

City of Afton, Minnesota
Heritage Preservation Commission
LOCAL PROPERTY DESIGNATION

DRAFT

NAME OF PROPERTY:

Historic Name: Emil Asp Blacksmith Shop

Other Names:

SHPO Inventory No.: WA-AFC-074

Parcel No: 22.028.20.41.0023

LOCATION:

Street & No.: 15880-36th Street South

City/Town: Afton

State, County, Zip: Minnesota, Washington County, 55001

PROPERTY OWNER:

Owner Name: Richard S. Pung

Owner Phone/Cell:

Street & No.: 15880 36th Street South

City/State/Zip: Afton, Minnesota 55001

CLASSIFICATION:

<i>Ownership of Property</i>	<i>Category of Property:</i>	<i>Number of Resources within Property</i>	
		<i>Contributing</i>	<i>Noncontributing</i>
X private public	X building(s) district site structure object	1	buildings sites structures objects
		1	TOTAL

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register of Historic Places: 0 *Open to the Public:* No

FUNCTION or USE:

Historic Functions: COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

Current Functions: DOMESTIC: secondary structure

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SIGNIFICANCE:

Historic significance: Associated with activities, processes, events, trends or persons of importance to the community, state or nation.

Narrative Statement:

The blacksmith shop once housed in the building at 15880-36th Street in Afton was owned and operated by Emil Asp. Emil (1879-1944) and Ida Vagnson Asp (1882-1946) were married in Sweden in 1900 before coming to Afton in 1907. The year of their arrival Ida gave birth to their son Lloyd (1907-1970).

Emil Asp purchased the south 40 feet of lots 7 and 8 on block 20 from the Joseph Wolf Company on December 15, 1910. The Joseph Wolf Brewery in Stillwater, Minnesota, operated Wolf's Saloon and Wolf Community Hall, also known as the Afton Auditorium Hall. The saloon was immediately south of what was then called Gummeson Creek and was across the stream from Wolf's Community Hall. (The saloon was eventually moved and now houses Lerk's Bar and Grill on the east side of St. Croix Trail. (Robb) The Community Hall was either torn down or burned down in 1920.)

Chris Christiansen, a blacksmith from Denmark who arrived in Afton in 1897, also operated a shop of his own nearby. "This Is Afton" states "Established about 1910, both he (Emil) and Chris Christiansen did a thriving business shoeing horses, sharpening plough shares and making runners for sleighs."

In 1925 Emil sold the property to Matilda Swanson, carrying the mortgage until it was satisfied in 1927. (In March 1926 Swanson filed a court action against the Stillwater and Hastings Railway Company and the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway Company to establish title to the property. She was ultimately declared "the owner in fee simple of the South 40 feet of Lots 7 and 8 in Block 20 of Afton.") The lot was then sold on December 29, 1943 to Frank and Leona Pribnow.

In the 1930 Bayport, Minnesota city directory Emil Asp is listed as a laborer for Andersen Frame Corp. The 1930 federal census also lists him as a laborer for a frame factory in Bayport. Emil died at age 65 in 1944. Ida died at age 66 in 1946.

Emil and his wife are buried in Hazelwood Cemetery in Bayport.

Architectural significance: Possessing distinctive characteristics of a style, place, period, method or materials of construction, builder or architect.

Architectural Classification: Commercial building
Materials Used: Wood frame, Asphalt, corrugated metal
Foundation: Limestone
Walls: Wood
Roof: Gabled with corrugated metal

Narrative Description:

The Emil Asp Blacksmith Shop is located on a small parcel of land at the northwest corner of the intersection of St. Croix Trail and 36th Street South. The wood frame barn is unique in that it retains most of its original architectural fabric.

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The building is sheathed in ship lap wood siding and displays all of its original fenestration openings. The only exception would be what appears to be downsized infill of the barn’s very tall barn door entry on the main east-facing elevation. That opening now displays a conventional, mid-20th century windowed overhead garage door. Older doors are now being refinished to replace the stock overhead door.

The east façade displays a symmetry of elements including the central door opening flanked by two large original six-over-six double-hung windows. Located above the opening and centered in the end gable is a three-over-three window that lights the loft area.

The side elevations both display two balanced window openings. On the south side the lower sash has been replaced with a single sheet of glass making the resulting configuration two six-over-one double hung windows. On the north elevation one window needed to be totally replaced with a new six-over-six true divided-light window. The more easterly of the two windows retains its original six-over-six lights.

At the lower level the west elevation retains a wood plank entry door and an original six-over-six double-hung window. In the gable above is a wood plank hayloft door.

The building sits on a limestone foundation, however most of the foundation has sunk into the ground and only portions of it are still visible along the easterly portion of the north elevation. The structure also displays new corrugated metal roof sheathing.

The building once displayed a wood plank floor, but time and rot have taken their toll and the building now has a dirt floor. As in many early barns, the frame construction is visible on the interior. A partially enclosed hayloft is suspended from the rafters in the west third of the open interior.

The original barn is the only structure on the site and is the contributing historic resource on the property.

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT: The Emil Asp Blacksmith Shop is significant as one of Afton’s original blacksmithing commercial barns. Located along St. Croix Trail South, the community’s major commercial arterial street, the barn structure retains most of it’s early 20th century features. The period of significance spans the time from the construction of the blacksmith shop in 1910 to the date Emil Asp sold the property in 1925.

OTHER ITEMS OF SIGNIFICANCE:

<p><i>Related Historic Contexts:</i> Townsite Development in Washington County 1839-1955 Immigration and Ethnicity in Washington County ca. 1838-1920 Early Agriculture and River Settlement 1840-1870 Railroads and Agriculture Development 1870-1940</p>	<p><i>Significant Person(s):</i></p>
<p><i>Period of Significance:</i> 1910 to 1925</p>	<p><i>Cultural Affiliation:</i></p>
<p><i>Significant Dates:</i> 1910 date of construction</p>	<p><i>Architect/Builder(s):</i></p>

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Acreage of Property: 0.09

Legal Description of Property: S 40 FT LOTS 7 & 8 020 SUBDIVISION NAME AFTON LOT 7 BLOCK 20
SUBDIVISION CD 19040

Boundary Justification: Washington County tax records, Afton Village boundaries

PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION:

Current Photographs:



The front, east-facing elevation of the Emil Asp Blacksmith Shop on St. Croix Trail South. Note the original six-over-six double hung windows on the lower level and the three-over-three windows in the loft. Camera facing west, northwest.

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View of the main, east-facing elevation with the modern overhead garage door down. The north-facing elevation retains its six-over-six double-hung window configuration. Camera facing southwest from St. Croix Trail South.



The back west-facing elevation of the Blacksmith Shop with its original doorway, six-over-six double-hung window and loft above. Camera facing east toward St. Croix Trail South.

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The west and south-facing elevations retain their window openings and display double-hung sash. Note that the lower sash on the south elevation have been replaced with a single pane of glass. Camera facing east, southeast toward St. Croix Trail South.



The north and west-facing elevations retain their window openings and display double-hung sash. Camera facing east, southeast toward St. Croix Trail South.

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Traces of the shop's limestone foundation can be found toward the northeast corner of the north-facing elevation. Most of the remaining foundation has sunk, along with the building into the soft, wet soil next to the creek.



Shop interior looking west from the front opening along St. Croix Trail South.

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The interior wood floor was lost to wet rot and the interior now displays a dirt floor. The hayloft can be seen in the interior view looking to the west.



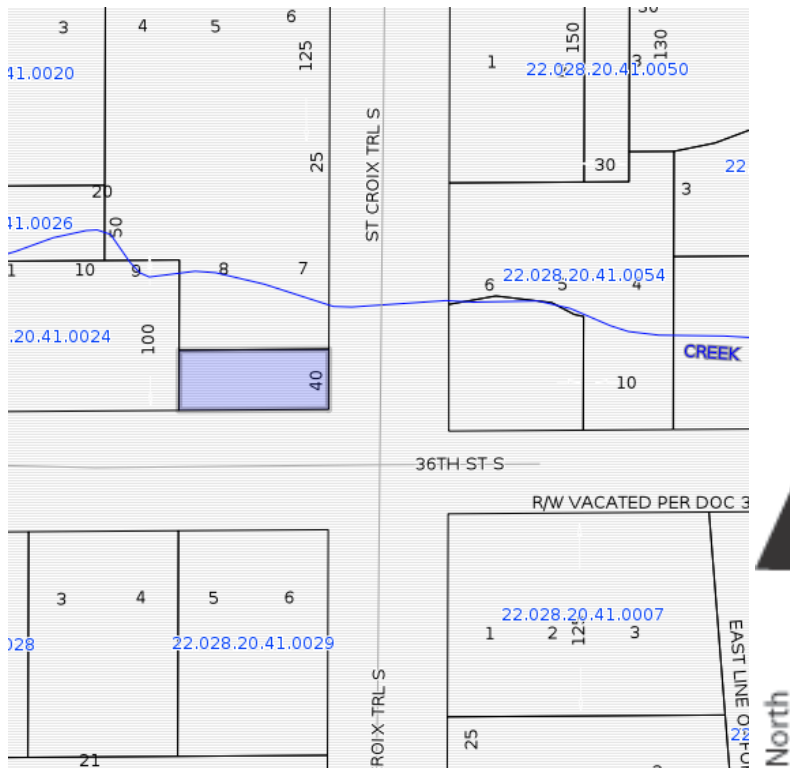
This interior view looking to the west southwest displays one of the two double-hung windows, both of which have lost their divided lights and are now six-over-one in configuration.

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AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH(S) AND SITE MAP(S) OF THE PROPERTY:



Aerial photograph of the Emil Asp Blacksmith Shop at the northwest corner of St. Croix Trail South and 36th Street South.



Parcel Map for the Emil Asp Blacksmith Shop.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC SOURCES:

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Blondoe, Steven. Minnesota Architecture-History Inventory Form City of Afton Flood Protection and Sanitary Sewer Improvements, Afton, Washington County, Minnesota. 2015.

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Federal census. 1930.

Hazelwood Cemetery records. Bayport.

Martens, Ken. Walking Tour of Afton. May 2013.

Robb, Edwin G. *Afton Remembered*. Afton Historical Society Press: Afton. 1996.

Washington County deed summary records.

Washington County Department of Property Records and Tax Payer Services.
www.mn-washington.manatron.com

Unpublished

Martens, Ken. Interview. May 10, 2016.

FORM PREPARED BY:

Name/Title: Thomas R. Zahn & Associates LLC
Street & No.: 807 Holly Avenue
City/Town: Saint Paul
State, County, Zip: Minnesota, Ramsey County, 55104
Telephone No.: 651-221-9765
Date Prepared: May 28, 2016

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER COMMENT:

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Review and comment by the State Historic Preservation Officer pursuant to Minnesota Statute _____; Subd. ____.

Date Submitted to SHPO: _____ Date of SHPO Comment: _____

AFTON CITY COUNCIL REVIEW / APPROVAL:

Designation of property pursuant to: _____

Date of Action: _____