

Architectural Improvements and Facility Upgrades to the Seminole Nation Museum

*Report to the Board of Directors
April 1, 2010*

In 2004, the Seminole Nation Historical Society received funding from the Institute of Museum and Library services to undergo a multi-part evaluation of the Seminole Nation Museum. This review, known as the Conservation Assessment Program, provided in-depth, detailed reports outlining areas of concern in both the physical structure of the building as well as the museum's artifact care and collections management.

Since that time, the museum has actively worked to address adverse issues noted in the Conservation Assessment. Museum staff, in conjunction with the board of directors, has developed new collections and exhibitions policies, installing a framework that defines both what we collect and how we care for those artifacts under our stewardship. We sought and administered grant funds to provide staff and technology to gain intellectual control of the thousands of artifacts in our collections and have improved, to industry-level standards, the environment in which these articles are housed. We have installed over \$20,000 worth of new HVAC systems in the public and exhibit portions of the building and have placed an additional \$5,000 worth of environmental controls in the newly developed collections storage area.

Improvements to the museum's interior and exterior structure have also been a priority, as the assessment identified over fifty adverse issues relating to the building and grounds. While smaller, less expensive repairs were made in the early years following the assessment, in late 2007 the museum began the first step in a three-phase, multi-year project to renovate the building's landscaping and grounds, refurbish its historic exterior and to repair and restore interior spaces.



Wewoka Community Center, circa 1939
Carl Albert Center, University of Oklahoma—Norman, OK

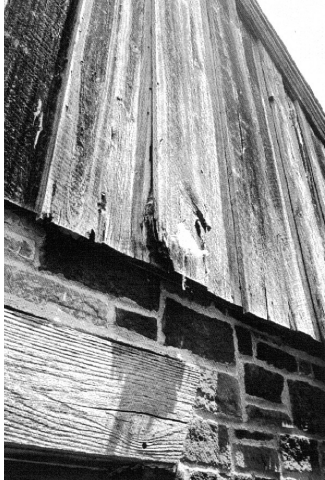
As part of the Phase I, and in conjunction with the Oklahoma Centennial, a new "Centennial Garden" space was developed complete with retaining wall, flagpoles, lighting, signage, sidewalks and a freshly sodded yard. These improvements created a more dramatic, useful, inviting and polished appearance for the facility. The improvements also addressed issues of security, safety, accessibility and drainage - all areas of concentration recommended by the architectural assessment.

Also considered an area of major concern at the time of the assessment was the museum's roof. Well past its lifespan, the composite shingle roofing was disintegrating daily and numerous leaks were causing not only exterior structural damage, but damage to exhibit spaces, artifact storage areas and interior public spaces, as well. With the generous support of Cook Oil Company, the Patterson Family Foundation, local citizens and money allocated from the museum's Building Fund, replacement of the roof began in early 2010 and has recently been completed. Along with the roof, Phase II restoration also included major exterior architectural elements, also identified in the assessment report as needing repair or replacement.

The following report to the Board of Directors of the Seminole Nation Historical Society is a record of the recent Phase II accomplishments involved in repairing the Seminole Nation Museum's roof and exterior façades and of our efforts to return the building to the unique architectural style as originally envisioned by the WPA in the 1930s.

Section 1. Gable Siding

[Below left] Identified as both a “High Priority” and “High Cost” issue, the architectural assessment report indicated that replacement of the board and batten siding and fascia board was a necessity. Rotten boards were splitting and warping, allowing for birds and other pests to nest and infiltrate the building.



[Left] Over the years, repairs had been attempted using pieces of aluminum flashing to cover holes.

Replacement of the board and batten siding began on January 25th, 2010. As pictured near right, ropes were used to pry the existing siding from the gables. Little of the wood was salvageable as it was brittle and so rotten that it splintered upon removal.

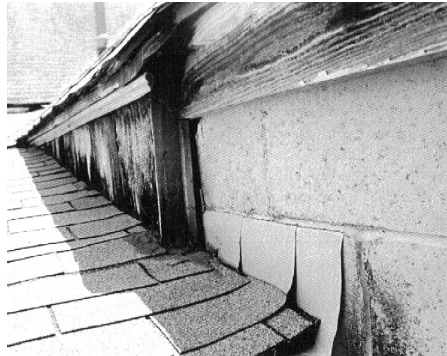


[Left] The siding as it appears after completion. The narrower battens will not only resist cupping and warping, but also emphasize the vertical height of the gables.

Section 2. Fascia Boards and Trim

[Below right] Much of the fascia boards, especially those running on the south side along the Military Exhibit and those of the Art Gallery were in disrepair or non-existent. Over time, as the weight of rain-water and particles of the disintegrating composite roofing pulled the old guttering down, extensive damage was done to the trim.

[Right] Areas where old and new portions of the building met had poor flashing and trim work, causing water to leak into the building.



[Above left] All fascia boards were replaced with wider, more substantial pieces of cedar to be more visually striking and architecturally appropriate to the design of the building. Trim was replaced and was designed to carry the same motif as the board and batten siding. Gaps in the long soffit of the Art Gallery were also sealed with cedar trim [Above right].

Section 3. Window Lintels

[Below left] The decorative window lintels above the four major window sets were splitting and rotting. Additionally, warping had wrested them away from the building, allowing water to permeate through gaps in the masonry. New lintels were fashioned out of 12"x3"x8' cedar and sealed in place with new mortar [Below right].



Section 4. Front Porch

[Below left] The front porch was one of the major areas of concern as it is often the area where visitors form their first impression of the museum. Unfortunately, due to numerous issues, extensive damage had accumulated over the last several years.



At some point in the 1980s or '90s, a minor roof leak inside the attic had been shunted over the porch area using corrugated tin. Over time, the leak worsened and the porch ceiling and support beams began to rot [Left] and [Below].



[Above] Board member Dennis Myers uses a forklift to hoist a new cedar support beam into place. The existing horizontal posts had warped due to water damage and age. The vertical support posts were rotting from the bottom and no longer supported the porch beams. New 10"x10" cedar posts and beams were installed duplicating the look of the originals [Right], while a new pine plank ceiling was put in place, as well [Below left].



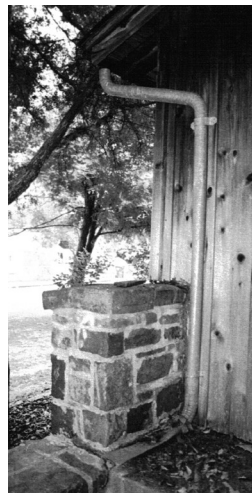
Section 5. South Façade Aluminum Windows

[Below left] The area on the south side that was once the gift shop had four large aluminum storm windows put in place to provide light into the room. When the space was converted into the Military Exhibit, thermal heat radiating through the windows was creating adverse issues with the new exhibits. Additionally, the windows had been vandalized and were allowing water and wind to access the room. They were also unsightly and detracted from the architectural style of the building. [Below right] The windows were removed and the exterior cedar was entirely replaced, again unifying the design with the coordinating board and batten siding.



Section 6. Guttering and Downspouts

[Below three images] Significant portions of the guttering and downspouts were damaged or, as in the case of the Military Exhibit and the Art Gallery, missing altogether. The renovation replaced all existing guttering, added an additional downspout serving the front porch area and added over 150 feet of guttering to serve the Military Exhibit and Art Gallery [Right and bottom].



Section 7. Basement Windows



[Left] The wooden facades covering the four basement windows had rotted with time and were unsightly and falling apart. Additionally, holes drilled in the concrete blocks behind the wood to allow for the pass-through of conduit and pipe were improperly sealed and allowed for water, pests and rodents to enter the building.



The four windows were sealed and covered with new cedar facings to match the rest of the woodwork. Trim was scroll-cut to fit tightly around pipes and conduit [Left] and the window edges were sealed with mortar to close gaps and provide a finished look [Right].



Section 8. Roof

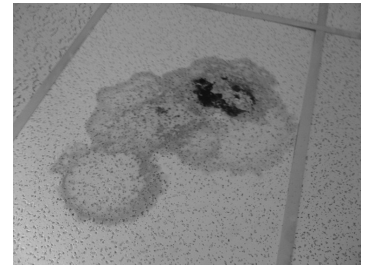
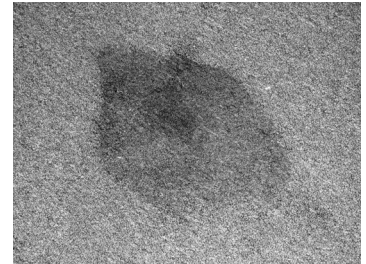


The largest, most costly and structurally significant adverse issue outlined by the Conservation Assessment Program report was the condition of the museum's roof. While the 1990s "Wewoka Wing" addition to the building was beginning to show slight wear, the original portion of the building, including the Military Exhibit and the Art Gallery, was in dire need of replacement.

Minor leaks began to occur in the mid-2000s, but by 2008, major leaks had developed that were creating damage to the building's interior and supporting framework. Storage and exhibit spaces were eventually compromised, necessitating the removal of collections to other parts of the museum.

Section 8. Roof (cont.)

The area of greatest concern was the Art Gallery. When the addition was built in the late 1980s, the roof pitch was set to a substandard 2/12. The shallowness of the pitch caused water to stand on the roof and leak into exhibit and storage areas.



Leakage into the gallery storage area damaged the insulation in the ceiling [Above] and altered the humidity to the point that artworks had to be removed. In the exhibit space, ever-increasing leaks stained the carpet [Upper right] and discolored ceiling tiles. In some instances mold was an issue (as seen in the ceiling tile pictured [Right]).



To prevent leakage reoccurring once the new roof was installed, it was decided to re-frame the gallery space with a deeper pitch. Construction began in late January and decking was in place by the first week in February. The new pitch can be seen overlaying the original roofline [Left].



Leaks were also occurring where the stone chimney met the roofline. As the fireplaces cannot be used, it was decided to remove the stonework above the roofline and seal the area with decking and shingles. [Near left] Workers disassemble the stone chimney and roofers remove layers of old shingles in preparation for new decking [Far left].

[Right] The reframing of the gallery roof to a steeper 4/12 pitch will significantly extend the life and functionality of the gallery's roof. Labor and material to re-pitch the space was an additional \$5,000. Although not included in the original bid, it was decided that this was the best opportunity to address this issue.



Section 8. Roof (cont.)

The south side of the building, which included the Military Exhibit, also had significant roof damage. Although it had been re-shingled in the 1990s, the space that was once the gift shop was aging poorly and had developed major leaks in late 2009. As can be seen in the photograph [Right], the ceiling in the Military Exhibit was becoming increasingly stained. Water infiltration required the removal of the Bill Mauldin cartoons and all of Stephen Douglas' hand-painted World War II envelopes and V-mails.



Extensive damage and missing shingles can be seen above in this image taken from the museum's south lawn. The more steeply pitched area is the Seminole exhibit, while the shallow area is the Military Room. Once completed, the area showed a marked improvement not only in appearance, but in function, as well [Left].



[Lower left] Severe damage to this valley above the porch caused extensive leaks to the entry area. The rotted post [Left] was the result of standing water from the leak, as well as poor drainage due to insufficient guttering.

[Below right] Once the several layers of shingles had been removed—including the original wood shakes—the open network of beams and boards supporting the roof structure was revealed.



Section 8. Roof (cont.)



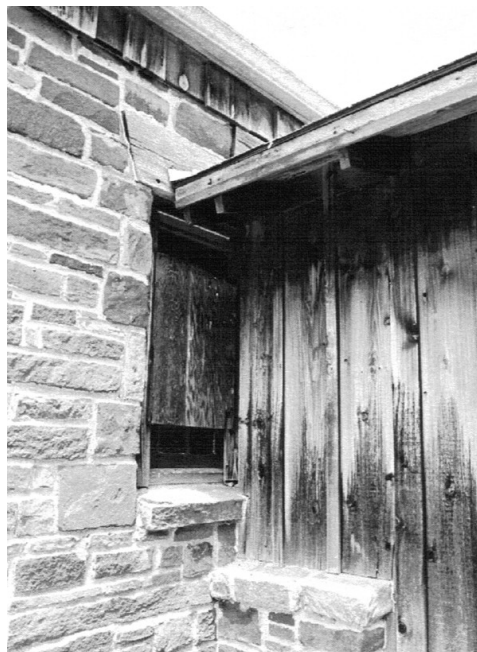
A portion of the damage to the Seminole Exhibit is shown in the photograph above. Small leaks over the past few years have mottled the large ceiling with numerous stains and discolorations. Fortunately, no artifact damage occurred.



[Above] As the original 1937 portion of the building had no decking, roofers installed a substrate prior to shingling. This new decking will provide an additional layer of security and stability to the roof.

Section 9. Men's Restroom Window

[Below left] This small window, located on the south side of the building adjacent to the Military Exhibit opens up into the men's restroom. The window was partially boarded-up in the 1970s to prevent access to the building. Despite the presence of interior wall board, wind and cold air seep through the window. Heating and cooling the adjacent interior spaces has therefore been an issue. Additionally, the exterior is unattractive and the window harbors pests. [Below right] The renovated area is much more attractive and in keeping with the over-all design of the building.



Section 10. Renovations 2007-2010

Since late 2007, numerous goals have been met in renovating the Seminole Nation Museum. Much of the work was based on recommendations of the 2004 Conservation Assessment Program reports, while some improvements were made for aesthetic or utilitarian purposes. The following pages review those changes and highlight the tremendous work accomplished by the museum's staff, board and volunteers in the past two and a half years.



[Above] The very first work began on November 19, 2007—four days after the 2007 Holiday Bazaar. P&H Construction began removing overgrown shrubs and plantings that were hiding the building and creating problems with the foundation.



[Above] In the days following the removal of the landscaping, old sidewalks and walkways were removed.



[Above right] The old sidewalks were made of busted concrete and rock and had become a trip and safety hazard. They were also too narrow and did not provide for wheelchair accessibility from the street level.



[left] Stonemason Jeff Simon began construction of the exterior's most striking feature—the stone retaining wall—in December of 2007. The wall took almost two months to complete.

[Right] In the spring of 2008, three new flagpoles were installed, replacing the old poles, which were made of welded pipe. Later that summer, new sidewalks were poured thanks to the Patterson Family Foundation and the new signage was set prior to Sorghum Day [Below].





In the spring and summer of 2008, the museum installed \$20,000 worth of new air conditioning in the original portion of the building and, based on a CAP recommendation, moved all of the condensing units to a new location. [Left] The move will extend the life of both the new and preexisting units .

[Below right] Also in the summer of 2008, four new streetlamps and accent lights were installed in the west and south lawns.



Two other projects for 2008 were the complete refurbishing of the storage closet – which included a new ceiling, lighting and shelving [Left], and renovation of the kitchen area. The upgrade gave the kitchen a cleaner, brighter look [Below left].



[Below] Proceeds from a very successful 2009 “April Shower” afforded us the opportunity to purchase a new zero-turn lawnmower, which cut our mowing time by over two-thirds and has improved the look of the grounds . Staff member Darrell Cherry is pictured below taking the new mower for a test drive.



[Left} We also took the time during the summer of 2009 to remove the dilapidated and unsightly storage garage behind the museum. The cleared space is now used to host demonstrators on Sorghum Day.



Section 10. Renovations 2007-2010 (cont.)



Spring and summer of 2009 were very busy times as the museum constructed a 1,200 sq. ft. storage building [Above] and installed Bermuda grass sod on the west and south lawns. Two benches given in the name of Fred & Mary Smith were set in place and the lamp post honoring Dr. Claude B. Knight was refurbished and installed in the southwest flowerbed [Right].



The museum received grant money in the spring of 2009 from the Oklahoma Department of Libraries and the Oklahoma Arts Council to develop a new climate-controlled collections storage area. The 1,100 sq. ft. area was created from ineffectual exhibit space and now houses all of the museum's artifacts, artworks and archives in a proper temperature- and humidity-regulated environment. Funds were also secured to purchase new metal shelving and storage cabinets [Left and lower left].

As part of the same project, a new entrance to the renovated Oil Exhibit was fashioned and opened prior to Sorghum Day in October 2009 [Middle left].



[Right] Most recently, in addition to exterior renovations, the staff took the opportunity to refurbish the ladies restroom, giving it a more contemporary feel, yet keeping the look appropriate to the 1930s/40s style of the building.



The Wewoka Community Center as it appeared in the late 1930s.



The building as it appeared in the mid-2000s after serving three decades as the Seminole Nation Museum.

And the building today, as it undergoes extensive upgrades and renovations to preserve its remarkable history and unique architecture.



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