



## **Demorest Woman's Club Economic Feasibility Study**

**2015**

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## I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Owned by the Demorest Woman's Club, currently the City of Demorest, Demorest Downtown Development Authority and Woman's Club are exploring options to improve the building so that it better serves the community. During the project, an assessment of the building was conducted to evaluate the building's physical condition and identify the most important repairs that would be needed for the building to continue to be utilized by all. Conceptual drawings were also created to assist in visioning and space planning to determine how best to use the space. These drawings should be utilized during the planning stage until architectural drawings are completed for the construction phase of the project. The project also identified proposed events at the building that could include:

- social club activities such as bingo, bridge and card games
- music, movie, poetry readings, musicals, and theatrical programs
- weddings and other banquet events
- meeting and event space for the City of Demorest, Piedmont College and other groups when possible

## II. BUILDING HISTORY: 1901-2015

The Demorest Woman's Club is a historic building built in 1901 and is located at 1035 Central Avenue in Demorest, Georgia. It originally was used as the Methodist Episcopal Church from 1901-1939 and was later utilized as a meeting place for the woman's club since 1954. Based on the building's historical significance in Demorest, the structure was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on December 30, 2008.

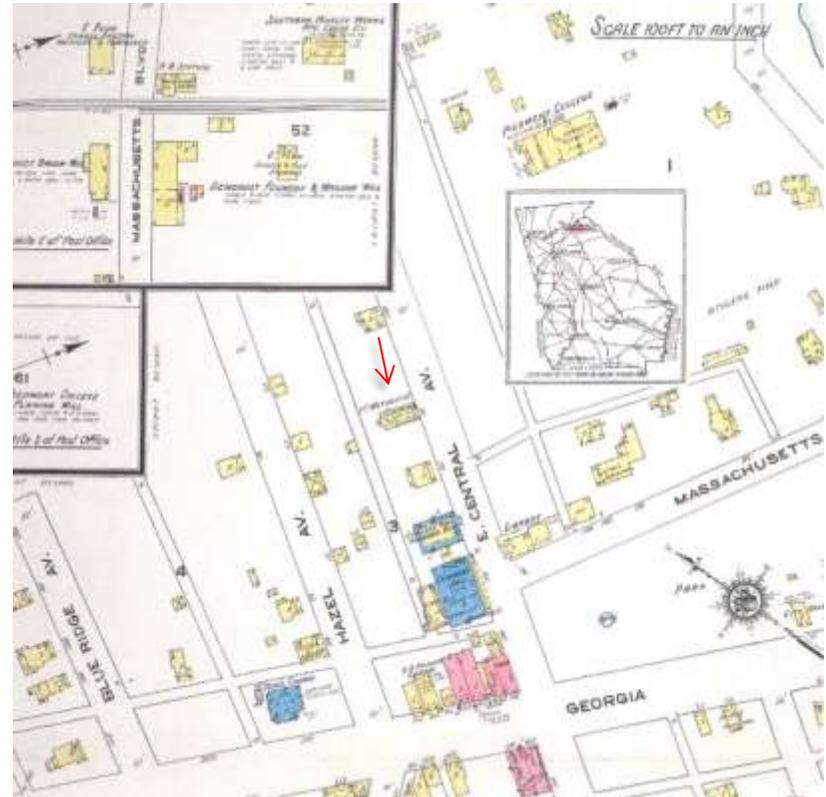


**Figure 1. Illustration of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1939 with the original steeple still in place before the building was purchased by the Demorest Woman's Club in 1954 for \$1.**



**WOMAN'S CLUB'S MRS. GILLESPIE (L)**  
With Members Inspecting New Home

**Figure 2. Woman's Club members after purchasing the building in 1954.**



**Figure 3. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map with red arrow pointing to the building's location in Demorest.**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC  
PLACES NOMINATION: LISTED ON  
DECEMBER 30, 2008  
HISTORIC PROPERTY INFORMATION FORM**

**SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION**

- 1. Historic Name of Property:**  
*Methodist-Episcopal Church, South of Demorest;  
Demorest Methodist Church*
- 2. Location of Property:** *1035 Central Avenue (US  
Highway 441)*  
**City:** *Demorest*                      **County:** *Habersham*  
**Zip Code:** *30535*  
**Approximate distance and direction from county  
seat:** *4.02 miles Southwest*
- 3. Acreage of property to be nominated (approximate):**  
*.14 acres*
- 4. Number of Historic Buildings or Structures:** *1 (one)*
- 5. Has the building(s) been moved, reconstructed, or is  
it less than 50 years old?** *No*
- 6. Property Owner:** *Demorest Woman's Club*
- 7. Reasons for Nominating the Property:** *Protection*

*The Woman's Club sits on a small parcel of land that lies in the shadow of Piedmont College along U. S. Highway 441. As the community and college have continued to grow, plans for a pedestrian bridge crossing over 441 and landing within 20 to 30 feet south of the Woman's Club building are gradually becoming a reality. The club understands that by nominating their clubhouse they cannot prevent the bridge, but if federal funds are used they want to ensure that their building is recognized and that the college will make plans to protect the building from unnecessary damage or demolition.*

**SECTION 2: DESCRIPTION**

**A. Number and Type of Historic Resources on property:**

*1(one) Club/Civic organization building*

**B. Description**

**1. Summary description**

*The property consists of one wood frame gable-front building that is one story in height from the front and two stories in height in the rear. It is set in a rural urban setting along the main thoroughfare through*

*Demorest (U.S. 441). Piedmont College's main Campus is located to the east with auxiliary college building located to the south of the Woman's Club building. To the west is the rear yard of the Women's Club followed by the rear yard of a private residence. To the north is a parking lot used by Piedmont College and the Woman's Club members.*

## **2. Full description of each historic building or structure**

### **2a. General character and appearance**

*The building is a gable-front building with Greek Revival elements. The front of the building is the narrow end, measuring approximately 30 feet in width. The length of the building extends approximately 70 into the tract to the northeast Overall; the only projection on the building is a rear two-story bay. Originally the building was a church the steeple having been removed 50 years ago as part of the desanctification process. Because of*

*the sloping topography and the raised roadbed, the building appears to be a single-story on the front. In actuality visitors enter the building on the second floor.*

### **2b. Exterior materials**

*The roof of the club is a standing-seam metal roof. The walls are wooden clapboards with a beveled edge and a simulated belt course (broader wooden band) between the first and second floors. There are three obvious phases to the exterior cladding. This is evident with three distinct styles of clapboard appearing above the belt course, and in the rear of the building. The latest being of yellow pine and of poor quality. Located primarily on the west (rear) wall, this material is subject to high levels of moisture both from rain sheeting from the roof and ground moisture associated with low elevation and a nearby drainage ditch.*

*Historical data indicates that the entire foundation of contiguous concrete block was installed in the 1954-1955 rehabilitation. This feature is obscured in portions by siding in the rear of the building. It is worthy to note that the foundation associated with the west face of the building is subject to high levels of moisture both from rain water sheeting from the roof and ground moisture attributed to low ground elevation and a nearby shallow drainage ditch. This ditch is 25 feet +/- from the west face.*

### **2c. Exterior features**

*Overall the building has little ornamentation. On the main façade are two simple Doric pilasters, one on each corner. The front doors, windows and vent are symmetrically placed with the front doors in the center, flanked by 6/6 double hung wood frame and sash windows. The attic vent is centrally placed in the upper portion of the façade. The north and south façades are similar in pattern with an even*

*rhythm of 6/6 double hung windows across the façade. The north façade has a portion that is cement block infill; date of this infill is unknown. On the south façade a door has been inserted in to the façade and one window in the southeast corner has been shortened, with ghosts of the earlier window still present. The west (rear) façade is dominated by two-story bay that is original to the building (Apse). Single 6/6 double hung windows are on each side of the bay with the center being a solid wall. The bay is covered in a hipped standing seam metal roof.*

### **2d. Interior arrangement**

*The main floor, upper level, has three areas: entrance, seating area and stage. The entrance area is immediately behind the front door with a small, modern kitchen off to the right and a stairwell on the left, which wraps around a closet that opens to the seating area. The seating area is a large open space available for*

*various functions. The stage area is a raised space to the rear (west side) of the room that is dominated by the bay. The stage is the most dominant feature of the room. This room had served as the sanctuary for the church and now serves as the main meeting space for the Woman's Club.*

*The first floor is used primarily for storage. The room has been subdivided into smaller rooms along the north wall; one is a restroom and the other is a storage closet. This space served as a multi-function area for the church; Sunday school was held here and this is where the choir practiced. Over time the original wood floor was replaced with a cement slab, the stairs to the stage were replaced with a modern wooden stair as was the main stairs leading up to the sanctuary with a cement tread in the portion closest to the basement.*

## **2e. Interior materials**

*Overall the building's interior is a functional space with little ornamentation. The main floor served as a sanctuary and the ornamentation comes from the use of horizontal beaded-tongue and grove board on the walls, ceiling and wainscoting. The walls and ceiling are painted white while the wainscoting is stained dark. Floors are heart-pine planks flush mounted. The kitchen and stairwell walls are simple wood sheets nailed to a basic frame running from floor to ceiling.*

*The basement area is utilitarian in its primary use and has no ornamentation in the construction. It comprises of a poured cement floor a horizontal beaded-tongue and grove board similar to what is used throughout the main floor.*

## **2f. Interior details**

*The interior of the building reflects the modification made by the Demorest Woman's Club in the years following 1954. The floors are constructed of heart pine as with most of the original wood interior. The ceiling associated with the upper floor is bead board, painted white. The wainscoting is also made of bead board but has been stained. Pine chair rail molding runs along the top edge of this feature. Most doors associated with the mid-century rehabilitation are of the horizontal 6-panel variety. Three modern chandeliers (Lowe's/Home Depot) are suspended from the ceiling. A stage is located at the northwest end of the main room. Constructed of pine, it is located in what was originally the apse or choir loft. Stair balusters are constructed of pine and are lathe turned.*

*The kitchen has built in cabinets and is equipped with modern electrical components.*

*Storage closets tend to be unfinished and sparsely equipped. Exposed wires, ductwork and modern wall framing tend to detract from the building's original details.*

*The lower level (first floor) has a more modern atmosphere than that experienced above. This stands to reason since it reflects considerably more post 1954 modification.*

## **2g. Structural system**

*The building rests on a contiguous concrete block foundation. The original support piers were removed during the post 1954 rehabilitation. Randomly spaced 4-inch steel posts support the upper floor joists along large horizontal circular sawn beams. Floor joists and ceiling rafters are randomly spaced 16 to 24 inches apart. The walls exhibit balloon frame construction.*

## **2h. Historical mechanical systems**

*Originally the building was heated with a wood burning stove that was vented with a brick chimney flue. This feature was removed during the initial 1954 rehabilitation and replaced with a gas stove that was located in the main sanctuary. A flue cover can be seen on the south wall where the stovepipe vented outside. Current heating and air ventilation was added in mid 1980s. There was originally no original in the building. The current bathroom facilities were added during the 1954 rehabilitation. This system was updated in the mid-1980s. The kitchen, located on the north side of the sanctuary just inside the front entrance, was also added during the 1954-55 rehabilitation. This has been upgraded in recent years.*

## **3. Grounds**

*The grounds around the Club are in a natural state; no attempt has been made for any formal or informal plantings. The front (east) side of*

*the building abuts a concrete sidewalk, which runs north to south beyond the building. The building is situated on a steep slope that tends to restrict the planting of flora species. To the north is a parking lot used by the community and Piedmont College. The rear (west) of the building is an open grassy area that is mowed and abuts private property. Kudzu is gradually encroaching this area. There is a shallow drainage ditch that is situated on a north-south axis in this area. Due to the low elevation found in this area and rain water from the roof, the ground moisture stay relatively high.*

## **4. Archaeological potential**

*Little potential exists for archaeological remains due to the site location in an urban setting and the steep topography precludes the existence of a site.*

**5. General character and appearance of the property's surroundings**

*The property is located along U.S. 441, the town's main thoroughfare. The setting is tranquil and serves as a good representative of a small Appalachian college town. Piedmont College's main campus is to the east with auxiliary buildings located to the south and a parking lot to the north. Residential development occurs to the rear (west) of the property.*

**6. Changes to the property and the approximate date(s)**

*When built, the Demorest Woman's Clubhouse was to serve the community as a house of worship. As evangelical alliances changed so too did the need for this building change. Unoccupied from 1939 to 1954, the old church had fallen into a severe state of deterioration. Windowpanes were missing, windows and doors were sagging, sills and joists rotting, and the*

*roof leaked in a myriad of places. Purchased from the church trustees for one dollar, the Woman's Club immediately began the first phase of rehabilitation under the direction of Club President, Mrs. Marvin Gillespie, in 1954.*

*The removal of the steeple signaled the beginning of a new era for the structure. Soon the chimney was removed and replaced with a stovepipe that exited the building on the south wall. Evidence of the flue opening is still visible today.*

*The foundation was strengthened and many original footers were replaced with a contiguous foundation of concrete block. This process improved the conditions in the lower level of the building, which led to the space being designed for extra meeting rooms and classrooms. Concrete was poured to serve as the primary flooring material in this area. 4-inch iron pipe was used to support the upper*

*floor joists. A new roof was installed, the walls re-aligned, windows replaced, and new electrical wiring was run. The Women's Club removed the old wood/coal burning stove and replaced it with gas heat.*

*Two sets of wood-framed stairs were originally cut to access the lower level. Rebuilt after 1954, they are "L" shaped, each making a 90-degree turn at a landing before proceeding to the ground floor. The first set is located in the southeast corner of the building. The second set is on the stage in the northwest corner. In 1956, Mrs. Ray Black of Dahunega, Georgia donated \$16.50 to have stair rails installed.*

*The mid-1980s brought additional upgrades to the Woman's Club. The electrical system was upgraded and central heating and air was installed. New ductwork can be seen running through the rooms and walls of the lower level,*

*serving the spaces above. Returns were cut into the walls and registers cut into the flooring. Exit signs and emergency lights were also part of this upgrade. New appliances and storage areas were added to many of the rooms including the kitchen and bathroom. PVC pipe was used to upgrade the interior drainage systems.*

*A 45-degree iron brace has recently been installed to support the northwest corner, lower level.*

**7. Brief description and date of construction for each noncontributing buildings and/or structures on the property**

*There are no other additional structures or buildings located on the property.*

**8. Boundary Description**

*When the Methodist Episcopal Church South was organized in 1895, the congregation began*

*searching for a suitable place to build the church. Captain J.S. Adams, a public-spirited early resident of Demorest, donated three land lots on Central Avenue, 45, 46, and 47 in Block Number 6. The deed of the property bears the date of 1901. Today, this property is located on the west side of Central Avenue (U.S. 441) across from the Piedmont College campus.*

*Starting at the point of beginning (POB) at the southeast corner of the property continue north along Central Avenue 75 feet. Turn 90-degrees to the east and continue 90 feet. Turn 90-degrees and continue 75 feet to the southwest corner. At the southwest corner turn 90-degrees and proceed to the POB.*

*Modern commercial activity and residential housing are gradually encroaching upon the site.*

## **SECTION 3: HISTORY**

### **A. Summary of Historical Facts**

#### **1. Original owner or occupant**

*Methodist Episcopal Church, South of Demorest (1901-1954)*

#### **2. Subsequent owners or occupants**

*Demorest Woman's Club (1954 to 2006)*

**A. Original use of property** Church (1902 – 1954)

**B. Subsequent uses of property**

*Demorest Woman's Club meeting house (1954-2006)*

**C. Current use of the property** *Demorest Woman's Club meeting house*

**D. Architect, engineer, builder, contractor, landscape architect, gardener, and/or other artists or craftsmen:** *George H. Carson, master builder*

**E. a. Date of construction and source(s) used to determine date:** *1901- Property Deed*

**b. Date(s) of significant/major alterations and/or additions:**

*1954-1955 and in the mid-1980/1990s*

**F. Significant persons**

*Dr. C. C. Spence – Founder of Piedmont College as well as the Methodist Episcopal Church South*

*George H. Carson – Local Master Builder*

**G. Significant events or activities:** N/A

**H. Name of Property**

*The original name for the building was the Demorest Methodist Episcopal Church South.*

*This name was given to the building by the church trustees after a portion of the congregation seceded from the Methodist Episcopal Church North.*

*The building is now commonly referred to at the Demorest Woman's Clubhouse. This stems from their 1954 acquisition of the site.*

**I. History of the Property**

*The town of Demorest in Habersham County was established in 1889 by a group of*

*investors from the northern and Midwestern United States. This group, incorporated as the “Demorest Home Mining and Improvement Company” (HMIC), purchased 3,500 acres in the southern Appalachian Mountains for the site of this planned community. John A. Reynolds, a surveyor, laid out the town. The company’s objective was to “make homes for people, to establish permanently a great variety of industries, to furnish employment for labor, and to improve natural advantages for business which this healthful region affords.” The town was named in honor of W. Jennings Demorest of New York, a widely known philanthropist, temperance advocate, and educator who later became a candidate for president of the United States on the National Prohibition ticket. Appropriate to the town name, liquor was banished from the community by a requirement of every deed that “no*

*intoxicating liquors shall ever be made, sold, or given away for beverage on the premises.”*

*The Methodist Episcopal Church North was organized soon after the founding of the town. The establishment of Presbyterian and Baptist congregations followed in 1891 and a Union Congregational Church was also established after that. By 1897, the Methodist Episcopal Church, North ceased to function. In that same year, Dr. C. C. Spence organized the Methodist Episcopal Church, South in the city hall. As this congregation grew, J.S. Adams, one of Demorest’s early residents and benefactor in the community, donated the land—three city lots church site. Services were held in Bank Hall, later known as Butler Hall, before construction of the church began in December 1901. The present building was completed one year later. George H. Carson designed and constructed the church building. Apparently some of the former members of the*

*Methodist Episcopal Church North joined the Methodist Episcopal Church South since the bell that been located in the earlier church was placed in the steeple of the new church. This bell had been a gift to the Methodist Episcopal Church, North from W. Jennings Demorest. In 1947, the Methodist Church (the church reunited in 1939 after factions ceased to exist) joined with the Congregational Church to become the Federated Church.*

*Thirteen years earlier, on November 9, 1934 at the invitation of Mrs. Henry C. Newell, wife of Piedmont College President, eleven women of Demorest were called upon to meet in her home. As a result of this gathering the Demorest Woman’s Club was organized. The Club was officially on federated November 13, 1934 in the home of Mrs. H. B. Forrester. During that year 51 additional members joined the organization.*

*Since its organization the club has sponsored or assisted in various community and county projects including: dental and well baby clinics; tuberculosis clinics; heart and mental health drives; maternity shelter; first-aid classes; hog removal from the city limits; securing city garbage pickup and the promotion of local beautification campaigns.*

*The Demorest Woman's Club also engaged in many civic programs. These accomplishments include purchasing red velvet curtains for the Piedmont College Auditorium, assisting in raising \$1000.00 for the Piedmont College Building Fund, supporting efforts to preserve our National Forests, and lobbying to prevent highway signs from being posted in Habersham County.*

*In 1950 the club adopted the Mimosa as their official tree. In November of 1954, the Demorest Woman's Club purchased the*

*existing building from the Methodist Church Trustees for one dollar. This purchase was carried out under a deed restriction that prevented the Club from ever selling the building.*

*Unoccupied since 1939, the old church laid in a state of severe deterioration. Windowpanes were missing, windows and doors were sagging, sills and joists rotting, and the roof leaked like a sieve. Under the direction of Mrs. Marvin Gillespie, the structure began to gradually take on new life. The foundation was strengthened with concrete block, the steeple and chimneys were removed, and a new roof installed. This initial phase also saw the walls re-aligned, windows replaced, and new electric wiring installed; the Woman's Club also incorporated gas heat and added the two front flanking rooms and a stage. During this time the basement was finished and utilized as a meeting room. With this*

*activity, it wasn't long before the entire community became involved. All of the electrical appliances for the kitchen were donated as well as numerous pieces of antique living room furniture. Weaving looms and a pottery kiln were also given to the club to perpetuate local forms of traditional art.*

*Today, the Demorest Woman's Club continues to uphold its traditions within the local community. A recent letter penned by the Mayor of Demorest states "the Woman's Club has made its presence known in many positive ways throughout the last sixty years. This has been accomplished by actively sponsoring community oriented projects, encouraging study, participation in, and the enjoyment of the Arts, and annually participating in charitable endeavors." In November the Club hosts the Annual Christmas Tree Wonderland which harkens the approach of the enchanting Appalachian*

*holiday season. The event features decorations for fall and Christmas as well as traditional and contemporary wreath designs. The clubhouse is readily available throughout the year to host numerous community groups such as the Demorest Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts, the Habersham Community Theatre, and Piedmont College. The ladies of the Demorest Woman's Club firmly believe that their clubhouse should remain an integral part of the downtown Demorest streetscape just as it has remained an integral part of the community's history.*

#### **SECTION 4: SIGNIFICANCE**

##### **A. Areas of Significance**

- *Architecture*
- *Education*
- *Woman's history*

##### **B. Statements of Significance**

*The Demorest Methodist Episcopal Church is significant in the areas of architecture, education, and women's history. The*

*structure is important in architecture, since a master builder in the Demorest community constructed it. It is a rare example of a once common building type. In education, the origins of this church are closely associated with the founding of what was later known as Piedmont College and in Women's history with the association of the Demorest Woman's Club.*

*In architecture, when recognized as the Methodist Episcopal Church South, it is significant for its association with George H. Cason, a master builder in the Demorest community. Through a unique series of event this building remains one of the few church buildings in the community that has remained predominantly intact. Cason came to Demorest from White County, Georgia soon after the founding on the town. His goal was to further his education at an academy located in the community. In his early twenties, he began a career in building construction. The Demorest Methodist Episcopal Church, South appears to have been one of his earliest works. Cason built the church structure in 1901. After this job, Cason went on to design and build the Demorest train depot in 1903. He is also responsible for numerous residential structures throughout the Community.*

*The Demorest Methodist Episcopal Church South is also significant in the area of education. Dr. C. C. Spence was the founder of the church as well as Piedmont College. Dr. Spence moved to the community in 1897 at the urging of local citizens who wanted to establish a college under the sponsorship of the Methodist Church. He founded the church and college in the same year. Dr. Spence was an ordained Methodist minister who had previously been the president of Young Harris College, a two-year Methodist College in Towns County, Georgia. The college at Demorest was founded in 1897 and Spence became the first president. The school was named the J. S. Green Collegiate Institute to honor on of an early donor. It was later changed to J. S. Green College. An agreement could not be reached with the Methodist Church so the American Missionary Association of the Congregational Church assumed responsibility for the college in 1901 and renamed the school Piedmont College. Dr. Spence continued to serve as President of Piedmont College until 1904 and remained on the Board of Trustees until his death in 1914. Presidents of Piedmont College since Dr. Spence's term have all been congregational ministers, making Dr. Spence the only Methodist minister to serve this position. As president, Dr.*

*Spence established a relation between the Congregational College and the Methodist Church that continued throughout his life. Piedmont College is now in its 80<sup>th</sup> year of operation as a four-year liberal arts institution.*

*As the Demorest Woman's Club, the building can still be significantly attributed to education. The Club has a history of promoting civic awareness, community values, Regional and Performing Arts. The floor plan of the building was subdivided into classrooms for the sole purpose of continuing education. The Demorest Woman's Club is a hallmark to Women's history in Central Appalachia. Since the founding of Demorest, opportunities for women were always available. In a pamphlet published by the DHMI Company in 1889 is the following announcement: "Business for Women – There are many business enterprises opening at Demorest which women may properly and profitably superintend. Any lady having money to invest, and wishing to take personal supervision of her business, can find the finest opportunities. Among industrial enterprises, which a woman may easily establish, are knit goods mills, clothing factories, glove factories, toy and bric-a-brac factories and many others, all of which are needed and*

*will pay liberal returns on the amount invested. The attention of ladies dependent on their own resources for support, and who have some means at their disposal, is invited to these promising fields for opening light, easy and profitable business."*

*Some businesses founded and managed by local women in Demorest were Nora Sosebee's Millinery Shop and Loice Adams' Dressmaking home industry. After Sosebee's Millinery Shop burned, she opened a grocery store that she ran successfully until the 1950s. Isabel Chrisler ran a dry goods and variety store from 1916 to 1965. Lucille Swindell operated the Coffee Cup Restaurant from 1929 to the mid-1960s and Olive Van Hise was an early dance and exercise instructor, from 1915 to 1925.*

*This intrepid persistence shown by these remarkable women is exhibited in the founding of the Demorest Woman's Club. Mrs. Marvin Gillespie recounted the acquisition to the property in an article that appeared in the Atlanta Journal, August 5, 1956. She recalled "the Methodists first offered the old church to the Men's Civic Club. But they wailed 'What would we do*

*with that worn-out old building if we had it.’ It was the Woman’s Club that moved in and asked for it if they would sell it for a dollar.” “The offer was accepted, and the members went to work to prove to the Men’s Civic Club what could be done with a dilapidated old house of worship.” This structure stands today as testimony to the perseverance, confidence, and ingenuity that has always been associated with the women of Demorest, Georgia.*

## **SECTION 5: SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Sources of Information**

Habersham County Planning Office

Habersham County Clerk’s Office

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[R] Jackson, Olin. The North Georgia Journal of History, Volume 1: Legacy Communications, 1989.

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[R] Turner, Margaret. 1956. Women Get Last Laugh Over Old Church Deal. Atlanta Journal, August 5, Local and State section.

[R] Staff Writer. 1995. Club House to Undergo Restoration. The Northeast Georgian, March 7, 2C.

[R] Gillespie, Evie. “History of the Demorest Methodist Church.” Demorest, Georgia, 1951.

[R] Davis, Margie. “A Brief History of The Demorest Woman’s Club, 1934 – 1976.” Demorest, Georgia, 1976.

[R] The Digital Library of Georgia. “Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Georgia Towns and Cities, 1884-1922.” University of Georgia Hargrett Library.  
<http://www.dlg.galileo.usg.edu/sanborn/> (accessed January 16, 2007).

### **III. BUILDING EVOLUTION: 1939-1954; 1995-PRESENT**

The building has been simplified since it was converted from a church to a place for social club meetings. The most dramatic change has been the removal of the steeple which originally was located at the front left corner of the building. Internally, many smaller changes have also occurred which have changed the interior space and should be reversed to maintain the integrity of the interior. When entering the building, the focal point is the stage and beauty of the original heart pine floor and beadboard walls and ceiling. Unfortunately, the view from the stage towards the entrance has changed. The addition of a kitchen area and stairway to the ground level has diminished the grandness of the space and also placed constraints on future uses.

Originally, the ground level below the main floor would simply been an open area and the building would have been supported by piers. This area now includes the mechanical room for the HVAC, water heater and electrical service for the building. The only bathroom is also located on this level. The rest of the area is open for storage and currently is underutilized. This level has

access to the exterior through a set of double doors and this access point should be utilized in the future. In 1995 and thereafter improvements were made due to maintenance needs and exterior damage from fallen trees. This included a new standing seam metal roof, new windows and an exterior door on the lower level.



**Figure 4. Demorest Woman's Club in 1995 after trees surrounding the property were cut down but before roof repairs were made.**



**Figure 5. Demorest Woman's Club in 1995 before roof repairs were made and exterior alterations were made to the lower level windows and doorway.**



**Figure 6. Demorest Woman's Club in 1995 after trees surrounding the property were cut down but before roof repairs were made.**



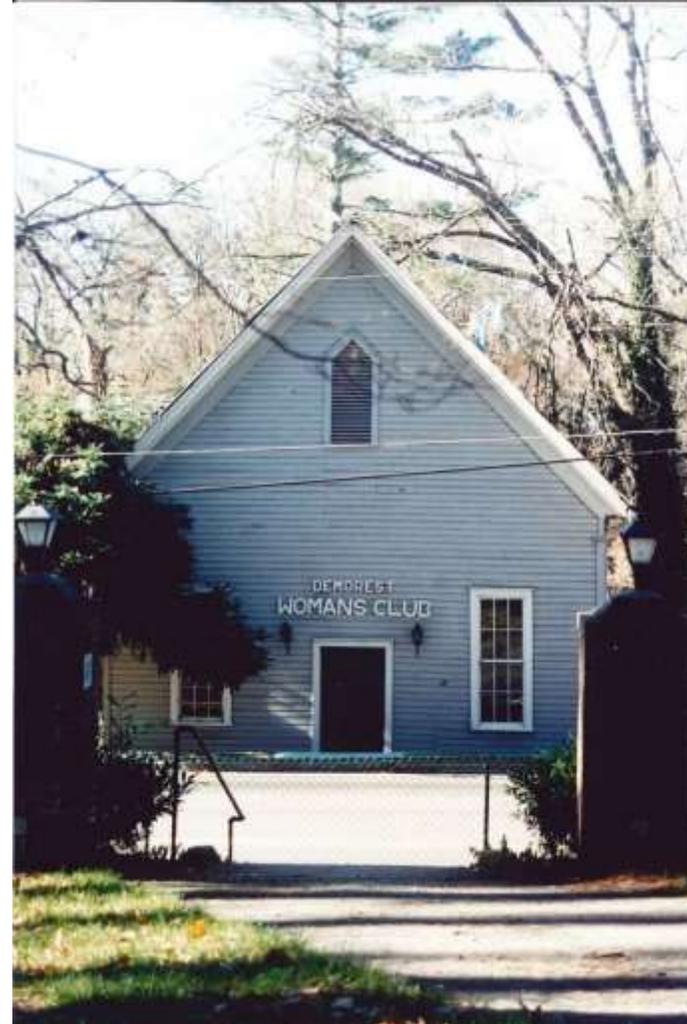
**Figure 7. Demorest Woman's Club in 1995 after trees surrounding the property were cut down but before roof repairs were made.**



**Figure 8. Demorest Woman's Club in 1995 after trees surrounding the property were cut down but before roof repairs were made.**



**Figure 9. Demorest Woman's Club in 1995 before roof repairs were made and showing side front window that is no longer present and should be reinstalled.**



**Figure 10. Demorest Woman's Club in 1995 from Piedmont College.**

## **IV. REHABILITATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. Exterior Improvements**

The exterior of the building originally featured a steeple at the front left corner, a historic wood double sash window below and an open area below the main level (Fig. 1). The steeple was removed when it became the woman's club and the lower level and window were filled in as well. It is recommended that the historic window be reinstalled in this corner to restore symmetry to the building (Fig. 9.).

The original section of the building is in adequate condition. The wood clapboards do not show many signs of rot or repair needs. This section however should be repainted as soon as possible and photos from 1995 show the building as light blue (Fig. 9-10). The original standing seam metal roof was replaced at this time and the roof is still in great shape with no areas requiring immediate attention. The front door is original and is seen in Figure 2 and requires repairs. Currently the grade at the doorway is adequate but to prevent ADA accessibility issues a new historically compatible door is recommended.

The lighting and signage should also be improved as budget permits. Both Van Dyke's and Rejuvenation offer suggestions for period specific lighting options and further research should be conducted to determine appropriate lighting styles as the project continues.

The primary area requiring the most attention is the lower level. This area is beginning to show signs of wood deterioration and all areas that require repair or replacement should be done with similar materials and repainted as well. While, the main floor still retains the original windows unfortunately the lower level does not. Photos from 1995 show historic windows in place before modern windows were installed. Some of these modern windows are now either sagging or broken and it is recommended that the modern windows be replaced with windows more historically appropriate for the building. The doorway leading to the lower level should also be replaced to maintain the historic character of the building.

- Siding and window repairs as needed
- Painting, lighting, signage & landscaping
- Front door replacement
- Road connection to lower level access from North Hazel Ave.



**Figure 11. View of the Demorest Woman's Club in September 2015. North Havel Avenue is directly behind the building and the turnoff to Piedmont College's parking lot could be extended to the side of the building. This would allow direct access to the building from the lower level and allow the proposed caterer's kitchen on this level to function for events.**



**Figure 12. Rendering of road connection to North Hazell Avenue to the building allowing deliveries below and an updated sign on the front of the building with new lighting.**

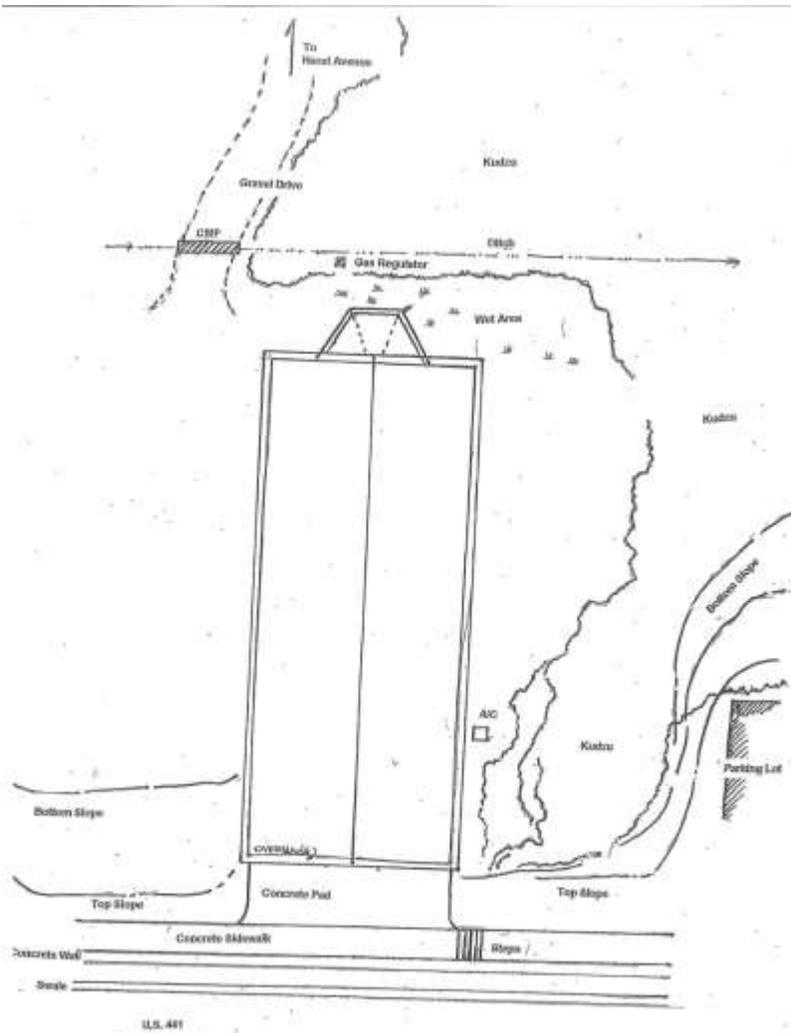


Figure 13. Current road behind the building at North Hazell Ave which continues to a Piedmont College parking lot nearby.

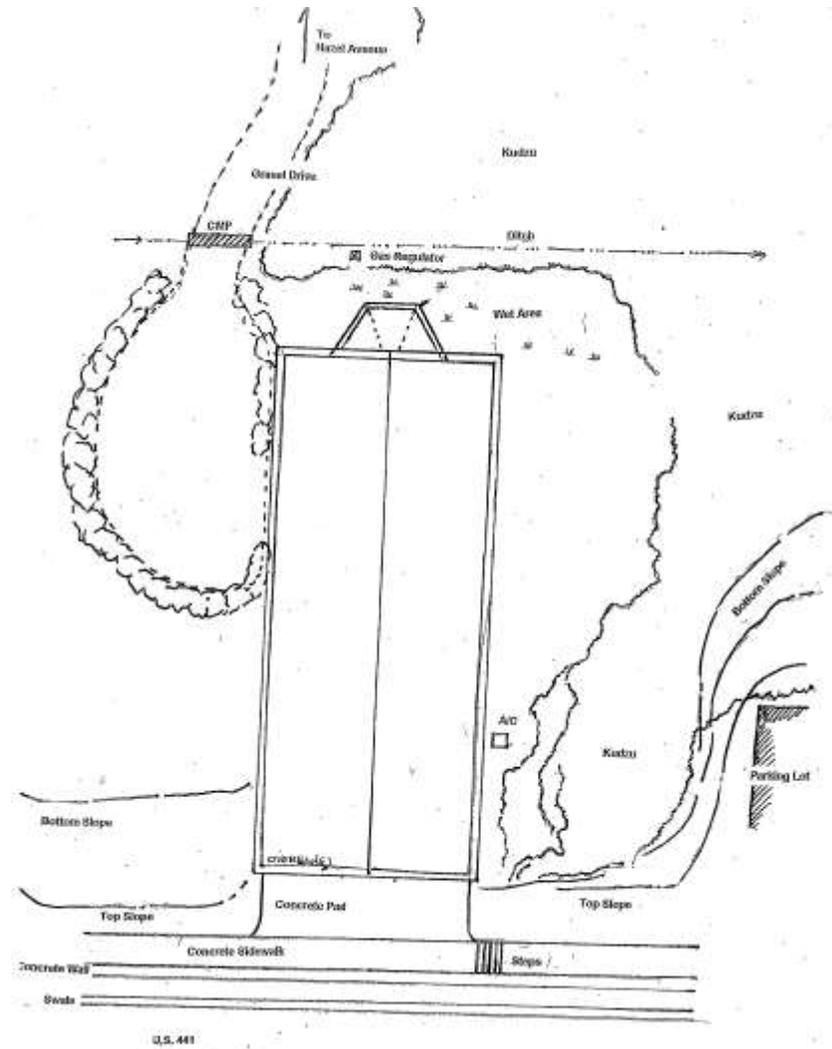


Figure 14. Suggested spur from this road to provide delivery and catering access to the lower level of the building.



**Figure 15. Front of building. Overall, the main floor's siding is in good condition but needs to be painted. The front left of the building once had a window here and the opening should be restored with a similarly styled historic window.**



**Figure 16. The front entrance should be improved to offer better ADA accessibility.**



**Figure 17.** The current sign for the woman’s club has been here for many years and a new sign is recommended to prevent further wood deterioration behind the letters. A hanging sign or one fixed to the building would be appropriate and a goose neck light or other style above would offer plenty of light. The two lights flanking the door should also be updated to a more historically appropriate style.



**Figure 18.** The front double door is original to the building but to ensure easy access for ADA accessibility, a new single door with side lights is recommended that would facilitate better access to the interior.



**Figure 19.** The building gets a lot of foot traffic from students going to Piedmont College who park in the nearby parking lots. Considering that the building is also only minutes from the downtown area it would be a great addition for hosting events, meetings and other social activities.



**Figure 20.** Demorest Woman's Club on U.S. 441.



**Figure 21.** Demorest Woman's Club and Piedmont College's Admission Building and pedestrian bridge in the background.



Figure 22. Front of building, east elevation. September 2015.



Figure 23. Left side of building, south elevation and U.S. 441. September 2015.



Figure 24. Left side of building, south elevation. This area can be utilized for a delivery area to the lower level catering kitchen and outdoor seating or garden space. September 2015.



Figure 25. Left side of building, south elevation, HWY 441 and sidewalk. The building has a lot of pedestrian traffic for Piedmont College and would be a great resource for student/college events. September 2015.



**Figure 26. Right side of building, north elevation. September 2015.**



**Figure 28. Right side of building, north elevation. September 2015.**



**Figure 27. Right side of building, north elevation and Piedmont College. September 2015.**



**Figure 29. Rear of building, west elevation. This area can be utilized for a delivery area to the lower level catering kitchen. September 2015.**



**Figure 30. Rear of building, west elevation. September 2015.**



**Figure 31. Left side of building, south elevation, with detail view of historic windows on main floor. September 2015.**



**Figure 32. Right side of building, north elevation with detail view of modern window sash on the lower level that is sagging at the top and the trim and sill do not line up at the bottom. September 2015.**

## **B. Main Floor: Interior Improvements**

The two most important improvements that should be done to improve the buildings service to the Woman's Club, City and Piedmont College are the addition of two ADA accessible restrooms on the main floor and the addition of a caterer's kitchen on the lower level. For both to be integrated into the buildings footprint without diminishing the integrity of the historic building, it is recommended that the restrooms be added where the kitchen is currently located and the caterer's kitchen be relocated to the lower level near where the current stage stairway is located.

By relocating the kitchen on the main level and instead locating the restrooms here, they will better serve the function of the building and also diminish the overall footprint of this amenity in the desired location. Also, by locating the restrooms in this corner it eliminates the need to have a primary staircase in the opposite corner for the buildings current configuration. Encapsulating the stairs and restoring the floor in this area would add valuable floor space to the main level and with the removal of this

wall it opens up the building to where the existing windows were and add s more natural light to the area. One window would need to be recreated for this functionality to work but it would create a new area that can best serve the main floor.

With the reconfiguration of the front interior space this allows the stage area to be modified to provide access from the main floor to the lower level. The current stairway should be changed to allow a dumbwaiter system to facilitate food delivery from the catering kitchen below to the main floor. A stairway should be added on the opposite side of the stage to allow catering staff access to the lower level and to come up and serve food during events.

The lighting should also be improved as budget permits. Both Van Dyke's and Rejuvenation offer suggestions for period specific lighting options and should be consulted as the project continues.

- ADA accessibility
- ADA restroom accommodations
- Dumbwaiter to basement level catering kitchen
- Stair relocation to basement level
- Painting
- Window repairs as needed
- Flooring repairs as needed
- Lighting
- Theatre stage improvements including moving stage curtain closer to the stage (requires removal of discontinued chimney at stage left front) and stage stairway improvements.



**Figure 33. Main floor looking towards stage.**



**Figure 34. Main floor looking towards the front doors, kitchen on left and stairs on right. It is recommended that the current chandeliers in the building be replaced with more period appropriate lighting.**



Figure 35. Front doors.

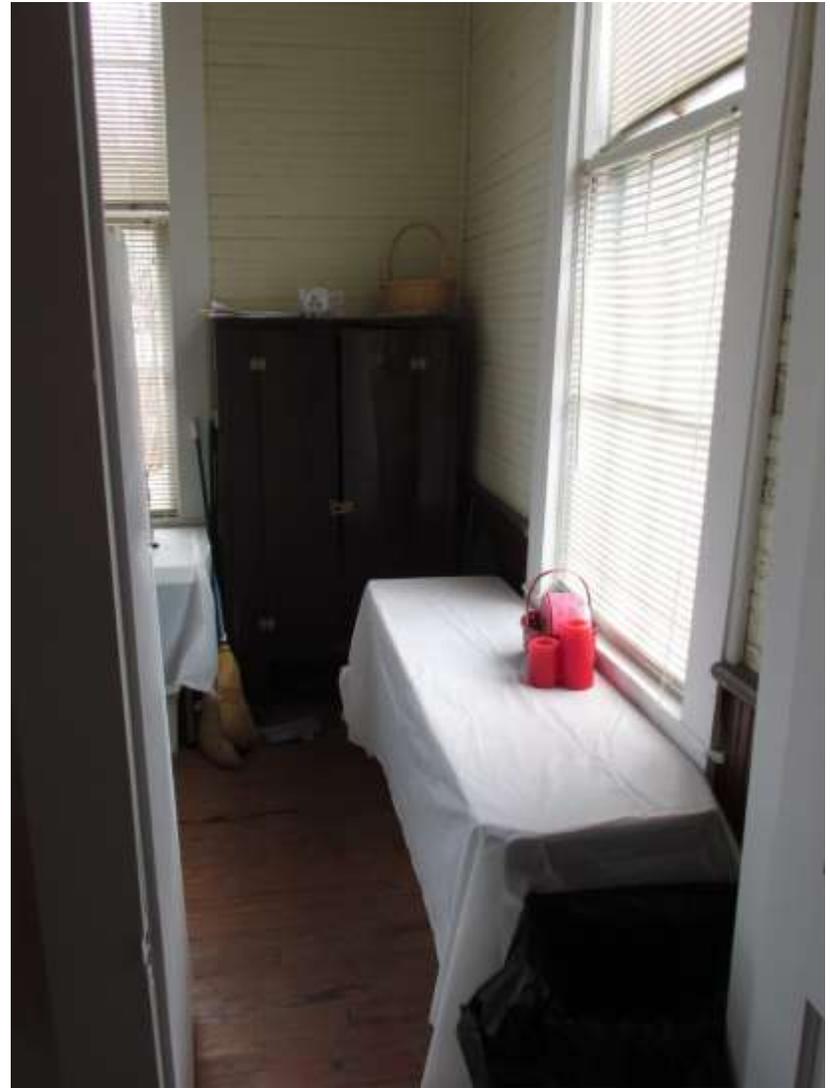


Figure 36. Main Floor Kitchen.



**Figure 37. Main Floor Kitchen. This area should be reconfigured into two (2) ADA accessible restrooms and utilize less floor space.**



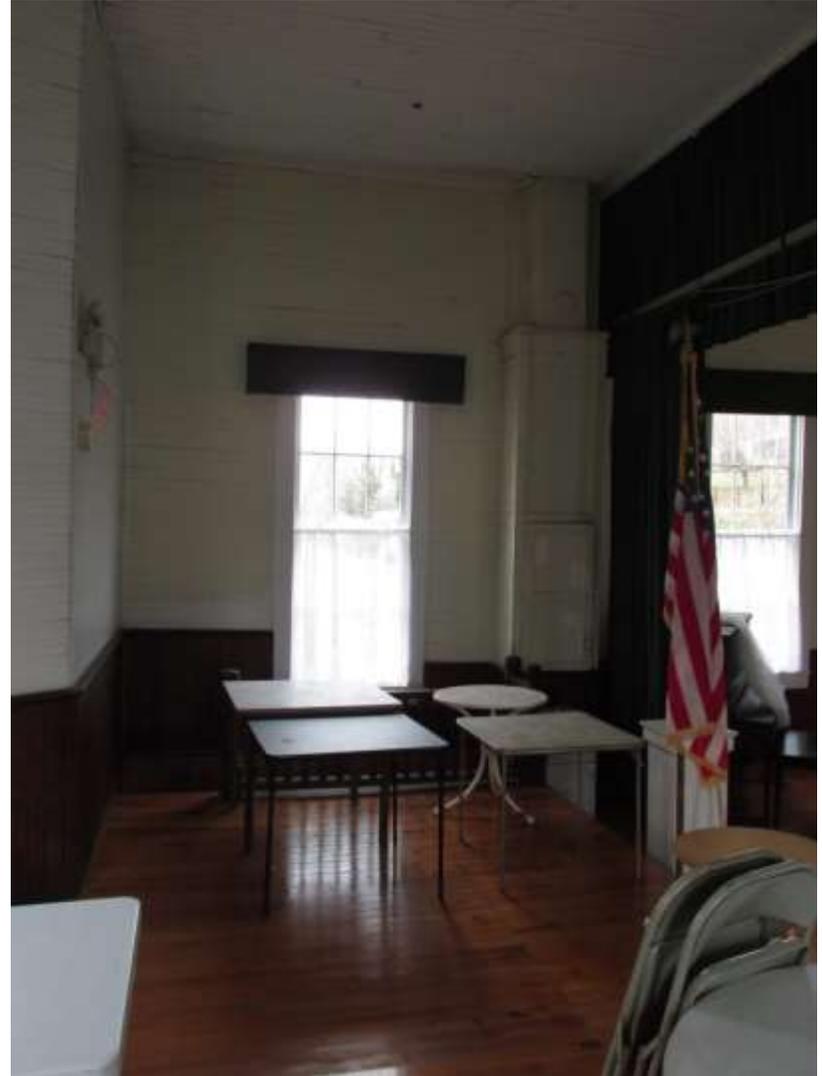
**Figure 38. Stairs to lower level. This area was originally open and should be restored to open floor space.**



**Figure 39. Stairs to lower level. A window originally was located on the side wall. It was removed when the floor was opened to provide stair access to the lower level. It is recommended that the window opening be restored and the stairs relocated to allow for more floor space.**



**Figure 27. Stairs to lower level.**



**Figure 28. Stage area on main floor looking towards stairs to lower level (behind tables).**



**Figure 29. Chimney system to the left of the stage stairs. This should be removed to allow for more stage area.**



**Figure 30. Stage area on main floor looking towards stairs to lower level. These stairs should be removed and the opening utilized for a dumbwaiter food delivery system from the proposed catering kitchen below.**



**Figure 31. Stage stairs to the lower level.**



**Figure 32. Stage area on the main floor. A new set of stairs is proposed at the left to provide access to the downstairs area. The current stairs are on the right and these are recommended to be replaced with a dumbwaiter. The stage area also should be upgraded with a new stage curtain and other amenities as the project continues.**



**Figure 33. Stage area looking towards the proposed new stairs to the lower level (behind tables).**

### **C. Lower Level: Interior Improvements**

The lower level serves primarily as preparation and storage space for the main floor and is currently dominated by the only bathroom for the building. Since the main floor will now have two ADA accessible restrooms for the public, this floor will not need as much square footage devoted to restrooms. The restroom on the lower level should be relocated to the rear bay window area. This area is large enough that it can facilitate two ADA restrooms that would only be used by staff.

In this new configuration it would allow more area for a caterer's kitchen near the current stage stairway. The stairs should be removed and the opening modified to accommodate a dumbwaiter food delivery system. With the double doors nearby it would create an efficient use of space for the area and a new set of stairs opposite the caterer's kitchen would allow catering staff easy access to the main floor and dumb waiter. The rest of the lower level area, which is currently open space between the existing bathroom and mechanical room, should be utilized as an event preparation room that can be utilized

be anyone who rents the building such as for a wedding or musical event.

Finally, since the current stairway will be encapsulated and the flooring above restored, this doorway should be closed off and the current mechanical room improved as budget permits. This should include a new concrete floor and vapor/moisture barriers of the exposed earth. .

Improvements in this room would also allow for better storage space. A new office for the building/event manager can be located in this area as well with access to the mechanical room through this office.

- Catering kitchen
- Restroom improvements
- Stairway to main floor
- Bridal room/ Event Room
- Manager's office
- Painting



**Figure 34. Lower level looking towards the rear of the building. The doorway to the outside is to the left. A new set of stairs is proposed directly ahead, the staff restrooms in the curtain area ahead and the caterer's kitchen around the corner. The door to the right leads to the current restroom for the building. This should be renovated to a bridal/event room.**



**Figure 35. Lower level looking towards current stairs to the main floor. The doorway to the left leads to the current bathroom/proposed bridal/event room. Straight ahead the area can be utilized as an office for the Building Manager once the current stairs are walled off. The doorway to the right leads to the outside and proposed road extension from North Hazel Avenue.**



**Figure 36. The current stairs are recommended to be sealed off and the floor above restored for more floor space. This would allow this area to be utilized as an office for the Building Manager. The doorway to the left of the stairs leads to the mechanical room. This room would be accessed from the Building Manager's office after the project is complete.**



**Figure 37. At minimum this area should have a new concrete floor poured and a moisture barrier placed over the exposed clay earth. Improvements in this room would also allow for better storage space.**



**Figure 38. Mechanical room with HVAC, electrical and plumbing systems. This room currently has some of the old wood sash windows that could be reused for the project.**



**Figure 39. Open area next to the restroom. This area should be incorporated into the new bridal/event room.**



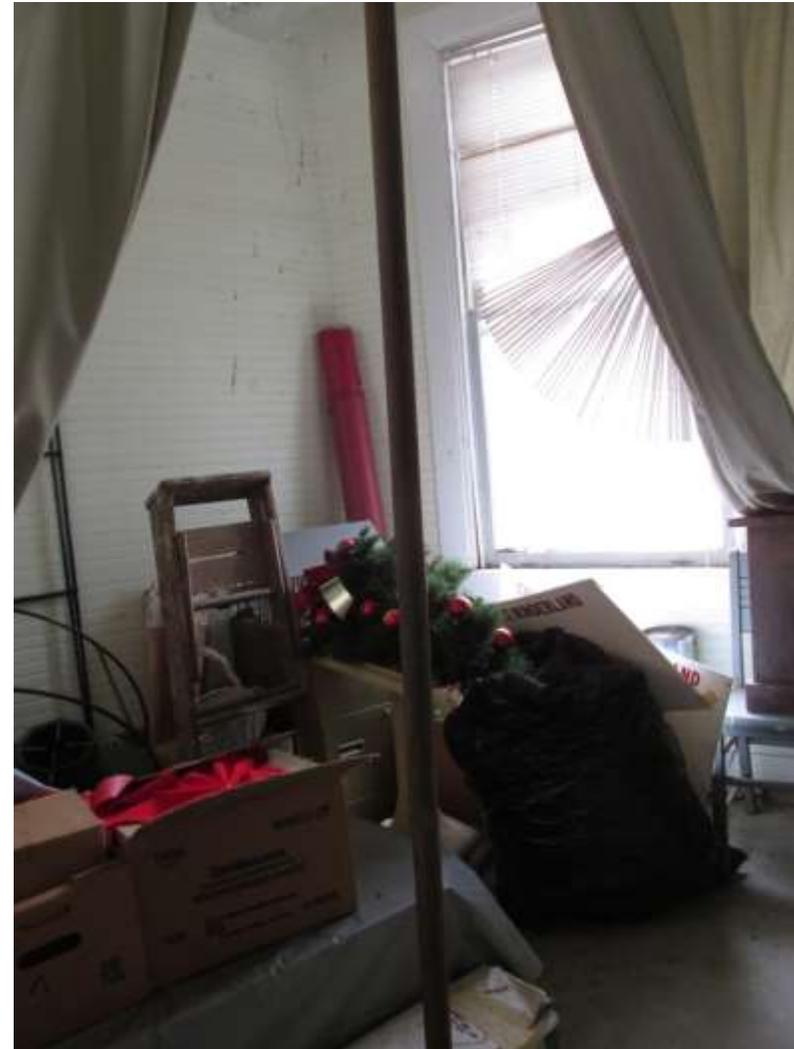
**Figure 40. Current lower level restroom. The restroom should be relocated to the bay window area on this floor and this area used as part of the proposed event room.**



**Figure 41.** Lower level where the proposed caterer's kitchen could be relocated once the current stairs are replaced by the dumbwaiter system.



**Figure 42.** Lower level bay window area where the proposed staff restrooms should be located.



**Figure 43.** Lower level of the bay window area currently used as storage and should be renovated into staff restrooms.

## **V. FINAL SUMMARY**

### **A.) Project Outline**

Depending on funding, it is recommended that the project be divided into phases determined by the priorities set by the Demorest Woman's Club and other stakeholders. These priorities should include necessary repairs and upgrades for the building's operation so that it can be utilized by the public as soon as possible.

Recommended priorities are as follows:

- a.)** Exterior and interior paint/ refinish and repair floors
- b.)** Repair/replace first floor and lower level windows and doors as needed
- c.)** HVAC, plumbing and electrical upgrades as necessary
- d.)** Main level space planning:
  - ADA Bathroom
  - Stage area improvements:  
(including dumbwaiter and stairs)

### **e.)** Lower level space planning:

- Caterer's kitchen
- Stairway to main floor
- Bridal room/ event prep room
- Restroom improvements
- Office manager area
- Mechanical room improvements

**f.)** Exterior landscaping with outdoor seating, garden space and driveway extension to basement level double doors for deliveries

## **B.) Funding**

**1.) The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)** awards grants and contracts from funds appropriated to the Commission annually by Congress. Program grants are awarded to state and local agencies and governmental entities (such as economic development authorities), local governing boards (such as county councils), and nonprofit organizations (such as schools and organizations that build low-cost housing). Contracts are awarded for research on topics that directly impact economic development in the Appalachian Region.

An application for an ARC grant can be completed by GMRC Department of Economic Development staff upon request for FY17.

**2.)** Other options for fundraising include the **Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program, Historic Preservation Fund Grant** program and the start of a **capital campaign** utilizing social media and other

marketing tools to publicize the building and gain public support for its use.

## **C.) Rehabilitation Cost Estimate**

### **Withers Home Construction**

#### **Paul Withers**

315 Stovall Rd

Lavonia, 30553

Mobile: 404-379-5265

Tel: 706-356-1909

Fax: 706-356-5311

Wither's Home Construction has completed many restoration projects in the Northeast Georgia Mountains area. These have included the restoration of the Southern Railway Depot in Lavonia which won an Excellence in Rehabilitation award from The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation in 2014, the Carnegie Library in Lavonia and the Maysville City Hall restoration which focused on the restoration of the building's second floor.

**WITHERS HOME CONSTRUCTION, INC.**

100 EAST LAWYER'S CROSSING

9/28/2015

Paul Withers  
Withers Home Construction, Inc.  
315 Stovall Rd. Ext., Lavonia, GA 30553

Joe Rothwell, City of Demorest, Demorest Women's Club  
Demorest, GA

Dear Mr. Rothwell, NEGRC

I am attaching the first estimate for the Demorest Women's Club project. Please know that it is a work in progress. As I'm sure you understand, a project of this scope requires a "meeting of the minds" in regards to design and purpose. There remains a variety of questions, a need for closer inspection of the building and specific features addressed.

When creating this estimate, we tried to follow the list of improvements provided to Withers Construction. We crafted the estimate in this manner to highlight the areas of question. We will be happy to fill-in-the-blanks as more information and decisions have been made.

I truly appreciate the opportunity to consult with you and to prepare an estimate for this project. I believe you are aware of several projects completed by my company and I look forward to working on this project as well. This is the type of project that I enjoy the most, blending the historical with the present.

Sincerely,



Paul Withers  
President  
Withers Home Construction, Inc.  
404-379-5265 – Cell Phone  
706-356-6311 – FAX  
[pwithers@windstream.net](mailto:pwithers@windstream.net) - Email

**Estimate: e-37**  
 Demorest Women's Club Economic  
 Feasibility Study - Exterior & Interior  
 Improvements

**Withers Home Construction**  
 315 Stovall Rd  
 Lawtonia, 30553  
 United States  
 Tel: 706-356-1909  
 Fax: 706-356-5311  
 Mobile: 404-379-5265

Bill to: **City of Demorest, Demorest Women's Club** Estimate number: e-37  
 Estimate date: September 27, 2015  
 Expires on: October 15, 2015  
 Grand total \$81,038.00  
 (USD):

| PRODUCT  | QTY | PRICE       | AMOUNT      |
|--|-----|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Description of Project</b><br>To be found in feasibility study documents and to be determined by client through continued discussion for specific design and purpose details. PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS A WORK IN PROGRESS.  | 1   | \$0.00      | \$0.00      |
| <b>Specialty</b><br>ADA accessibility - location and material decision to be determined.   | 1   | \$0.00      | \$0.00      |
| <b>Doors</b><br>Install a 3'0" x 92" Mahogany door unit with side panels. Labor to remove doors, prep area for new door and install door. Labor and materials. Door hardware not included.   | 1   | \$3,200.00  | \$3,200.00  |
| <b>Windows &amp; Doors</b><br>Remove and replace 8 basement windows to match existing first floor windows. Demo, prep areas and install new custom windows. Labor and materials.   | 1   | \$6,105.00  | \$6,105.00  |
| <b>Repairs</b><br>Miscellaneous repairs to exterior - includes remove and replace damaged siding, caulking, trim, first floor window repairs, etc. Includes labor and materials. ALLOWANCE ONLY - More detailed inspection needs to be documented for realistic figures. Based on previous jobs with similar issues. | 1   | \$6,800.00  | \$6,800.00  |
| <b>Painting</b><br>Painting - exterior painting. To scrape off all loose paint, prep, caulk, rime and apply 2 coats of exterior paint.   | 1   | \$15,500.00 | \$15,500.00 |

**Withers Home Construction**

Estimate: e-37

| PRODUCT   | QTY | PRICE       | AMOUNT      |
|---|-----|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Specialty</b><br>Lighting, signage and landscaping - TO BE DETERMINED.   | 1   | \$0.00      | \$0.00      |
| <b>Specialty</b><br>ADA accessibility to be determined once location has been configured.   | 1   | \$0.00      | \$0.00      |
| <b>Restroom</b><br>ADA restroom - ALLOWANCE for 1 - 70 sq. ft. ADA bathroom including walls, flooring, plumbing and electrical fixtures, soap dispenser, paper towel dispenser, commode, lavatory with faucets, drain, exhaust fan and overhead light, and mirror. Labor for room and materials for room and fixtures listed above. (PLUMBER AND ELECTRICIAN NOT INCLUDED). | 1   | \$3,500.00  | \$3,500.00  |
| <b>Plumbing</b><br>For 1 - ADA restroom on first floor.   | 1   | \$1,400.00  | \$1,400.00  |
| <b>Electrical</b><br>Electrical needs for entire project will need to e determined once final design and purpose has been established.  | 1   | \$0.00      | \$0.00      |
| <b>Specialty</b><br>Dumbwater service area to be determined.  | 1   | \$0.00      | \$0.00      |
| <b>Painting</b><br>Painting - interior, first floor, ceilings, basement - prep, caulk, prime as needed and apply 2 coats of paint. labor and materials.   | 1   | \$10,400.00 | \$10,400.00 |
| <b>Flooring</b><br>Refinish existing first floor flooring. PLEASE NOTE: ADDITIONAL FLOORING MATERIALS HAVE NOT BEEN FIGURED DUE TO UNCERTAINTY.   | 1   | \$3,248.00  | \$3,248.00  |
| <b>Specialty</b><br>Lighting, stage area improvements, chimney removal are not figured at this time.  | 1   | \$0.00      | \$0.00      |
| <b>Stairs</b><br>Build a new set of stairs to enter into/from stage area. Labor and materials.  | 1   | \$3,000.00  | \$3,000.00  |
| <b>Restroom</b><br>Add 2 standard restrooms. Includes 2 commodes, 2 lavatories with faucets, 2 exhaust fans, drains, 2 overhead lights, 2 mirrors and a hot water heater. Labor for building walls, doors, fixtures as listed above. No PLUMBING & ELECTRICAL INCLUDED.   | 1   | \$4,000.00  | \$4,000.00  |

**Withers Home Construction**

Estimate: e-37

| PRODUCT   | QTY | PRICE       | AMOUNT      |
|---|-----|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Plumbing</b><br>Plumbing for 2 standard restrooms on basement level.   | 1   | \$2,500.00  | \$2,500.00  |
| <b>Specialty</b><br>Bridal room - does not include lighting labor & materials.  | 1   | \$5,040.00  | \$5,040.00  |
| <b>Specialty</b><br>Office manager's room, catering kitchen, storage, event prep space and loading area - TO BE DETERMINED.                                   | 1   | \$0.00      | \$0.00      |
| <b>HVAC</b><br>NEEDS TO BE DETERMINED.  | 1   | \$0.00      | \$0.00      |
| <b>Demolition</b><br>Demo front stairs, existing wall/partitions, basement partition walls, etc. Labor.   | 1   | \$2,500.00  | \$2,500.00  |
| <b>Debris removal fee</b><br>Debris removal   | 1   | \$1,500.00  | \$1,500.00  |
| <b>Labor</b><br>Carpentry Labor to re-build floor system for old floor area in front stairwell.   | 1   | \$1,500.00  | \$1,500.00  |
| <b>Building Materials</b><br>Building materials for floor re-framing.   | 1   | \$275.00    | \$275.00    |
| <b>Contractor's fee</b><br>Contractor's overhead, insurance, design and fee. FEE FIGURED ONLY ON ITEMS WITH NUMBERS QUOTED. PLEASE BASE FEE ON COST PLUS 15%. | 1   | \$10,570.00 | \$10,570.00 |
| <b>NOTE</b><br>Design fee for next stage will be invoiced at \$62.50 per hour.  | 1   | \$0.00      | \$0.00      |

**Total (USD):**

\$81,038.00

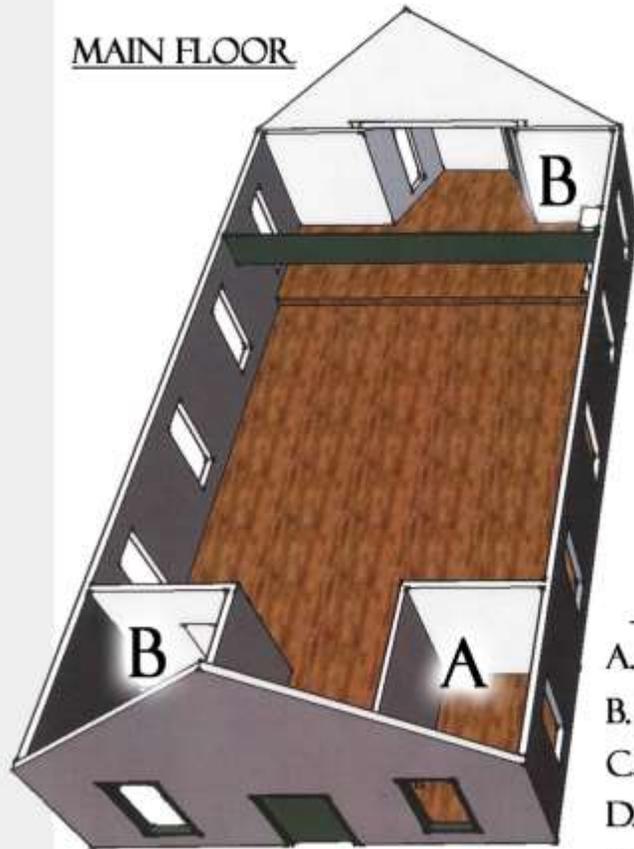
**Grand Total**

**\$81,038.00**

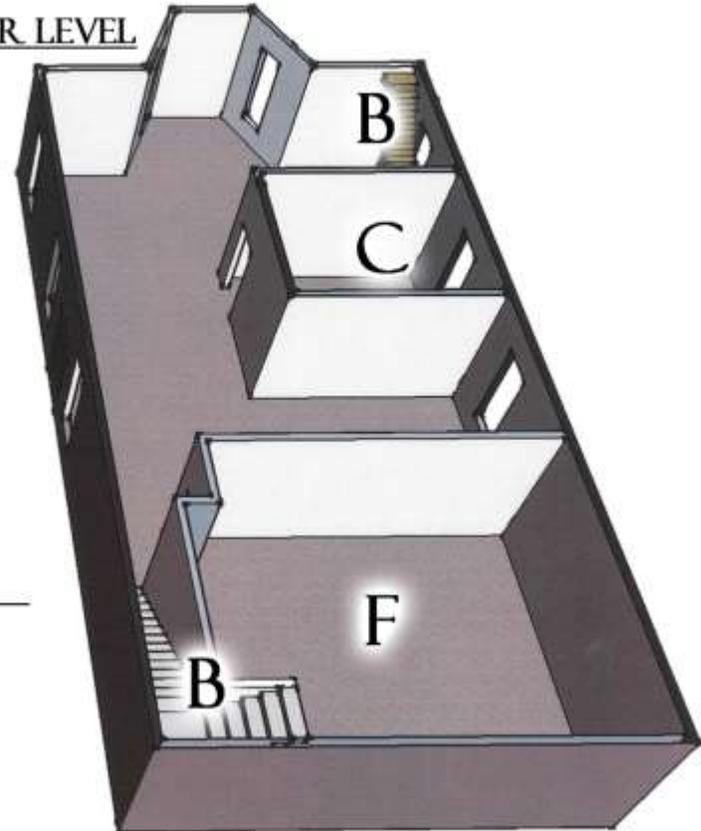
# DEMOREST WOMAN'S CLUB ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY STUDY: 2015

EXISTING

MAIN FLOOR



LOWER LEVEL



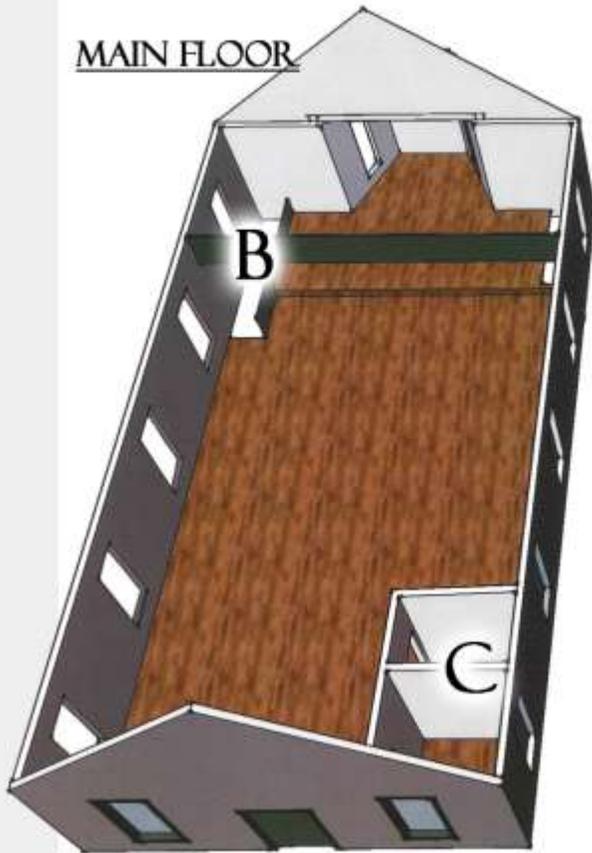
## LEGEND

- A. KITCHEN
- B. STAIRS
- C. RESTROOMS
- D. OFFICE
- E. EVENT ROOM
- F. MECHANICAL ROOM

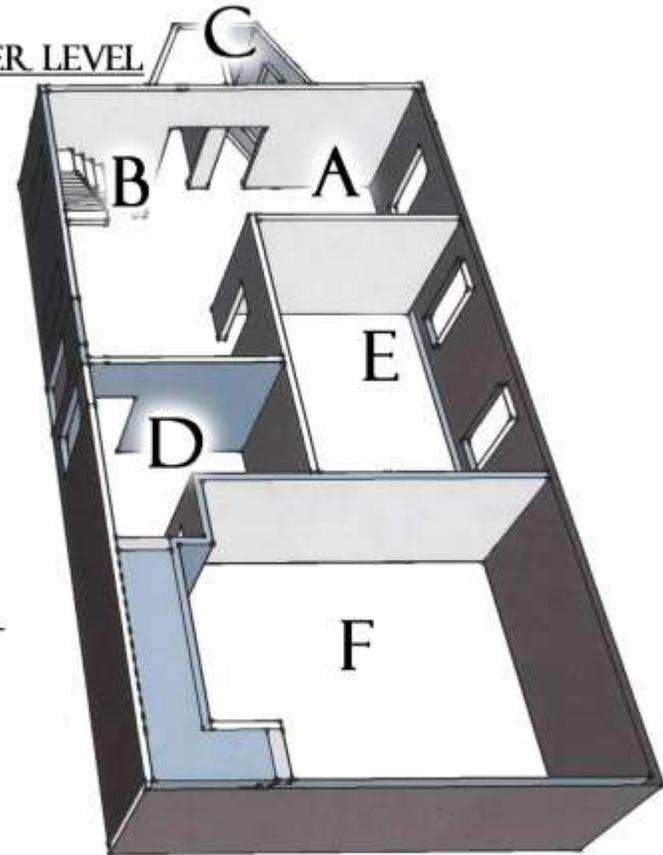
# DEMOREST WOMAN'S CLUB ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY STUDY: 2015

PROPOSED

MAIN FLOOR



LOWER LEVEL



## LEGEND

- A. KITCHEN
- B. STAIRS
- C. RESTROOMS
- D. OFFICE
- E. EVENT ROOM
- F. MECHANICAL ROOM