Site Character

Marywood is a 156 acre site with a variety of landscapes types and Red Lake River Frontage. It provides a unique opportunity for visitor/nature center development per the site’s ability to accommodate a variety of experiences and its natural beauty. As part of the Northern Prairie, close to the Aspen Parkland transition, the predominantly flat landscape has been shaped by river processes of the Red Lake River. Through erosion, meandering, and flood events the site represents a natural time line of natural processes. In recent time the site has experienced a variety of human events, the site once being the location of a major timber staging area, commercial farming, and catholic convent. This interaction of built and natural environments has created an inspiring scenic composition.

Description of Photographs:

Oblique Photograph: The image below shows the site extent from Hwy. 2 to its borders along the Red Lake River. Much of the site is currently in contract farming.

Aerial Photograph: The aerial view shows the various landscape types. Agriculture, Forest, Floodplain forest, Oxbow Lake, Red Lake River meander, and Marywood facility.

Photo A: A view of the oxbow lake and wetland environment. This oxbow was created when the river was channeled to create a log staging area.

Photo B: This view shows the back 40 acres currently in contract farming. A great location for prairie restoration.

Photo C: This remnant railroad grade brought train loads of timber to the Red Lake River where it was dumped to be processed down stream in Crookston. It has been used as a trail for many years.

Photo D: This photo depicts some of the site design and arrival experience for the Marywood convent.

Photo E: The Red Lake River provides a beautiful scene and represents the major force shaping the regional landscape.
AERIAL VIEW

OXBOW & WETLANDS: A

HISTORIC RAIL ROAD: C

THE BACK 40: B

ENTRANCE DRIVE: D

RED LAKE RIVER: E
Site

Analysis

Marywood is an appropriate site for the ambitious vision that has been set for the Northern Prairie Visitor’s Center. It is a large, varied site that can accommodate a number of interpretive landscapes and a number of different but compatible uses. It has a large, very well maintained institutional building that is fully up to code. Marywood is a microcosm of the region located centrally in Northwestern Minnesota.

Along with its abundance of natural amenities, the site has had an interesting and varied history. Set in the Midwest’s northern prairie, this site has seen a variety of uses: logging, railroading, commercial agriculture and most recently, a catholic convent. Some of these layers of history are visible to the visitor while others are not. All provide opportunities for interpretation recall past events.

Existing site amenities include:

- Marywood Facility
- Marywood landscape
- Agricultural Fields and Contract Farming
- Large Upland Forested Areas
- Riparian Forest
- Ox Bow Lake
- Wetland Areas
- Lengthy Red Lake River Shoreline
- Highway 2 Access
- Proximity to Downtown Crookston
- Historic Railroad Grade
- Historic Staging Area
- Historic Army Corp. Channel
- Vista Locations
- Working Infrastructure

These amenities are the key ingredients to a successful design. By appropriately composing these resources, the visitor center will have the draw and leave the visitor with an experience that will continue over time.
MARRYWOOD SITE ANALYSIS

- Parking @ 25 Stalls
- Steep Bank
- FEMA 100 Yr. Flood Plane
- Historic Rail Line
- Wet in Major Floods
- Contract Farming @ 10 Acres
- Contract Farming @ 40 Acres
- Forest @ 40 Acres
- Ox Bow Lake & Wetland
- Forest @ 12 Acres
- Grassland
- Wet Area
- Residences
- Marywood Facility
- Entrance Drive
- Red Lake River
- River Beach
- Vistas
- Historic Rail Line
Marywood is a former convent building and campus for the Sister’s of St. Joseph of Medaille. Its 49,463 sq. ft. building was built in the late 1950’s and was used as a novitiate/junior college, convent, and retirement home for the order. It consists of 26 bedrooms, a variety of living spaces, large dining room, full commercial kitchen, large chapel, meeting spaces, service rooms, multiple garages, six offices, a variety of specialty rooms, and a split entry with a large open reception space. The building is fully ADA accessible.

The strong horizontal lines of the building reflect the flat plane of the prairie landscape. The variety of rectilinear building volumes creates a composition of varied interior spaces. The elevator head houses complete the modular composition. These modules express a human-built environment that reflects the form of the landscape. The building’s brown/ochre brick and its white fascia banding relate to the natural colors of the northern prairie and reinforce the building’s horizontality. The glazed front wall permits light to flood interior spaces. The elegant curve of the glazed front wall defines the place where the built and the natural environment meet: where the building, sky, and prairie landscape are one.

Description of Photographs:

Oblique Photograph: This view shows the facility and surrounding grounds at the building site.

Marywood Facility: The arrival to the building. Note the assemblage of building modules, large glazed front wall, horizontal lines, and the tension of elegant arcs on the elevator superstructures and front wall glazing.

Dining Hall: The dining hall was fully updated and could support large gatherings.

Chapel Hall: The chapel is a large space with 3 open stories, balcony, and stained glass windows.

Commercial Kitchen: The kitchen has been fully updated and is in excellent condition.

Courtyard: The courtyard is the only area that integrates outdoor/indoor space and provides an excellent opportunity for new use.

Oblique view of the Marywood Facility & Grounds
Existing Floor Plans: Key Spaces

The Marywood building is a late 1950’s design. It’s key functions have been a novitiate/junior college, convent, and retirement home for the Sister of St. Joseph of Medaille. The overall condition, although a bit dated, is excellent and would make a great retrofit for a visitor/nature center. The building is a split entry with entrance room, closet space, and elevator access. The entire building is ADA accessible and all renovations to code have been made. The split level entry limits the incorporation of indoor/outdoor spaces although, a sun room is located in the courtyard and is accessible by stairway from the building’s interior.

The building consists of many unique spaces:

Chapel: The large open space provides a unique opportunity for gathering, concerts, and performance.

Swing Space: The post structure consists of non load-bearing walls that are easily removed or reorganized for new uses. The ground floor space beneath the chapel offers a unique opportunity for a second large space in the building.

Bedrooms: The abundance of bedroom space provides an opportunity for boarding use.

Office: The abundance of office space provides the opportunity for multiple business/organizations to occupy the facility.

Dinning Hall: The large dining hall is in excellent condition and could accommodate large parties.

Kitchen: The kitchen is in excellent condition and is large enough to facilitate major events.

Service Areas: Multiple service areas and garages can facilitate a variety of service and shop uses.

Infrastructure: The buildings infrastructure is excellent. The well could handle any uses proposed for the site with high quality water and the building boiler is 3 years old. Elevators accommodate both circulation and service needs on all floors as well as the split level entry.

Speciality Rooms: A variety of rooms from sound proof music rooms to meeting, reading, and living rooms provide many opportunities.

Storage: Storage space is available for multiple uses.

Restrooms: Public restrooms exist on all floors with shower and wash facilities on first and second floors.