

CITY OF WASHINGTON

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Historic Preservation Commission
FROM: Jon R. Oliphant, AICP, Planning & Development Director
SUBJECT: Certificate of Appropriateness Request of the Washington Historical Society to Paint a Mural on the Façade of 128 Washington Square
DATE: October 6, 2022

The Washington Historical Society (WHS) has proposed to have a mural painted on part of the south-facing façade of its headquarters building at 128 Washington Square. Per the Square building design guidelines, the Historic Preservation Commission must approve a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to the commencement of the work.

The proposed historically-themed mural would be the third to be commissioned in as many years by the WHS. The mural would be completed by Anat Ronen. Ms. Ronen has painted with the Walldogs and also works as an independent contractor. The work is tentatively scheduled to be completed from October 15-20, weather permitting.

It is intended to depict the Round Barn, which was in existence between 1914-1988. Washington dairy farmer, Fred Zimmerman, built a round barn on property that he purchased on Eldridge Street in the 1910's. The barn was based on round barns that he had seen in operation at the University of Illinois and which were highly efficient at maximizing dairy production. The barn was used first by the Zimmerman's and then sold to and utilized by other farmers until 1972, when it was taken out of operation. It sat abandoned and neglected until 1980, when a group of citizens tried to purchase and save the barn from further dilapidation. While the effort was ultimately unsuccessful, it was not completely in vain because those citizens decided Washington needed a Historical Society that could educate people about Washington's history and to protect the physical items from the past. Thus, the WHS was formed.

The draft depiction of the mural is attached with a longer history of the Round Barn. While this figures to be very close to the final version, there may likely be brief language inserted at the bottom to reflect the connection between the Round Barn and the WHS.

The COA request will be considered at the HPC meeting on October 12.

Attachments

CITY OF WASHINGTON, ILLINOIS

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS APPLICATION

Applicant Name: Washington Historical Society

Phone Number: (773) 425-0499

Owner Name: Washington Historical Society

Phone Number: (773) 425-0499

Contractor Name: Anat Ronen

Phone Number: (713) 291-6605

Architect Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Address or location of property: 128 Washington Square

Property Tax ID Number (PIN): 02-02-24-108-017

Please describe the proposed work:

The Washington Historical Society proposes to have Anat Ronen paint a historically themed mural on the south wall of the building at 128 Washington Square between October 15 – October 20. Anat is a Walldogs painter who also does murals on her own, outside of Walldogs. She was one of the three painters who worked on the mural on the north side of Brunk’s in 2020 and completed the mural featuring Washington’s historic bandstands in 2021. A draft sketch of the mural is attached.

PLEASE ATTACH:

- The legal description of the property.
- Any architectural drawings or sketches to enable the Historic Preservation Commission to determine what the final appearance and use of the real estate will be.
- Ten copies of the application and supporting materials.

***Certification:** To the best of my knowledge, the information contained herein, and on the attachments, is true, accurate, and correct, and substantially represents the existing features and proposed features. Any error, misstatement, or misrepresentation of material fact or expression of material fact, with or without intention, shall constitute sufficient grounds for the revocation or denial of the proposed Certificate of Appropriateness.*

Signature of Applicant

Date

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Application Completed: _____

Case No. _____

Please contact Jon Oliphant, Planning & Development Director, at 444-1135 with any questions.



The Round Barn



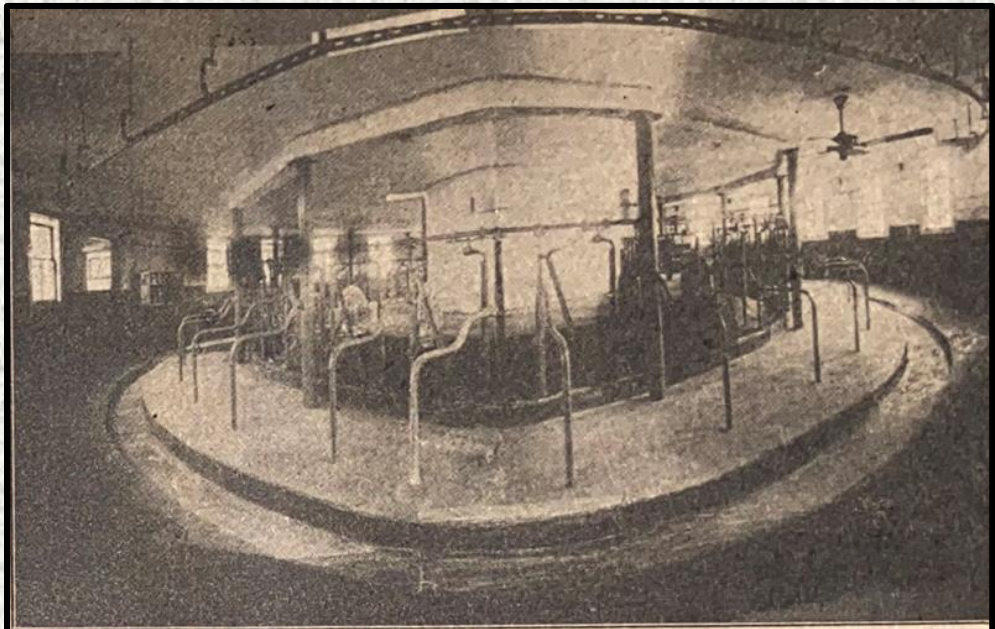
The story of Washington's Round Barn begins in the summer of 1914 when Fred Zimmerman bought two parcels of land off of Eldridge Street from Fred Brackman and John Widmer. It was Zimmerman's intention to locate a large dairy business there. Soon after the purchase, Zimmerman visited the University of Illinois and their newly constructed round barns to get ideas for his dairy business, as he wanted to construct the most modern facility possible.

The three round barns at the U of I were initially experimental constructions in the early 1900s, but they became the blueprint for hundreds of round barn constructions throughout the Midwest.

Zimmerman returned and constructed his round barn on Eldridge Street at a cost of \$8,000, which today would be over \$210,000. The state-of-the-art facility, 56 feet in diameter, and 60 feet tall at the apex, contained cement silo in the center, 12 feet in diameter, that could hold 150 tons of material.



F. E. Zimmerman's new round barn.



Interior View of First Floor of the Barn.

The milk from the farm was bottled and most was taken to Peoria, where it was sold by the Washington Dairy Company, which had several stores in Peoria.



of University of Ill.

What does all this mean to you? It means that the milk must be better, but you pay not a penny extra.

WE DO NOT PASTEURIZE THE ZIMMERMAN DAIRY MILK.

ZIMMERMAN DAIRY

PHONE 232

**We've Spent A Lot of Money ... We
Are Doing a Lot of Work to Give
You Better Milk**

We're more particular about cleanliness at the Dairy than wife. All milk utensils and bottles are sterilized each day with steam. All cows are groomed daily. We have recently added more Guernsey cows to our herd so we can give you a richer and better milk. Our herd is accredited and under the supervision

the fussiest house-

FRESH

MILK

for
STRENGTH

Zimmerman sold the dairy business to the J.D. Roszell Company in 1929.

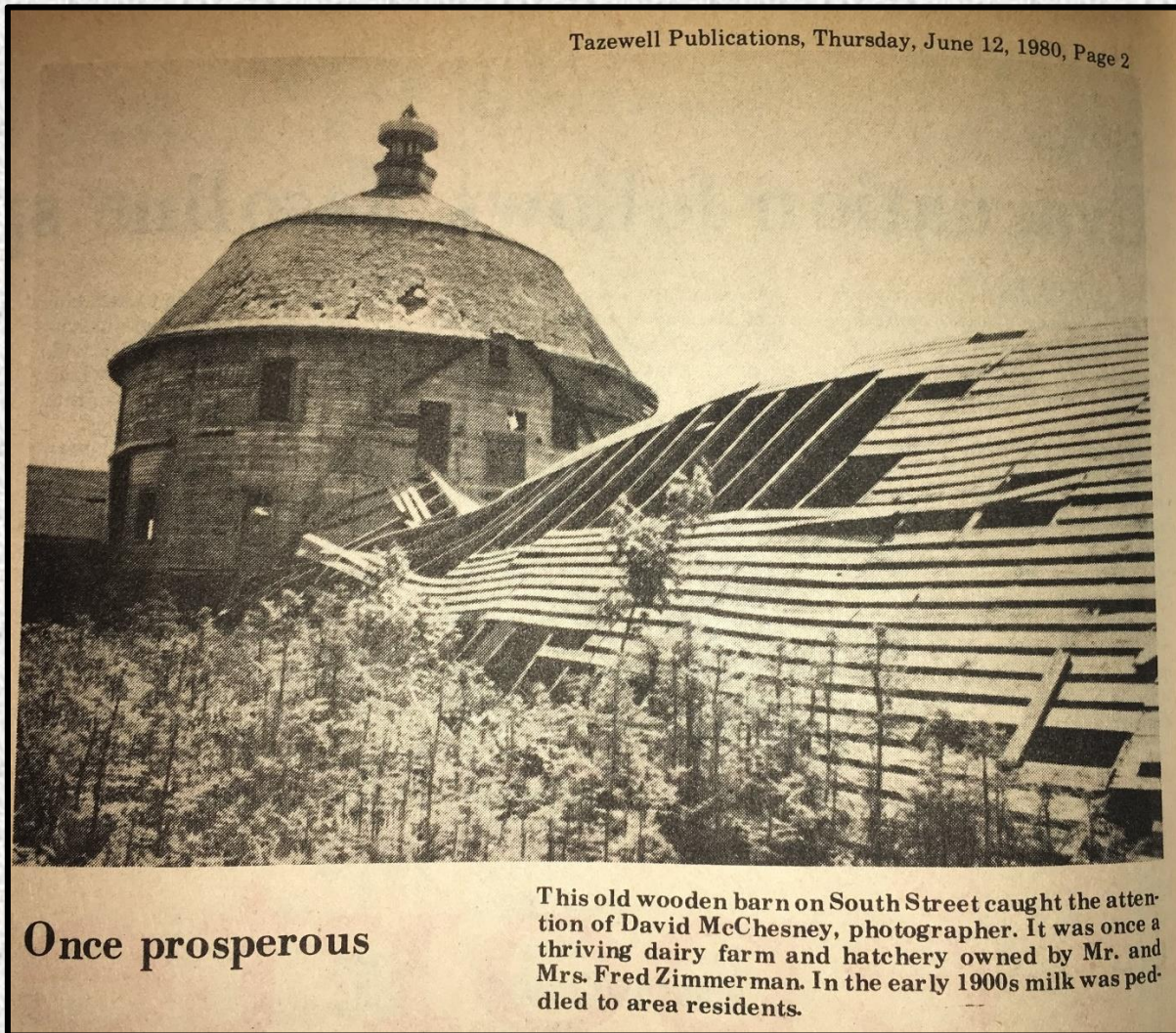


Roszell's sold the farm to Elmo Muller in 1944, who ran Muller's Dairy until 1951.



SPECIAL BODY ON NEW TRUCK.—Muller Bros. Dairy's new truck which was recently put in service. Shown in the above picture are Elmo Muller, manager and operator of the Muller Bros. Dairy, and on the right is Henry Vogelsang of the Garber Motor Company who sold the chassis. The body was a special order built by the Herman Body Co. of St. Louis. —Reporter Photo.

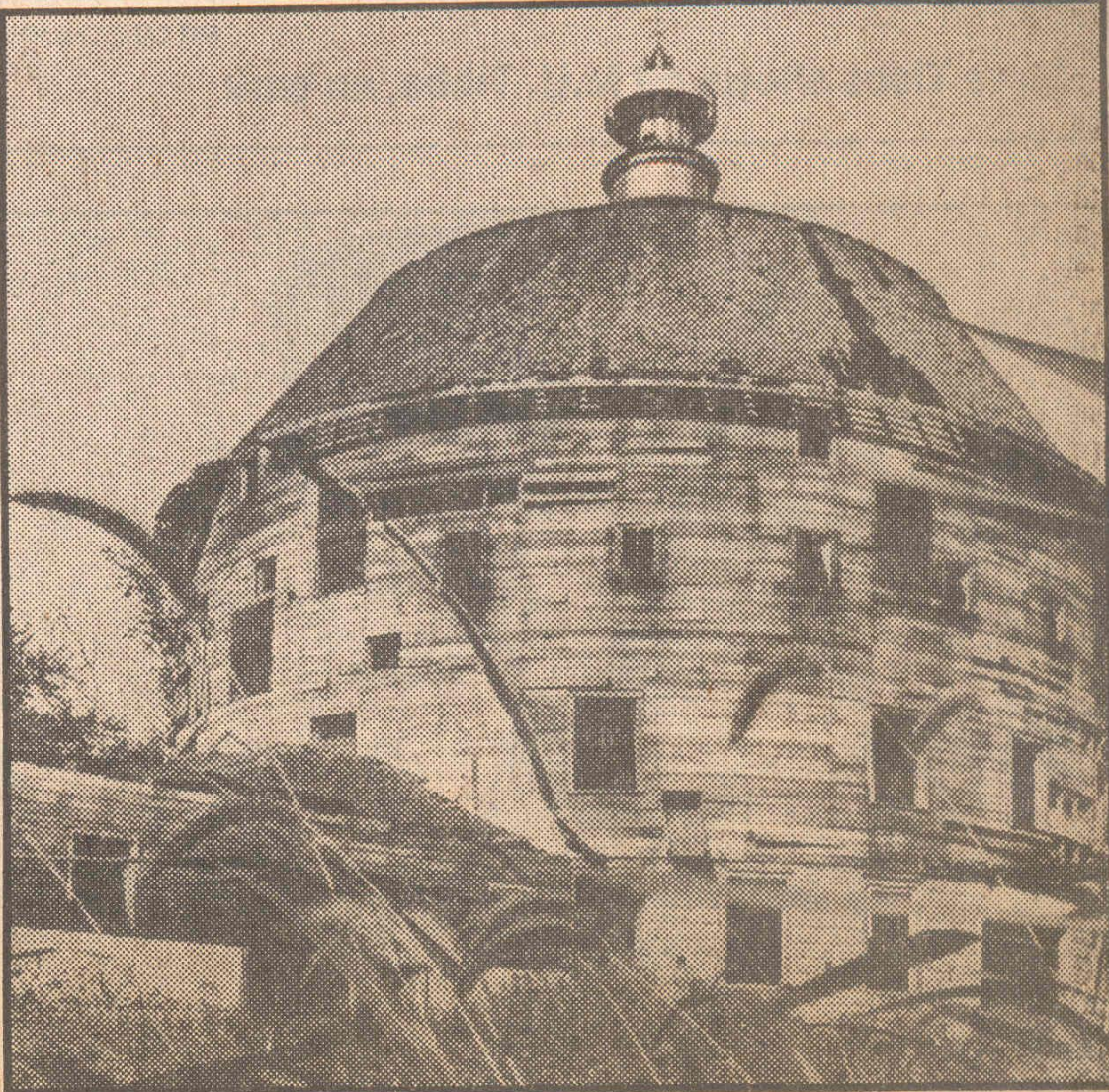
Muller then sold the property to Edward & Alma Steffen. They operated a chicken farm there until Edward's death in 1965, and Alma singlehandedly continued the operation until 1972. The close of that farm ended the productive life of the Round Barn. Alma passed away in 2016 at the age of 94.



In 1980, David Chasco spiked interest in the aging round barn, as it was one of the few left standing in Illinois. Chasco, a University of Illinois architecture instructor at the time, developed a presentation with the help of his senior design students on the restoration of the barn for its use as a possible community center. The result of the presentation in Washington led to the formation of the Washington Historical Society, whose first big project was the push for the restoration of the barn.

The first step was the get the barn listed on the National Register of Historic Places. An application was filed, but with the possibility of the barn being moved as part of its restoration, it was denied, leaving Washington own its own to finance the project.

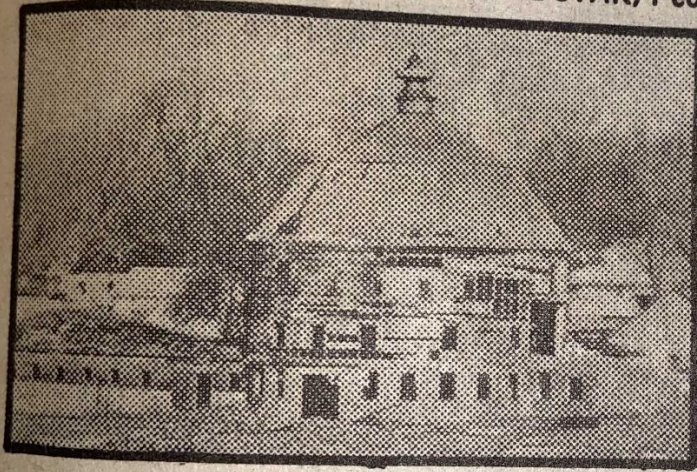
The problem was, the newly-formed Historical Society didn't have any money, and the city organizations who verbally supported the project didn't commit to contributing any money toward the project either. Alma Steffen offered to donate the barn to the Historical Society if they moved it to a new location, but the \$500,000-600,000 cost of that was far too expensive of an endeavor for the Historical Society to take on without any assistance. In the end the Historical Society abandoned the project.



LINDA HENSON/ Journal Star

A 1982 photo of the round barn

JOURNAL STAR, Peoria, Sunday, March 25, 1984 D1



This round barn was once used by the old Washington Dairy. It is located on the south edge of Washington.



In 1984, with nearby citizens complaining about the barn's condition and the rats that were coming from it. The barn had become a place for teens to congregate and in its deteriorating condition, was dangerous and not safe. Calls again went to the

Washington Historical Society to help with renovation, but their stance was clear. Historical Society President Frances Whittaker was quoted as saying: "It was just impossible and still is for our society to take over anything of that magnitude. It would have to be a community project...I have found this community hard to pull together. Those that have roots are in wheelchairs and have canes. The young vital people have no roots here, not enough of them."

The surrounding buildings came down in 1984 but the Round Barn remained in the hopes that some renovation could take place, hopes that never were realized.

In 1988 the Steffens began to dismantle the barn, burning it piece by piece on a nearby burn pile. On a windy March afternoon, the burn pile embers blew toward the barn and it caught fire and was destroyed, leaving only its memory.

