MAIN STREET

MAKEOVERS

TRANSFORMING SPACES, ELEVATING LIVES.

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY REPOSITIONING PLAN

110 W Huron St.

Berlin, WI 54923

A Personal Note

Dear Property Owner,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to imagine what your property could become.

When I first looked at this building, I didn't see outdated finishes or areas in need of repair—I saw possibility. I saw a historic building with character, a location that connects people to downtown Berlin and the Fox River, and a space capable of becoming something truly memorable.

The images and recommendations in this report are not intended to be a renovation blueprint. They are a vision of what is possible. Their purpose is to help you see your property through fresh eyes and to demonstrate how thoughtful, strategic improvements can unlock hidden value without sacrificing the history that makes the building special.

One of the greatest mistakes made in revitalization is assuming that every problem requires a major construction project. In my experience, the most meaningful transformations often come from revealing what is already there. Historic architecture, authentic materials, and a strong sense of place are assets that cannot be recreated once they are lost.

Every recommendation in this report was developed with that philosophy in mind. The goal is to maximize visual impact, improve marketability, attract quality tenants, and strengthen both the property and the surrounding downtown while respecting your investment.

I hope these ideas inspire you to see your building not only for what it is today, but for what it has the potential to become.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share that vision with you.

Sincerely,

Marti Ingraham

Founder
Main Street Makeovers

"Transforming Potential Into Value."

110 W Huron, Berlin WI

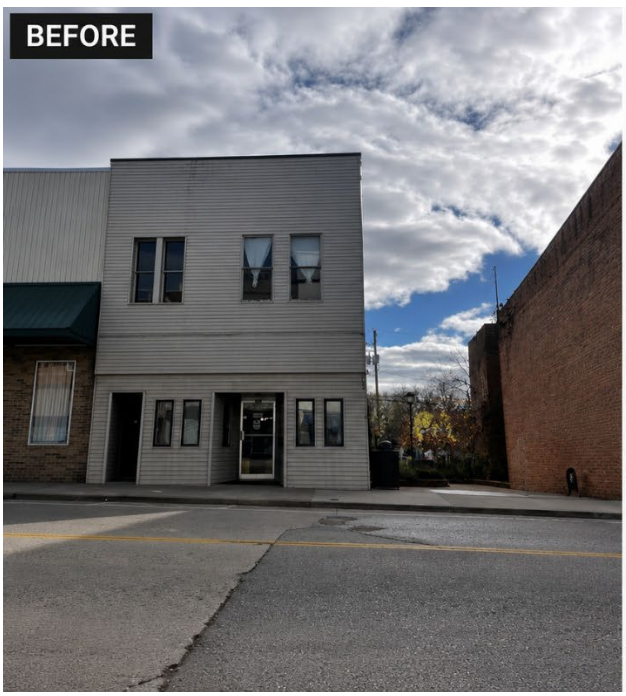
Project Overview

Property Location

Historic mixed-use commercial building located at 110 W Huron in Berlin, Wisconsin, approximately one block from the Fox River.

Objective

Demonstrate how targeted cosmetic improvements, adaptive reuse concepts, and strategic placemaking can transform an underutilized historic property into a destination that contributes to downtown revitalization without requiring major structural reconstruction.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Strengths

The property possesses several valuable assets often overlooked in historic downtown buildings:

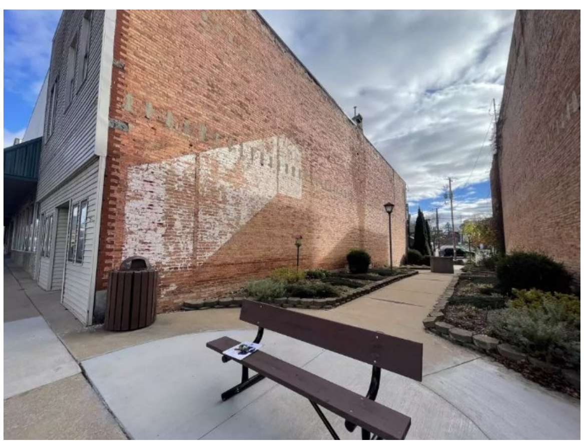
- Prominent Main Street location
- Walking distance to the Fox River
- Historic architectural character
- Storefront windows
- Original hardwood floors
- Exposed brick walls
- Flexible open floor plan
- Existing second-floor residential space
- Rear balcony with outdoor living potential
- High visibility from both vehicle and pedestrian traffic

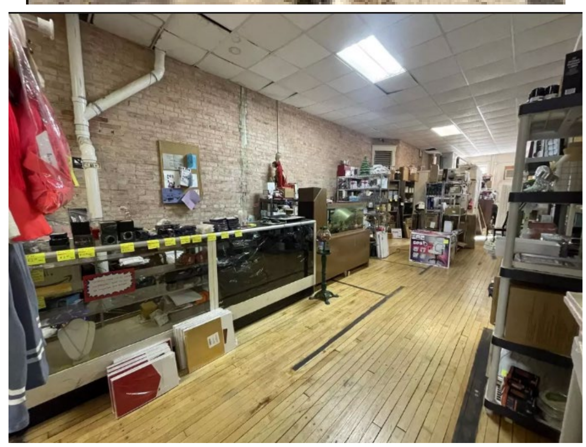
Challenges

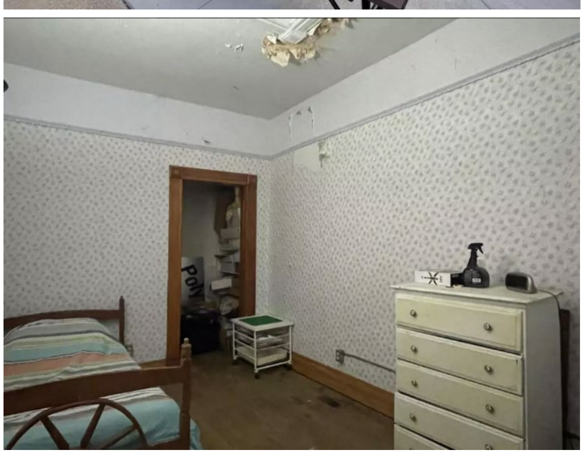
Despite these strengths, the building suffers from common small-town downtown obstacles:

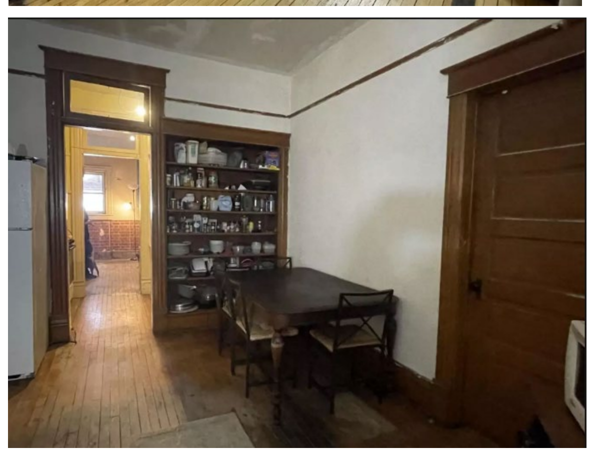
- Limited curb appeal
- Lack of visual identity
- Underutilized outdoor spaces
- Minimal pedestrian engagement
- Aging finishes
- No destination features encouraging visitors to stop
- Missed opportunities to connect with local tourism assets

Existing Condition Images



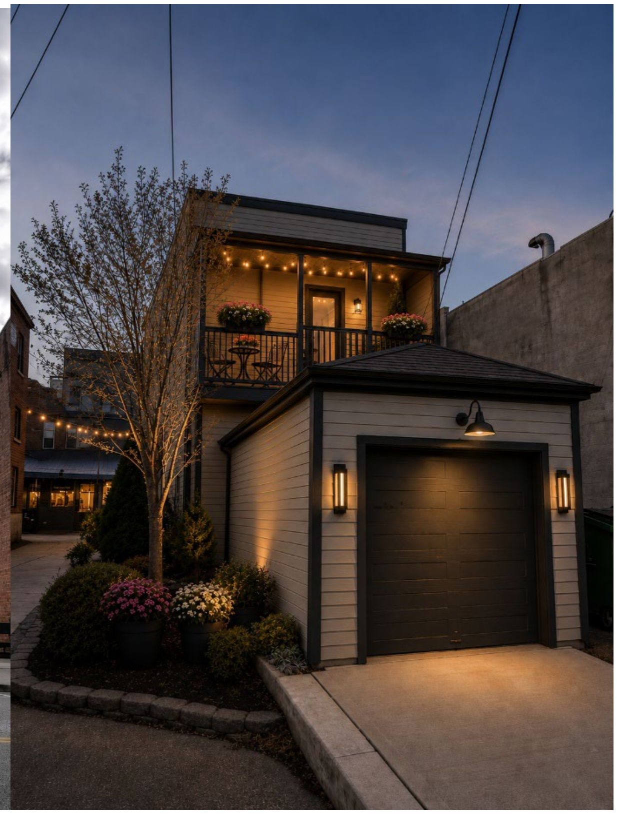






MAIN STREET METHOD ANALYSIS

Hidden Potential Visuals



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READ LOCAL
A BOOK IS A DREAM THAT YOU HOLD IN YOUR HANDS.
FICTION
New ARRIVALS
MAIN STREET BOOKS
BERLIN, WI
LOCAL HISTORY
The Fox River

Market positioning review

From an investment standpoint, this building has significantly more upside than its current appearance suggests. The biggest value isn't just in renovating it—it's in repositioning it.

One challenge is that there is very little published leasing data for Berlin, Wisconsin specifically. Most commercial leases are negotiated privately. Based on comparable Class B/C downtown markets in central Wisconsin (Ripon, Waupun, Princeton, Omro, New London, etc.), here is a realistic underwriting range rather than a single number.

Space	Typical Rent
Downtown Retail	$8–14/sf NNN
Updated Destination Retail	$14–18/sf NNN
Professional Office	$10–16/sf Gross
Renovated Historic Apartment	$1.10–1.50/sf/month (about $13–18/sf annually)

These ranges reflect comparable small-town Wisconsin markets where renovated historic properties command a premium over average storefronts.

Investment Analysis

Strengths

Excellent Location

- Main Street frontage
- Very near the Fox River
- Walkable downtown
- Highly visible
- Easy street parking
- Historic district character

This is one of the better locations in Berlin.

Mixed-Use Income

This is what makes the property attractive.

Instead of relying on one tenant, you potentially have:

- Commercial rent
- Residential rent
- Future appreciation
- Tax advantages
- Opportunity for owner occupancy

Diversified income is generally more resilient than a single-use building.

Potential Income Example

Assuming:

Retail: 2,200 sf

Lease Rate:
$15/sf

Annual Rent

≈ $33,000

Apartment

Assume

1,200 sf

Renovated

$1.30/sf/month

Monthly Rent

≈ $1,560

Annual

≈ $18,720

Total Gross Income

Approximately

$51,700/year

before expenses.

If the retail became a destination business instead of generic office space, that rent could increase further.

Biggest Value Drivers

These improvements would likely provide the highest return.

1. Exterior Transformation ⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐

Exactly what you illustrated.

Reason:

People lease what they can picture succeeding.

A beautiful storefront rents faster.

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2. Upper Apartment Renovation ⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐

People love historic apartments.

High ceilings

Original trim

Walkable downtown

Near the river

Those are all selling points.

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3. Alley Activation ⭐⭐⭐⭐

The mural creates:

- free marketing
- Instagram traffic
- tourism
- downtown identity

That benefits the entire block.

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4. Destination Retail ⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐

The space should not compete with Amazon.

Instead become something people visit.

Examples:

- bookstore
- coffee shop
- wine bar
- boutique
- mercantile
- specialty foods

Destination businesses consistently outperform commodity retail in small historic downtowns.

Risks

Every investment has them.

Population

Berlin is around 5,500 people.

That limits the number of viable businesses.

The retail concept must attract people from outside Berlin.

Building Age

Likely unknown costs:

- HVAC
- plumbing
- electrical
- roof
- masonry
- windows

These should be thoroughly inspected.

Vacancy

Small-town retail can take longer to lease.

Budget for 6–12 months of vacancy in your underwriting.

What I Would Pay

If I were evaluating this as an investor, I would ask:

"Can this building become one of the three most recognizable buildings in downtown Berlin?"

After your redesigns, I think the answer is yes.

That changes everything.

Instead of leasing square footage, you're leasing an experience.

My Biggest Observation

This building's highest and best use is not simply as a commercial rental property.

It's a destination mixed-use building.

Imagine:

- Main Street Books (or another specialty retailer) on the first floor
- A beautifully restored apartment upstairs
- A Fox River mural drawing visitors down the alley
- A landscaped, lighted rear patio and balcony
- Community events, author talks, and seasonal promotions

That combination would create a property with a recognizable identity, increasing both rental demand and long-term appreciation.

Estimated Investment Rating

Category	Rating
Location	⭐⭐⭐⭐☆
Appreciation Potential	⭐⭐⭐⭐☆
Cash Flow Potential	⭐⭐⭐⭐☆
Tourism Opportunity	⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐
Risk Level	Moderate
Overall Investment	8.8/10

The biggest increase in value often comes not from adding square footage, but from changing perception. A building that people notice, photograph, and talk about can command higher rents, attract better tenants, and contribute more to the success of the entire downtown than a comparable building with the same floor plan but no identity. That's the core of the Main Street Method.

Principle 1: Reveal Hidden Character

Rather than covering historic features, the redesign highlights them.

Improvements

- Exposed brick becomes a focal point
- Original hardwood floors are showcased
- Historic architectural details are preserved
- Black ceiling treatment creates visual contrast
- Modern lighting emphasizes existing character

Result

The building feels authentic rather than renovated, allowing visitors to experience the history of the structure while enjoying modern amenities.

Principle 2: Create Visual Identity

A building that blends in rarely attracts customers.

Improvements

- Updated storefront design
- Enhanced architectural lighting
- Coordinated color palette
- Distinctive signage
- Decorative planters

Result

The property transitions from a forgotten storefront into a recognizable downtown landmark.

Principle 3: Activate Underutilized Spaces

The highest return often comes from improving spaces already present.

Rear Balcony

Added:

• Bistro seating
• Decorative containers
• Ambient lighting

Result

An overlooked outdoor area becomes a usable amenity for residents, visitors, or future tenants.

Principle 4: Build a Sense of Place

Great downtowns tell a story.

Community Mural Concept

The side wall was reimagined as a large-scale public art installation celebrating:

• Fox River heritage
• Wisconsin wildlife
• Outdoor recreation
• Small-town culture
• Local history

Result

The mural creates a photo opportunity, encourages social sharing, and provides a memorable visual identity connected specifically to Berlin.

Principle 5: Increase Flexibility

The most successful downtown spaces can adapt over time.

Reimagined Ground Floor

The updated retail space demonstrates potential uses including:

• Independent bookstore
• Coffee shop
• Boutique retail
• Art gallery
• Professional office
• Community gathering space

• Tourism center
• Specialty market

Result

Future occupants inherit a flexible space requiring minimal buildout.

ECONOMIC IMPACT POTENTIAL

Property Value

While exact valuation would require professional appraisal, improvements of this nature typically increase:

• Lease desirability
• Occupancy potential
• Business visibility
• Tenant retention
• Marketability

Downtown Impact

Benefits extend beyond the property itself.

Potential outcomes include:

• Increased pedestrian activity
• Longer visitor dwell times
• Additional downtown spending
• Greater tourism appeal
• Improved perception of Main Street
• Encouragement of neighboring property investment

BERLIN OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

Berlin possesses several underleveraged tourism assets:

• Fox River access
• Historic downtown architecture
• Wisconsin small-town charm
• Nearby Green Lake tourism traffic
• Walkable downtown blocks
• Existing local businesses

This property sits at a strategic location where it can help connect Main Street activity with river-focused tourism.

MAIN STREET METHOD SCORECARD

Historic Character Preservation: 10/10

Visual Impact Improvement: 9/10

Tourism Potential: 9/10

Community Identity Enhancement: 10/10

Implementation Difficulty: 3/10

Cost Effectiveness: 9/10

Economic Development Potential: 8/10

Overall Main Street Method Score: 9.1/10

INVESTMENT REQUIRED VS. VALUE CREATED

One of the most common misconceptions in downtown revitalization is that meaningful transformation requires extensive reconstruction and significant capital investment. In reality, some of the highest-return projects focus on revealing existing assets rather than replacing them.

This project demonstrates how strategic improvements can dramatically change public perception, tenant interest, and economic potential while preserving the building's historic integrity.

Improvement	Estimated Investment Level	Value Created
Exterior Paint & Color Palette	Low	Creates instant curb appeal and stronger street presence
Updated Signage	Low	Establishes identity and improves visibility
Decorative Lighting	Low-Medium	Enhances evening appeal and perceived quality
Planters & Landscaping	Low	Softens storefront and increases pedestrian appeal
Community Mural	Medium	Creates tourism draw and social media exposure, but grants available
Interior Paint & Ceiling Updates	Low	Modernizes space while highlighting historic features
Enhanced Lighting	Low-Medium	Improves functionality and customer experience
Balcony Activation	Low	Creates additional usable square footage
Staging & Merchandising Concepts	Low	Helps prospective tenants visualize possibilities

Hidden Value Unlocked

Before

- Generic appearance
- Limited destination appeal
- Underutilized outdoor spaces
- Weak connection to local tourism
- Difficult for prospective tenants to envision possibilities
- Building blended into surrounding streetscape

After

- Distinctive Main Street landmark
- Enhanced tourism potential
- Activated indoor and outdoor spaces
- Strong connection to Berlin's identity and Fox River heritage
- Flexible space suitable for multiple business models
- Increased visibility and marketability

Tenant Attraction Recommendations

To maximize occupancy and long-term success, the property should be positioned toward destination-oriented businesses that complement Berlin's historic downtown and draw both residents and visitors.

Recommended Tenant Types

- Independent bookstore
- Specialty retailer
- Boutique gift or home décor shop
- Art gallery or maker's marketplace
- Professional office with retail storefront
- Tourism and visitor center
- Wellness center or Spa

The second-floor 4 bedroom/1 bath residential space provides an opportunity for owner occupancy, long-term rental income, or short-term lodging, creating an additional revenue stream while increasing activity in the downtown district.

Capital Improvement Recommendations

The proposed improvements focus on maximizing visual impact while minimizing construction costs.

High Priority

- Repaint exterior with a cohesive historic color palette
- Install new storefront signage
- Upgrade exterior lighting
- Replace dated entry fixtures
- Add decorative planters and seasonal landscaping
- Refresh interior finishes and lighting

Medium Priority

- Create a community mural along the side wall
- Enhance the rear balcony with seating and lighting
- Improve alley landscaping and pedestrian experience
- Upgrade interior merchandising and display systems

Long-Term Opportunities

- Restore additional historic architectural details
- Improve upper-floor residential amenities
- Add outdoor seating or event space
- Enhance energy efficiency through window and lighting upgrades

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Investment Prioritization

The Main Street Method recommends investing where the greatest visual and economic return can be achieved first.

Priority	Improvement	Expected Impact
1	Exterior façade improvements	Immediate curb appeal and increased visibility
2	Signage and architectural lighting	Stronger identity and evening presence
3	Interior cosmetic improvements	Improved leasing potential and customer experience
4	Community mural	Tourism, placemaking, and social media exposure
5	Rear balcony enhancements	Additional usable space and tenant value
6	Future residential upgrades	Increased long-term rental income

By completing improvements in phases, property owners can begin realizing increased value while spreading investment over time.

Revenue Opportunity Assessment

This property offers multiple opportunities to generate income beyond traditional retail leasing.

Primary Revenue Sources

- Ground-floor commercial lease
- Second-floor residential rental
- Premium lease rates following improvements

Additional Revenue Opportunities

- Short-term rental of the upper-level residence (where permitted)
- Pop-up retail events
- Local artisan markets
- Workshops, book signings, or community events
- Seasonal downtown promotions
- Collaborative tourism experiences tied to the Fox River and downtown Berlin

The property's location near the Fox River and along Berlin's primary commercial corridor positions it to benefit from both local foot traffic and regional tourism. By creating a distinctive destination that reflects the community's historic character, the property has the potential to command higher occupancy, stronger tenant demand, and increased long-term value.

Tenant Attraction Recommendations

The property's highly visible Main Street location, historic character, proximity to the Fox River, and flexible layout make it well suited for tenants seeking distinctive space rather than conventional commercial or residential accommodations. The goal should be to attract tenants who benefit from the building's character and contribute to downtown activity.

Retail Recommendations

Rather than competing for traditional retail tenants, this property should target destination businesses that encourage visitors to spend time downtown and complement Berlin's growing tourism and community events.

Ideal Retail Uses

- Independent bookstore or specialty retailer
- Boutique gift or home décor store
- Coffee shop or café
- Wine bar or tasting room
- Artisan marketplace
- Specialty food or gourmet shop
- Creative studio or gallery
- Professional office with customer-facing storefront

Retail Marketing Strategy

To attract quality tenants, emphasize:

- High-visibility Main Street frontage
- Historic architecture and exposed brick
- Updated storefront and modern lighting
- Flexible open floor plan
- Walkable downtown location
- Proximity to the Fox River and community events
- Distinctive building identity that supports business branding

Businesses seeking a memorable customer experience will often place greater value on a unique historic property than on a conventional retail space.

Residential Recommendations

The upper-level residence offers an opportunity to create a premium downtown living experience by combining historic charm with modern amenities.

Target Residents

- Young professionals
- Remote workers
- Empty nesters
- Small business owners
- Healthcare and education professionals
- Individuals seeking a walkable downtown lifestyle

Residential Marketing Strategy

Highlight features such as:

- Historic woodwork and architectural character
- Updated kitchen and bedroom finishes
- Private balcony with outdoor seating
- Walkable access to downtown restaurants and shops
- One block from the Fox River
- Quiet second-floor living above Main Street
- Low-maintenance lifestyle with unique character

Unlike newer apartment developments, this residence should be marketed as a one-of-a-kind historic home offering charm, authenticity, and a sense of place that cannot be replicated.

Main Street Method Recommendation

The strongest long-term strategy is to curate tenants who complement one another rather than simply filling vacancies. A destination retail business on the first floor paired with a well-appointed residential unit above creates a vibrant mixed-use property that generates consistent activity, strengthens downtown Berlin, and increases long-term property value.

Return on Investment Beyond Dollars

The most valuable outcomes extend beyond property value.

Community Benefits

- Improved downtown appearance
- Increased civic pride
- Stronger sense of place
- Enhanced walkability
- Greater support for neighboring businesses

Economic Benefits

- Increased tenant demand
- Improved lease potential
- Higher visitor traffic
- Longer visitor dwell time
- Increased downtown spending

Tourism Benefits

- New photo opportunities
- Social media visibility
- Stronger connection to the Fox River corridor
- Additional reasons for visitors to explore downtown Berlin

Main Street Method Takeaway

The goal is not to create the most expensive building on the block.

The goal is to create the most memorable building on the block.

When historic character is revealed, community identity is celebrated, and overlooked spaces are activated, even modest investments can generate lasting economic and social value.

Hidden Potential Score

Investment Required: $$
Community Impact: **Tourism Potential:** $$$$ **Economic Development Value:** $$$$ **Historic Preservation Success:**

Overall Verdict:
This project represents a high-impact, low-to-moderate investment revitalization opportunity that strengthens both the property and the broader downtown district while preserving the character that makes Berlin unique.

CONCLUSION

This project demonstrates that meaningful revitalization does not require extensive demolition or costly reconstruction. By revealing existing character, improving curb appeal, activating overlooked spaces, and creating stronger connections to community identity, this historic Main Street property becomes a catalyst for downtown investment.

The transformation illustrates a core principle of the Main Street Method:

"We see what others overlook."

The building's greatest value was never hidden in major construction projects. It was already there—waiting to be revealed.