

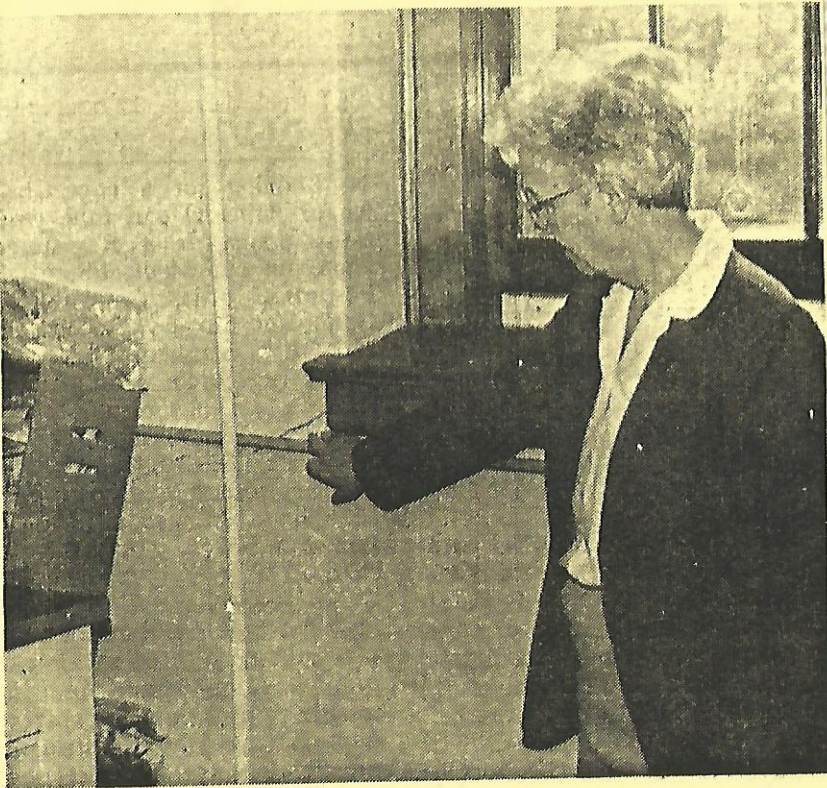
Crookston

Daily Times

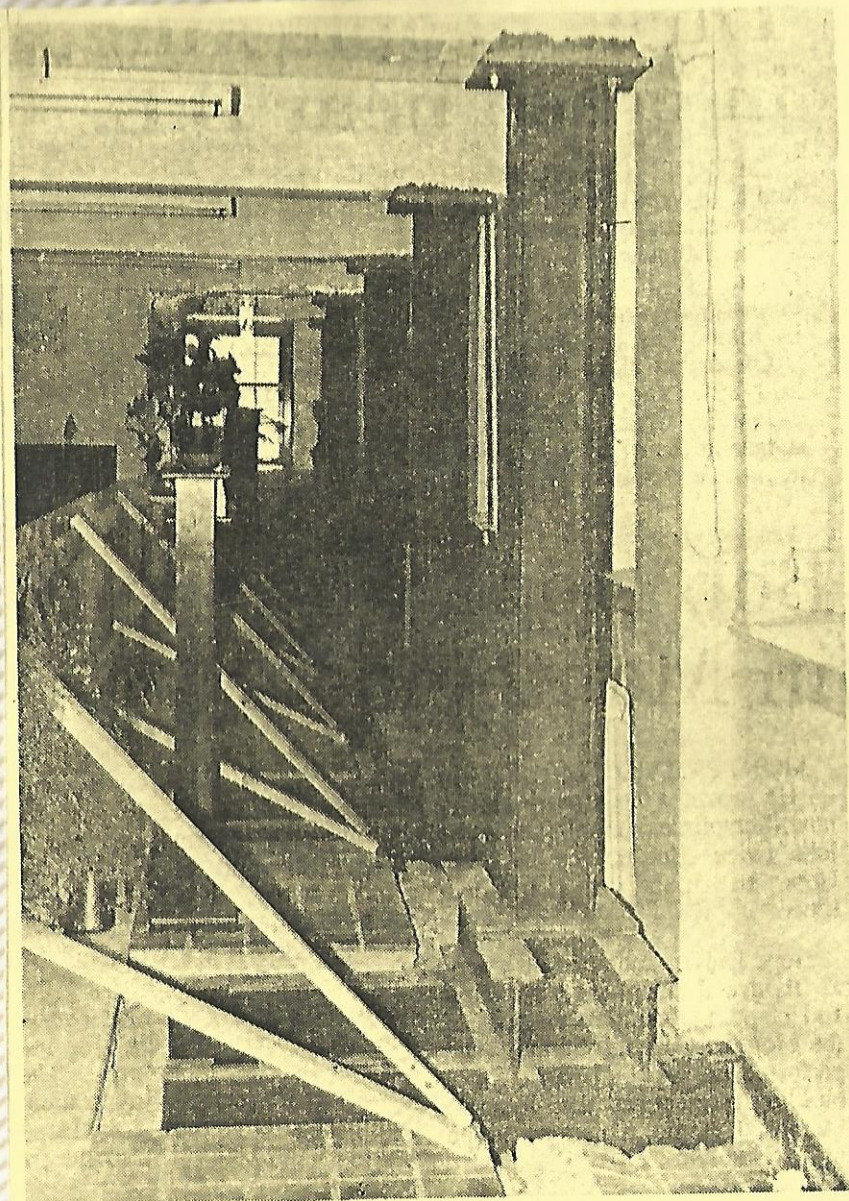
MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 1992

Mount St. Benedict

to be demolished



Sister Eleanor Mueller, prioress of Mount St. Benedict, points to a widening crack in the former dining room of the monastery building. (Times Photo By Twylla Altepeter)



Metal pillars shore up concrete beams in the southwest corner of the building. In October 1991, an engineer recommended the whole building be vacated unless immediate action was taken to shore up the beams. (Times Photo By Twylla Altepeter)

New building

Since the soil beneath and west of the present building is unstable, this area is unsuitable for a new building. The location of various other buildings on the campus does not allow sufficient space for a new building of adequate size without moving or demolishing something.

"In constructing for healthcare, it is desirable that the building be on ground level so as to be handicap accessible," the prioress said. Since 75 is median age of the Sisters of Saint Benedict in Crookston, healthcare must be considered.

Since Marian Hall is on ground level, it can easily connect with another ground level building. Floor plans are being developed for a one-story, three-winged structure with a central chapel.

Sacred Heart Chapel

While the present Sacred Heart Chapel, located on the southeast corner of the monastery, is on

stable ground, it is not on ground level and is in a location that leaves insufficient space for new construction. Retaining the existing chapel would necessitate expenditures for the addition of an elevator, the construction of an entrance where the chapel currently connects with the building to be demolished, some repairs and renovations and the removal of some other buildings on the grounds to provide sufficient space for building.

"In examining cost factors, we considered both initial cost and continued maintenance (of the chapel). After much prayer and deliberation, we came to the conclusion that the most responsible decision was to demolish the existing chapel and construct a new building incorporating offices, chapel, healthcare and other needs," Sr. Eleanor said.

Proposed schedule

The next few months, she said, will be spent in more detailed planning. The Sisters of Saint Benedict are working with the architectural firm of Yeater Hennings Ruff Shultz Rokke of Moorhead.

A proposed project schedule calls for bids to be let between Jan. 16 and Feb. 25, 1993, with demolition of the chapel to begin about March 15. Construction could begin in April 1993.

The sisters plan to remain in the present building until they are able to move into the new structure in March 1994. Demolition of the monastery would begin in April and the site could be completed by June 1994.

Cost of project

Sr. Eleanor Mueller said the total cost of the project will be about two million.

"We have already had people in looking at what can be salvaged," she said. "Not much can be used in the new facility."

When the original building was put up in 1923 with 42,000 square feet, it cost \$260,000. Payroll laborers received 35 to 40 cents

an hour and foremen earned \$1 an hour, she mused.

She admits financing of the new project will take work and soul-searching. "We don't plan to do aggressive fundraising," she stressed, "but we welcome the contributions of those who wish to participate in our building project."

She said the Sisters of Saint Benedict are independently supported by the various works of the sisters in the community and contributions from benefactors.