St Francis Xavier Rectory Update

Summary of observations of the Rectory at 26 Chestnut Land Road, New Milford

Photos are courtesy of Henry Beary and Stacey Keaney

St Francis Xavier Parish Rectory

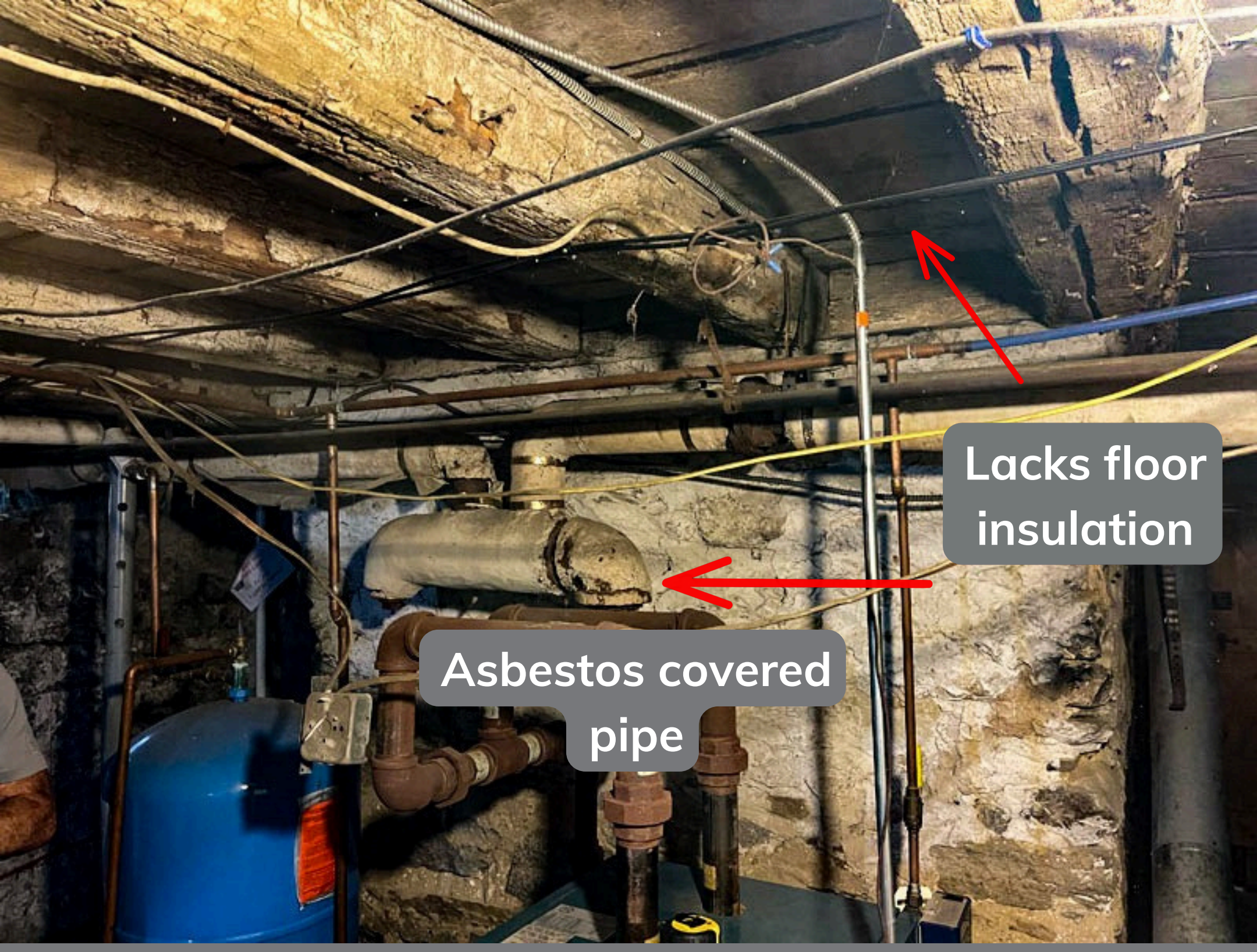
- 26 Chestnut Land Road, New Milford
- Built in 1810; 3900 square feet
- Not on New Milford Historical Registry

There are several health and safety risks that prevent securing insurance and a certificate of occupancy in its current condition. They are:

- Floor and wall framing
- Foundation walls and sills
- Hazardous staircases
- Kitchen addition
- Unsafe and outdated plumbing and electrical materials
- Asbestos located in the basement
- Deteriorating masonry chimneys that create a fire hazard
- Lack of insulation
- Bathrooms are non-compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Deteriorating roofing causes rectory to be uninsurable

St Francis Xavier Parish Rectory

- Due to settlement of foundation, the 1st and 2nd floor is sloping creating a falling hazard for occupants
- Several iterations of floor finishing have rotted and been superficially replaced by plywood
- The stairways are not ADA compliant, therefore, requiring near-term ADA remediation to enable certificate of occupancy
- Bathrooms also require near-term ADA remediation
- A contract with a structural engineer will be required to evaluate all existing framing for recommendations for repair or replacement



Framing

Existing timber joists have deteriorated and appear to be no longer structurally sound.

The resulting risk is the compromised ability of the floor system to support its design loads, e.g. weight of occupants, furniture, and building materials, which could cause a failure in the floor assembly.

Framing

Existing framing with splices that impact structural integrity.

Due to the age of the rectory, we observed existing framing showing its lack of structural integrity.

After exposing the interior framing, we discovered more outdated electrical wiring.

Foundation

There is flood and water damage that was repaired.

There is significant dampness that can lead to mold infestation.

The sill on top of the foundation is rotted in many areas.

Numerous temporary repairs have been made to reinforce the floor framing with added floor joists and pump jack lally columns.

There are asbestos covered pipes and outdated, metal shield wiring (i.e. bx).

Electrical

The existing wiring is not grounded posing a significant fire hazard.

Current staircase risers are too steep, handrail/guardrails are not up to current building code. They are less than 36 inches high. The hallway guardrail is also less than 36 inches high and does not comply with current building code.

The handrails and guardrails are less than 36 inches wide creating a staircase hazard.

Floor surface is uneven contributing to tripping and falling hazard.

The kitchen porch deck addition built over a crawlspace and has several roof styles creating potential ice buildup and roof leaks.

The crawlspace has rodent infestation.

Chimney

The existing chimney that serves the wood stove on the first floor does not exit through the roof.

The door allows smoke from the woodstove to enter the attic.

Smoke Remediation

Rectory was fumagated in the spring of 2025 to remove cigar smoke and pet odors.

However, fumagation was not successful.

Sheet rock was removed in an attempt to remove the odors.

This also was not successful to remediate the smell of cigar smoke and pet odors.

Bathroom is too narrow and not ADA compliant .

Bathroom is too small for the average sized person.

Attic / Roof

There are loose and missing bricks on the exterior.

Excessive nailing in the roof has compromised the sheathing making the roof vulnerable to leaks.

This is the reason why the rectory will be uninsurable.

SUMMARY

The extent and breath of existing health and safety risks inhibit occupancy in the rectory. Left as is, the St Francis Xavier Rectory will become a liability.

Therefore, the viable option is to remove and rebuild the rectory on a new foundation with energy efficient systems that comply with ADA and required building codes.

The result will be a smaller, energy efficient rectory. This is expected to have a lower cost than remodeling of the existing structure that would impact long-term maintenance and upkeep costs for our parish.