

MEDIA RELEASE

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September Lightning Strike Ignites Devastating Fire at Historic Drummond House (1310 State St.) in Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Eau Claire, WI – A lightning strike during a September 2025 storm ignited a destructive fire at the 1888 historic landmark known as *The Drummond House*, causing extensive structural damage and triggering a months-long mitigation and evaluation effort involving emergency responders, restoration professionals, and insurance representatives.

The fire began after lightning struck the roof of the 137-year-old home, burning approximately 70% of the attic and roof structure. Eau Claire Fire Department crews worked for more than six hours to extinguish the blaze, deploying an estimated one million gallons of water to suppress flames and prevent further spread.

While the fire severely damaged the roof, the water required to extinguish it caused significant additional destruction throughout the entire structure. At one point, more than four feet of standing water accumulated in the basement.

EDJ Rentals, the owner of the property in Eau Claire contracted Classic Construction and Consulting to lead both the restoration consulting process along with the coordination with the property's insurance provider. As part of the emergency response, Classic Construction mobilized crews to remove saturated materials in an effort to limit mold growth and prevent structural deterioration.

Post fire, the exterior brick has also begun to show signs of chalking and deterioration due to moisture now trapped behind the masonry.

Over the past several months, Classic Construction, EDJ Rentals, and the insurance carrier have been working to reach a conclusion that would allow the Drummond House to be restored to its pre-fire condition. Multiple contractors—five in total—were asked to evaluate the cost to rebuild under current building codes. All parties have reviewed options and assessed the cost and feasibility of reconstruction; all have concluded that the damage caused by the fire does not make the building economically viable to rebuild.

Kevin Suoja of Classic Construction & Consulting noted the significant challenges facing any attempt at reconstruction:

“Part of the problem with reconstruction and related cost is the code upgrades that need to happen on this project. We would have to remove all interior wall and ceiling finishes down to the building’s main structure, and all mechanical systems will have to be replaced for code reasons—this adds a tremendous cost to the reconstruction.”

— *Kevin Suoja, Classic Construction & Consulting*

Due to the severe water damage, extensive mold contamination, structural vulnerabilities, and reconstruction costs, Classic Construction and EDJ Rentals have reached a difficult but necessary conclusion: **the Drummond House will most likely need to be demolished. As final insurance settlements are reviewed and considered, a final decision will be made before the end of the year.**

The recommendation includes salvaging any historically or structurally recoverable materials before safely removing the remainder of the building and restoring the site to a level, stable grade.

EDJ Rentals and Classic Construction express their appreciation to the Eau Claire Fire Department, local officials, neighboring residents, and the community for their patience and support throughout the ongoing assessment process. EDJ remains committed to restoring and maintaining historic homes and properties throughout the area.

EDJ Rentals LLC has agreed to release live footage of the property and the damage caused by the fire and by the water used to extinguish it. For more on EDJ Rentals, find more on the website. <https://edjrentals.com/>