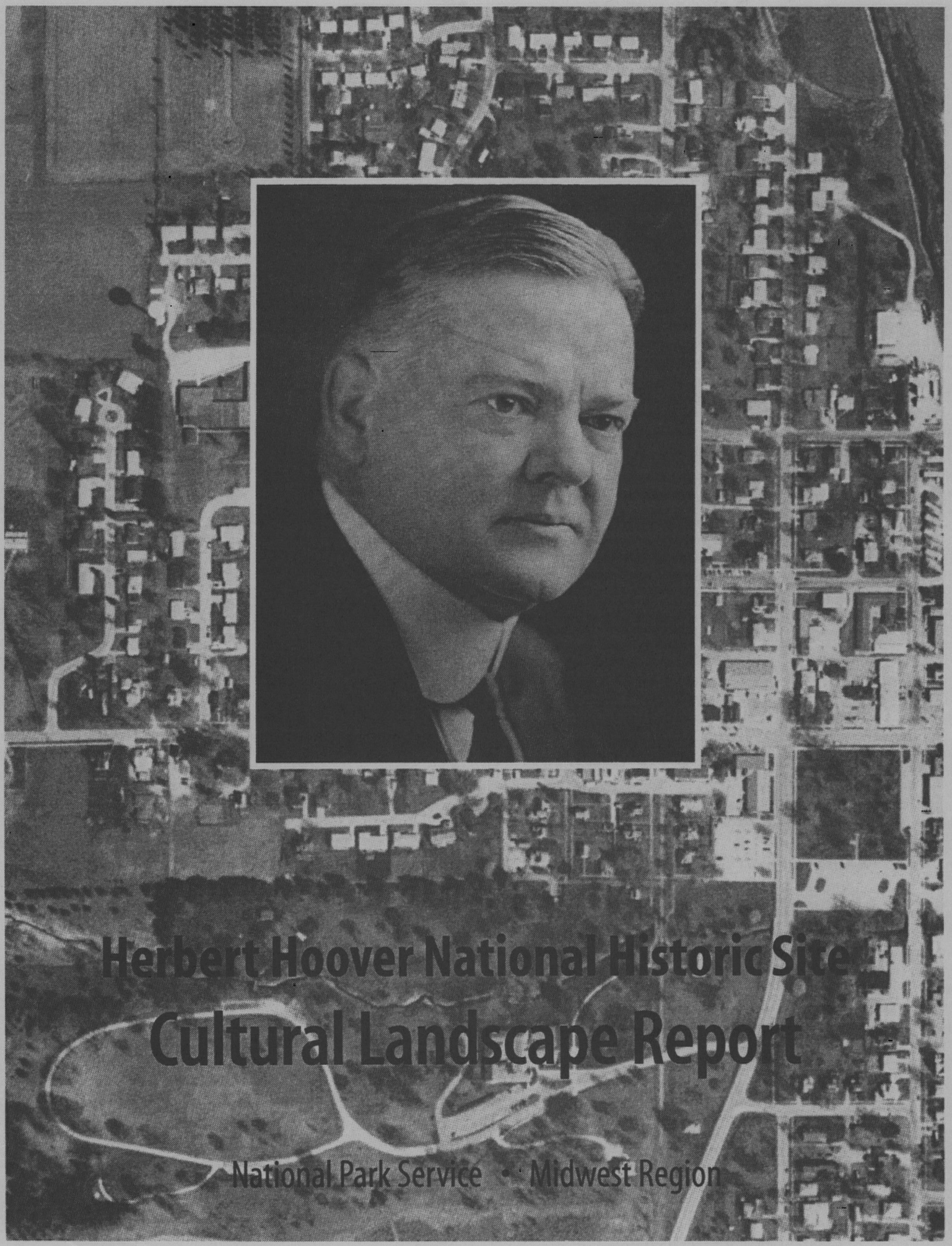

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site

Cultural Landscape Report

National Park Service • Midwest Region

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site

Cultural Landscape Report

National Park Service
Midwest Region
Omaha, Nebraska

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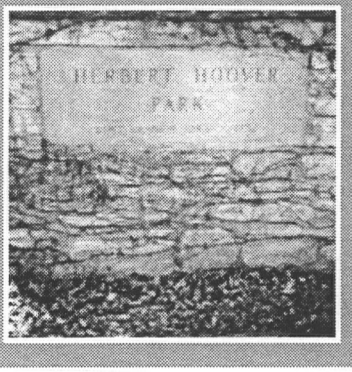

1 Management Summary

1 Management Summary

Introduction

The Herbert Hoover National Historic Site (NHS) is the birthplace of Herbert Hoover, the thirty-first president of the United States. Herbert Hoover was born in a small cottage in West Branch, Iowa, on August 10, 1874. The NHS, including the cottage where Hoover was born, is located in east-central Iowa, 8 miles east of Iowa City, 120 miles east of Des Moines, and 50 miles west of the Mississippi River. North of Interstate 80 at exit 254, the 186.80-acre site is located within the southern portion of West Branch, Iowa *(Exhibit A, Context and Location)*.

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the NHS also contains several late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century houses and outbuildings, a visitor center, the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum, the gravesite of President and Mrs. Hoover, ancillary facilities related to the various site facilities, and open space. Additional landscape resources include the Isaac Miles farm, a portion of which has been planted as a tall-grass prairie re-creation; the Thompson farm, which is still farmed by the last previous farm owners; a landscaped picnic area; parking areas; and open space.

As a result of the widespread interest in Hoover's birthplace following his nomination and election to the presidency, Lou Henry Hoover, Hoover's wife, initiated efforts to purchase the cottage where her husband had been born. Although Hoover had spent his early years in West Branch, the recently orphaned Hoover had moved from Iowa to Oregon to live with relatives in 1885. Following acquisition in 1935, Lou Henry Hoover embarked on a program to remove post-1885 features from the birthplace. Creation of the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society soon followed. From the beginning, the Hoover family and, subsequently, the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society undertook projects intended to beautify the grounds and to create a setting that they felt appropriate to a presidential memorial as well as evocative of Hoover's boyhood.

Over the years, additional land purchases have increased the size of the property. Today, it includes not only the original Hoover cottage but also several adjacent and nearby lots and farms. Through the 1950s and early 1960s, the property developed as both public park and presidential memorial. In 1952 the society established the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Park and developed picnic shelters, shuffleboard courts, and comfort stations for visitor use. In 1957 a blacksmith shop representative of a typical blacksmith shop of the period and similar in appearance to the shop Herbert Hoover's father had owned was built near the birthplace cottage on a site close to its

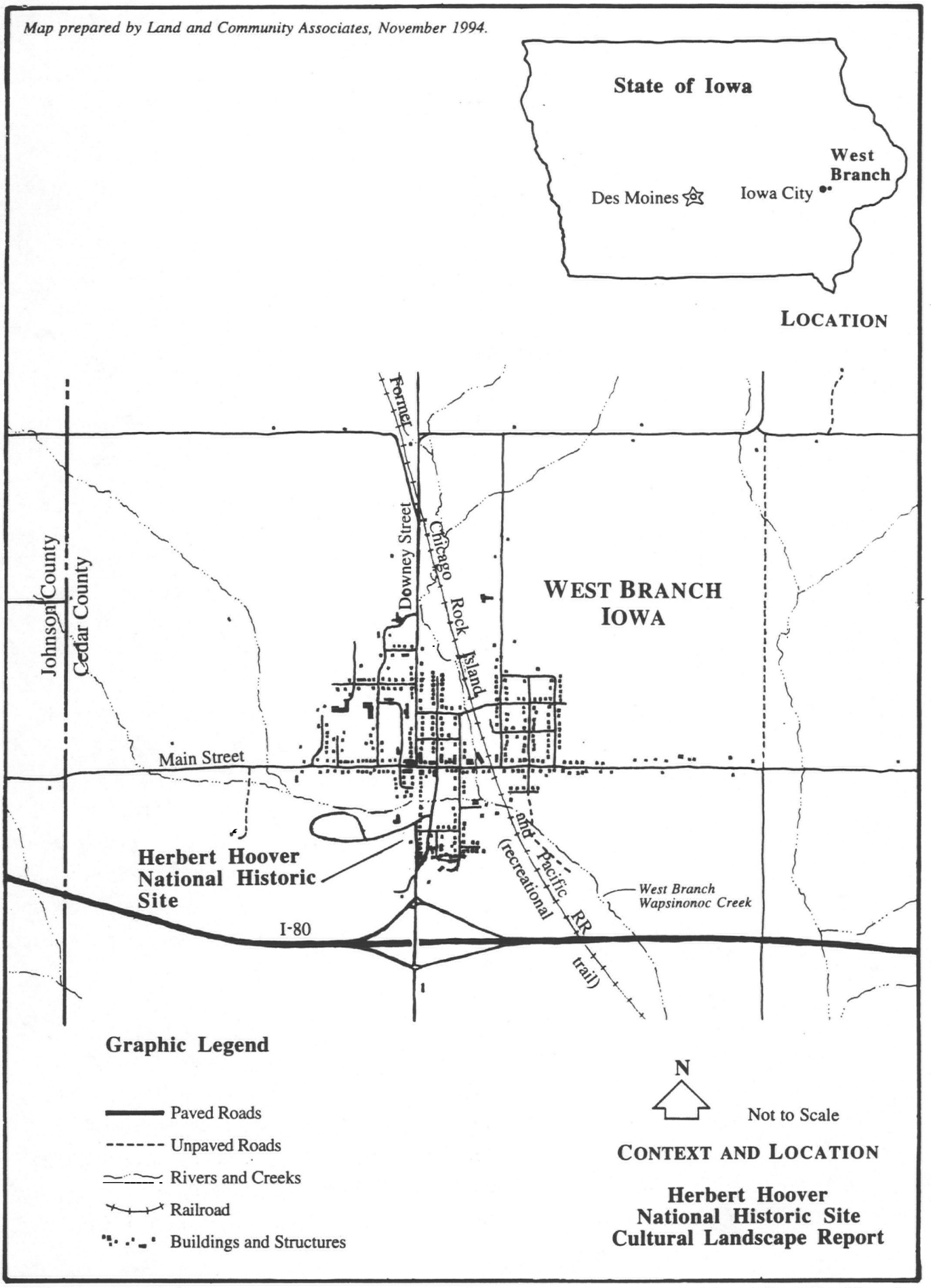

Exhibit A. Context and Location.

original location. The Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum, housing Hoover's papers and memorabilia, opened to the public in 1962. The people of West Branch donated a nineteenth-century Quaker meetinghouse, which was installed at the site in 1964.

Following Hoover's death in October 1964, he was buried at the southwestern edge of the property within sight of the birthplace cottage. The property was designated a National Historic Site (NHS) in 1965. In 1967 NPS began to purchase additional land to increase the size of the NHS and to provide visual buffers at the site's edges. NPS also began to plan for the restoration, reconstruction, and—in some cases—relocation of historic houses in an attempt to create a *circa* 1880 neighborhood setting for the birthplace cottage. A federal building designed to accommodate both the U.S. Post Office and the visitor center was constructed in 1970–71; and a nineteenth-century schoolhouse was moved to the site in 1968. In 1969 the NHS expanded to include the Isaac Miles farm. The NHS was officially transferred to the NPS in 1971. NPS purchased the Thompson farm in 1974.

NHS Boundaries

The northern boundary of the Herbert Hoover NHS runs from east to west along Main Street in downtown West Branch beginning at Second Street. It turns south for one block at the Post Office then turns again to run west along Wetherell Street. The boundary line turns south before the dead-end of Wetherell Street; it angles north, following the line of the Wapsinonoc Creek, then turns due west at the Thompson farm. The eastern boundary of the NHS is an irregular northeast/southwest line that begins at Second Street, runs in a step-like pattern to First Street and Parkside Drive, and then follows the line of the Interstate 80 entrance ramp. The southern boundary runs parallel to Interstate 80. Finally, the western boundary is a north-south line running through the agricultural fields of the Thompson farm about 400 feet west of the farm buildings. It bisects the fields between fences, rather than along a fence line. While the southern boundary of the NHS is quite clear, the northern and eastern boundaries are irregular and difficult to distinguish through casual observance. The western edge is also difficult to distinguish since it falls within the middle of a field and does not coincide with a visually defined edge such as a fence line. The Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association retains ownership of a house and its immediate environs southeast of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum; the tract is surrounded by the NHS.

NPS administers most of the site as a National Historic Site; the National Archives administers the Library-Museum; and the General Services Administration (GSA) of the U.S. government administers the federal office building. The U.S. government owns 181.11 acres of the site, the city of West Branch owns 4.59 acres encompassing street rights-of-way and alleys, and the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association, Inc. (HPLA) owns 1.10 acres, including a

parking lot and the office of the HPLA. The 44.79 acres of the Thompson farm on the west edge of the NHS are federally owned but the previous owners hold a life-tenancy as part of the acquisition agreement.

Project Background

NPS initiated the CLR process for the NHS in response to the need for clear guidance on how to manage different landscape units of the site. Throughout its history as a commemorative and interpretive site, the site has changed in size, appearance, and complexity. The site also has changed from a representation of Hoover's boyhood home to a historic village re-creation and memorial park that incorporates his presidential library and gravesite.

The CLR has been undertaken primarily in response to management needs and concerns. NHS managers, working to re-create the historic scene in the village core, have recognized the need for more detailed information than that available in the 1968 *Historical Base Map and Ground Study.* Moreover, NPS has identified a need for recommendations concerning management of other landscape areas of the NHS, especially the gravesite, farms, and loop road. The master plan provides only the general recommendation to maintain the "memorial character." There is also a lack of guidance concerning appropriate treatment of the different areas of the NHS landscape.

The CLR provides information that can be consulted in developing future plans for meeting increased site visitation needs and expanded site functions without damaging cultural landscape values. The site has experienced increased visitation in recent years: library visitation doubled between 1987 and 1992. In the 1990s, expanded parking facilities are necessary to accommodate increased visitation and plans for library expansion. The CLR explores accommodating additional parking within the context of cultural landscape protection and enhancement.

During the spring and summer of 1993, repeated site flooding resulting from the region's extremely heavy precipitation made hydrology issues a high priority. Since Wapsinonoc Creek is a central element of the cultural landscape, the scope of the CLR was expanded to address issues related to site drainage, flood protection, and bank stabilization.

The *Draft 1992 Development Concept Plan* (DCP) was prepared to serve as a guide for NHS development in addressing several pressing issues:

- visitor conflicts and confusion caused by the presence of both a National Historic Site and a Presidential Library-Museum within the NHS boundaries,
- significant increases in visitation,

- the need for additional interpretive and educational facilities,
- the need to upgrade maintenance facilities,
- flooding problems, and
- a proposal for an Iowa Welcome Center in West Branch.

The absence of a CLR has hindered efforts to evaluate the effects of the DCP alternatives. The DCP remains in draft form pending completion of the CLR.

Scope of Work

The scope of work for the CLR calls for the consultant team in conjunction with NPS includes the following:

- investigations of Herbert Hoover's childhood neighborhood and other later landscape units such, as the gravesite;
- representations of the development of that landscape over time as the site has evolved from Hoover's boyhood neighborhood to a NHS;
- preservation treatment recommendations consistent with NPS policies and planning documents; and
- evaluation of alternative design proposals presented in the DCP.

Investigation Methodology

Phase I included a site visit to the NHS by Land and Community Associates and Dunbar/Jones personnel to meet with NHS and regional NPS personnel, a review of the materials available for the project, and a reconnaissance of the site. NPS personnel provided the consultant team with relevant materials identified at the NHS. Representatives of the consultant team attended a pre-design conference at the NHS to establish administrative procedures, coordinate activities, and clarify scheduling issues.

Phase II included a site reconnaissance for the existing conditions report, documentation photography, and annotation of the base map provided by NPS.

Phase III included review of materials identified in Phase I, historical research of Herbert Hoover Presidential Library archival materials, photocopying of relevant materials, a review of all

identified primary and secondary sources, and fieldwork to document existing conditions.[1] Since earlier research efforts, notably the work of NPS historian Edwin C. Bearss and consulting historical architect William Wagner, have revealed considerable information concerning the nineteenth-century history of the site, NPS and the consultant team concurred that, given the budgetary constraints of the CLR, previous research efforts would not be duplicated. Earlier work had been consistent with the NPS intention of re-creating the nineteenth-century historic village scene.

In recent years, NPS has become aware of significant gaps in both information and resources that make historic scene re-creation difficult for this site. As a result, this CLR has approached twentieth-century resources with an attitude that they might contribute to a more holistic understanding of the site as it relates to the entire lifetime of Herbert Hoover, and not just his boyhood years, as well as to the larger context of presidential memorial sites. The site history concentrates on the events, activities, and personalities significant in the physical evolution of the National Historic Site cultural landscape; it is not intended to provide a comprehensive discussion of the history of the NHS or the life and times of Herbert Hoover. Political, social, and other aspects of history are included only as they relate to the physical development, management, or protection of the site. Team representatives conducted telephone interviews with Floyd Fawcett, West Branch resident and long-time participant in efforts to preserve and manage the site; architect William Wagner of Des Moines, who has been professionally involved with the site since the 1950s; and landscape architect Robert Dyas, who provided consulting services to the site in the 1960s. The site history in combination with the discussion of existing conditions contributes to the analysis and evaluation of cultural landscape significance, integrity, and character-defining features.

Existing conditions were documented at the NHS through field work in the winter, spring, and fall of 1994. Field work results are represented in Chapter 3 through written text, photographs, and maps. Graphic materials that support the discussion of existing conditions include contemporary photographs of selected site features and existing conditions maps. One map illustrates the core historic area at an enlarged scale; the other illustrates the entire historic site at a smaller scale. The maps can be used in conjunction with historic maps in Chapter 2 to compare historic and existing conditions.

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[1]Post-1964 records of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association are stored at the library-museum as a courtesy to the association but are not available to researchers. As a result, the consultant team may be unaware of some information pertaining to that period. A review of materials concerning this period when they are made available in the future may reveal information that could be used to supplement the findings of this CLR.

Phase III culminated in the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site cultural landscape workshop held on April 11–13, 1994. The workshop brought NPS personnel from both the region and the NHS and the consultant team together on-site to discuss site-related issues. The final product of Phase III was a workshop notebook summarizing the results of work undertaken during Phases I, II, and III. The notebook provided a reference document for workshop participants.

Phase IV involved additional research of primary and secondary sources, personal interviews with Floyd Fawcett, William Wagner, and Robert Dyas, review of additional materials provided by NPS at the Cultural Landscape Workshop and, in subsequent communications, development of site history, additional field work, and refinement and revision of the existing conditions information developed during Phase III. The scope of work for Phase IV was amended to include preparation of a topographic survey and a hydrology workshop. The amendment reflects NPS concerns that resulted from the severe 1993 floods and the subsequent USGS report. A topographic survey of the site was undertaken during Phase IV and NPS personnel and representatives of the consultant team held a one-day hydrology work session at the NHS.

Phases V and VI involved development of the incorporation of government review comments for all previous work; evaluation of significance, integrity and character-defining features; identification of a period of significance; and evaluation of the *Draft DCP* alternatives based on the findings to date; and cultural landscape treatment recommendations.

Multi-disciplinary CLR Team

The CLR consultant team is a multi-disciplinary team with Land and Community Associates of Charlottesville, Virginia, and Ames, Iowa, as the primary firm and the Dunbar/Jones Partnership of Des Moines, Iowa; Andropogon Associates, Ltd. of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; John Milner Associates of West Chester, Pennsylvania; and Snyder and Associates, Inc. of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, as sub-consultants. Land and Community Associates has administered the project and served as the team historical landscape architects, using a team of landscape architects, historical architect, architectural historian/preservation planner, and historian. The Dunbar Jones Partnership has documented existing conditions using a team of two landscape architects with extensive regional experience. Andropogon Associates, Ltd., with its experience in landscape restoration, management, and sustainable design, has provided the services of two landscape architects to fill the team role of contemporary landscape architects. A historical architect from John Milner Associates, Inc. served as the team historical architect. Snyder Associates, Inc., a civil engineering firm, undertook field work to develop a topographic survey of the site. The CLR process has been collaborative with representatives of all firms meeting at the NHS not only to investigate and

analyze the site but also to work together with NPS personnel in substantive work sessions designed to adapt the CLR to meet the particular needs and constraints of this unique site.

Management Summary

The CLR is the latest in a series of efforts to recognize, manage, and administer the NHS. Public visitation to the site began as early as 1928 when Herbert Hoover campaigned for and won the election for president of the United States. During 1928 and in the years following, Jennie Scellars, who owned the former Hoover property, conducted tours through the birthplace cottage. Since the Hoover family purchased the birthplace cottage and grounds in 1935, several different managing bodies have administered the birthplace cottage and associated grounds. Regardless of its administrative and management structure or ownership, Hoover family members and a dedicated group of West Branch citizens have remained supportive and involved in efforts to preserve, interpret, and care for the site since 1928. To name only a few, Bill Anderson, Floyd Fawcett, and L.C. "Rum" Rummells, played major roles in developing a vision and implementing plans for the site's development and providing assistance to the Hoover family. First, Lou Henry Hoover and, then following her death in 1944, Allan Hoover most often represented the family in matters concerning the birthplaces site. Herbert Hoover remained aware of and approved site preservation and development activities from 1935 until his death in 1964. Lou Henry Hoover advocated the establishment of the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society, which was founded in 1939, and merged with the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation, Inc. (HHBF) in 1958. The foundation had been established in 1954, in support of the site, then called the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Park. The new administrative entity retained the name of the foundation. In 1963 the parent agency of the National Archives, the General Service Administration (GSA) assumed management of the property from the HHBF.

Following Hoover's death in 1964, several Congressional bills were entered authorizing establishment of a memorial park. In 1965 President Lyndon Johnson signed Public Law 89-119 authorizing establishment of the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site. The legislation authorized not only preservation of the Hoover birthplace but also of other resources associated with Hoover's boyhood in West Branch. As a result of the act, GSA transferred ownership of the property, other than the Library-Museum, to NPS in 1971. NPS began planning for its operation of the site shortly after GSA acquired the site and began negotiating the purchase of additional parcels of land in the NHS vicinity. The 1965 NPS master plan for a proposed NHS was consistent with the authorizing legislation and addressed Hoover's preference for a neighborhood setting rather than a park-like setting. In addition, the master plan included the existing Herbert

Hoover Presidential Library-Museum to endorse the concept of the site as a memorial to Hoover's entire life.

A second master plan for the NHS, based on the 1965 plan, was completed in 1970. The plan focused on the re-creation of the birthplace cottage environs; it advocated restoring historic buildings, removing buildings and structures such as picnic shelters and comfort stations that did not exist on the site during the Hoover boyhood, and installing boardwalks and other features that would have existed during the nineteenth-century. A 1971 Memorandum of Understanding between the site superintendent and the library director established cooperation in matters affecting both organizations.[2] In 1971 a letter from Allan Hoover, Herbert Hoover's son, was quoted in the HHBF's 1971 guidelines for the 1970 master plan. Hoover wrote that he would like "to have some understanding or arrangement with the National Park Service so that either the Foundation or the family, if the latter was still extant, could be consulted about any major changes to plans prior to their undertaking."[3] Subsequent planning documents expressed a willingness to cooperate with the Hoover family and the HHBF and, later, with the HPLA The association was founded in 1969. It merged with the foundation in 1972, and the new organization retained the name of the association.

An *Addendum to the Master Plan* was approved in 1978. It differed from the 1970 plan by strongly emphasizing visitor services as well as advocating restoration of the historic scene; the plan called for the retention of picnic shelters and non-historic circulation routes and for the construction of comfort stations. Four years later, in 1982, a *Resource Management Plan* for the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site was approved. This plan considered preservation of natural resources and advocated stabilization and additional study of the site's cultural resources.

In 1985 the National Archives and Records Administration was established as an agency independent of GSA and assumed responsibility for the continuation of all agreements. That same year a *Special Populations Action Plan* called for the installation of universal accessibility ramps and other accommodations at historic buildings and structures throughout the NHS. The 1995 *Statement for Management* focused on restoration and interpretation of the site's historic resources and urged the identification and preservation of cultural landscapes, particularly the historic neighborhood and gravesite. It also advocated expanded visitor services as well as additional research concerning all the resources. The *Draft DCP,* which was prepared in 1992, proposed alternative solutions to visitor contact issues.

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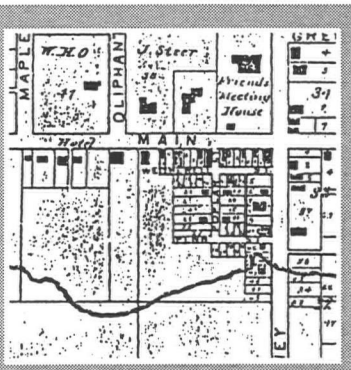
[2] U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, Midwest Regional Office, *Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, Development Concept Plan, West Branch, Iowa*, (August 1992), 13.
[3]Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation, Inc., *Guidelines for the 1970 Master Plan,* (1971), 11.

Summary of Findings

The NHS is a significant cultural landscape associated with the boyhood of Herbert Hoover and the nation's major research, commemorative, and memorial efforts associated with the thirty-first president. The site has a period of significance that extends from Hoover's birth in 1874 through the completion of a Hoover gravesite memorial landscape in 1966. Pre-existing site features dating from the 1874 to 1885 boyhood have been incorporated into the commemorative and memorial landscape created between 1935 and 1966. Many of the site's major cultural landscape features date not from the Hoover boyhood sub-period, however, but from the post-presidential sub-period that extends from the Hoovers' acquisition of the birthplace in 1935 through the completion of the memorial landscape at the Hoover gravesite in 1966.

Treatment recommendations have been made for the entire NHS as well as for the distinct landscape character areas identified, documented, analyzed, and evaluated in the CLR. These six areas include the historic core, the gravesite, the library-museum area, the loop drive area, the rural/agricultural setting, and the visitor contact and park support area. Treatment recommendations have been developed to retain and rehabilitate the essential character-defining features from the period of significance and to avoid attempts to re-create any one historic period.



2 Site History

2 Site History

The site history for the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site has been divided into the following six historical periods associated with the site's development and management or with the life of Herbert Hoover:[1]

- Pre-1874 The period prior to Herbert Hoover's birth
- 1874–1885 The period of Herbert Hoover's boyhood in West Branch
- 1886–1927 The period of Herbert Hoover's adolescence and pre-presidential
- 1928–1934 The period during which the property received recognition as the Hoover birthplace; beginning with Herbert Hoover's campaign and presidency and culminating with the death of the owner, Jennie Scellars
- 1935–1966 The period between the establishment of the park and the implementation of the gravesite design following Herbert Hoover's death and burial
- 1967–1994 The period of NHS development and re-creation of a nineteenth-century historic scene

Pre-1874 *(Exhibit B: Pre-1874 Landscape Chronology)*

In 1852 Eli Hoover purchased 163.52 acres in the town of West Branch, Iowa—enough land to plant an orchard and to keep fields, meadows, gardens, and a chicken-yard.[2] With his son, Jesse Hoover, Eli Hoover built a blacksmith shop, "a long building with a door on the south side," on the parcel of his land located closest to town.[3] By 1871, Eli and Jesse Hoover had also constructed a small cottage near the blacksmith shop as a home for Jesse Hoover, his wife Hulda, and their infant son Theodore *(Figure 1)*.

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[1]Previous studies of the NHS have focused much attention on the nineteenth-century, particularly the Hoover boyhood years. As a result, NPS has directed that the CLR pay particular attention to twentieth century developments at the site. Early historical periods are discussed briefly in the CLR since many other documents with narrative discussions are available for those periods. Earlier work that was undertaken in support of creating a nineteenth-century village scene was accomplished through very thorough research in these same records (albeit without a landscape emphasis). It is unclear how much new material would be revealed through similar primary research for the CLR. Such research would be desirable but does not appear to be a priority for the current CLR which can be used in conjunction with previous documents.

[2]Future investigation may reveal how the fields and meadows were used; this information has not yet been identified.

[3]Lou Henry Hoover, "West Branch Little House," Genealogy File: Box 17, "West Branch Little House" Correspondence, 1938-1941, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum.

Pre-1874 Landscape Chronology Legend

1 Laban Miles house constructed, 1869-1872

2 Staples house constructed, 1869-1872

3 Mackey house constructed, 1869-1871

4 Hildebrand house constructed, c. 1869

5 Methodist Church constructed, 1870

6 Garvin house constructed, 1870-1872

7 Hayhurst house constructed, 1870-1872

8 Herbert Hoover birthplace cottage constructed, 1871

9 Garden, 1870s

10 Well/pump, 1870s

11 Maple tree

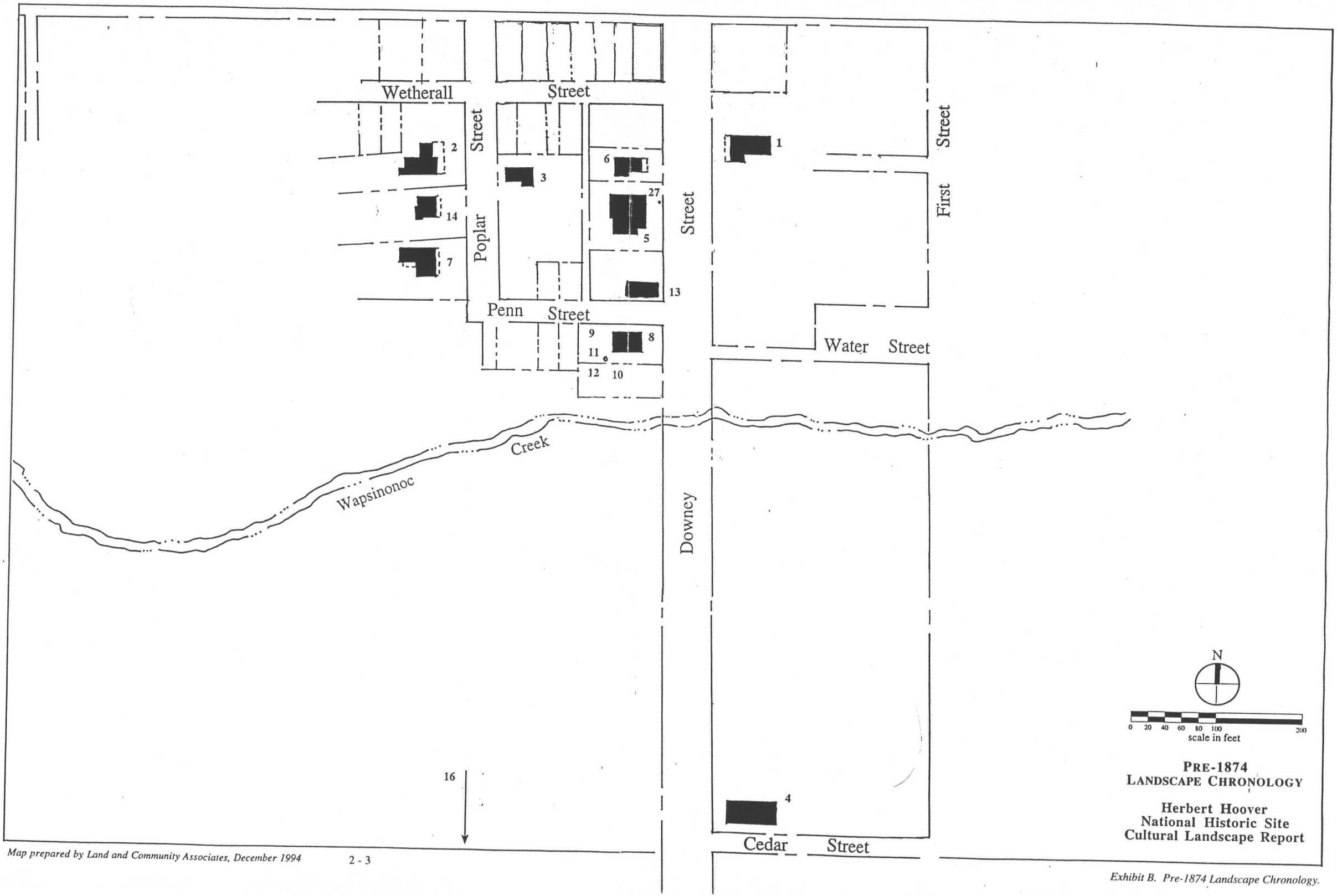
12 Siberian crab-apple tree

13 Jesse Hoover's Blacksmith Shop constructed, c. 1871

14 Wright house constructed, 1873

16 Miles farmhouse constructed, 1870s

27 Kerosene street lamp



PRE-1874
LANDSCAPE CHRONOLOGY

Herbert Hoover
National Historic Site
Cultural Landscape Report

Map prepared by Land and Community Associates, December 1994

Exhibit B. Pre-1874 Landscape Chronology.

WEST BRANCH

ORANGE ST.
DEPOT ST.
COLLEGE ST.
GREEN ST.
WATER ST.
VALLEY ST.
MAPLE ST.
MAIN ST.
FIFTH ST.
FOURTH ST.
THIRD ST.
SECOND ST.
FIRST ST.
OLIPHANT ST.
DOWNEY ST.
6TH ST.
Depot
Schools
Cemetery
W.H.O
J. Steer
Friends Meeting House
Hotel
J.R.S
N
0 100 200 300 600
scale in feet

West Branch Business Directory.

Wm. Townsend, Notary Public.
Thos. Townsend, Dealer in Grain, Lumber, and Coal.
Jos. Steer, Lumber Dealer, and Dealer in Real Estate.
C. T. Penrose, Dealer in Dry Goods, Ready-made Clothing, Hats, Caps, Boots, Shoes, Groceries, &c.
Thos. James, Justice of the Peace.
Peter Thomas, Resident Farmer.
Jno. T. Carson, Resident Farmer.

Map A. *"West Branch, Springdale Township 79 North, Range 4 west of 5th Prime Meridian." Atlas of Cedar County, Iowa. Marshalltown, Iowa: Harrison and Warner, 1872.*

There was substantial development in West Branch between 1869 and 1873. New buildings constructed in the neighborhood near the Hoovers' small cottage included the Mackey house, the Laban Miles house (belonging to one of Herbert Hoover's uncles), the Staples house, the Garvin house, the Hayhurst house, and the Wright house.

The prairie lands surrounding the developing town were plowed and cultivated as farmland. The area presently known as the Isaac Miles Farm was part of the original 160 acres Aaron Baker purchased in 1852. Baker sold the land later that year to Samuel King who divided the property, selling eighty acres to Joseph Steer in 1853, but retaining the portion encompassing the Isaac Miles Farm. In 1855 King sold the remainder of the property to Timothy Kirk. Esther and Anna Bruff purchased the eighty-acre farm from Kirk in 1868. When Anna Bruff died in 1873, she left half of her portion of the farm to Esther Bruff and the rest to Lydia B. Oliphant, Hannah B. Williams, Joseph Bruff, Mary Andrews, Sarah B. Coggeshall, and Elizabeth Kirk. Oliphant and the others immediately conveyed their half of the property back to Esther Bruff.[4] The land presently comprising the Thompson Farm was owned in 1860 by Samuel Staples and David Stratton; in 1865 Stratton became the sole owner of the portion now known as the Thompson Farm. Agricultural activity for both the Isaac Miles and Thompson farms was typical for the area in 1860 and 1870 with the families keeping horses, milk cows, and other cattle; crop produced included wheat, sweet potatoes, barley, hay, and Indian corn, and the farms also produced molasses and butter.[5]

1874–1885 *(Exhibit C: 1874–1885 Landscape Chronology)*

Herbert Hoover's birth took place in his parents' small cottage on August 10, 1874.[6] In later years Herbert Hoover recalled that the one-story, wood building had "a wide porch the full length of the back of the house with a small open woodshed."[7] Lizzy Ensley, a neighbor of the Hoovers, remembered it, however, as a two-room house with a woodshed to the north and no porch to the rear.[8] A coal shed stood on the cottage grounds. Hulda Hoover cultivated vegetables and planted

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[4]Future investigation may reveal how the farm was used during this period; this information has not yet been identified.

[5]An examination of U.S. Census records for 1860 and 1870 indicate that the two farms now included in the NHS were typical for the vicinity.

[6]Herbert Hoover was actually born about midnight between August 10 and August 11, 1874. Historic references are inconsistent. August 10 is used in this CLR because it is the date on which the birthday celebrations for Herbert Hoover were held at the park.

[7]Lou Henry Hoover to J.B. McKay, 23 August 1937, Genealogy File: Box 17, "West Branch Little House" Correspondence, 1938-1941, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum.

[8]William McKay to Lou Henry Hoover, 27 November 1937, Genealogy File: Box 17, "West Branch Little House" Correspondence, 1938-1941, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum.

1874–1885 Landscape Chronology Legend

1 Laban Miles house

2 Staples house

3 Mackey house

4 Hildebrand house
(Hoover residence, 1879-1884)

5 Methodist Church

6 Garvin house

7 Hayhurst house

8 Herbert Hoover birthplace cottage
(Hoover residence, 1874-1879)

9 Garden

10 Well/pump

11 Maple tree

12 Siberian crab-apple tree

13 Jesse Hoover's Blacksmith Shop

14 Wright house

15 P.T. Smith house constructed, 1874

16 Miles farmhouse

17 Levi Forney house constructed, c. 1870s-1880s

18 Miles barn

19 Plank sidewalk installed, c. 1884

20 Miles outbuildings constructed, 1880s

21 South Downey Street bridge constructed of wood, late 1800s

27 Kerosene street lamp

71 Footbridge

Wetherall Street

Street

Poplar Street

Penn Street

Street

First Street

Water Street

Creek

Wapsinonoc

Creek

Downey

Cedar Street

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
27
71

N

0 20 40 60 80 100 200
scale in feet

1874-1885
LANDSCAPE CHRONOLOGY

Herbert Hoover
National Historic Site
Cultural Landscape Report

Map prepared by Land and Community Associates, December 1994

Exhibit C. 1874–1885 Landscape Chronology.

flowers around the house including, one niece recalled, "phlox, wild sweet William, columbine, petunias, balsam and verbenas...I especially remember dark red tulips. The walkway was bordered with portulaca. And the flower beds were edged with shells. Iris or 'flags' are also remembered, and of course lilacs and peonies in a few years."[9] The 1971 NPS Historic Structures Report of the boyhood landscape identified a picket fence fronting Downey and Penn Streets with three swinging gates—one on Downey Street and two on Penn Street—providing access to the Hoover yard. The Downey Street gate and the east Penn Street gate were pedestrian gates; the other Penn Street entry was a wagon gate. A board fence bounded lots 42 and 43 on the west and south. Both types of fencing used by the Hoovers were whitewashed. A "little boardwalk" led from the Downey Street boardwalk to the front of the birthplace cottage. [10] Jesse Hoover dug a drain near the well in the vegetable garden behind the cottage. Waste water, such as dishwater, could be poured into the drain. The family also used a wooden rain barrel to catch water running off the roof. A chain pump replaced the well a few years later. The family's water pump was located near the southwest corner of the back porch. A wooden tub beneath the pump's spout collected water, and the family used a gourd dipper that they kept hanging on the pump. A Siberian crab tree shaded the backyard of the little house and a maple tree stood to the west.

The Hoover family, like their neighbors, would have kept a vegetable garden but little is known about it apart from Tad Hoover's memory of it as associated with his mother and a golden red Siberian crab apple.[11] Other apple trees and a few pear trees were also remembered as part of a "young orchard" located behind the birthplace cottage.

By 1874, when Herbert Hoover was born, West Branch had become an active small town with houses and streets in the residential neighborhoods adhering to an organized grid. Houses had begun to be built farther south on Downey Street. The P.T. Smith house was one such house built on South Downey Street in 1874. In 1879 the Hoovers moved into a house that had been constructed between 1868 and 1870 and was adjacent to the P.T. Smith house. The second Hoover house was a substantially larger two-story house. The Hoover family at the time of the move included Jesse and Hulda Hoover and their children, Theodore (Tad), Herbert, and Mary. As well as moving into the larger house nearby on South Downey Street, Jesse Hoover also

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[9]Lou Henry Hoover, "Memories of a Little House," Genealogy File: Box 17, "West Branch Little House" Correspondence, 1938-1941, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum.

[10]U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, Denver Service Center, *Historic Structures Report: The Hoover Houses and Community Structures, Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, West Branch, Iowa*, by Edwin C. Bearss (30 November 1971), 98.

[11]U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, Denver Service Center, *Historic Structures Report: The Hoover Houses and Community Structures, Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, West Branch, Iowa*, by Edwin C. Bearss (30 November 1971), 100.

opened a farm machinery business in 1879. Jesse and Hulda Hoover sold the cottage where Herbert Hoover had been born and the blacksmith shop to another blacksmith, G.M.D. Hill.

The Hoovers played an active role in the Quaker community of West Branch; Hulda Hoover was a noted speaker in the Quaker meeting. Jesse Hoover died in 1880; he did not live long in his new home or operate the new business for any length of time. Hulda Hoover supported the family as a seamstress following Jesse Hoover's death. For several months that year Herbert Hoover lived with one of his uncles, Major Laban Miles, in Osage Indian Territory (later Oklahoma). In 1884 Hulda Hoover died of pneumonia. Following his mother's death, Herbert Hoover lived for a short time with his father's brother, Allen Hoover, on a farm near West Branch. In 1885 Herbert Hoover moved from West Branch to live with another uncle, Dr. Henry John Minthorn, in Oregon. He did not return to West Branch during his childhood.

In 1886 Z. Taylor McCaleb, another blacksmith, purchased the birthplace cottage from G.M.D. Hill. McCaleb sold it to Victoria Hill in 1888. She, in turn, sold the cottage to Jennie and Port (R.P.) Scellars in 1889. When R.P. Scellars died in 1916, Jennie Scellars became the sole owner of the birthplace cottage property. A house belonging to Levi Forney stood across South Downey Street from the birthplace cottage.

During Herbert Hoover's boyhood, West Branch was continuing to develop in much the same way that most Iowa small towns developed. Families, like the Hoovers, whose fortunes were improving and whose families were growing moved to larger houses, built new ones, or expanded their smaller, earlier houses. Most houses had several outbuildings that might include a barn, a privy, various sheds, and chicken houses. The documentary evidence of such features, however, is sporadic, although portions of some are visible in photographs and some have been revealed through archeological investigations. The evidence that there is gives an indication of the character of the neighborhood. The Hoovers' neighbors, the original owners of the neighboring Wright house, had a barn constructed on their lot. Common features in the neighborhood in which Hoover lived included fences, such as the white picket fence that enclosed the Staples house, and carriage blocks and hitching posts, such as the ones at the Laban Miles house. A well with an iron pump was located at the southeast corner of the Garvin house and a kerosene street lamp was installed in front of the Methodist church. Families planted and tended vegetable and flower gardens as well as such fruit bearing trees as apple, pear, cherry, and plum. These types of features were not isolated, single occurrences but characteristic of the growing and developing community. Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century photographs depict the Hoover neighborhood as a semi-agrarian community at the edge of a developing commercial center.

By the time Hoover left West Branch for Oregon in 1885, a sidewalk of two-inch planking ran along the east side of South Downey Street from Main Street to the Wapsinonoc Creek and some distance beyond. The unpaved streets in late nineteenth-century West Branch were dusty in summer, icy in winter, and muddy whenever it rained. There may have been boardwalks parallel to Penn and Poplar Streets for the convenience of pedestrians. The South Downey Street Bridge, a wooden vehicular bridge, crossed the Wapsinonoc Creek about eighty feet south of the birthplace cottage in the late 1800s. A footbridge spanned the creek about fifteen feet downstream from the vehicular bridge. Public walks were not the only innovations of the 1880s. The town of West Branch enjoyed telephone service and utility lines and poles were located along Downey and other streets.

It is possible that Hoover may have spent time during his days in West Branch on the Isaac Miles farm. He certainly would have known the farm since family members lived there, and it was only a short distance from his Downey Street home. Isaac Miles, a relative of Herbert Hoover, married the owner of the farm, Esther Bruff, in 1877.[12] By the 1870s and 1880s when Esther and Isaac Miles owned the farm, almost twenty acres had been added to the original eighty. Miles kept seventy-three acres under cultivation, one and one-half acres as woodland, and the remaining twenty-four acres as permanent pasture, meadow, and vineyard. An apple orchard stood southeast of the farmhouse Miles built in the 1870s. The barn was constructed about the same time, perhaps in the 1880s. Miles employed a hired man who boarded on the property, and together they reaped the meadows for hay and clover seed, and grew corn, oats, rye, potatoes, and apples. Miles also kept horses, mules, milk cows, cattle, pigs, and chickens. Isaac Miles was involved in the operation of his brother Benjamin Miles' West Branch Industrial School and frequently allowed students to work and live on his farm. In 1883 Miles rented the farm to B.T. Gruwell.[13] Activities on the Thompson Farm, which by the 1880s was owned by David Stratton, were similar during this period. U.S. census records for 1880 reveal that of Stratton's eighty acres, forty acres were in meadow and three acres were in woodland and forest. The farm value, including land, fences, and buildings was $4,000. Crop production remained a significant activity with the farm producing hay and Indian corn, but no wheat or barley indicated. The census also indicates that two cords of wood were cut on the property that year as well as the presence of a one-acre apple orchard of forty trees that produced fifteen bushels of apples. Like any farmer with an orchard, Stratton also kept

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[12]Isaac Miles was the uncle of Laban Miles who was Hoover's uncle. Not enough information has been identified concerning Hoover's parents and their families to determine the exact relationship between Herbert Hoover and Isaac Miles.

[13]U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, Office of History and Historic Architecture, *Buildings in the Core-Area and Jesse Hoover's Blacksmith Shop, Historic Structures Report*, by Edwin C. Bearss and Wilfred M. Husted, 30 November 1970, 121-128.

bees which produced twenty-five pounds of honey and three pounds of wax.[14]n 1885 Charles Haworh acquired the eighty acres that Stratton had owned since 1865.

1886–1927 *(Exhibit D: 1886-1934 Landscape Chronology)*

After leaving West Branch, Hoover attended a Quaker school, the Friend's Pacific Academy, in Newberg, Oregon. Later he worked as an office boy for his uncle Henry John Minthorn's land-settlement office. In 1891 he enrolled in the new Stanford University as one of the school's first students. In a geology class, Hoover met Lou Henry, the woman he would marry following her graduation from Stanford in 1899. Herbert Hoover graduated in 1895 with a degree in geology and quickly became a successful mining engineer. In 1897 before leaving for a position with Bewick, Moreing and Company as a gold-mining engineer in Australia, Herbert Hoover returned to West Branch for the first time since boyhood. During his stay, he visited his parents' graves.

Hoover became known for his organizational skills and his connections in politics and business. In 1914 he was chosen to head the American Committee in London. The committee successfully coordinated the transportation to the United States of more than 120,000 Americans stranded in Europe by the outbreak of World War I. Toward the end of the war, Hoover was chosen to organize the Belgian relief program and to head the Relief and Reconstruction Program for Europe. As a result of his achievements during the war, President Warren Harding appointed Hoover Secretary of Commerce in 1921.

In October of 1921, Lou Henry Hoover stopped in West Branch with her father to visit places her husband had heard mentioned. In 1923 Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover made his second visit to West Branch on his way to deliver a speech in Ames, Iowa. He commented, "I am disillusioned. The hills have flattened out; the old familiar buildings are gone; the town has trebled in population and the old swimming hole down there under the railroad bridge is only half the size it was when I was a boy."[15] New buildings in the neighborhood surrounding Hoover's first home included the 1899 Varney house located south of the Wapsinonoc Creek, the 1903 C.E. Smith house located on Cook's Hill just south of the P.T. Smith house, and the 1920 Leech House in West Branch had several outbuildings. The Laban Miles house cluster included a one-story frame woodshed, a privy near the south end of the woodshed, and a well, cistern, and pumps located immediately southeast of the kitchen.

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[14]U.S. Census, Schedule 2, 1880.

[15]*The West Branch Times*, 19 April 1923, quoted in Frank T. Nye, Jr. *Doors of Opportunity: The Life and Legacy of Herbert Hoover* (West Branch: Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association, Inc., 1988), 59.

The land southwest of the birthplace cottage remained nearly free of development since it was the site of the Cedar County fair grounds from 1886 throughout the early 1900s. The fair grounds encompassed a race track, two wells, and several sheds.

During the late 1880s, R.P. and Jennie Scellars, the new owners of the birthplace cottage, replaced the maple tree west of the cottage with a stock barn and, in 1890, had the cottage turned 90 degrees and attached to a two-story house they had moved to the site *(Figure 2)*.

In 1917 the wooden South Downey Street Bridge was replaced with one made of concrete. The new owners of the Wright house, the Pennocks, demolished the nineteenth-century barn on their property in the 1920s; the lumber was re-used to construct a garage. In 1923 the second Hoover house was razed.

In 1887 Esther and Isaac Miles sold their farm to Samuel Branson; Branson sold it to O.C. Holloway in 1890. At that time an evergreen grove sheltered the house and barn on the east; there was an apple orchard on the south; and other trees were on the north and west. The Holloways used the house, barn, and other outbuildings that had been constructed by Miles and cultivated the orchard. In 1890 they farmed fifty-seven acres and kept cattle, horses, and hogs. In 1893 Holloway hired Homer Baker to dig a well on the property.[16] He had a windmill installed to pump water from the well in the early twentieth century. Between 1925 and 1935, Holloway built a garage. The Holloways also built a shed that they used as a woodshed and storage space.[17] The Thompson Farm changed hands during this period as well with Oliver and Elizabeth Endsley owning the farm in 1888 and selling it to James Yetter in 1899.

[16]NPS, *Buildings in the Core-Area*, 133-139.
[17]U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, National Register of Historic Places, "Inventory—Nomination Form, Herbert Hoover National Historic Site," 7-4.

1886–1934 Landscape Chronology Legend

1 Laban Miles house

2 Staples house

3 Mackey house

4 Hildebrand house
Demolished, 1923

5 Methodist Church

6 Garvin house

7 Hayhurst house constructed,

8 Herbert Hoover birthplace cottage
Turned 90 degrees, Scellers' two-story building added, 1890
Two shed roofs added to rear, 1899

11 Maple tree

12 Siberian crab-apple tree

13 Jesse Hoover's Blacksmith Shop
Demolished, prior to 1895

14 Wright house

15 P.T. Smith house

16 Miles farmhouse

17 Levi Forney house

18 Miles barn

19 Plank sidewalk

20 Miles outbuildings constructed, 1880s

21 South Downey Street bridge constructed of wood, late 1800s
Rebuilt in concrete, 1917

22 Cedar County Fairgrounds in operation, 1886-early 1900s

23 Methodist parsonage constructed, prior to 1895

24 Varney house constructed, 1899

25 Director's house constructed, 1905

26 Leech house constructed, 1920

27 Kerosene street lamp

71 Footbridge, replaced 1886

Wetherall Street
Poplar Street
Penn Street
Street
Street
First Street
Water Street
Cedar Street
Downey
Creek
Wapsinonoc
1
2
3
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
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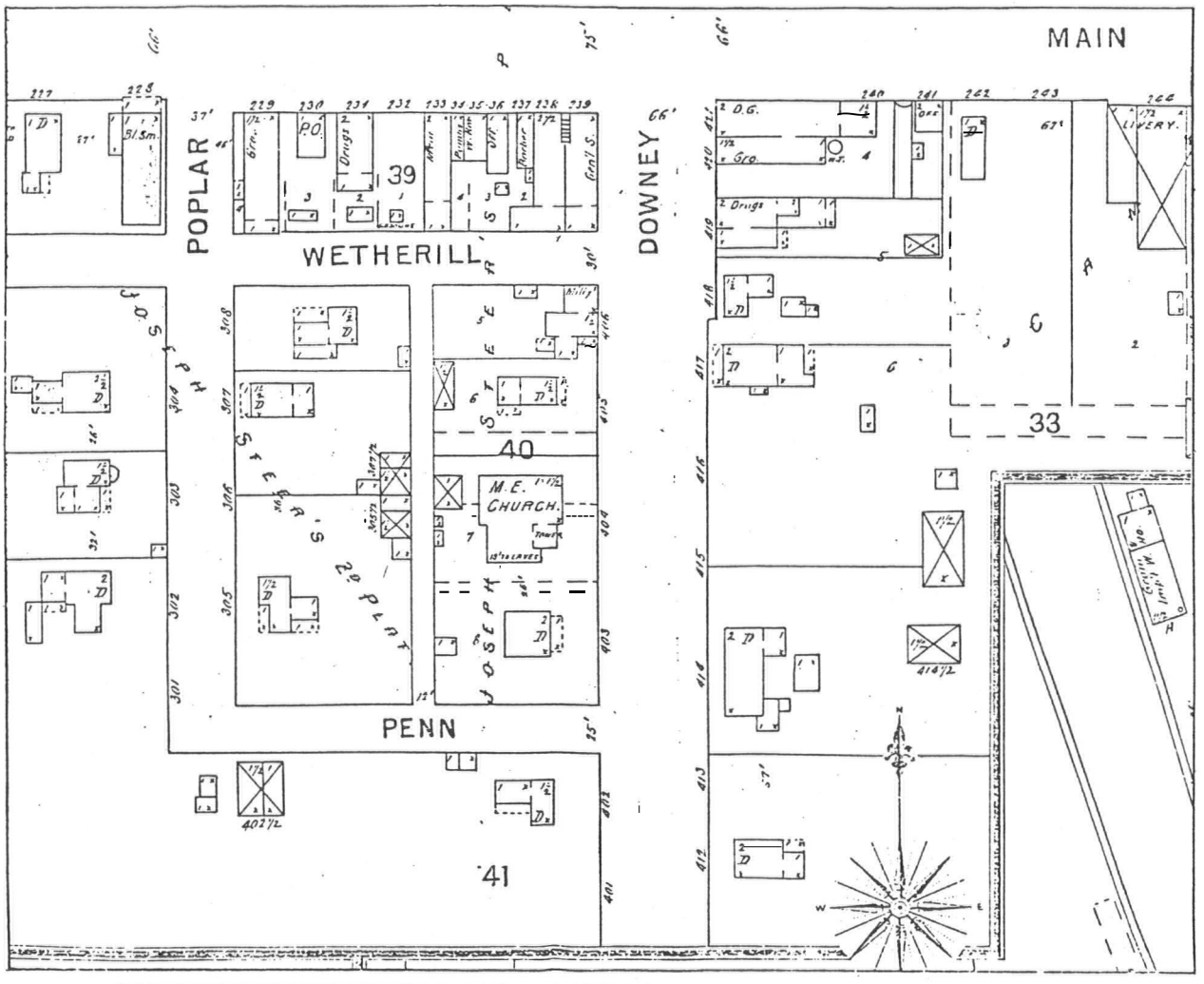
22
23
24
25
26
27
71
N
0 20 40 60 80 100 200
scale in feet

1886-1934
LANDSCAPE CHRONOLOGY

Herbert Hoover
National Historic Site
Cultural Landscape Report

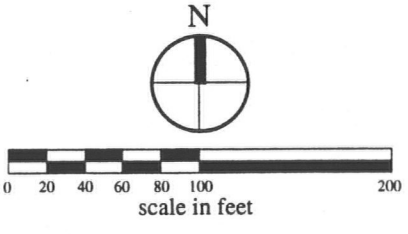
Map prepared by Land and Community Associates, December 1994

Exhibit D. 1886–1934 Landscape Chronology.

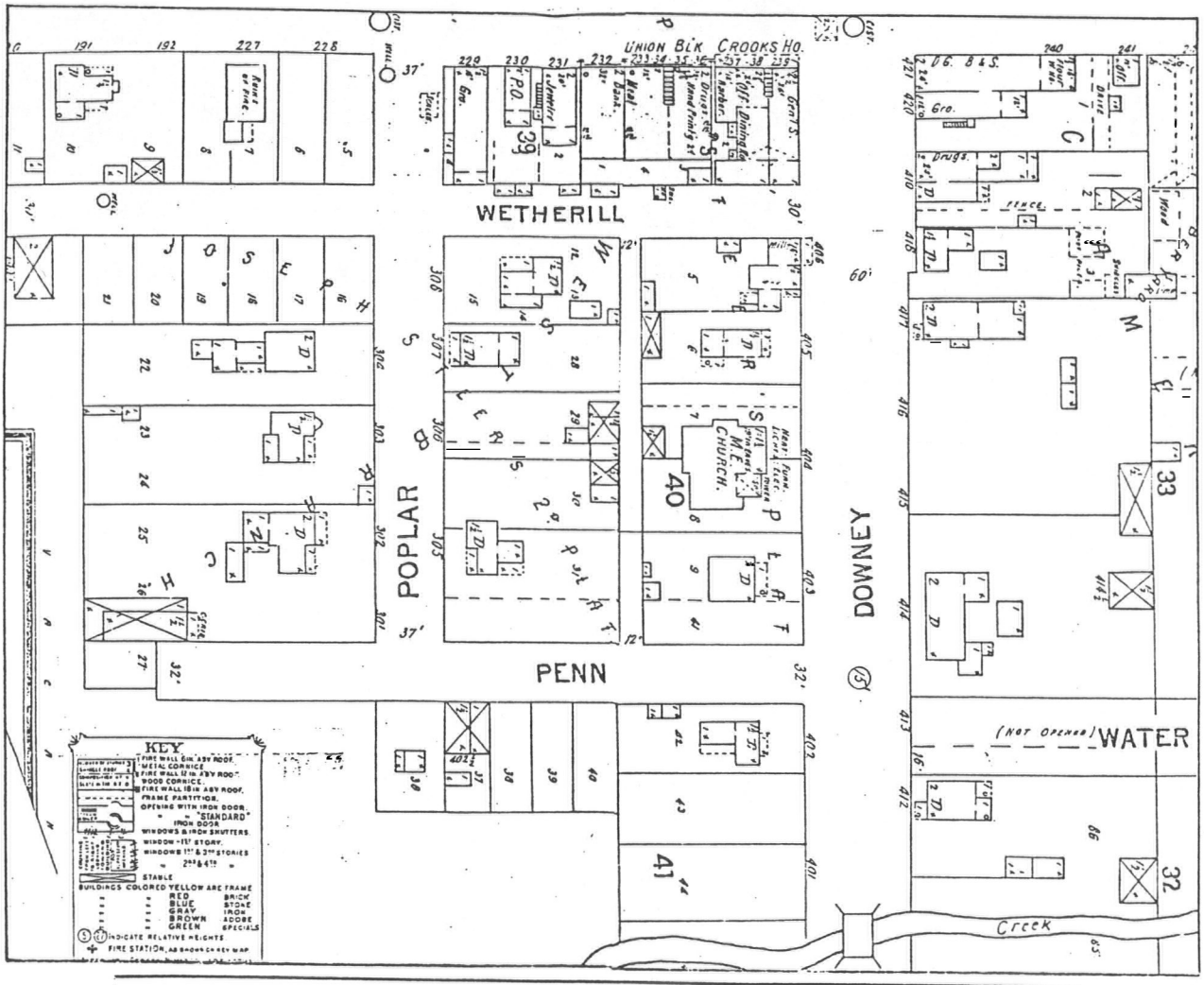


SANBORN MAP 1895

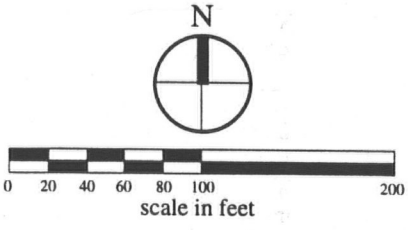
HOOVER HOMESITE, WEST BRANCH, IOWA



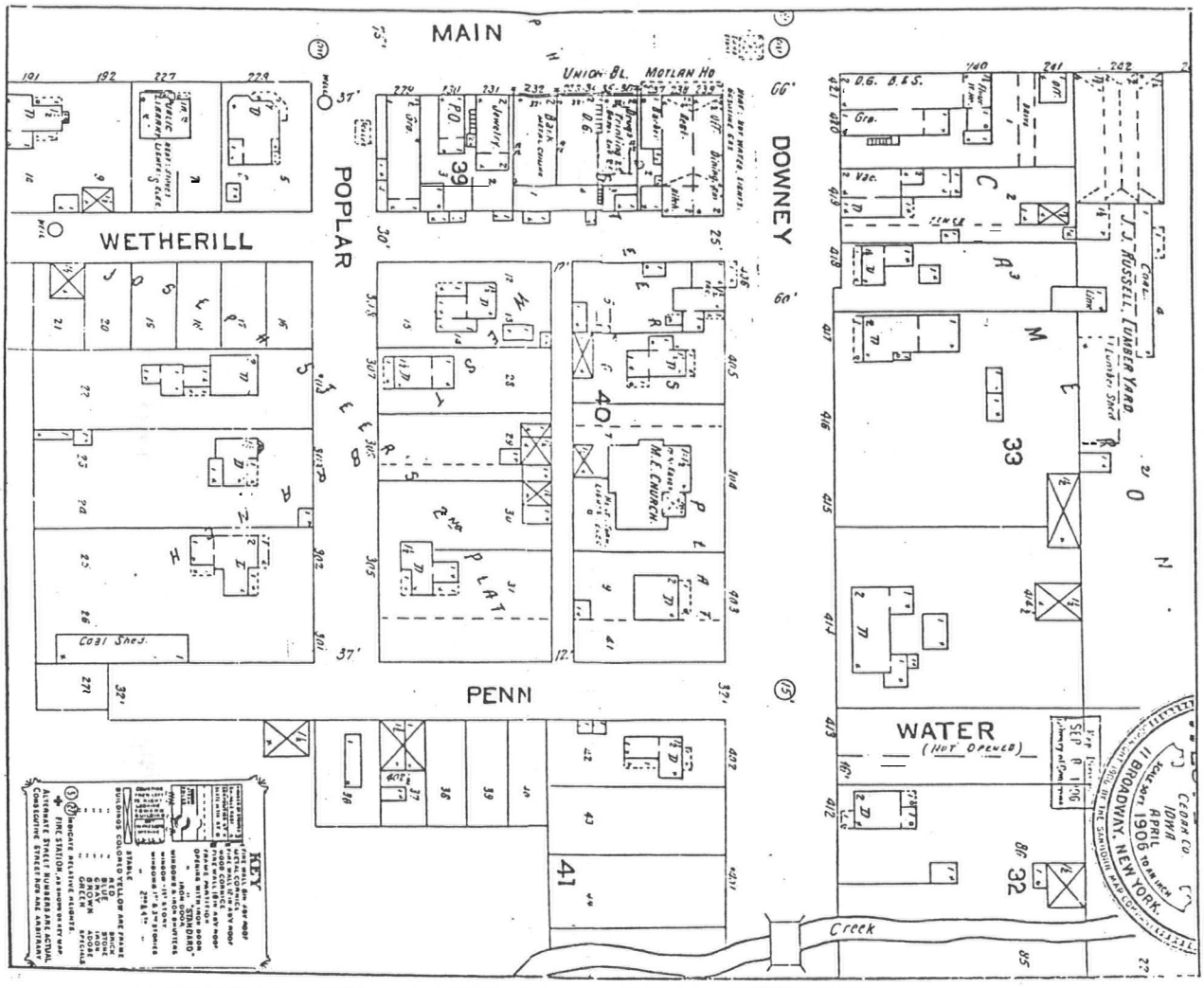
Map B. Sanborn Map, Hoover Homesite, West Branch, Iowa, 1895.



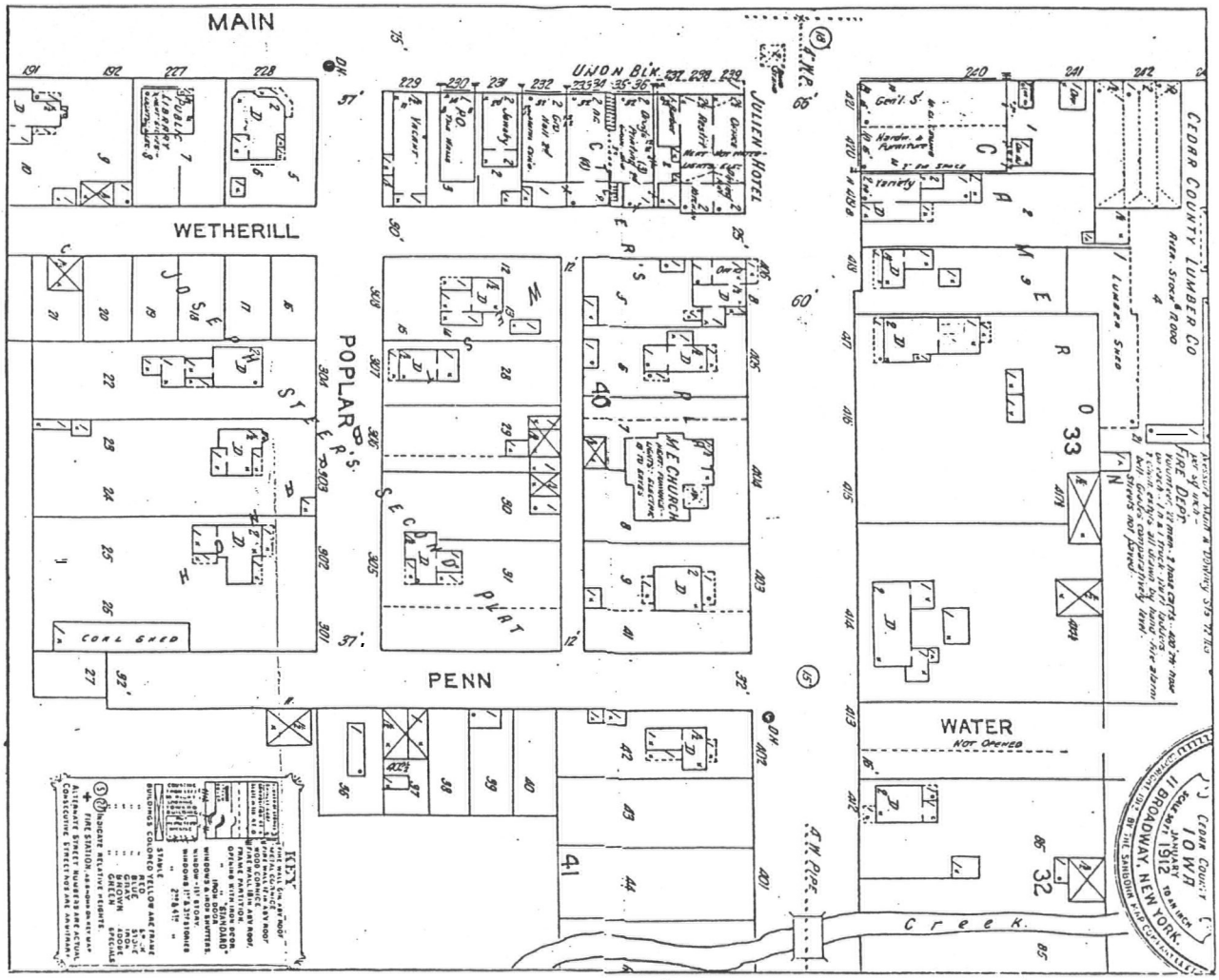
SANBORN MAP 1900
HOOVER HOMESITE, WEST BRANCH, IOWA



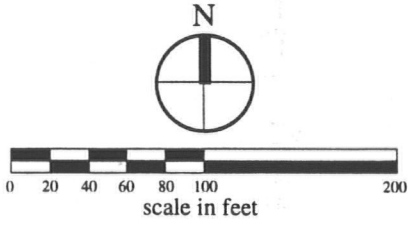
Map C. Sanborn Map, Hoover Homesite, West Branch, Iowa, 1900.



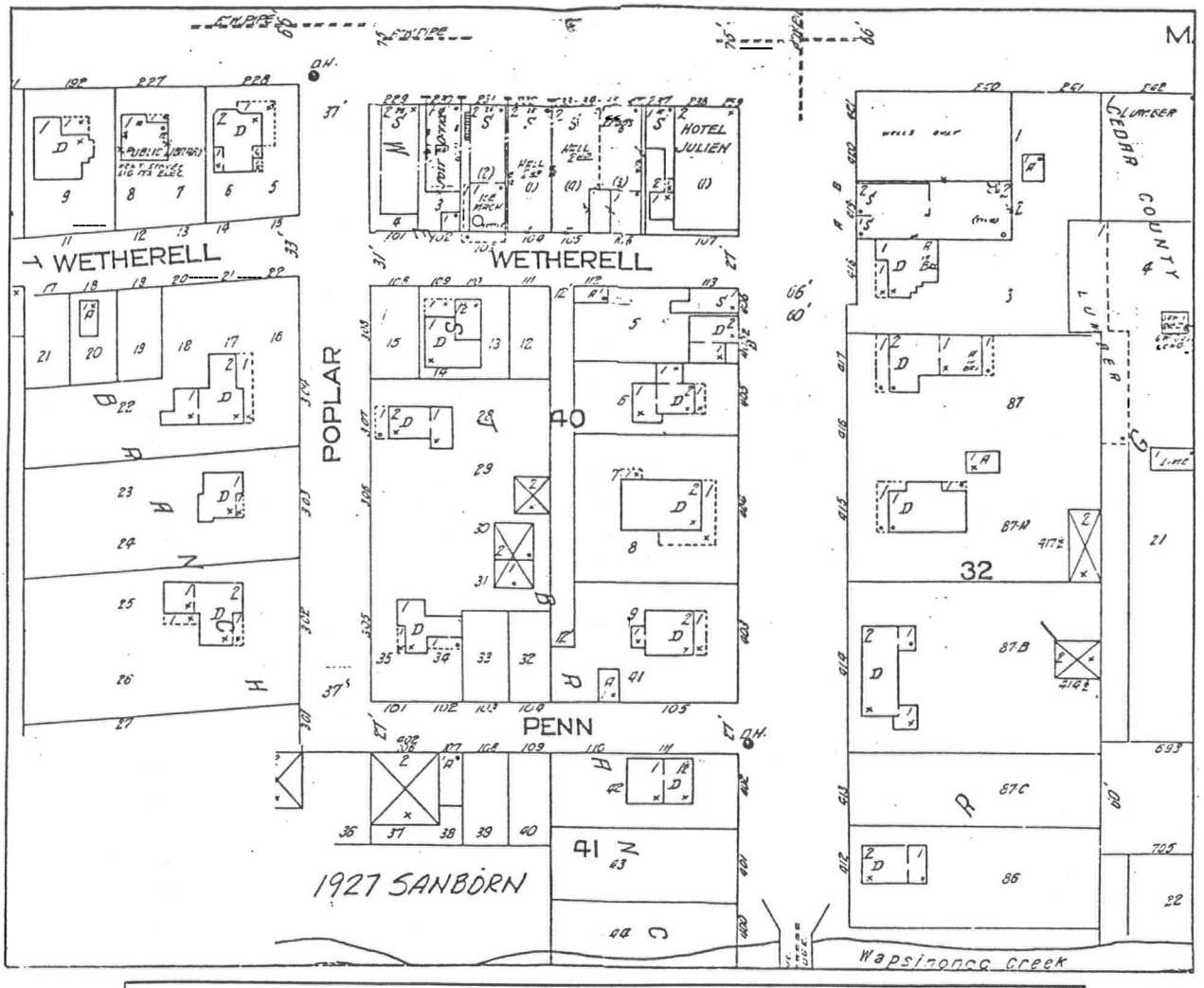
Map D. Sanborn Map, Hoover Homesite, West Branch, Iowa, 1906.



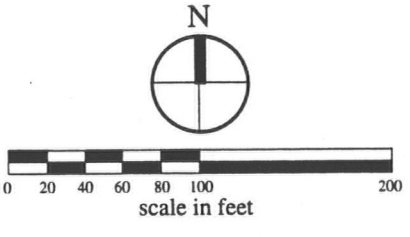
SANBORN MAP 1912
HOOVER HOMESITE, WEST BRANCH, IOWA



Map E. Sanborn Map, Hoover Homesite, West Branch, Iowa, 1912.



SANBORN MAP 1927
HOOVER HOMESITE, WEST BRANCH, IOWA



Map F. Sanborn Map, Hoover Homesite, West Branch, Iowa, 1927.

1928–1934 *(Exhibit D: 1886–1934 Landscape Chronology)*

There was public interest in the Hoover birthplace by 1928, even before Hoover won the Republican nomination. Birthplace owner Jennie Scellars placed a wood sign in the cottage yard identifying the property as his birthplace *(Figure 3)*. Scellars began conducting public tours of the cottage for a small fee before the election. His nomination as president stimulated even more interest with visitors traveling to West Branch to see the birthplace. In June of 1928, Lou Henry Hoover sent a letter to Herbert Hoover's cousin G. C. Hoover, a former mayor of West Branch, to authorize purchase of the birthplace from Scellars for a sum of $2,500 "or at a slightly advanced price." The increase was considered likely since the owner would expect a larger sum for the birthplace of the Republican nominee for president.[18]

G.C. Hoover continued to correspond with Lou Henry Hoover concerning the birthplace site during the summer of 1928. He made an offer of $3,000 to Jennie Scellars in early July, and later in the month reported to Mrs. Hoover that "there have been something like 2,500 registered so far" at the birthplace cottage and that he had "been unable to make any definite deal."[19] The 2,500 attendance figure indicates substantial public interest in the site from the beginning of Hoover's candidacy.

During the 1928 campaign Hoover stopped at West Branch, where volunteers from the newly formed Hoover Birthplace Committee had made arrangements for his appearance. This committee grew into the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society, Inc., which was formally established in 1939. This group of friends, relatives, and supporters of Herbert Hoover and their descendants and predecessors have remained involved with the birthplace to the present. The committee was an outgrowth of the Cedar County Hoover Farm Club that had organized to support Hoover's candidacy in the spring before the Republican convention. W. B. (Bill) Anderson, who would enjoy a long association with the birthplace site and the Hoover family, was one of the original officers of the farm club.[20]

Herbert Hoover's political career peaked when he won the 1928 presidential election and was inaugurated as president in 1929. On Hoover's fifty-fifth birthday in 1929, the Pilgrim Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in Iowa City dedicated a bronze plaque in his honor and

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[18]Letter quoted in Frank T. Nye, Jr. *Doors of Opportunity: The Life and Legacy of Herbert Hoover* (West Branch: Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association, Inc., 1988), 56.
[19]Quoted in Frank T. Nye, Jr. *Doors of Opportunity: The Life and Legacy of Herbert Hoover* (West Branch: Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association, Inc., 1988), 57.
[20]Nye, 81-82.

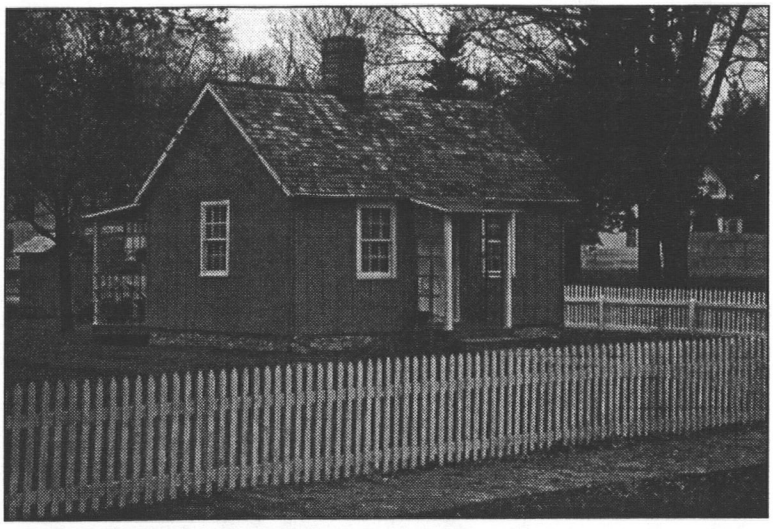

Figure 1. Birthplace cottage as restored by NPS (1994).

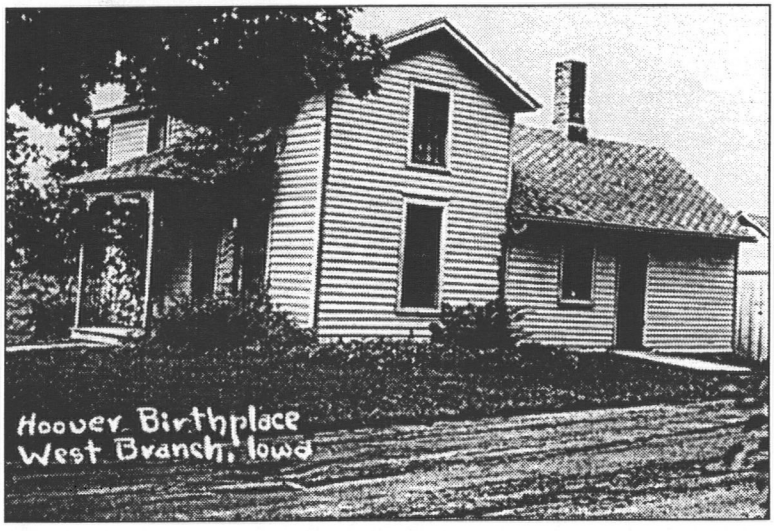

Figure 2. Birthplace cottage following alteration by Jennie and R. P. Scellars (1928).

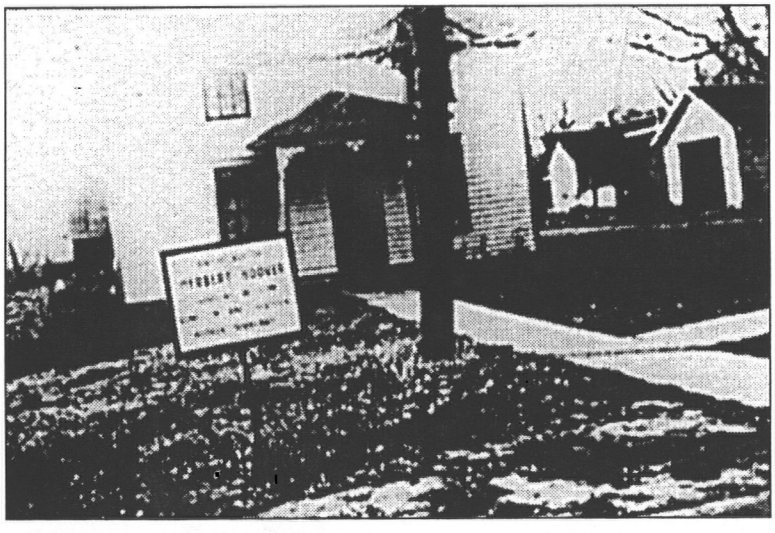

Figure 3. Sign Jennie Scellars placed in front of birthplace; cottage not visible behind the two-story house R. P. and Jennie Scellars had attached to the cottage (1928).

had it mounted on a boulder and installed in front of the birthplace cottage *(Figure 4)*. The owner, Jennie Scellars, had the cottage and her two-story house painted cream in preparation for the dedication. Once the identifying bronze plaque was in place, Jennie Scellars' wooden sign was removed from the site.[21] In addition to conducting tours of the cottage, Scellars allowed concerts to be performed under a maple tree in front of the residence. According to Frank Nye, 34,348 visitors had signed Jennie Scellars' guest book by the summer of 1931, twenty-eight months into the Hoover presidency.[22] The elevation southwest of the birthplace was called an overlook by some, even during the term of Hoover's presidency. Bill Anderson, in particular, saw its potential as a viewpoint for the birthplace and surrounding countryside.[23]

In 1930 J.N. "Ding" Darling, well-known *Des Moines Register* cartoonist and a close friend of Hoover's, began to pursue the purchase of the property for Lou Henry Hoover. Darling worked with Hoover's boyhood friend Fred Albin to acquire the cottage for the Hoover family. He reported that although Scellars would not part with the property, she "is not doing as badly by the job as we had feared. It is kept in apple-pie order; the yard is well-sodded, and flowers around the house make it very attractive to the eye. There are no refreshment stands either on the premises or near it, and Mrs. Scellars, herself, conducts the job of showing the visiting tourists through the house with fine dignity and sympathetic affection."[24] Although Jennie Scellars would never sell the cottage herself, Darling's and Albin's negotiations were not without the ultimate desired result. When Scellars died in 1934, her heirs agreed to sell the property to Fred Albin, who purchased it on the Hoovers' behalf in 1935.

1935–1966 *(Exhibit E: 1935–1966 Landscape Chronology)*

Fred Albin immediately transferred the property to the Hoovers. Following its purchase, Lou Henry and Herbert Hoover considered two alternative plans to develop the site for public use. They considered either restoring the birthplace cottage to its late nineteenth-century appearance or removing it to create a small park or children's playground. Both alternatives included siting a statue of the Egyptian goddess Isis on the grounds.[25] The statue, sculpted by Auguste Puttemans, was a gift of Belgian children, refugees, and soldiers to Herbert Hoover in gratitude for his World War I relief program. The sculpture depicts a veiled figure in Egyptian robes holding three flames

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[21]Nye, 133.
[22]Nye, 131.
[23]Interview between J. Timothy Keller and Frederick W. Schneider of LCA with Floyd Fawcett, 4 December 1994, West Branch, Iowa.
[24]Darling to Lawrence Richey, 26 September 1930, quoted in Nye, 135.
[25]Isis was a mother goddess who symbolized life, fertility, and prosperity.

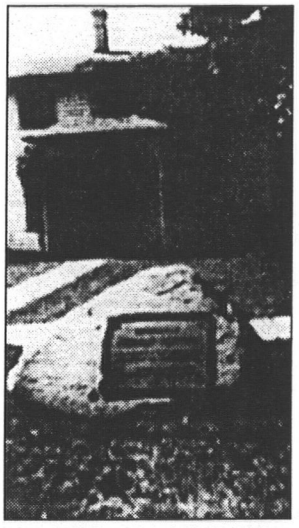


Figure 4. Plaque and boulder that replaced Jennie Scellars' wooden sign in front of the birthplace cottage (1935).

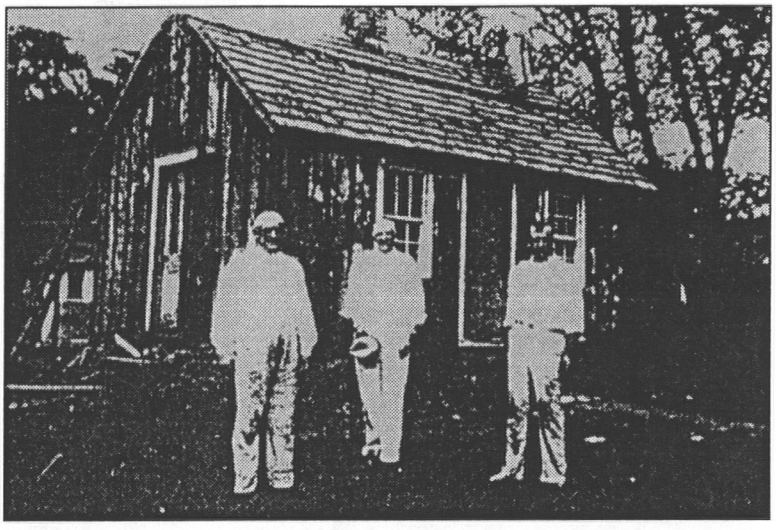


Figure 5. Birthplace cottage during restoration (1938).

Figure 6. Caretaker's cottage (1948).

1935–1966 Landscape Chronology Legend

1 Laban Miles house

2 Staples house

3 Mackey house

6 Garvin house

7 Hayhurst house

8 Herbert Hoover birthplace cottage restored, 1938

10 Pump

14 Wright house

15 P.T. Smith house

16 Miles farmhouse alterations, concrete walkway, late 1940s

17 Levi Forney house

18 Miles barn

19 Boardwalk, concrete sidewalk

20 Miles outbuildings: corncrib constructed, 1940
Demolish privy; construct oat bins, chicken house, machine shed, late 1940s

21 South Downey Street bridge

22 Cornfields on old fairground site

23 Methodist parsonage removed from Park, 1956

24 Varney house

25 Director's house, restored and painted yellow, 1964

26 Leech house

28 Caretaker's cottage constructed, 1938

29 Fence installed, 1938

30 Flagstone walk installed, 1938
Curved walkway installed, 1952

31 Retaining wall installed, regrading and seeding banks, 1939

32 Footbridge installed, 1939

33 Isis statue installed, 1939

34 Flagstone walk installed, 1939

35 Picnic area developed, 1940

36 Row of evergreens, 1948

37 Shuffleboard courts and horseshoe pits, 1950-1952

38 Garage constructed at site of Scellers' barn, second garage constructed, 1951-1952

39 Birthplace gateway constructed, 1952

40 Park gateway constructed, 1952

41 Boy Scouts and Negus Family Association shelters constructed, 1953

42 Two houses removed from the Park, 1954

43 Overlook developed, 1955-1961
Burial of Herbert Hoover and Lou Henry Hoover, 1964; gravesite landscaped, granite walkway and white marble blocks, installed, ledger stones places on graves, 1965-67

44 Loop road developed, 1951

45 King (Endsley) house removed from the Park, 1956

46 Sidewalk installed, 1956

47 Blacksmith shop constructed, 1957

48 Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum constructed, 1962
Auditorium added, 1964

49 Comfort stations constructed, 1962

50 Service station constructed, 1962-69

51 Quaker meetinghouse moved to site, 1964

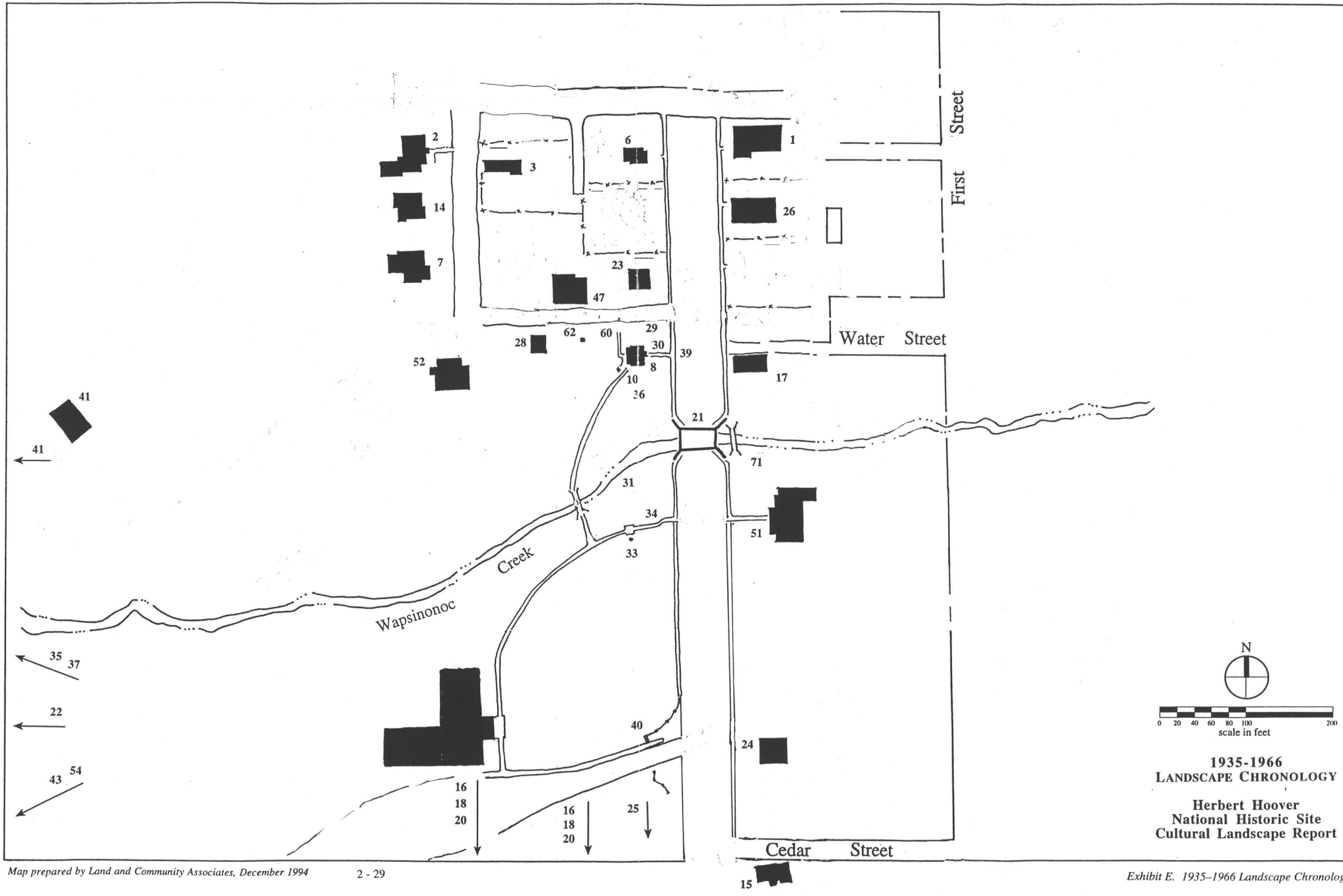
52 Maintenance building constructed 1964-1965

53 Several hundred nut tress planted, 1965-1966

54 Guard shelter constructed at gravesite, 1965

70 Penn Street moved 80' north, 1956

71 Footbridge demolished, 1937

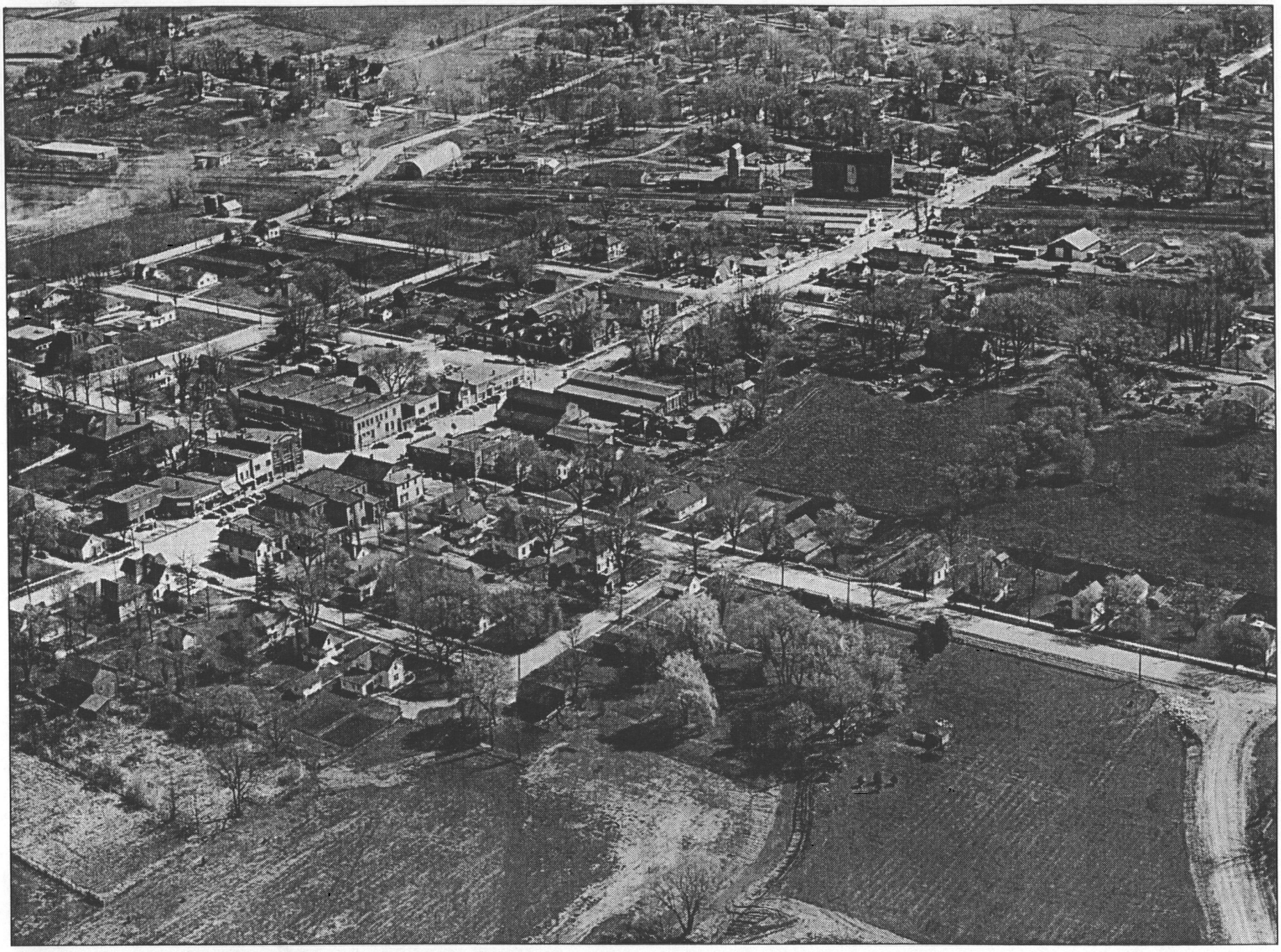


Map prepared by Land and Community Associates, December 1994

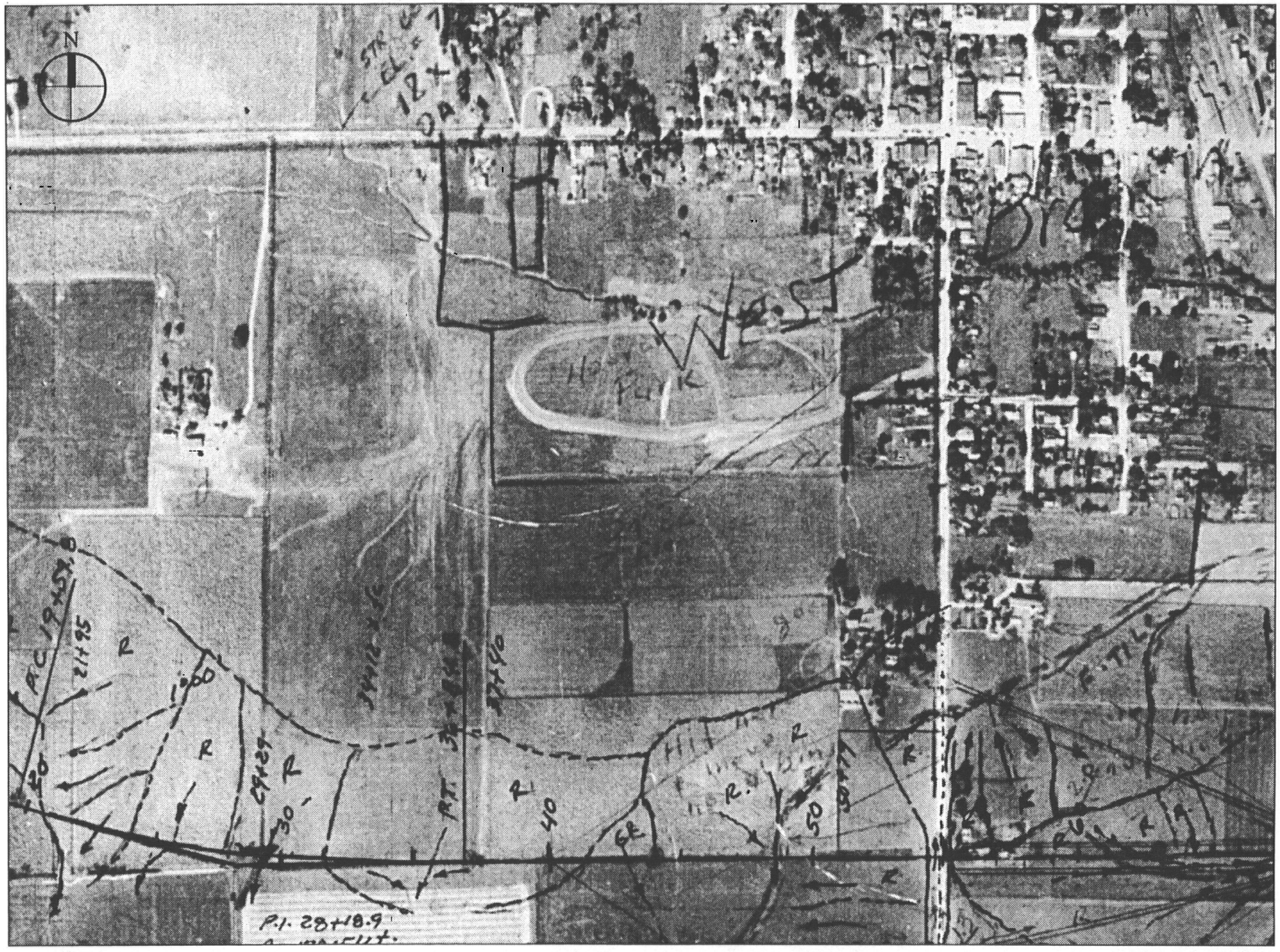
Exhibit E. 1935–1966 Landscape Chronology.

0 100 200 300 400 500 1000
approximate scale in feet

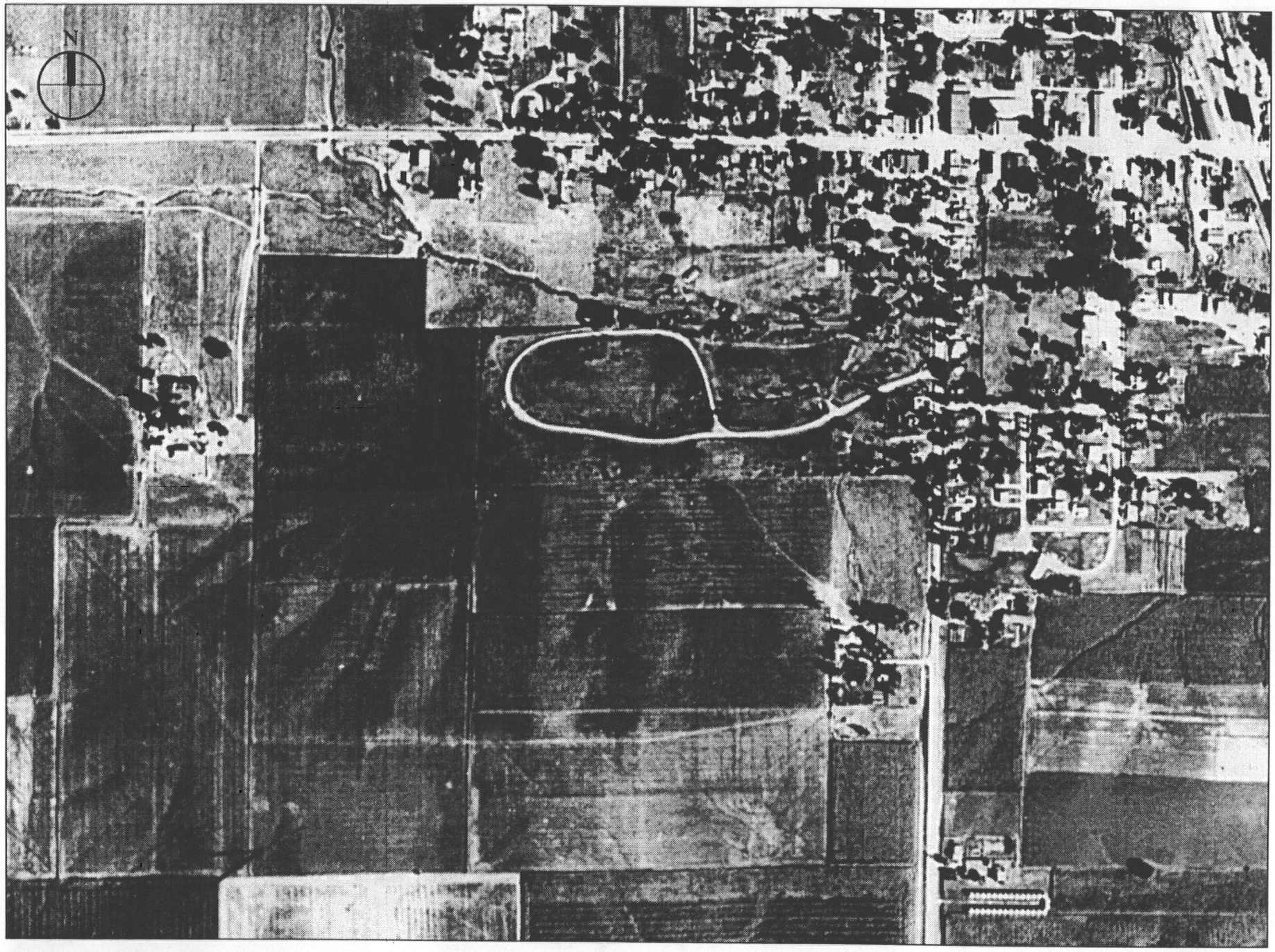
Map G. Aerial photograph of site, Iowa Department of Transportation, September 1936.



Map H. Oblique aerial photograph of developed area, looking northeast, from the 1995 West Branch Historical Calendar, photo taken in 1950.



Map I. Aerial photograph of site, Iowa Department of Transportation, October 1951.



Map J. Aerial photograph of site, Iowa Department of Transportation, September 1957.

(representative of past, present, and future) and the key of life. On the base of the statue an inscription, written in French, reads "I am that which was and is, and will ever be; and no mortal has yet lifted the veil which covers me." NPS historian Edwin Bearss has suggested that "the selection of Isis was probably made by Puttemans because of the suggestion of plenty, but that interpretation shares also the eternal wonder at the mystery of life."[26]

The Hoovers ultimately decided to retain the birthplace cottage. Despite this decision, the site still developed over time as both a commemorative site and a public park.

Although Mrs. Hoover used the term "restore" in her preliminary alternatives and Herbert Hoover was quoted that the birthplace was to be "restored," the term must be regarded in an early twentieth-century, non-professional context. Mrs. Hoover's concept of restoration would not be considered analogous to a contemporary NPS definition and practice of restoration. In fact, the Hoover's treatment might be more akin to what would be termed rehabilitation in contemporary practice since the site was to incorporate features from the boyhood era as well as memorial and utilitarian elements.

The Hoovers were adamant about returning the cottage to its birthplace-era orientation and size and advocated removing modern additions. They were responsible for the cottage being painted white; it had been painted a cream color when Jennie Scellars was the owner. It appears that Lou Henry Hoover always assumed that the birthplace would be white or a light color. There are several mentions of a preference for white or a light color to make the birthplace more visually prominent; Nye quotes at least two letters from Lou Henry Hoover concerning the color in relationship to the caretaker's cottage.[27] Lou Henry Hoover interviewed and wrote to neighbors and other Hoover family members for their memories of such features as windows, the chimney, back porch, and front entry since her husband had been too young to remember living in the birthplace. The Hoovers appear to have valued small, utilitarian elements, such as the pump that was to be installed again inside the cottage's back porch. It is ironic, however, that while they wished to remove the two-story house moved to the site and attached to the cottage by the Scellars, they would consider attaching a caretaker's cottage to the cottage. Lou Henry emphasized, however, that the new structure should be subordinate to the old by not exceeding the height of the cottage and by being painted gray to "harmonize with the surroundings" if the birthplace were to be painted white.[28] The

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[26]U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, Denver Service Center, *Historic Structures Report: The Hoover Houses and Community Structures, Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, West Branch, Iowa*, by Edwin C. Bearss (30 November 1971), 47.
[27]Nye, 148 and 153.
[28]Nye, 148.

addition of the caretaker's cottage and the incorporation of the Isis sculpture established precedents for using the landscape to meet pragmatic site needs and to introduce features with no nineteenth-century association onto the site.

Most of the Hoover's restoration of the birthplace cottage and treatment of its immediate environs occurred in 1938 and 1939. To create an even lot, Herbert Hoover's son Allan bought from Anna Kniese an additional strip of land adjacent to the former Scellars property. The purchase was in response to his mother's desire to "square out the grounds."[29] In her attempts to recreate the historic appearance of the cottage, Lou Henry Hoover relied on the recollections of various members of the Hoover family. During her research, she consulted the surviving members of Herbert Hoover's family who were familiar with the cottage during Hoover's boyhood years. Lou Henry Hoover provided her draft manuscript to those who had provided her information and revised the manuscript based on the comments she received. The former First Lady's intention, it appears, was to return the birthplace to its appearance, circa 1874.[30] She combined the results of her research and investigations in a manuscript entitled "Memories of a Little House," which remains the most authoritative source about the appearance of the birthplace cottage and its landscape. Meticulously researched, reviewed for accuracy by people who had actually seen and visited the Hoover home during Hoover's boyhood, and compiled by an individual with first-hand knowledge about nineteenth-century Iowa communities, Lou Henry Hoover's work appears to be the most comprehensive and accurate account of the boyhood home and landscape. NPS historian Ed Bearss pointed out in his 1971 historic structures report that Lou Henry Hoover, like her husband, had spent her youth in a small Iowa community; consequently her understanding of a nineteenth-century domestic landscape would appear to be substantial and authoritative. Her work provided the basis for much of the NPS research of the 1970s and the historic structures report for the birthplace; it remains a credible source today.

Lou Henry Hoover's investigations revealed Herbert Hoover's mother Huldah Hoover as an active gardener who cultivated a number of flowers. As was the custom of the time, neighbors and relatives exchanged and traded seeds, roots, bulbs, and cuttings. It is logical to assume that Huldah Hoover's garden was not static and that the annual plants and bulbs, in particular, may have varied from year to year depending upon her tastes, health, leisure time available for gardening, and perhaps even the rainfall and temperatures for a particular season. The varieties identified for the

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[29]Nye, 148.

[30]U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, Denver Service Center, *Historic Structures Report: The Hoover Houses and Community Structures, Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, West Branch, Iowa*, by Edwin C. Bearss (30 November 1971), 87.

Hoover yard included phlox, wild sweet Williams, columbine, petunias, balsam, verbenas, lilacs, peonies, iris, and tulips with portulaca bordering the walk.

In 1938 Lou Henry Hoover had the Scellars' two-story house removed and returned the birthplace to its original orientation. Bruce McKay, the architect hired by the Hoovers to complete the project, oversaw the installation of a new foundation and a new roof on the birthplace cottage and the construction of a caretaker's cottage nearby *(Figures 5,6)*. They had the caretaker's cottage stained dark brown to be unobtrusive in comparison with the white-painted birthplace cottage. Lou Henry Hoover played an integral part in each step of the process. In addition to supervising the restoration or construction of buildings on the site, she approved the re-grading and landscaping of the yard based on her research, the installation of the stone walkway leading from the cottage to the street, the design of the new wood fence around the cottage yard, and the planting of trees and ivy to screen the caretaker's cottage from view. Herbert Hoover seems to have been less interested in the project than his wife, at least initially. The June 17, 1937, edition of *The West Branch Times* quoted him, "This isn't my idea, but it would please Mrs. Hoover, who is the one who wants to have the old home restored."

In 1939 Lou Henry Hoover directed that the Belgian statue of Isis be installed "in a position to be contemplative of the house [birthplace cottage]."[31] Fred Albin suggested that there should be plantings along the borders of the birthplace grounds and that "a proper setting of shrubbery" should be set around the Isis statue *(Figures 7,8)*. He also advocated that a low stone wall should be built along the edge of the Wapsinonoc Creek to separate "that part of the grounds maintained by lawn mower and the part allowed to grow up more or less wild, along the creek bank." Albin believed that the birthplace cottage itself should be left without shrubs that might detract from its modest appearance.[32] Bruce McKay concurred with Albin about the landscape setting for the statue, remarking, "Mr. Hoover wants the statue looking towards the cottage...But then there is the problem of the way the light falls on it, the background, and many other things. I have worked on placing it near the cottage or across the creek. It should have a background of evergreens, as I

[31]Lou Henry Hoover to J.B. McKay, 23 August 1937, Genealogy File: Box 17, "West Branch Little House" Correspondence, 1938-1941, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum.
[32]Fred Albin to Allan Hoover, 29 April 1939, quoted in Nye, 165.

Figure 7. Isis statue shortly following its installation near the birthplace cottage (early 1940s).

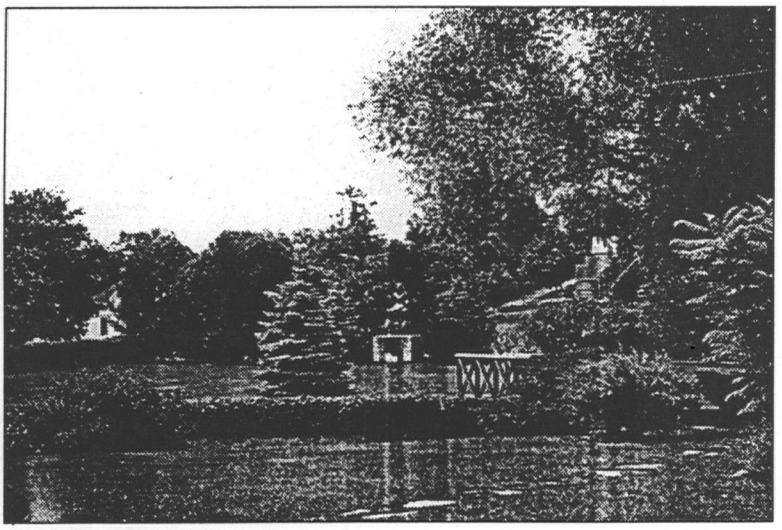

Figure 8. Shrubs planted in 1939 to provide a backdrop for the Isis statue (1948).

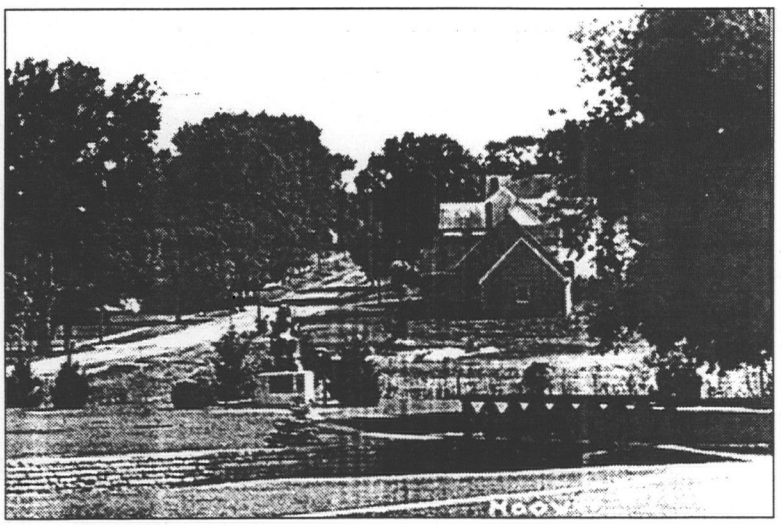

Figure 9. Walks and footbridge following installation of Isis statue (early 1940s).

think it is a little foreign to the cornfields you have here."[33] Bruce McKay also suggested establishing a museum to be housed in a building similar to a Quaker meetinghouse.[34]

The Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society was incorporated in 1939 at the suggestion of Lou Henry Hoover, who wanted a responsible organization to assume management and supervision of the birthplace. The articles of incorporation stated the society's objective: "to acquire, take care of and preserve the cottage and the surrounding grounds."[35] Allan Hoover deeded the birthplace cottage and premises to the society but became one of its trustees and retained a role in the decision-making process. The Hoovers also supplied the society with funds. The Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society expanded and landscaped the birthplace grounds as well as maintaining them for visitors. Several times the society considered hiring a professional "landscape gardener" or "landscape artist" to plan the layout of the grounds. Allan Hoover quashed the suggestion each time; he felt that the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society should not "develop the house and yard into a show place" but should attempt to maintain it to look as it did when owned by Jesse Hoover.[36]

In 1939 post-and-wire fencing was installed around the property boundary and a retaining wall was constructed along Wapsinonoc Creek. The society purchased one-third of an acre of land west of the birthplace grounds from Anna Kniese to obtain soil for regrading the land on both sides of Wapsinonoc Creek. In addition to re-grading and seeding the area with grass, the society had flagstone walks installed and a footbridge over the creek to allow easy access between the birthplace cottage and the statue of Isis *(Figure 9)*. The Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society had asked Herbert Hoover to design the footbridge but he declined, explaining that he could not recall the original appearance of the bridges in West Branch.[37]

Kaiser's Wayside Gardens, Inc. of Marion, Iowa was engaged to provide plantings for the birthplace grounds in the early 1940s. Correspondence between Frank L. Pearson, a West Branch banker and charter member and officer of the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society, and George Kaiser, horticulturalist and owner of Wayside Gardens, indicates that Wayside not only provided

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[33] Minutes of the Organization Meeting of the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society, 22 March 1939, Hoover Presidential Library Association, Deeds to Property: Box 1, L.C. Rummells File, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum.

[34] Minutes of the Organization Meeting of the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society, 22 March 1939, Hoover Presidential Library Association, Deeds to Property: Box 1, L.C. Rummells File, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum.

[35] Articles of Incorporation for the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society, West Branch Collections, Hoffman-Sayles: Box 2, Speight, Glenn, Ac. 381, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum.

[36] Allan Hoover to Fred Albin, 16 May 1939, Records of the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation, Inc. Box 3, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum.

[37] Allan Hoover to Fred Albin, 8 September 1939, Records of the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation, Inc. Box 3, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum. The designer of the bridge has not yet been identified.

plantings for the birthplace grounds but also advice on plant selection and, at least, some sketches. The correspondence describes most of these plantings as planned for the creek vicinity and alludes to some damaged material that would require replacement. The original plantings and their replacements have not been identified conclusively but an invoice from November 1940 identifies installation of the following plant material: one blue spruce, one Pfitzer, two smaller blue spruce, eight Boston ivy, eight Japanese quince, nine red barbery, and three cistena plum. In addition the files of the Maintenance Division of the NHS contain a list identified as "Plantings at Hoover Birthplace" and further identified as "By Kaiser's Wayside Nursery, Cedar Rapids, in 1941."[38] The list identifies the plant materials in the several following locations:[39]

> Along the fence between the two houses. From North to South
> Along West fence, East of pond: North to South
> Around Brown House (believed to be the caretaker's house)
> Along Street
> Along south line
> Behind statue
> Sides of Statue
> Front side of Statue
> By tables
> North of creek
> By Grape Arbor
> East of Statue
> By Creek and on Retaining Wall

Apparently the two houses mentioned in the list would have been the birthplace cottage and the caretaker's house. Plantings listed for the fenceline included (sic) Syringa Varinella, Snowball, Honeysuckle, Lilac (white), Golden Elder, Black Haw, Fern Leaf Sumac, Coral Commars Dogwood, Lilac, American Highbush Cranberry, and Spirea Thunbergia. Sistina Plum was listed for both sides of the gate between the two structures. Along the west fence, east of the pond the list identifies Persian Lilacs and American High Bush Cranberry. Plantings listed for the corners and sides of the "Brown House" included Pyramid Comunus, Juniper Spruce, Spirea Thungeria, Spirea Anthony Waterer, Concol or Fir, and Green spruce. Plantings listed for "Along Street"

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[38] "Plantings at Hoover Birthplace," Hoover Birthplace Plantings File, Maintenance Division, Herbert Hoover NHS. The list may date from 1941 or have been copied or compiled at a later date.

[39] The nomenclature and capitalization used in the list on file have been used in this section of the document to avoid errors of interpretation.

were "Hedge, Spirea Von Houti" and for "Along south line" were "Hedge, High bush cranberry, Lantana." Correspondence to Lou Henry Hoover for the same year identified vegetation used in the Hoover's restoration scheme as including tulips in brick-bordered beds, pansies, bleeding hearts, bluebells, peonies, iris, columbine, shrubs, pines, and weeping willows.[40]

The Kaiser list also identifies plant materials for the sides of the statue as follows:

Behind Statue = Douglas fir, Norway Spruce, Douglas Fir
Sides of Statue = Blue Spruce
Front side of Statue = Mugho Monana Pine
East of Statue = Austrian Pine

Additional plant materials and locations identified include the following:

By tables = 3 Scotch Pines
North of creek = Concolor Firs
By Grape Arbor = Austrian Pines
By Creek and on Retaining Wall = Pfitzer Junipers

Evidently, Kaiser also was involved in planting a number of poplar trees at the birthplace. A letter from the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation to Kaiser in 1941 indicated displeasure at the number of dead poplars that were responsible for uncomplimentary remarks from the visitors who were "coming in big numbers."[41]

To encourage visitation and public use of the property, the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society had the triangle of land beneath the willows south of Wapsinonoc Creek developed into a picnic area in 1940.

During the early 1940s, Herbert Hoover sponsored the donation of two eighty-acre farms to the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society (the donation process lasted for a period of several years, becoming final in 1943). Edgar Rickard owned one of the farms, located in Nodaway County, Missouri. Hoover's aunt, Mattie Hoover Pemberton, owned the other, located in Marshall County, Iowa. One of the conditions of the Pemberton farm donation specified that Mattie Pemberton would have use of it during her lifetime. Apparently Hoover intended the farms to be sold and the

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[40]Mrs. Stratton to Lou Henry Hoover, Genealogy File: Box 17, "West Branch Little House" Correspondence, 1938-1941, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum.
[41]Correspondence with George Kaiser, Wayside Gardens, 1940-1941. Records of the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation, Inc. Box 3, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Museum.

profits used to advance the interests of the society.[42] The Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society sold both properties in 1947.

Additional funds came from the Iowa State Legislature which approved a two-year appropriation of $1,200.00 per annum for the birthplace for 1942 and 1943 at the request of the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society The 1943 and 1945 legislatures each renewed the appropriation, extending it to 1947.

On January 7, 1944, Lou Henry Hoover died in the Hoovers' New York apartment. Funeral services were held in New York City and she was buried in California. Following her death, it appears that the Hoover's son Allan increased his involvement with the West Branch site and assumed his mother's former role as spokesperson for the Hoover family concerning the birthplace.

In 1945 Herbert Hoover, Jr. wrote to the society that he and some friends would like to purchase forty or fifty acres of land adjacent to the birthplace cottage for a park. A few months later, Herbert Hoover, Sr. informed the society that they had no more than $20,000 (enough to buy about twenty-five acres) to spend for new property. In 1946 the society acquired the Norman Rogers property, encompassing a house, a lot, and fifteen acres of farmland known as "the old fairgrounds," a lot and a house belonging to Charles Worrall; five lots from L.C. and Mable Rummells; a barn and a lot belonging to the West Branch Telephone Company; and three one- or two-acre tracts from Anna Kniese, Cecil Butler, and Charles Pearson. The Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society also purchased the building now known as the director's house south of the present site of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum *(Figure 10)*. Originally the society planned to move the house from the birthplace grounds to develop a new entrance to the park. Harold Stotler purchased the house in 1947 on the understanding that he would have it relocated. The Stotlers lived in the house at its original site, however, for the next sixteen years.

O.C. Holloway and his son Fred owned the Isaac Miles Farm south of the park for over fifty years, finally selling it to Severin Pedersen in 1941. Fred Holloway built the farm's existing rough wood corncrib in 1940 shortly before the sale to Pedersen.[43] Severin Pedersen had also acquired what is now known as the Thompson Farm in 1935. Five years later, in 1946, Pedersen gave the

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[42]Nye, 176.
[43]National Register Form, 7-3.

farm to his daughter and her husband, Pauline and John Kofron.[44] The Kofrons were responsible for several new developments at the farm in the late 1940s. They renovated and altered the farmhouse, enlarged the cellar, added a bathroom (and demolished the privy), enclosed the front porch, removing the chimney from the center of the house and adding a new chimney on the north side, removed the east bay, had the house wired for electricity, and made other internal changes. Kofron also reinforced the stone foundation of the barn with cement. He laid a concrete walkway from the back porch of the house to the woodshed and built the chicken house and the machine shed. The machine shed was constructed out of lumber salvaged from an outbuilding that had previously stood on the site.[45]

In 1948 the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society sponsored Hoover Day, a celebration honoring Herbert Hoover's seventy-fourth birthday. Hoover Day succeeded in attracting visitors and the press to the birthplace, and the society initiated plans to celebrate Hoover's eightieth birthday in 1954. From 1948 to 1950, the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society concentrated its efforts on landscaping the grounds according to a master plan prepared by the Iowa Conservation Commission. Although the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society seriously considered constructing a Quaker meetinghouse/museum and presented the idea to Herbert Hoover in 1948, the suggestion was not implemented. The society had evergreen trees planted along the south property line, had the orchard graded, and directed the planting of ornamental and shade trees, shrubbery, and lawn grasses throughout the grounds. Following completion of this planting phase, the society focused on construction projects to prepare for the 1952 establishment of the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Park. Installations included picnic tables and facilities such as shuffleboard courts and horseshoe pits to foster the park's use as a picnic and recreation area. To encourage visitation, construction began on a serpentine driveway through the park in 1951. A stone gateway entrance to the park, designed by New York architect Raoul Delmare, was constructed by 1952 *(Figure 11).* Herbert Hoover's Iowa Award, which he had received in 1951, was placed on display in a newly built white-painted, brick and wood gateway in the fencing around the cottage *(Figures 12, 13).* The architecture firm of Eggers and Higgins designed the gateway. A curved walkway, probably flagstone, led from the gateway to the birthplace cottage. The Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society had the circa 1890s stock barn that had belonged to the Scellars converted into a garage and storage building and had a second garage constructed. The society also oversaw the installation of culverts across the Wapsinonoc Creek in the early 1950s. The official dedication of the Herbert Hoover

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[44]Two dates are given in NPS, *Buildings in the Core Area* as the year the Kofrons gained possession of the farm, 1946 and 1956. It is unclear at this time why there is a discrepancy but because John Kofron is credited with constructing several of the buildings at the farm in the 1940s the 1946 date has been used in this draft.
[45]NPS, *Buildings in the Core-Area*, 140-144.

Figure 10. The director's house (1966).

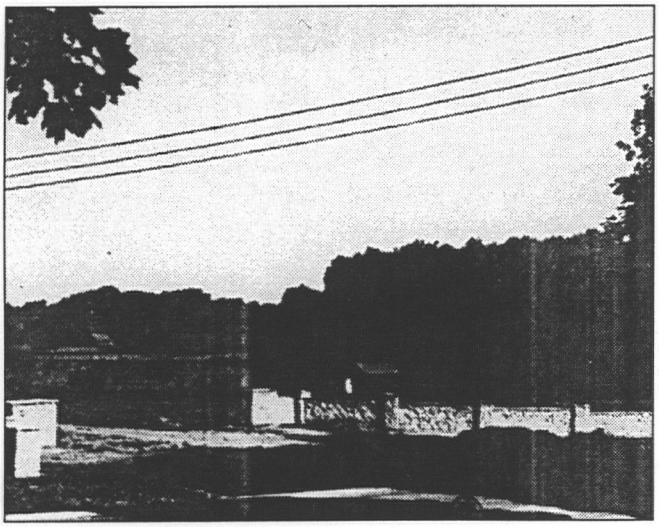

Figure 11. Stone gateway entrance to the park immediately following construction (1952).

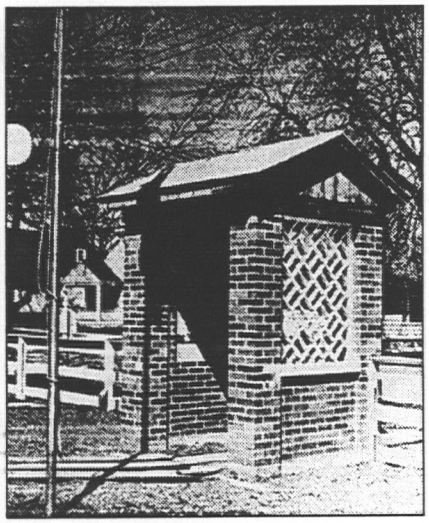

Figure 12. Gateway at the birthplace cottage during construction (1952).

Birthplace Park occurred on June 30, 1952. The development of the loop road in the vicinity of the old race track also dates from this period;[46] a comparison of aerial photographs from 1951 and 1957 confirms that the road was developed sometime between those years.[47] The western alignment of the loop road appears to correspond to the location of the abandoned but still-visible trace of the race track as apparent in a 1936 aerial photograph.[48]

The period between 1953 and 1964 witnessed important changes in both the administrative and the physical development of the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Park. The boundaries of the park continued to expand. In 1953 the members of the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society learned that a small corner of the park, which they had thought to be a street, actually belonged to Mrs. Frank Pierpont. They redeemed the land from a tax sale for Mrs. Pierpont, who then deeded it back to the society. In addition, the society purchased the Methodist church parsonage property that had once been the site of Jesse Hoover's blacksmith shop.

Construction and development projects in this period concentrated on adapting the park for visitor use and convenience rather than historic restoration. Picnic shelters, one donated by the Negus Family Association and the second donated by the Boy Scouts of America, were added to park facilities in 1953 *(Figure 14).* Herbert Hoover had been an active supporter of the Boy Scouts for many years and had served as the organization's honorary president. The shelters were used by visitors as well as by local residents holding family reunions and other events. A public comfort station was constructed in the same year. In 1954, as a part of Hoover's eightieth birthday celebration, the Boy Scouts set a bronze plaque in the stone fireplace of the shelter they had donated. It reads, "This shelter is dedicated by the Boy Scouts in Iowa, in tribute to the life of Herbert C. Hoover, as a reminder that the road of opportunity he traveled is open for all American youth." Allan Hoover authorized the removal of two houses from the park area that same year.

The national attention that focused on the birthplace during the 1954 celebration in honor of Herbert Hoover's eightieth birthday sparked the idea of a national organization affiliated with the park. The Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation was formed in 1954 and incorporated in 1955 to act on a national level to support the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society, which would continue to administer the park locally.

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[46]Floyd Fawcett, 4 December 1994.
[47]Aerial Photograph, Iowa Department of Transportation, 1951 and Aerial Photograph of Site, Iowa Department of Transportation, 1957.
[48]Aerial Photograph, Iowa Department of Transportation, 1936.

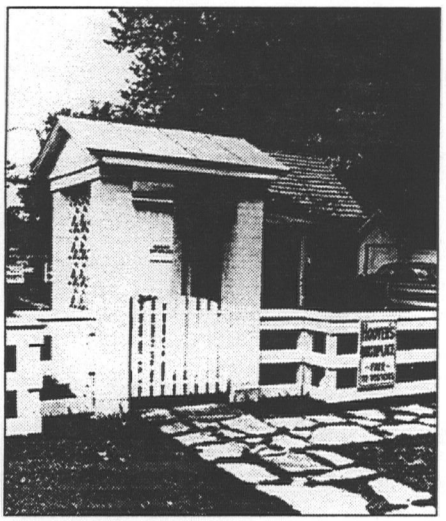

Figure 13. Gateway at the birthplace cottage two years after installation (1954).

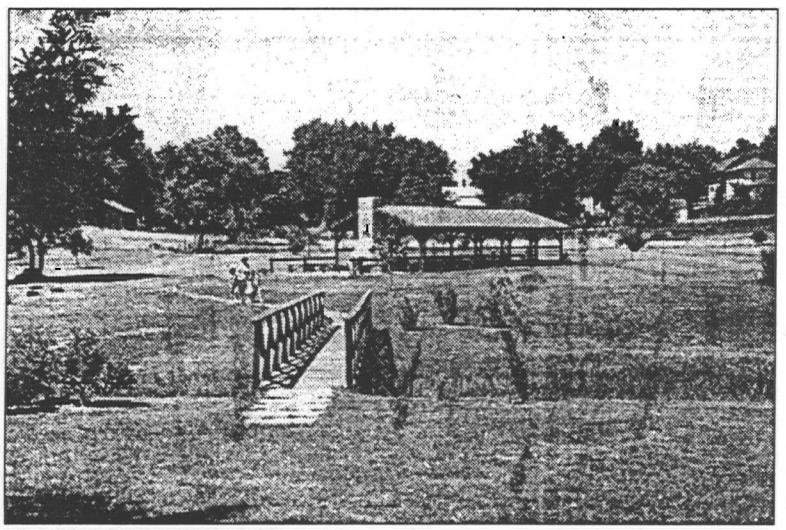

Figure 14. Picnic shelter donated to the park by the Boy Scouts of America (1954).

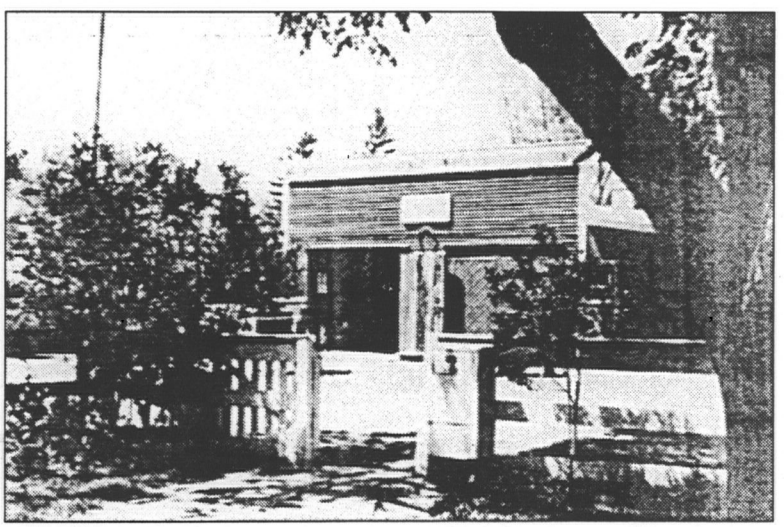

Figure 15. Blacksmith shop ten years after construction (1957).

In 1955 John R. Fitzsimmons, Sr., FASLA, who was the chairman of the department of landscape architecture at Iowa State University, consulted with some of the trustees of the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society to discuss the overlook area at the southwestern edge of the park and landscape improvements. Prior to assuming the chairmanship, Fitzsimmons had been the primary extension landscape architect at Iowa State University. In that capacity, he was the principal designer of the state parks developed in Iowa during the Civilian Conservation Corps era. His professional involvement at this point in the park's history may have influenced the introduction of a more park-like feeling to the landscape. Also in 1955, Allan Hoover, according to Nye, communicated with prominent designer Tommy Church, regarding development of a park plan. Allan Hoover sent Church topographical maps of the site, but it appears that Church never became formally involved with the park.[49]

A Quaker meetinghouse/museum at the park was still under consideration in 1955. Allan Hoover reported to the society, however, that his father felt "a meeting house would be a little out of place since nothing of that kind apparently used to be on the immediate grounds."[50]

In 1956 the society had the parsonage and the former King (or Endsley) house moved out of the park to make room for the construction of a typical blacksmith shop similar to the one owned by Jesse Hoover in the nineteenth century. In conjunction with the plans for the blacksmith shop, the town of West Branch agreed to the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society's proposal to move Penn Street eighty-feet north of its original site. After rerouting it, the society had a sidewalk constructed parallel to the new street and a parking lot for visitors built to the north. Des Moines architect William Wagner agreed to prepare the drawings for the blacksmith shop, which was constructed in 1957 of materials salvaged from a circa 1870 barn *(Figure 15).* Bill Anderson, who had been involved with the birthplace since the formation of the original committee, introduced Wagner to the site.[51] At the time Wagner was a partner in the architectural firm of Wetherell & Harrison of Des Moines and the sole member of the historic preservation committee of the Iowa Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Wagner's involvement with the site would continue for the next two decades.[52]

Allan Hoover had originally vetoed the idea of a blacksmith shop since no authentic plans could be found for the one built by Jesse and Eli Hoover. Stipulating that the building would merely be a

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[49]Nye, 252.
[50]Allan Hoover to William Anderson, 1 March 1955, quoted in Nye, 238.
[51]Interview by J. Timothy Keller, LCA. with William Wagner, 6 December 1994, Des Moines, Iowa.
[52]An exhibit documenting and honoring Wagner's work regarding this site and others was on display in the park visitor center from 13 November, 1994 to 31 March, 1995.

typical example rather than a historic reconstruction, however, he eventually acquiesced. The 1957 blacksmith shop does not occupy the exact site of Jesse Hoover's shop. Allan Hoover advised that the new structure should be located farther from the birthplace cottage than the original "so as not to be crowded."[53]

In May of 1958, Neil MacNeil, a close friend of the Hoover family, wrote that Herbert Hoover was considering donating some of his memorabilia to the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation, Inc. and that he would like to see it housed in a simple building remote from the birthplace cottage.[54] (The foundation had merged with the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society to become the managing body of the park earlier that year.) Out of this idea developed the original concept to design a museum for the site. As a result of a disagreement between Herbert Hoover and the administration of his alma mater, Stanford University, the original plan for a museum was expanded to include the presidential library. Designed by architect Edgar Higgins of Eggers & Higgins of New York with William Wagner as associate architect, the library-museum opened in 1962 with former presidents Herbert Hoover and Harry S Truman jointly dedicating the new facility *(Figures 16, 17).*

The foundation determined to extend the park's boundaries once more in 1958 and approached John Kofron, the owner of the Isaac Miles Farm, about purchasing his land. Negotiations with Kofron extended over a period of several years. In 1960 the foundation authorized a study to list buildings and structures on the Miles Farm to evaluate a fair price for the property. The study identified extant buildings and structures as a frame house on a brick and concrete foundation, a barn, a machine shed, a poultry house, a garage, and two corncribs.

Architect William Wagner relates that he was approached about the overlook site in the late 1950s and that he recommended "resculpting" the overlook area into a landscaped terrace that would provide a more focused and "axial" relationship with the cottage. As early as 1961 he began to prepare some sketches developing the overlook as a potential gravesite. The issue of a burial site had arisen as a result of Herbert Hoover's advancing age and a recent serious illness. Although he never spoke directly with Herbert Hoover concerning the concept of the burial site on the overlook, Wagner feels that the former president was aware of the proposal and may have commented on it. Wagner traveled to New York to meet with Allan Hoover at the Waldorf Astoria apartment of the elder Hoover to discuss site development. Upon his return from New York, he had already received a directive from Allan Hoover to simplify the design. Wagner feels it is likely that both father and son reviewed the preliminary designs since they were in New York together and that the

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[53]Allan Hoover to William Anderson, 1 March 1955, quoted in Nye, 239.
[54]MacNeil to William Anderson, 15 May 1958, quoted in Nye, 275.

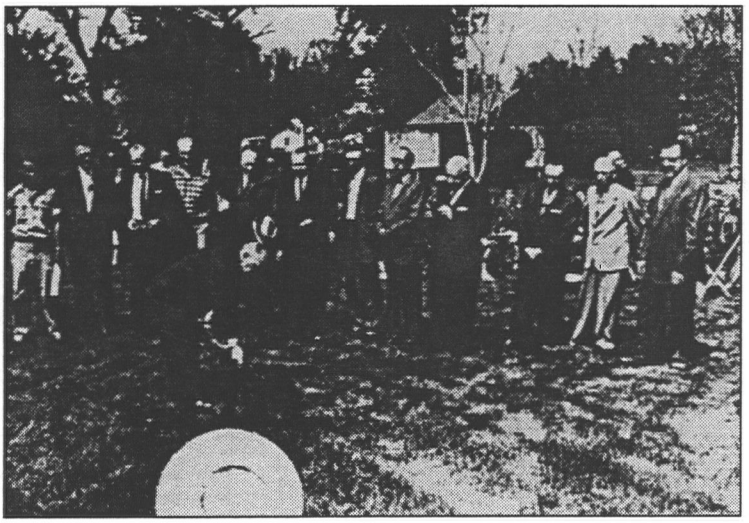

Figure 16. Ground-breaking ceremony for the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum (1962).

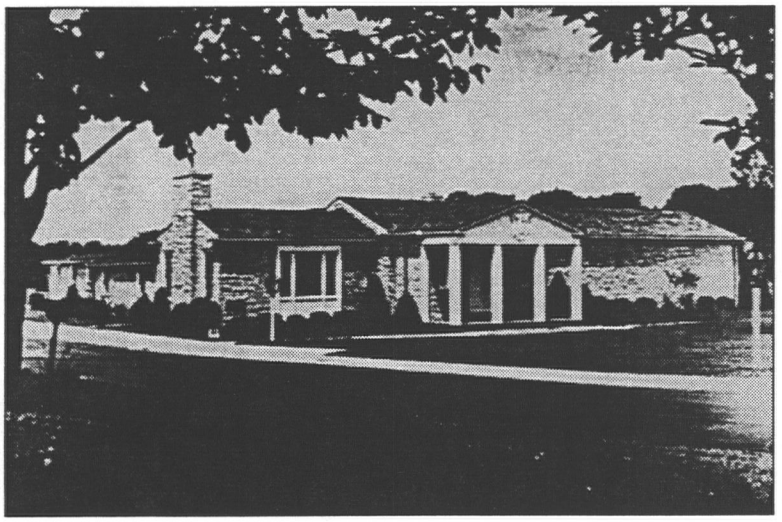

Figure 17. Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum (1962).

desire to simplify was consistent with Herbert Hoover's usual design intentions for the West Branch site. He also relates that he is aware of correspondence in which Allan Hoover disclaimed any singular responsibility for making such important decisions.[55]

By late 1959 there was already public speculation that the overlook would be a possible burial site for Herbert Hoover. According to Floyd Fawcett, the first published mention of the gravesite occurred in the December 1959/January 1960 issue of *The Iowan.* The article relates that "As the new Hoover library takes shape, local residents speculate on other structures that might be located in the scenic park. The chief subject of interest is the circular, landscaped terrace at a far corner and topping the highest elevation. Many feel it will eventually be used for a burial site for the Hoovers, while others believe it will simply house a larger monument."[56]

In 1963 the foundation took formal steps to protect adjacent lands and views to and from the site. The foundation purchased approximately five acres of farm land adjacent to the overlook to save it from being used as a hog lot and to preserve the view from the overlook. Kofron, the owner, however, sold the rest of his land to the Greater Iowa Development Corporation, a subsidiary of the Greater Iowa Corporation. The Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation, subsequently obtained an easement and use restriction on the sixteen-and-one-half acres directly north and west of the site to keep the area free from permanent development.

In 1960 the Boy Scouts of America offered to fund a swimming pool. Although Herbert Hoover approved of a pool at the park and asked William Wagner to estimate construction costs, he decided the idea was impractical given the short season for swimming in West Branch.

The completion of nearby Interstate 80 in 1961 improved visitor access to the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Park and the Management Committee also had made arrangements with the town of West Branch to make South Downey Street one-way and to prohibit parking in the vicinity of the birthplace cottage. That same year a bridge and a dam were constructed across the Wapsinonoc Creek.

The Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation added the three houses immediately south of the park entrance gate on the west side of South Downey Street to their other property acquisitions and had comfort stations constructed in 1962. They also purchased the Leon Nosbish property to prevent Nosbish from constructing a Dairy Queen that would have been visible from the park.

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[55]Interview by J. Timothy Keller, LCA. with William Wagner, 6 December 1994, Des Moines, Iowa.
[56]Howard and Marilynn Greenwald, "The Hoover Birthplace," *The Iowan,* vol. 8, no. 2 (December, 1959/January, 1960); 13.

In 1963 the foundation had acquired another lot on the (contemporary) east side of South Downey Street almost across from the birthplace. The foundation was responsible for the U.S. Post Office acquiring an option for the lot with the stipulation that the foundation would provide the building design. Also in 1963, the Management Committee of the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation added two lots to the one already owned on South Downey Street so that the old Quaker meetinghouse, a gift of the people of West Branch, could be moved into the park and restored. The lots were cleared of their structures and the meetinghouse moved to the site in 1964 *(Figures 18, 19)*. Although most advocates of a Quaker meetinghouse at the park had envisioned it as a museum, the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum fulfilled this function after 1962. As a result, the meetinghouse was moved to the site in 1964, but was never used as a museum. The relocated meetinghouse had been considered for demolition; its move to the site was to ensure its preservation.[57]

Franz Lassner, the first director of the library, decided to live in the house near the library, now known as the director's house, rather than have a new residence built on the grounds. Accordingly, the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation repurchased the house from the Stotlers in 1964. The Lassners had the building painted a bright yellow. (Although repainted gray in 1979, the house was still sometimes called "the Yellow House." The house was repainted yellow in 1993.) Edgar Higgens, the primary architect of the library-museum dedicated in 1962, also designed the addition and the auditorium that enlarged the library in 1964 *(Figure 20)*. William Wagner was associate architect for the original building and was the architect of later additions but was not involved in the 1992 addition.

Also in 1964, the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation presented the deed of the twenty-eight acre park to the General Services Administration (GSA) of the U.S. Government, which accepted the administration of the park and library. The core area of the present National Historic Site was essentially complete by the end of this period.

In October of 1964 Herbert Hoover died at the age of ninety. He was buried at the site on the southwestern edge of the park that had been chosen as the overlook in 1955. Lou Henry Hoover, who had died twenty years earlier from a heart attack, was re-interred beside him *(Figures 21,22)*. William Wagner relates that the headstone from Lou Henry Hoover's original gravesite was brought to West Branch at the same time and buried as part of the re-interment.

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[57]Fawcett, 4 December 1994.

Following the Hoover interments in 1964, implementation continued of William Wagner's design for the overlook area, which had, in fact, become the presidential burial site.[58] Two ledger stones of Vermont white marble were placed to mark the graves of Herbert and Lou Henry Hoover. Also following Hoover's death in 1964, Congress passed several bills authorizing establishment of a memorial park. In 1965 President Lyndon Johnson signed Public Law 89-119 that authorized the establishment of the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site. As a result of the act, NPS began acquiring land adjacent to the core site, including the Isaac Miles farm property, on a parcel-by-parcel basis and began to make plans for its treatment and operation of the site. In 1965 the Management Committee of the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation contracted to purchase the Hanson House just south of the park gate. Work on the gravesite landscape continued in 1965 and 1966. The granite walkway, flanked by two blocks of Vermont white marble, was installed in 1965. In addition, a guard shelter was constructed, the site was re-graded and planted with lawn grasses and shrubs, and an automatic sprinkler was installed. In 1966 several hundred trees were planted behind the gravesite and benches were installed. Chestnuts (slipped from survivors of the blight), hickories, and black walnuts were included in the plantings because Herbert Hoover recalled them from his childhood. The planting list provided to Dr. Franz Lassner of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library by Wetherell, Harrison, Wagner Architects of Des Moines indicated an expectation that the list would be modified as plantings were installed. Ray Thurston of the firm and the author of the letter, however, cautioned that there should be no substitutions from the list since the ultimate size of the plant material in the area "is critical."[59] This comment indicates that the plantings were indeed intentional and deliberately chosen for size and species. The list states that the "exact number of plants needed to fill the areas may vary slightly from the numbers given. The final number will be determined by the owner as the actual work is under way."[60] The list specified an indeterminate number of *Thuja occidentalis* (eastern arborvitae) to be installed as large as possible and with a notation that the existing number could be sufficient, one-hundred 10" = 12" extra heavy *Taxus cuspidata desniformis* (dense yew) to be planted as close together as possible, ten 30" = 36" *Taxus cuspidata* (spreading yew), thirty 30" = 36" *Juniperus chinensis sargenti* (sargent juniper), ten 24" = 30" *Taxus media browni* (browns yew), and six 4' = 5' *Picea pungens viridis* (Colorado green spruce).

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[58]The area in the southwest corner of the park where Hoover is buried was called the overlook prior to his death in 1964 when it became known as the gravesite.

[59]Ray L. Thurston to Dr. Franz Lassner, March 24, 1965, HEHO Birthplace Plantings File, Maintenance Division, Herbert Hoover NHS.

[60]Wetherell, Harrison, Wagner Architects, Planting List, Overlook Area, March 24, 1995, HEHO Birthplace Plantings File, Maintenance Division, Herbert Hoover NHS.

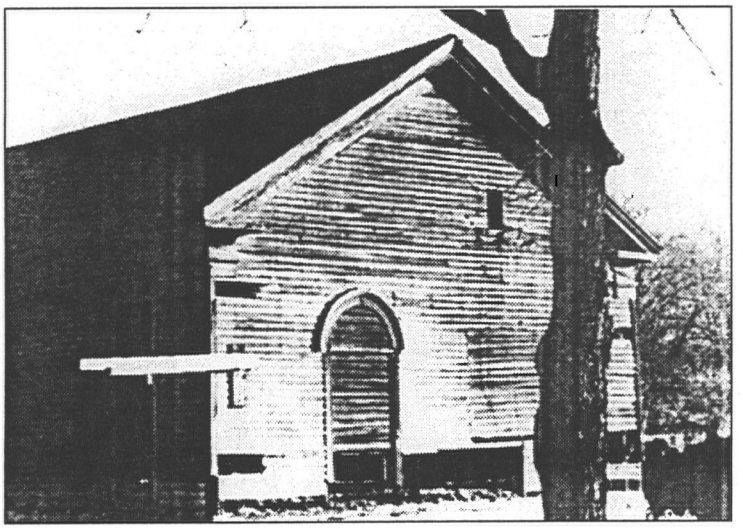

Figure 18. Meetinghouse following relocation to the park but prior to restoration (1964).

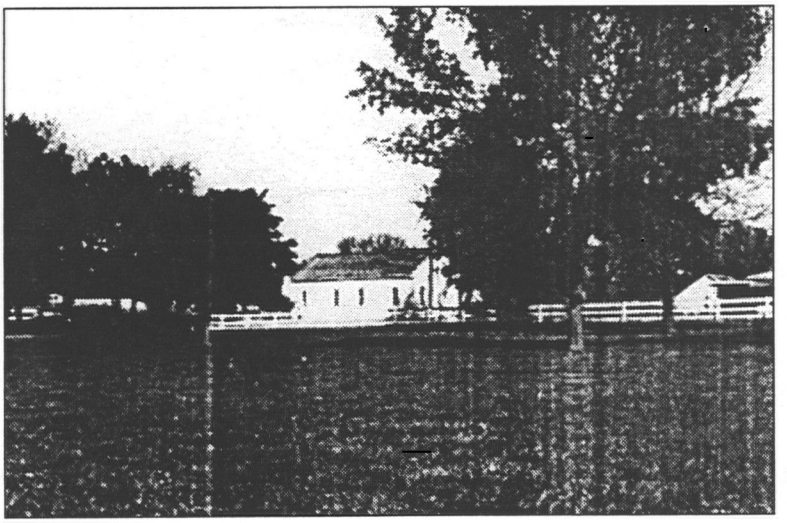

Figure 19. Meetinghouse following restoration (1966).

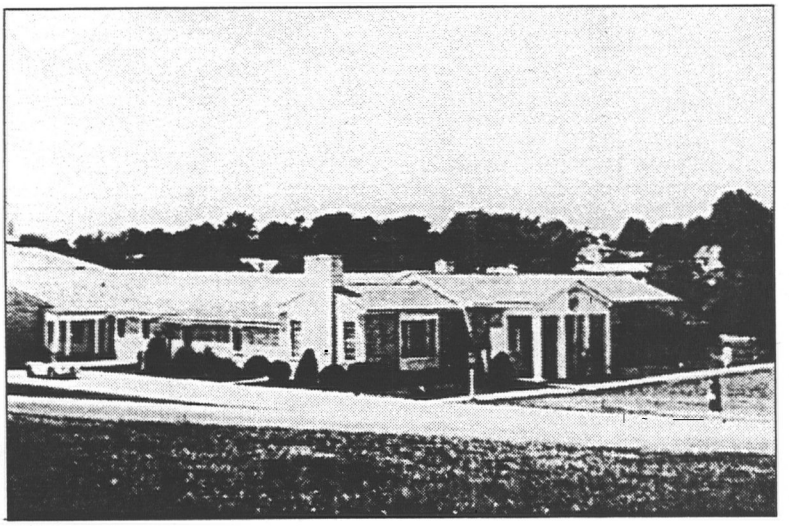

Figure 20. Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum following construction of the 1964 addition (1967).

Figure 21. Gravesite prior to its preparation for the interment (1964).

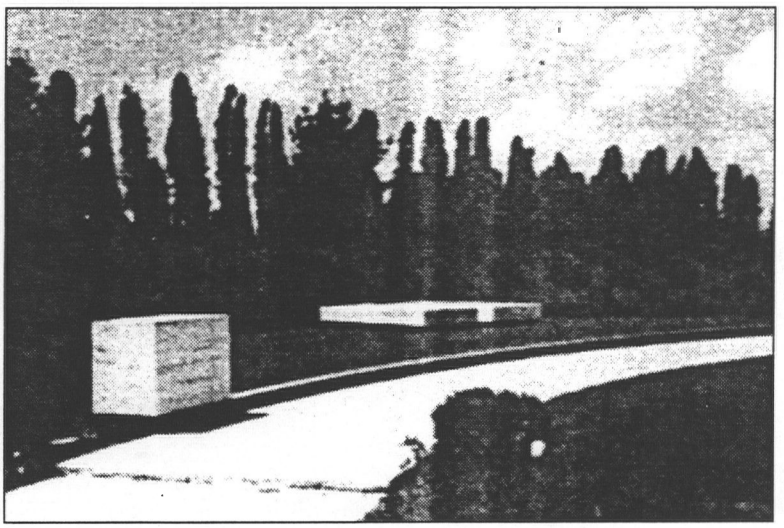

Figure 22. Gravesite four years after Herbert Hoover's burial and Lou Henry Hoover's re-interment (1968).

Other events of the 1960s included establishment of a vista between Hoover's gravesite and the birthplace cottage.[61] In 1965 Franz Lassner, the director of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum, asked the Cedar Rapids Garden Club for their assistance with landscaping at the park, particularly in the area near the Isis statue. According to club members Mrs. Gordon DeLay and Mrs. Reginald Figge, Lassner escorted them around the park. At one point he remarked, "It was always President Hoover's hope that some day a vista of trees might be created outlining the view between his birthplace and the gravesite. He felt that the human drama implicit in the journey from birth to the grave might thus be stressed."[62] He mentioned that Hoover had envisioned the use of native trees such as hickory, butternut, walnut, and hawthorn in informal plantings.[63] Lassner also suggested construction of a rustic dam across the Wapsinonoc Creek to create a small pond lined with willows and wildflowers.

Mrs. DeLay and Mrs. Figge presented the idea of a planted vista between the birthplace cottage and the gravesite at the NHS to the other members of the Cedar Rapids Garden Club. Upon receiving an enthusiastic response, they presented the idea to the Des Moines Founder's Garden Club. The Iowa Garden Clubs together offered Lassner about $6,000 towards the development of such a vista. NPS initially opposed the idea but, as Acting Assistant Regional Director of NPS Harry Robinson wrote to the superintendent of the Herbert Hoover NHS, Lawrence Quist, "Dr. Lassner stated pretty bluntly that he has no intention of turning down an offer of $6,000 for a project of personal interest to Herbert Hoover."[64] Lassner urged NPS to reconsider. NPS eventually agreed to allow development of a vista with the stipulation that the plans would be reviewed by a landscape architect from the branch of Design and Construction before they were implemented.

In 1966 representatives of the garden clubs met with Robert Dyas, a landscape architect and professor of landscape architecture at Iowa State University, to develop a long-range plan for the

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[61]William Wagner attributes Allan Hoover with developing the vista concept. With the burial of his parents on the site, it appears that Alan Hoover began to think of the park more as a memorial and less as a living history site. The emphasis with Hoover seemed to shift away from preservation-type activities and more to those designed to enhance the memorial park nature of the site. He advocated removal of the caretaker's cottage and trees that obscured the view to the birthplace. He also objected to the chicken house reconstruction that occurred as part of the living history activities of NPS.

[62]Mrs. Gordon DeLay and Mrs. Reginald Figge, "The Vista," *Leaguely Speaking* 21, no. 4 (February 1966):16-17.

[63]At this time no direct evidence from Lassner or Hoover has been identified to confirm Hoover's interest in the vista although William B. Anderson, one of the original members of the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society who played an active role in the administration of the site until his resignation from the presidency of the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation, Inc. in 1962, stated in an oral history interview that he had approached the Hoovers, while Herbert Hoover was still living, about the possibility of such a symbolic vista.

[64]Harry Robinson to Lawrence Quist, memorandum, 15 September 1965. NPS files, Herbert Hoover National Historic Site.

vista. Dyas offered to waive his fee but requested an hourly wage for the students who would assist him on the project.

1967–1994 *(Exhibit F: 1967–1994 Landscape Chronology)*

In 1968 Robert Dyas and Iowa State University landscape architecture students prepared a preliminary planting plan that was approved by NPS. Planting began that year; trees were moved from the back of the park to areas around the birthplace cottage, two shadblow serviceberry trees, two Eastern redbud, nine cornelian cherry dogwood, and ten downy hawthorn were planted along the vista axis, and another tree was planted near the blacksmith shop.

Trees and other plantings originally were supplied by Platt's Nursery. Correspondence of the Cedar Rapids Garden Club, however, indicates displeasure with project management. Dyas' plant list for 1969 included one bitternut hickory, one shagbark hickory, one butternut, one white oak, twelve bur oak, two shadblow serviceberry, two Eastern redbud, nine cornelian cherry dogwood, ten downy hawthorn, six white mulberry, and five American plum trees. Platt's Nursery planted an extra butternut tree where the plan called for a shagbark hickory, a bitternut hickory where a butternut was indicated, and a bur oak in the wrong location. One of the bur oaks died but was not replaced because it had been planted on land needed for construction of the library addition. In 1969 Platt's replaced the butternut, a white oak which had died, two redbuds, and a shadblow serviceberry tree. The nursery agreed to plant a white oak and a shagbark hickory in the spring of 1970. Representatives of the garden clubs on a site visit in June could not find either of the new trees but they did find three recently planted bur oaks that had not been included in the plan.

In 1970 the Cedar Rapids Garden Club terminated its association with Platt's Nursery, and hired other nurseries, including the Linn County Nursery and the Pleasant Valley Orchard and Nursery, to continue the vista plantings. Additional work included the replacement of six bur oaks, one hawthorn, and one dogwood in 1970.

In 1971, as a result of the 1965 act, NPS assumed administration of most of the twenty-eight acre site from GSA; the agreement transferring the property, exclusive of the library-museum, from GSA to the Department of the Interior did not receive final signatures until June of 1971. NPS assumed administration of the core site, including the birthplace and the grounds around the library-museum, on July 1, 1971. The NPS program, in contrast with earlier park development that emphasized visitor access and use, focused primarily on efforts intended to recreate the historic nineteenth-century feeling of the neighborhood and the birthplace cottage.

In 1974 plantings included three redbud, three smooth sumac, and three shadblow serviceberry trees.[65] In 1975 replacements and additions to existing vegetation included two shagbark hickory by the library, three bur oak by the road junction, one hackberry, and two buttonbush by the creek where the sumac had been planted previously. The addition of three walnut, six red oak, one white oak, three redbud, two shadblow serviceberry, one hawthorn, one American plum, and one buttonwood tree finished the vista planting project in 1976.

[65]Research for the CLR has not identified bills, receipts, correspondence, or planting plans concerning the vista project for the years 1970-1974.

1967–1994 Landscape Chronology Legend

1 Laban Miles house

2 Staples house

3 Mackey house restored, 1967

6 Garvin house

7 Hayhurst house

8 Herbert Hoover birthplace cottage restored, 1990

10 Pump

14 Wright house

15 P.T. Smith house restored, 1967

16 Miles farmhouse

18 Miles barn

20 Miles outbuildings

21 Concrete bridge railings replaced with wood, 1985

22 Cornfield replanted as prairie, 1971
Prairie burned, 1984, 1985

24 Varney house relocated, 1967

25 Director's house restored and painted yellow

26 Leech house

28 Caretaker's cottage removed, 1968 or after

29 Fence replaced, 1974

30 Flagstone walk removed

31 Retaining wall

32 Footbridge

33 Isis statue

34 Flagstone walk

35 Picnic area

36 Row of evergreens

37 Shuffleboard courts and horseshoe pits removed

38 Garages

39 Birthplace gateway removed

40 Park gateway

41 Boy Scouts and Negus Family Association shelters

43 Gravesite rehabilitated, 1987

47 Blacksmith shop

48 Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum, 1971 addition
1974 addition
1992 addition

49 Comfort stations razed

50 Service station razed

51 Quaker meetinghouse

52 Maintenance building

53 Several hundred nut trees

54 Guard shelter constructed at gravesite

55 Federal Building (post office and visitors center) constructed, 1967

56 Schoolhouse moved to Park, 1968
Schoolhouse restored, 1977

57 Vista established, 1968
Planted: 1970, 1974, 1975, 1976

58 C.E. Smith house relocated, 1969

59 Downey Street realigned and renamed Parkside Drive, 1970

60 Vegetable garden planted, 1974

61 Siberian crab apple trees planted, 1974

62 Privy constructed, 1974

63 Chicken house constructed, 1974
Removed, 1988

64 Replica kerosene street lamp installed, 1974

65 Gazebo constructed, 1974

66 Comfort stations constructed, 1975

67 Three garages constructed, 1977

68 Boardwalks installed, 1977

69 Bandstand constructed

Wetherell

Street

Wapsinonoc Creek

Parkside Drive

[Water Street]

Cedar Street

2 14 7 3 67 6 58 65 56 47 68 1 26 24 55 69 28 62 60 63 29 30 8 10 36 39 52 41 41 66 21 32 31 34 33 51 57 35 37 22 43 54 48 16 18 20 25 40 59 15

N

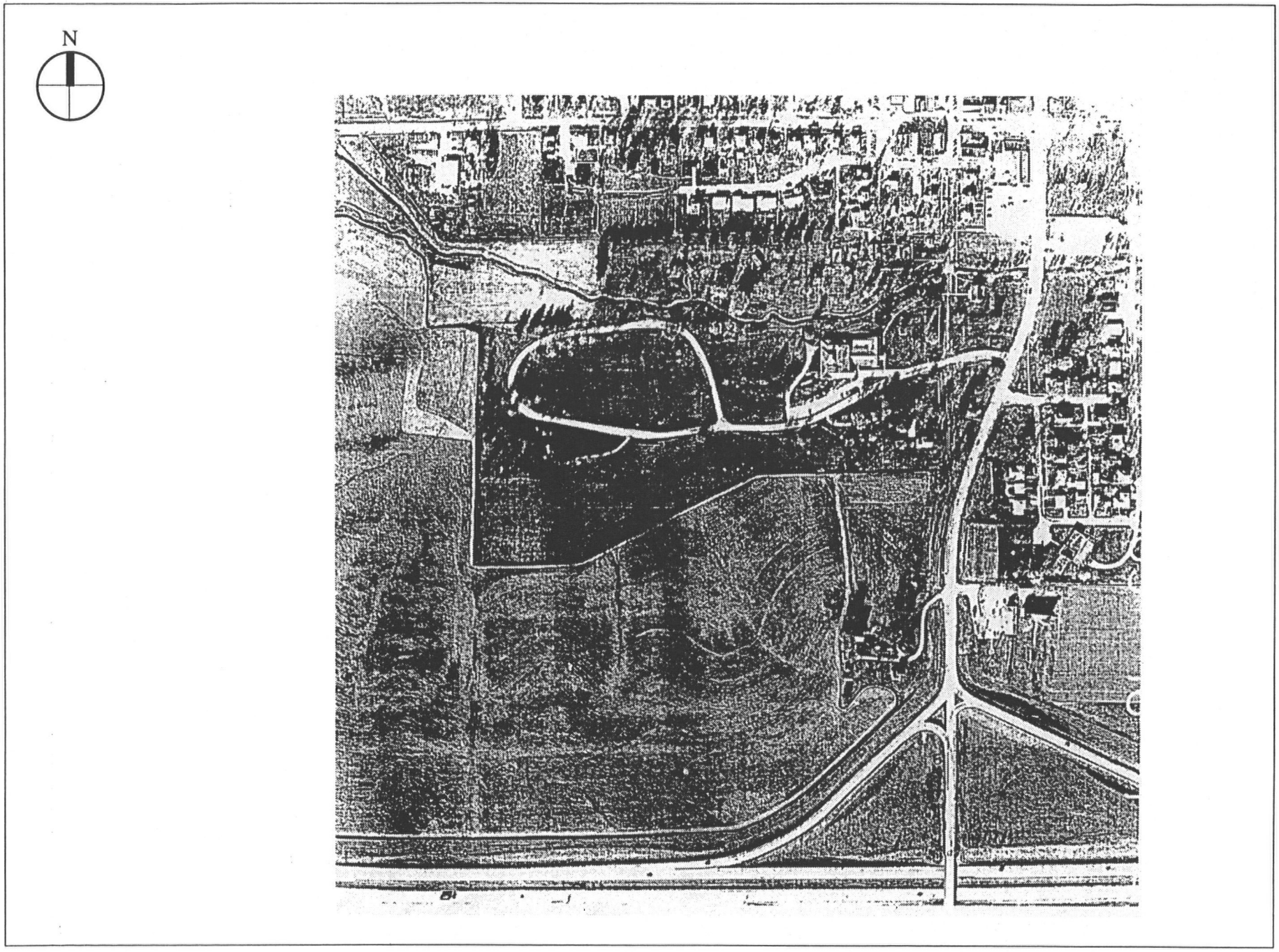
0 20 40 60 80 100 200
scale in feet

1967-1994
LANDSCAPE CHRONOLOGY

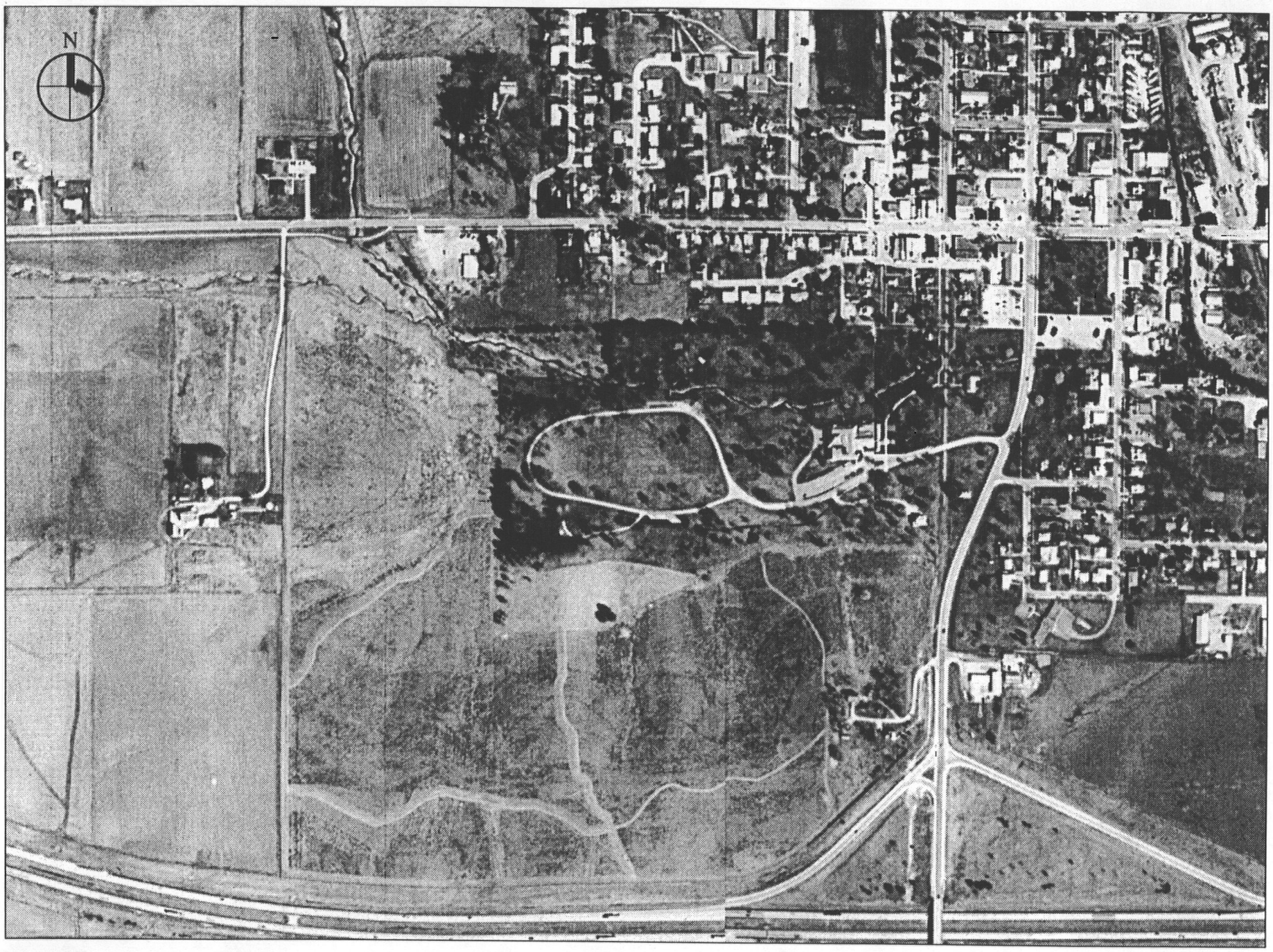
Herbert Hoover
National Historic Site
Cultural Landscape Report

Map prepared by Land and Community Associates, December 1994

Exhibit F. 1967–1994 Landscape Chronology.



Map K. Aerial photograph of site, Iowa Aerial Surveys, Iowa City, Iowa, December 1973.



Map L. Aerial photograph of site, Iowa Department of Transportation, 1990.

Partial Plant List for Vista

(Based on Dyas' 1968 preliminary planting plan for the vista or mentioned in correspondence between nurseries and the Cedar Rapids Garden Club or on nursery bills.)

Acer negundo	box elder
Acer nigrum	black maple
Acer rubrum	red maple
Alnus glutinosa	European alder
Amelanchier canadensis	shadblow serviceberry
Amorpha fruticosa	indigobush amorpha
Andropogon gerardi	big blue stem
Andropogon scoparius	little blue stem
Aster laevis	blue aster
Aster spp.	asters
Betula nigra	river birch
Carex spp.	sedges
Carya cordiformis	bitternut hickory
Carya ovata	shagbark hickory
Celtis occidentalis	common hackberry
Cephalanthus occidentalis	common buttonbush
Cercis canadensis	Eastern redbud
Cornus alternifolia	pagoda dogwood
Cornus amomum	silky dogwood
Cornus mas	cornelian cherry dogwood
Cornus racemosa	gray dogwood
Cornus stolonifera	red osier dogwood
Corylus americana	American filbert
Crataegus crusgalli	cockspur hawthorn
Crataegus mollis	downy hawthorn
Echinacea pallida	purple cone flower
Elymus canadensis	Canadian wild rye
Fraxinus americana	white ash
Gleditsia triacanthos	honey locust
Hamamelis virginana	witchhazel
Helianthus taetiflorus	sunflower
Hypericum spp.	St. Johnsworts
Ilex verticillata	winterberry
Juglans cinera	butternut
Juglans nigra	black walnut
Juniperus virginiana	Eastern red cedar
Lilium spp.	lilies
Liriodendron tulipifera	tuliptree
Mentha spp.	mints
Morus alba	white mulberry
Myosotis spp.	forget-me-nots
Ostrya virginiana	hop hornbeam
Panicum virgatum	switch grass
Physocarpus opulifolius	common ninebark
Pinus strobus	Eastern white pine
Pinus sylvestris	Scotch pine
Platanus occidentalis	buttonwood (or sycamore)
Potentilla fruticosa	bush cinquefoil
Prunus americana	American plum
Prunus serotina	black cherry
Quercus bicolor	swamp oak
Quercus borealis	red oak
Quercus coccinea	scarlet oak
Quercus macrocarpa	bur oak
Quercus velutina	black oak
Ranunculus spp.	buttercups
Ratibida pinnata	coneflower
Rhus glabra	smooth sumac
Rhus typhina	staghorn sumac
Ribes cynosbati	pasture gooseberry
Rosa spp.	wild roses
Salix nigra	black willow
Sambucus canadensis	American elder
Sorghastrum nutans	Indian grass
Spartina pectinata	slough grass
Tilia americana	American linden
Trillium spp.	wake robins
Verbina spp.	vervains
Veronica spp.	speedwells
Viburnum acerifolium	mapleleaf viburnum
Viburnum cassinoides	witherod viburnum
Viburnum dentatum	arrowwood viburnum
Viburnum lantana	wayfaring tree viburnum
Viola spp.	violets

In the late 1960s and the 1970s, NPS concentrated on recreating the nineteenth-century appearance of the NHS. As a part of this effort, NPS purchased the Varney house in 1967 and moved it across the Wapsinonoc Creek to its present location on South Downey Street; NPS removed the lean-to and porch on the rear of the house that had been added subsequent to its original construction. NPS also acquired the Mackey house, removing a porch and carport from the structure and the P.T. Smith house, removing post-1884 alterations such as exterior chimneys and a lean-to. Other historic houses acquired by NPS in 1967 included the Leech house, the Garvin house, the C.E. Smith house, and the Staples house. The Visitor Center/Post Office building was constructed in 1970–71 on the site that the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation had included in the U.S. Post Office option.

In 1968 a schoolhouse was moved to the NHS; it was the first schoolhouse in West Branch and was donated to the park by the West Branch Heritage Foundation. According to NPS historian Bearrs, the schoolhouse was constructed in 1853. In 1969 the C.E. Smith house was moved to its present location on the lots just northeast of the blacksmith shop as part of the effort to create a historic neighborhood setting for the birthplace *(Figure 23).*

Also in 1969, Dairy Industry Company, a subsidiary of the Greater Iowa Corporation, sold the remaining eighty-three acres of the Isaac Miles farm to the U.S. Government to become part of the park. The company had built a Gulf service station on the farm fronting South Downey Street (present Parkside Drive) between 1962 and 1969. The station had been designed to conform architecturally with buildings at the birthplace park, but had deteriorated by 1970.

The town of West Branch granted NPS a perpetual easement on all town-owned streets, alleys, and parking lots within the NHS in 1969 and agreed to the relocation of South Downey Street in 1970 to remove vehicular traffic from the historic area *(Figure 24).* Following the relocation, South Downey Street was renamed Parkside Drive.

In 1969 Allan Hoover and the chairman of the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation, Admiral Lewis Strauss, established the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association, Inc. to conduct the business of the foundation while the foundation was embroiled in a lawsuit. The Belgian American Educational Foundation (BAEF) had donated $900,000 to the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation in 1962 to construct an addition to the library. In 1964 two of the members of the BAEF filed a suit against the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation to recover the $900,000 on the grounds that the BAEF had exceeded its authority in making the donation. The legal action was a lengthy process lasting several years, and it seriously affected the foundation's ability to raise funds for new projects. When the court ended the suit by deciding against the BAEF in 1970, the

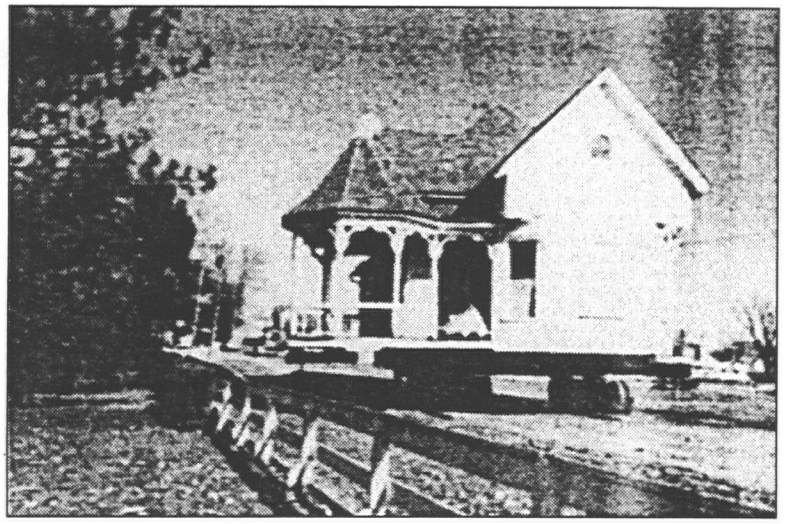


Figure 23. Relocation of 1903 C.E. Smith house (1969).

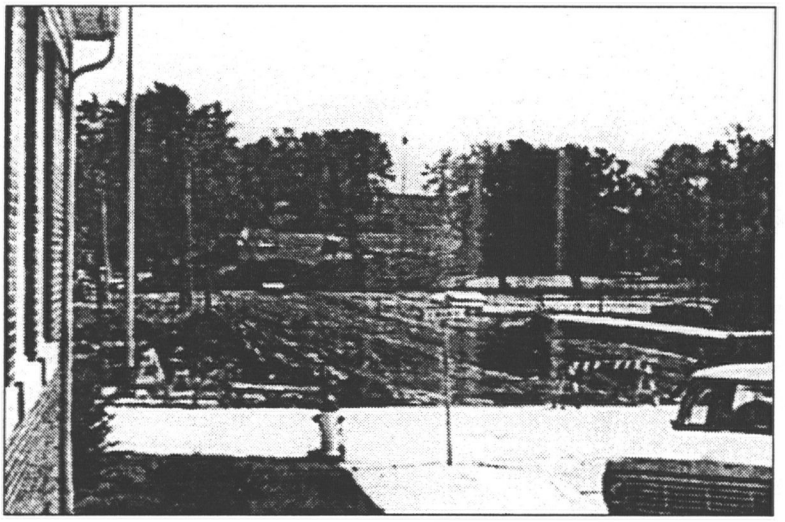


Figure 24. Rerouting of South Downey Street (1970).

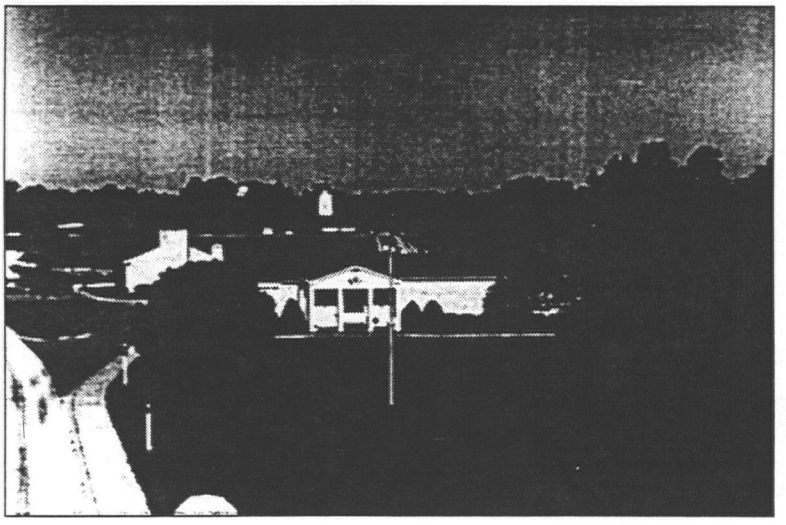


Figure 25. Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum following construction of the second addition in 1971 (1973).

foundation and the new library association merged together under the name Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association

The National Archives used the director's house as a temporary space for archival storage and offices from 1969 until the completion of the library expansion in 1971 *(Figure 25).* Architect William Wagner designed the addition. Also in 1971, NPS became responsible for administration of the remainder of the site's federally owned property with the exception of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum. At that time NPS agreed to consult with the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association before undertaking any major changes in the park's management and development plans.

The 1970 Master Plan developed by the Perkins & Will Partnership called for the establishment of a prairie to replace the agricultural fields at the southwest edge of the site.[66] The plan is the first known mention of establishing a prairie at the site. The plan does not address the origins of the proposal for prairie re-creation. The recommendation, however, is certainly in keeping with the environmental spirit of the early 1970s when a number of prairies were re-established in various parts of the Midwest. The prairie proposal also appears to be a low-cost maintenance solution to hillside erosion. In 1971 the prairie replaced a cornfield on a portion of the Isaac Miles Farm *(Figure 26.)* Over the next decade, the prairie was expanded to include all of the Miles Farm except the farmstead cluster and immediate environs. The expansion also extended to take in the portion of the Thompson Farm that had been protected previously by an easement. As a result, a substantial edge of the NHS has been maintained as a tallgrass prairie. Since the prairie predated cultural landscape initiatives and awareness in the NPS by several years, there was no rationale or policy in place at that time to preserve agricultural fields for their cultural landscape values.

Another addition to the library-museum, also designed by William Wagner, was completed in 1974 *(Figure 27).* That year, the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association transferred its holdings, with the exception of the director's house, to NPS.

Between 1974 and 1977, NPS focused on recreating the historic appearance of the birthplace cottage. Living history demonstrations began in 1974 in the backyard of the birthplace cottage to give it the "lived-in" look advocated by Herbert Hoover.[67] Also in 1974, NPS had flower beds in

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[66]"The Master Plan" for the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, Perkins and Will Partnership (Robert J. Piper and Christopher Custer), 1 April 1970.

[67]Progress Report to the Members of the Executive Committee from John M. Henry, 2 November 1973, William B. Anderson Papers: Box 15, Subject Files Herbert Hoover Birthplace Association, 1973, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum.

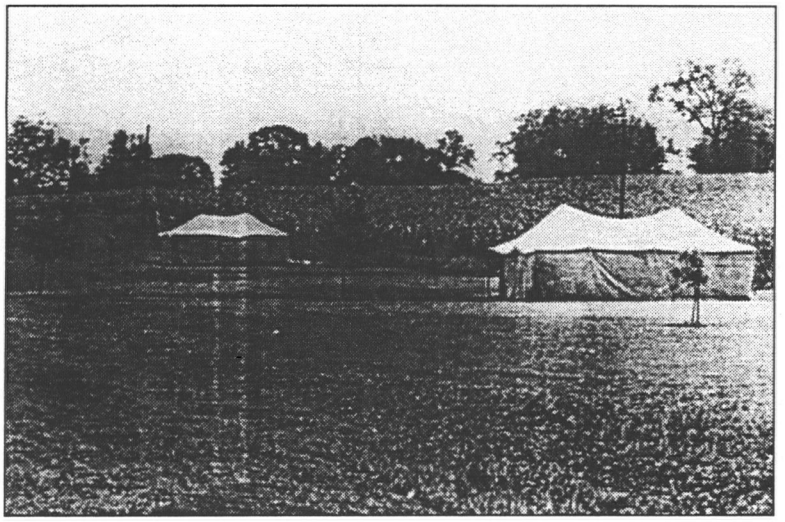

Figure 26. Cornfield by the overlook prior to prairie installation.

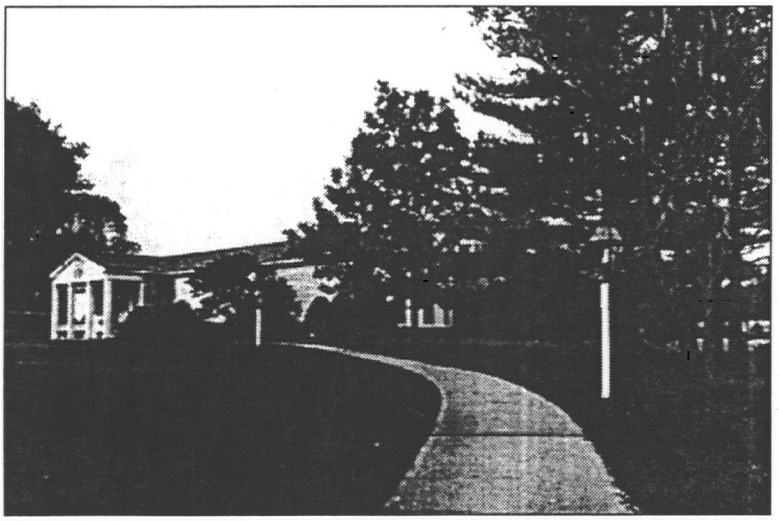

Figure 27. Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum following construction of the third addition in 1974 (1977).

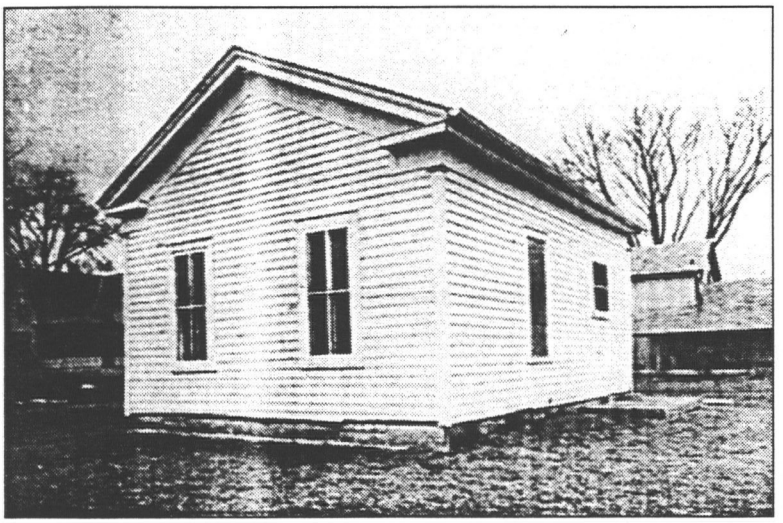

Figure 28. Circa *1853 schoolhouse during restoration (1977).*

the yard of the birthplace cottage edged with Mississippi River clam shells the way Hulda and Jesse Hoover had kept them. Researcher Kathleen DeGroot of Holland Flower Bulbs Specialists, Inc. discovered a strain of short-stemmed, dark red tulips similar to the ones planted by Hulda Hoover.[68] NPS had one hundred of the tulips planted in the yard of the birthplace cottage, as well as three Siberian crab apple trees (remembered by Theodore Hoover). NPS also had a board and picket fence, designed with pedestrian and carriage gates to be similar to the original fence, constructed around the birthplace cottage.[69] NPS installed a replica of the kerosene lamp that had stood in front of the Methodist Church in the nineteenth century and constructed a gazebo. These vegetative and smaller-scale features were installed based upon the research of the site's first NPS historian, Glennie Murray.

Trees from behind the gravesite were transplanted in 1974 to screen views of the Standard service station and a junk car yard from the NHS. A row of white pines was planted as screening along the north boundary of the park south of the row of houses on Wetherell Street, sometimes called "Bankers Row."

Also in 1974, NPS finally purchased the Thompson Farm, which had been identified for inclusion in the NHS in 1965, with life tenancy granted to the owners. The Thompson Farm had passed from Severin Pedersen to Fern Elizabeth and Donald Thompson in 1956. The purchase included a house, a barn, a machine shed, two corncribs, a chicken house, three sheds, two metal bins, and eight portable hog buildings.

During the administration of Grant Peterson as site superintendent, 1975 to 1981, NPS built comfort stations near the Boy Scout shelter. In 1977, to enhance the nineteenth-century feeling of the area, NPS installed boardwalks, board fences, picket fences, clotheslines, arbors, and hitching posts at the NHS and restored the schoolhouse *(Figure 28).* In the same year, NPS proposed building three garage/storage buildings to conceal parked vehicles that might detract from the historic feeling of the reconstructed 1870–1880 neighborhood, but they were not built.

A 1980 site plan developed for the NPS by William Wagner of Wagner Marquart Wetherell Ericsson Architects of Des Moines, Iowa, depicts the NPS plan for restoring and reconstructing

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[68]Progress Report to the Members of the Executive Committee from John M. Henry, 2 November 1973, William B. Anderson Papers: Box 15, Subject Files Herbert Hoover Birthplace Association, 1973, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum.

[69]Progress Report to the Members of the Executive Committee from John M. Henry, 2 November 1973, William B. Anderson Papers: Box 15, Subject Files Herbert Hoover Birthplace Association, 1973, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum.

the birthplace cottage landscape.[70] The plan appears to be a fairly reliable representation of existing conditions for that time. The plan shows the birthplace cottage with a four foot wide boardwalk leading to the six foot wide boardwalk along Downey Street, a picket fence along Downey Street and a board fence along the south side of the lot, a vegetable garden (planted with corn, potatoes, tomatoes, beans, chard, carrots, onions, radishes, beets, muskmelon, lettuce, cabbage, and watermelon), in the southwest corner of the lot, the chicken house and chicken yard located approximately in the center of the west edge of the site, and the privy near the northwest corner of the site. The plan also includes a clothes line in the backyard and the pump and its platform near the southwest corner of the house. Vegetation identified on the plan includes many of the species identified in Lou Henry Hoover's research or associated with the site since the 1940s such as portulaca along the boardwalk leading to the house, tulips, petunias, verbena, lilac, bluebells, sweet William, iris, and Siberian crabapple. Floodlights were included for security. Much of the plan was implemented. William Wagner designed the replica of a circa 1880 privy that was constructed behind the cottage *(Figure 29).* A chicken house was stocked with live chickens and installed near the privy, and a vegetable garden was planted nearby. In recent years, however, NPS has moved away from a living history approach which is quite staff-intensive and requires a substantial level of historical documentation that is not available or well documented for this site. Subsequently the chicken house has been removed and the vegetable garden discontinued.

NPS restored three historic houses between 1983 and 1984. NPS also burned portions of the park's 76-acre prairie in 1984, 1985, and annually from 1990 to 1994 to keep trees from encroaching and to prevent uncontrolled fires. The South Downey Street bridge over the Wapsinonoc Creek was rehabilitated in 1985 and the 1917 concrete railings replaced with wooden ones. In 1987 the gravesite was rehabilitated according to a 1985–1986 plan developed by Neumann Monson Architects of Iowa City. The rehabilitation included installation of a sound system, new lighting, a lawn irrigation system, re-setting the flagstones, and removing and then replacing yews in locations that would be affected by the construction activity. The most recent addition to the library-museum was completed in 1992.

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[70]Herbert Hoover Birthplace, Drawing No. 80042-1, Sheet 1 of 3, *Historic Structures Preservation Guide,* HEHO Birthplace Plantings File, Maintenance Division, Herbert Hoover NHS.

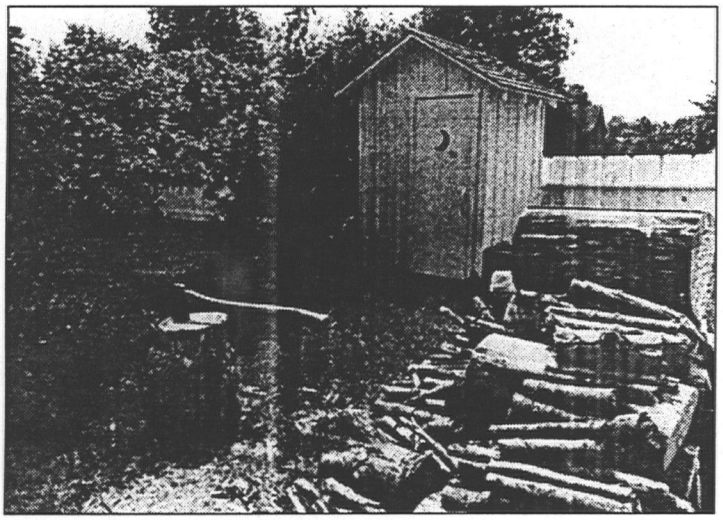
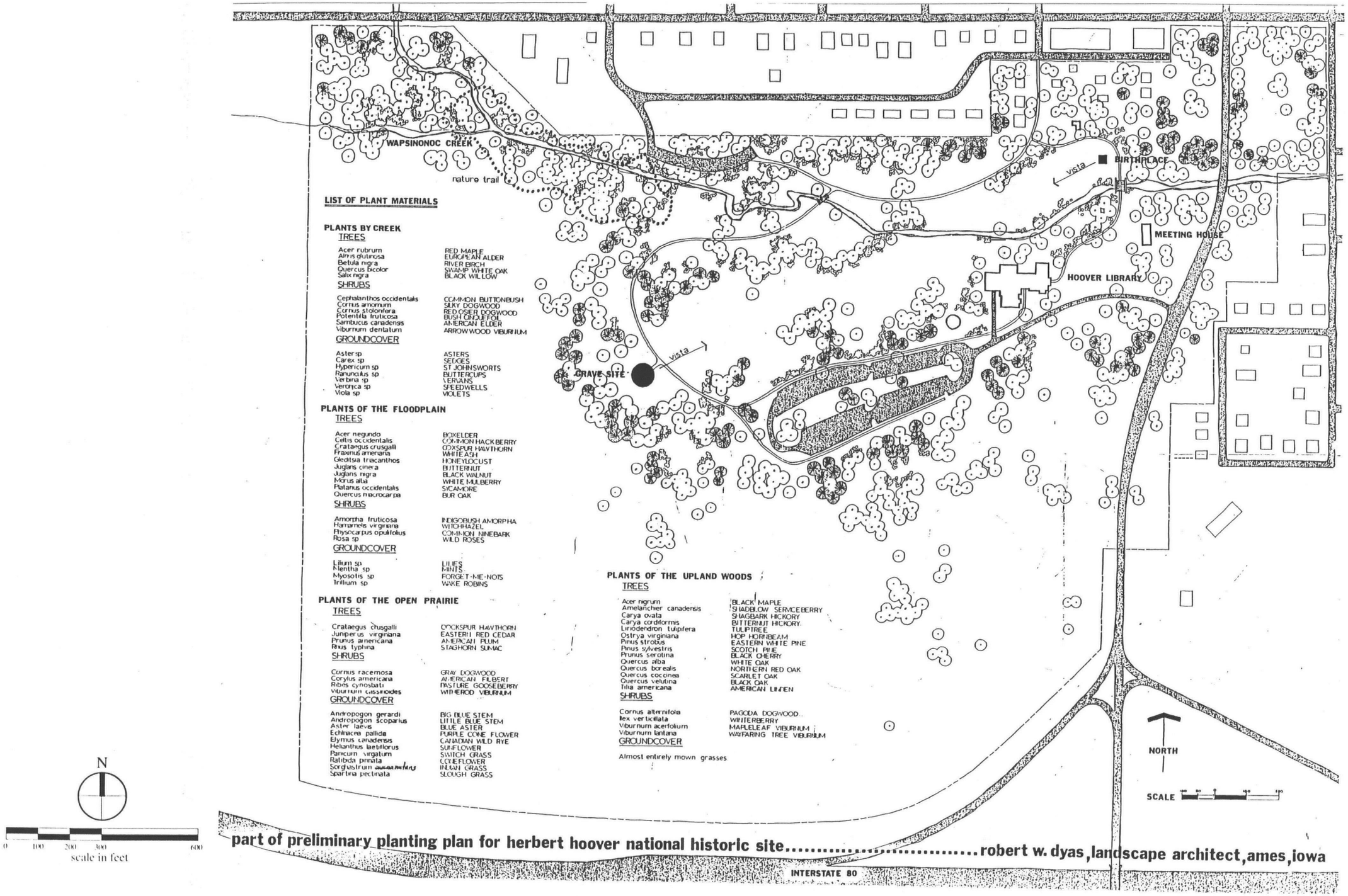
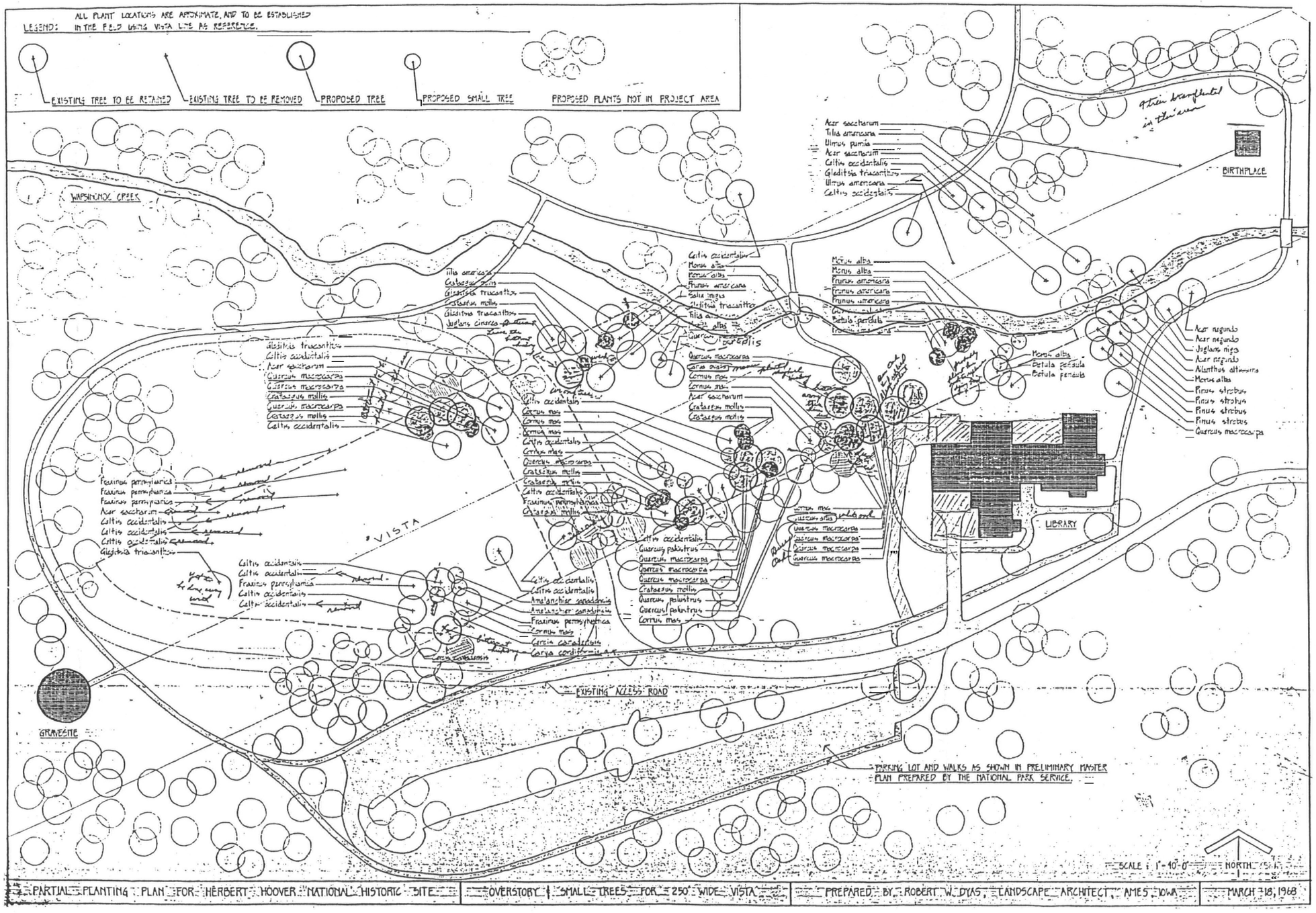


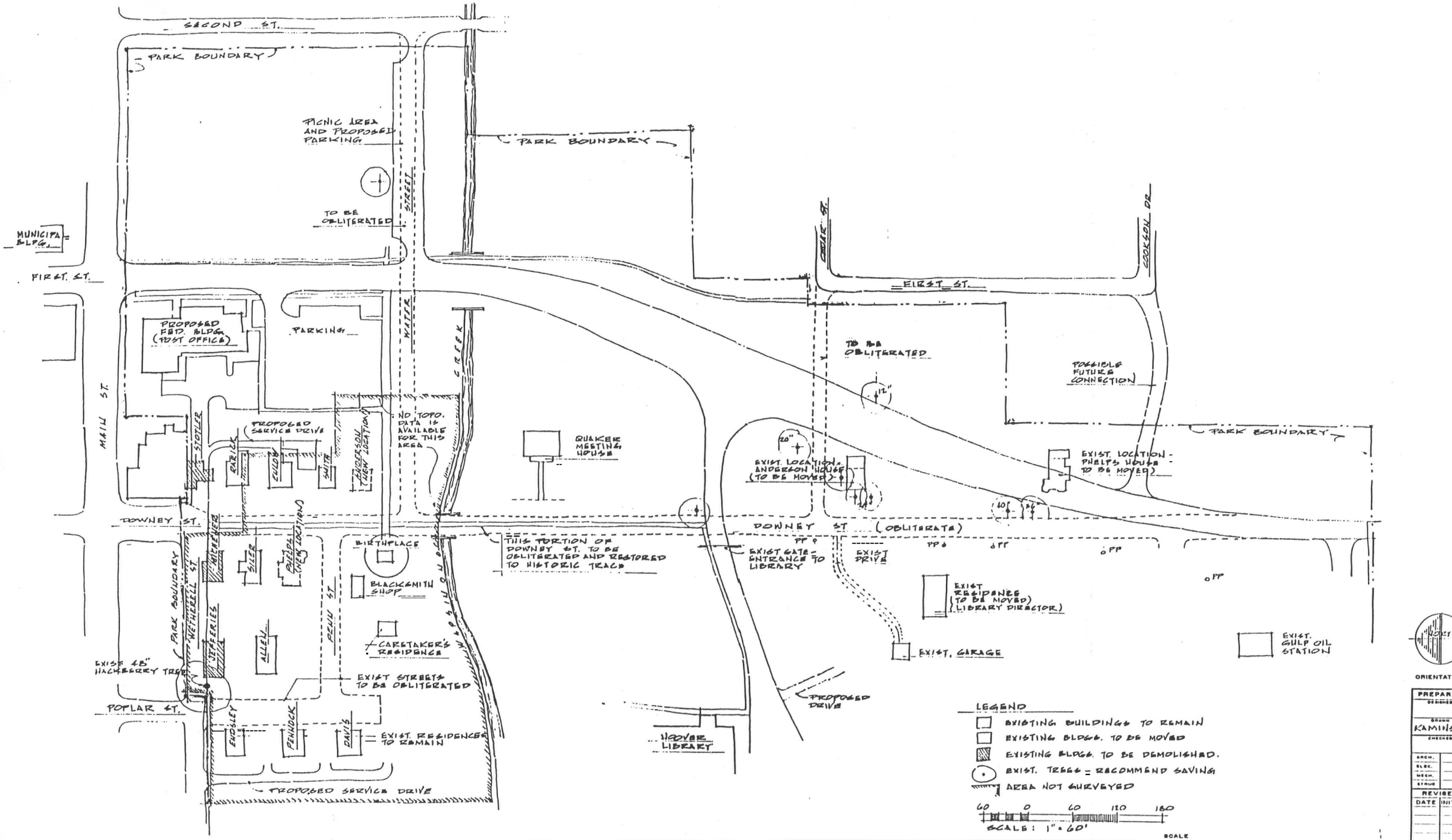
Figure 29. Newly installed privy behind the birthplace cottage (1974).



Map M. *"Part of Preliminary Planting Plan for Herbert Hoover National Historic Site." Robert W. Dyas, 1968.*



Map N. *"Partial Planting Plan for Herbert Hoover National Historic Site." Robert W. Dyas, 1968.*



- NPS DRWG. NO. NHS-NHP/3001, 2 SHEETS TOPOGRAPHY = FIRST ST. EXTENSION & PARKING AREAS
- NPS DRWG. NO. NHS-UH/3003-B, 2 SHEETS FIRST STREET CONNECTION & FEDERAL BLDG. PARKING

BASIC DATA

2 = 75

NOTES:

1. TOPO. DATA ON DRWG NO. 3001 DOES NOT INCLUDE AREAS WEST OF DOWNEY STREET, AND NORTH OF WAPSINONOC CREEK, OR THE AREA IMMEDIATELY NORTH OF THE CREEK AND EAST OF DOWNEY ST. ALL BUILDINGS SHOWN IN THIS AREA ARE INDICATED IN THEIR APPROXIMATE SIZE AND LOCATION, ONLY.
2. ONLY EXISTING TREES THAT ARE WORTH SAVING HAVE BEEN SHOWN =

RECOMMENDED _____ DATE

CONCURRED _____ DATE

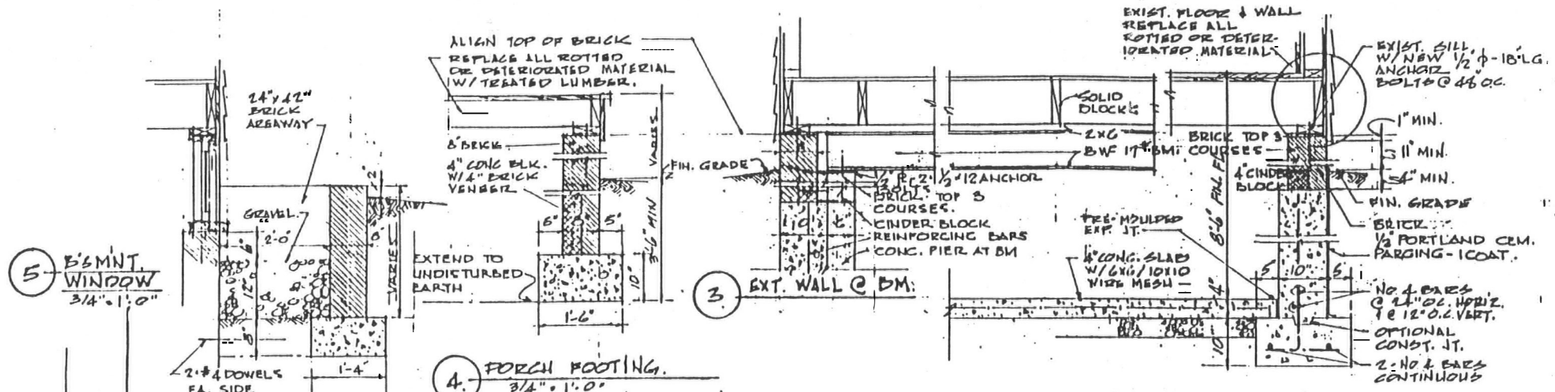
_____

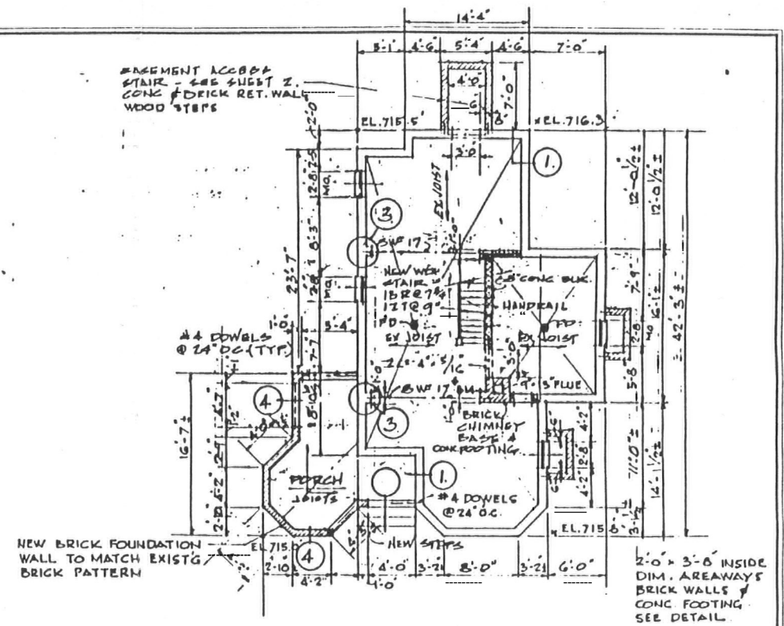
APPROVED _____

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
MAINTENANCE DIVISION
PREPARED BY
MIDWEST REGIONAL OFFICE

PREPARED
DESIGNED
DRAWN KAMINSKI
CHECKED
ARCH.
ELEC.
MECH.
STRUC
REVISED
DATE | INITIAL
REGION
PCP NO.
SHEET 1 OF 1

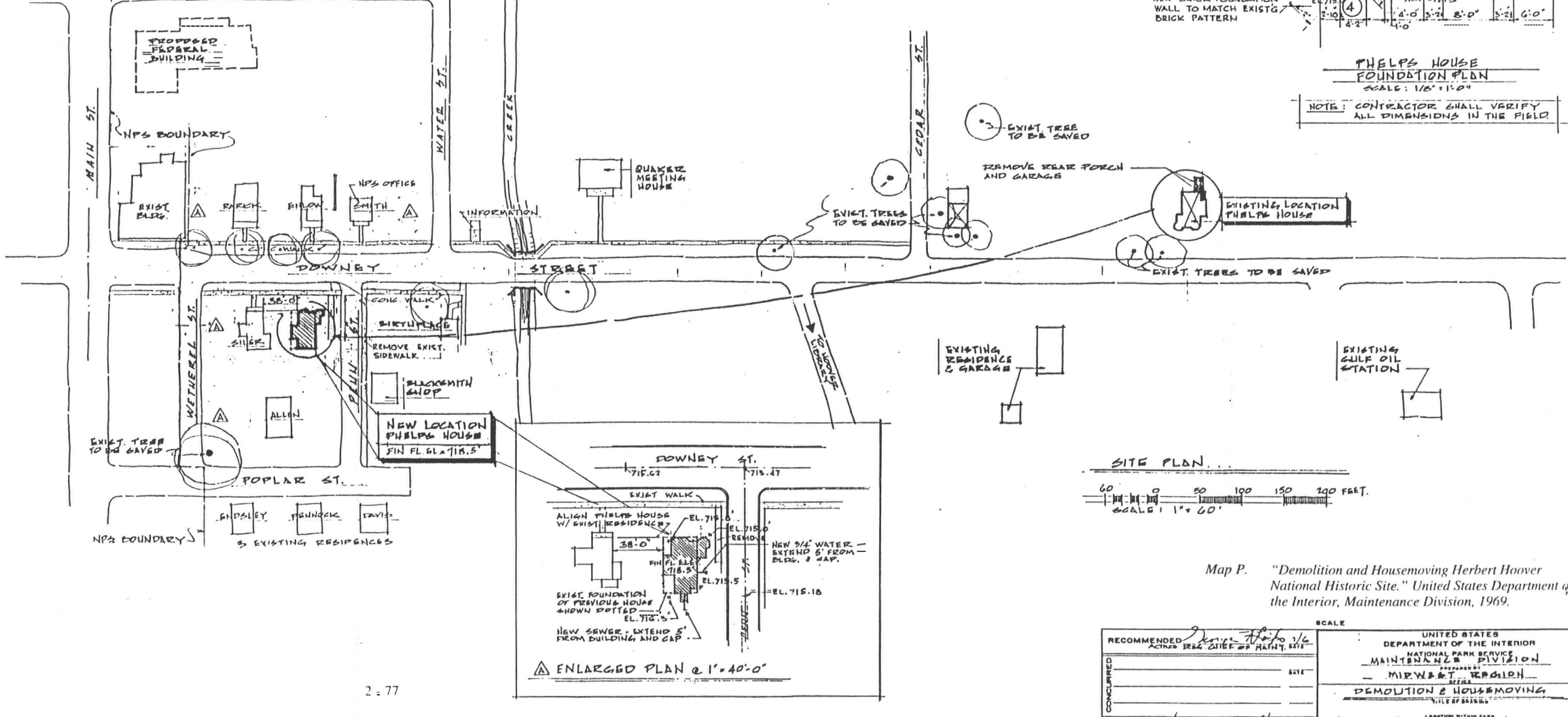
Map O. *"Study Area Development, Herbert Hoover National Historic Site." United States Department of the Interior, Maintenance Division, 1968.*





THELPS HOUSE
FOUNDATION PLAN
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

NOTE: CONTRACTOR SHALL VERIFY ALL DIMENSIONS IN THE FIELD



Map P. "Demolition and Housemoving Herbert Hoover National Historic Site." United States Department of the Interior, Maintenance Division, 1969.

SCALE

RECOMMENDED [signature] 3/6
ACTING REG. CHIEF OF MAINT. DATE

CONCURRED _____ DATE

APPROVED [signature]

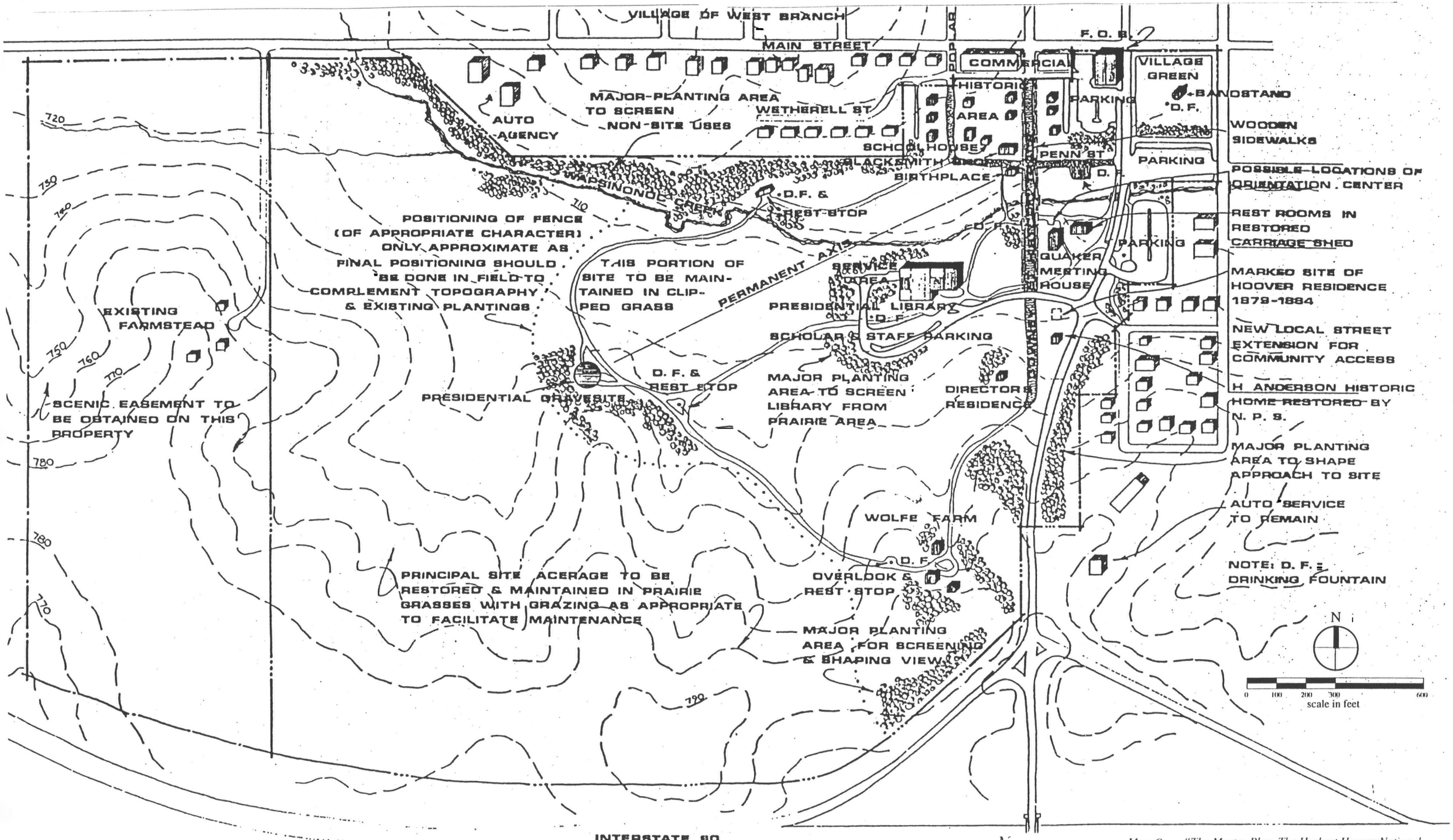
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
MAINTENANCE DIVISION
PREPARED IN MW&PT REGION
DEMOLITION & HOUSEMOVING
TITLE OF DRAWING
HERBERT HOOVER NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

NORTH
ORIENTATION

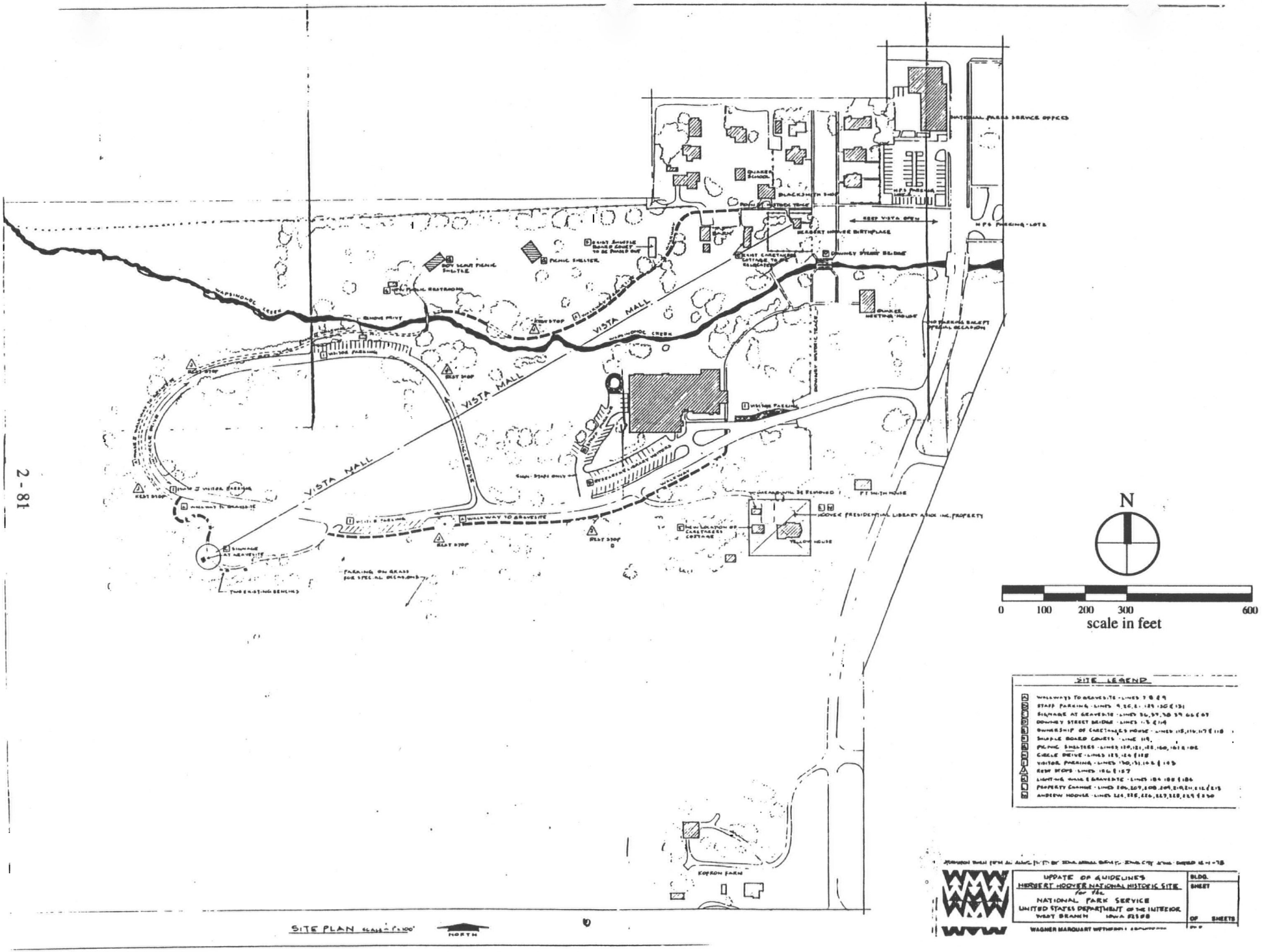
PREPARED / DESIGNED	
DRAWN	KAMINSKI
CHECKED	
ARCH.	
ELEC.	
MECH.	
STRUC	
REVISED	
DATE	INITIAL
1-31-69	Y.I.K.
REGION	
PCP NO.	
SHEET	OF 2
DRAWING NO	422 80002-A

2 - 77

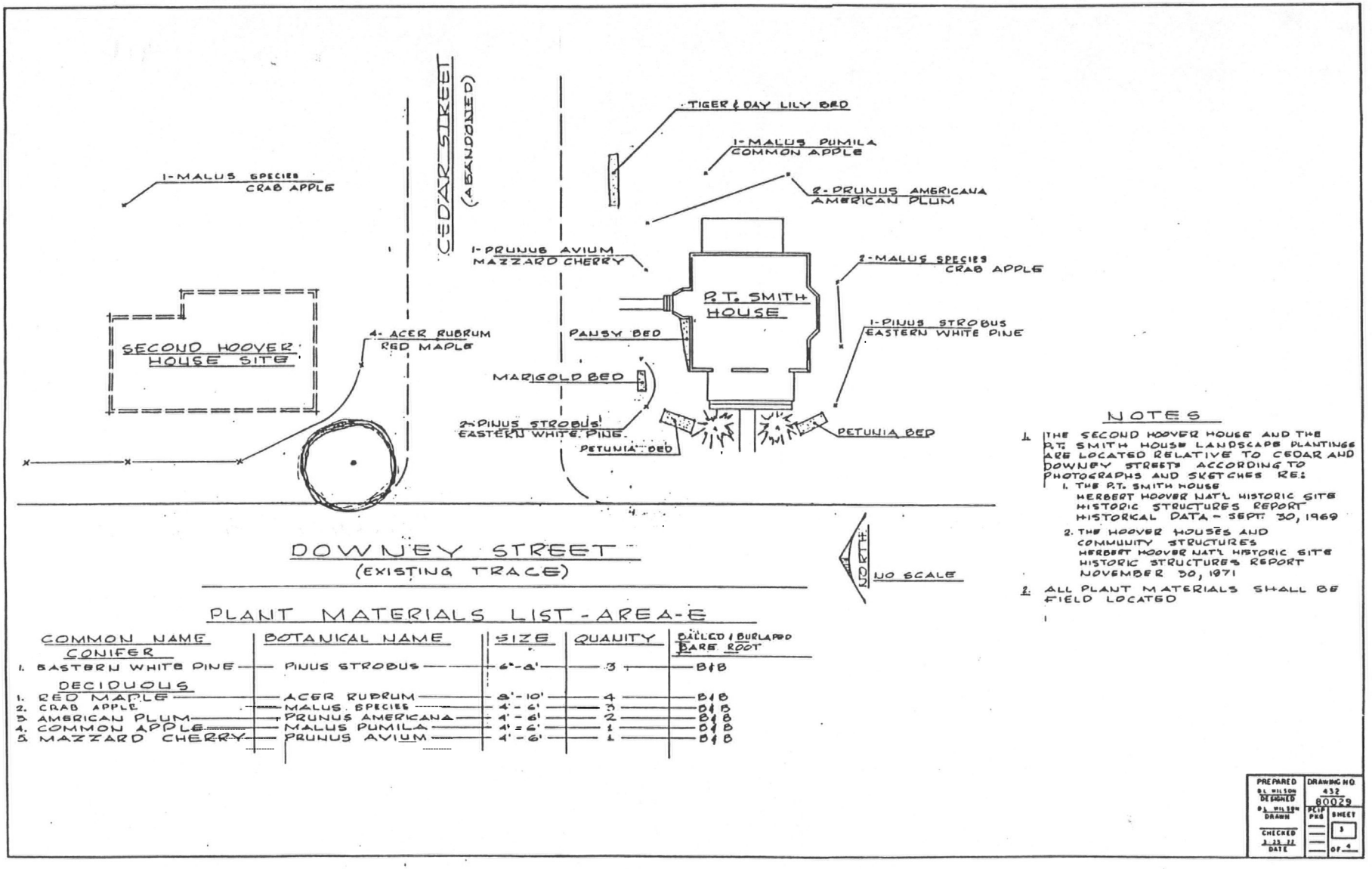
BASIC DATA



Map Q. *"The Master Plan, The Herbert Hoover National Historic Site," Perkins and Will, 1970.*



Map R. *"Update of Guidelines Herbert Hoover National Historic Site for the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior." Wagner Marquart Wetherell Architects, 1976.*



NOTES

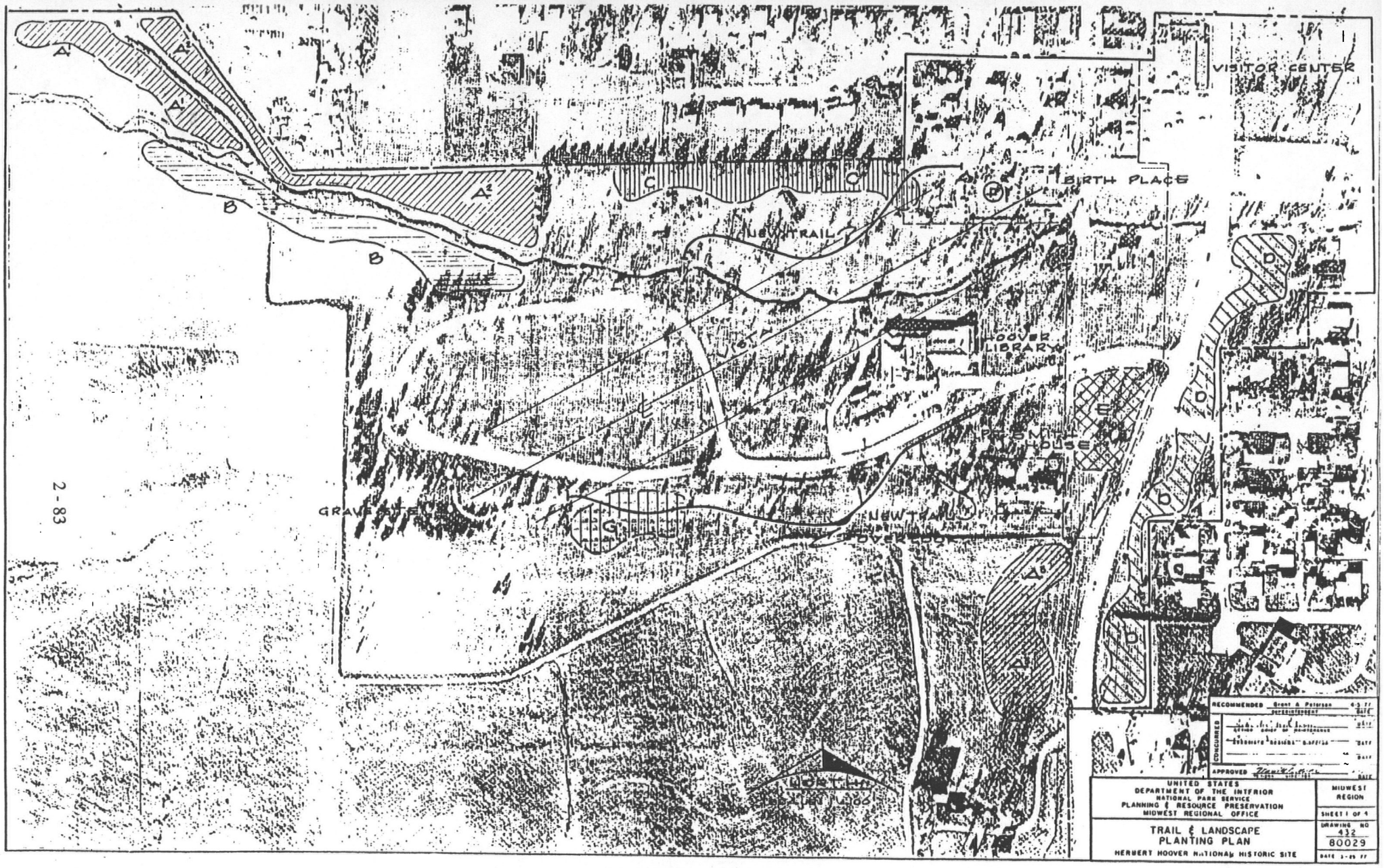
1. THE SECOND HOOVER HOUSE AND THE R.T. SMITH HOUSE LANDSCAPE PLANTINGS ARE LOCATED RELATIVE TO CEDAR AND DOWNEY STREETS ACCORDING TO PHOTOGRAPHS AND SKETCHES RE:
   1. THE R.T. SMITH HOUSE
      HERBERT HOOVER NAT'L HISTORIC SITE
      HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT
      HISTORICAL DATA - SEPT. 30, 1969
   2. THE HOOVER HOUSES AND COMMUNITY STRUCTURES
      HERBERT HOOVER NAT'L HISTORIC SITE
      HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT
      NOVEMBER 30, 1971
2. ALL PLANT MATERIALS SHALL BE FIELD LOCATED

PLANT MATERIALS LIST - AREA-E

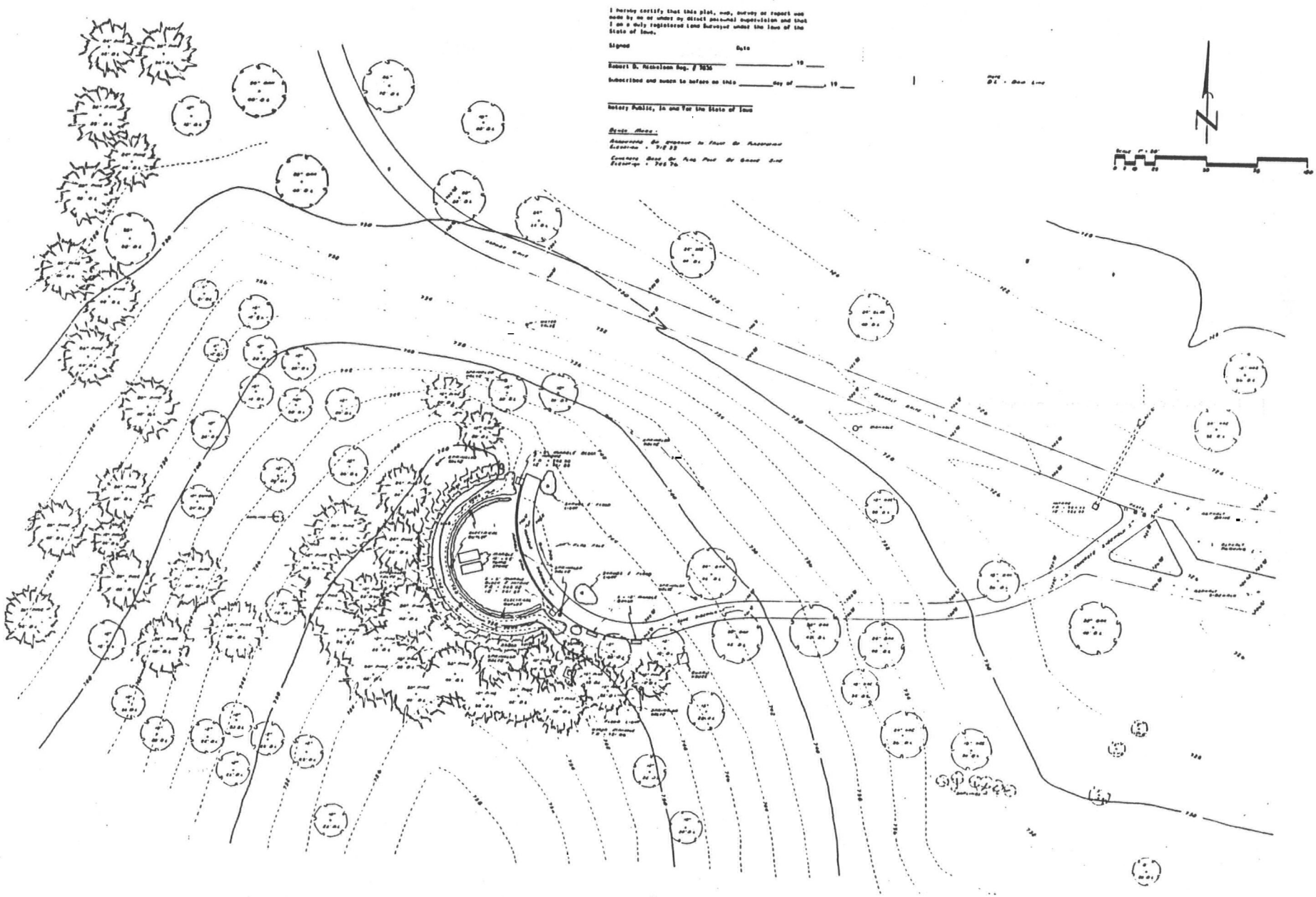
	COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	SIZE	QUANITY	B&B / BURLAPPED / BARE ROOT
	CONIFER				
1.	EASTERN WHITE PINE	PINUS STROBUS	6'-8'	3	B&B
	DECIDUOUS				
1.	RED MAPLE	ACER RUBRUM	8'-10'	4	B&B
2.	CRAB APPLE	MALUS SPECIES	4'-6'	5	B&B
3.	AMERICAN PLUM	PRUNUS AMERICANA	4'-6'	2	B&B
4.	COMMON APPLE	MALUS PUMILA	4'-6'	1	B&B
5.	MAZZARD CHERRY	PRUNUS AVIUM	4'-6'	1	B&B

PREPARED	DRAWING NO.
D.L. WILSON DESIGNED	432 80029
D.L. WILSON DRAWN	PCTP PRS / SHEET 3
CHECKED 3-23-77 DATE	OF 4

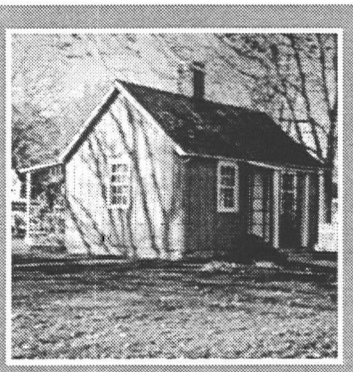
Map S. "Drawing No. 432-80029," 1977.



Map T. *"Trail and Landscape Planting Plan Herbert Hoover National Historic Site." United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1977.*



Map U. "Topo Hoover Gravesite." MMS Consulting, Iowa City, Iowa, 1984.



3 Existing Conditions

3 Existing Conditions

Site Description

The Herbert Hoover National Historic Site contains both the birthplace cottage and the gravesite of Herbert Hoover, the 31st president of the United States, as well as the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum. The current site is 186.80 acres in size, with 181.11 acres owned by the Federal government, 4.59 acres owned by the city of West Branch, and 1.10 acres owned by the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association.

The birthplace cottage and gravesite are 1,600 feet apart but visually connected. The gravesite is the burial place of both President Hoover and his wife, Lou Henry Hoover. Buildings and structures on the site include the Visitor Center/United States Post Office, a number of nineteenth-century residences—some in original locations and some relocated—a representation of a nineteenth-century blacksmith shop, a relocated and restored Quaker meetinghouse, a relocated and restored schoolhouse, the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum, picnic shelters and comfort stations, maintenance buildings, and two farmstead clusters.

Much of the landscape near buildings and structures and near the approach to the gravesite is composed of well-tended lawn with scattered clusters of deciduous canopy trees, flowering trees, and shrubs. A tallgrass prairie re-creation covers the southern half of the NHS while cultivated agricultural land occurs along the west boundary. The Wapsinonoc Creek enters the NHS from the northwest, flows east-southeast through the site, and leaves the site north of the NPS maintenance structures along Second Street. Most of the site drains to the creek although small portions of the prairie and agricultural fields drain south and west towards Interstate 80.

Landscape Characteristics

Overall Landscape Organization

The Herbert Hoover National Historic Site is composed of several distinct landscape character areas with different landscape organizational patterns. The re-created village setting attempts to reflect a typical Midwestern village grid pattern that contrasts with the nearby park-like setting and presidential burial site. The pattern of the Iowa farmstead, with its cluster of house and outbuildings set within open land, remains the dominant organization for the Isaac Miles and Thompson farms. The relationships have been altered somewhat by the reintroduction of the

tallgrass prairie. The institutional setting of the library-museum adds yet another layer of organization as do the visitor service and park maintenance areas. The existing landscape organization can be characterized as the juxtaposition of the landscape character areas described below *(Exhibit I):*

The historic core, which is located in the central northeastern part of the NHS between the central business district of West Branch and the library-museum entry drive, contains the site's primary major historic resources, including a portion of a village re-creation intended to provide a setting representative of eastern Iowa in the 1880s. The historic core is centered along the former alignment of Downey Street *(Figure 30)* and the former Penn Street; the Herbert Hoover birthplace cottage *(Figure 31)* is located west of the Downey Street trace. Buildings in the historic core area are predominantly sited to face historic road traces aligned along a grid. Pedestrian boardwalks follow road trace alignments *(Figure 32)*. Wooden fences with wooden gates define the edges of the road traces and individual house lots *(Figure 33)*. Deciduous canopy trees and grassy areas line the road traces; lawns surround the individual houses, which generally have foundation plantings as well as informal combinations of canopy and flowering trees and shrubs. In the historic core, boardwalks take the place of the more typical paved sidewalks that are used in other parts of West Branch. Downey Street south of the Quaker meetinghouse area has no boardwalks but otherwise, is similar. Residences dating from the nineteenth century line Poplar Street: three residences on the west side and one on the east side. A maintenance structure *(Figure 34)*, a schoolhouse *(Figure 35)*, and a blacksmith shop *(Figure 36)*—all connected by boardwalks—are located between Poplar Street and the Downey Street trace. There are five nineteenth-century residences located adjacent to the trace: three on the east side and two on the west. The Quaker meetinghouse has been relocated east of the trace and south of Wapsinonoc Creek *(Figure 37)*. Although once closely related to the rest of the core, the second Hoover house site *(Figure 38)* and the P.T. Smith House *(Figure 39)* are now visually isolated on a wedge-shaped site between the Downey Street trace and Parkside Drive, south of the Library entry drive. The area includes interpretation of the house site, the residence and associated plantings, walks, and site furnishings adjoining Parkside Drive.

The gravesite *(Figure 40)*, located in the center of the NHS, is a memorial area that includes the graves of Herbert Hoover and his wife Lou Henry Hoover. A concrete walk provides pedestrian access to the gravesite. The crescent-shaped gravesite consists of two polished marble slabs marking the graves of Herbert and Lou Henry Hoover *(Figure 41)*, a flagpole, a granite pedestrian walk set in an arc, a backdrop of clipped yews and white cedars set on a carefully graded slope, and a mixed deciduous and evergreen grove (primarily white pine) enclosing the area on the west.

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Map compiled by Land and Community Associates from 1995 survey prepared by Snyder and Associates. This map is for planning purposes only.

Exhibit G. Existing Conditions, Site.

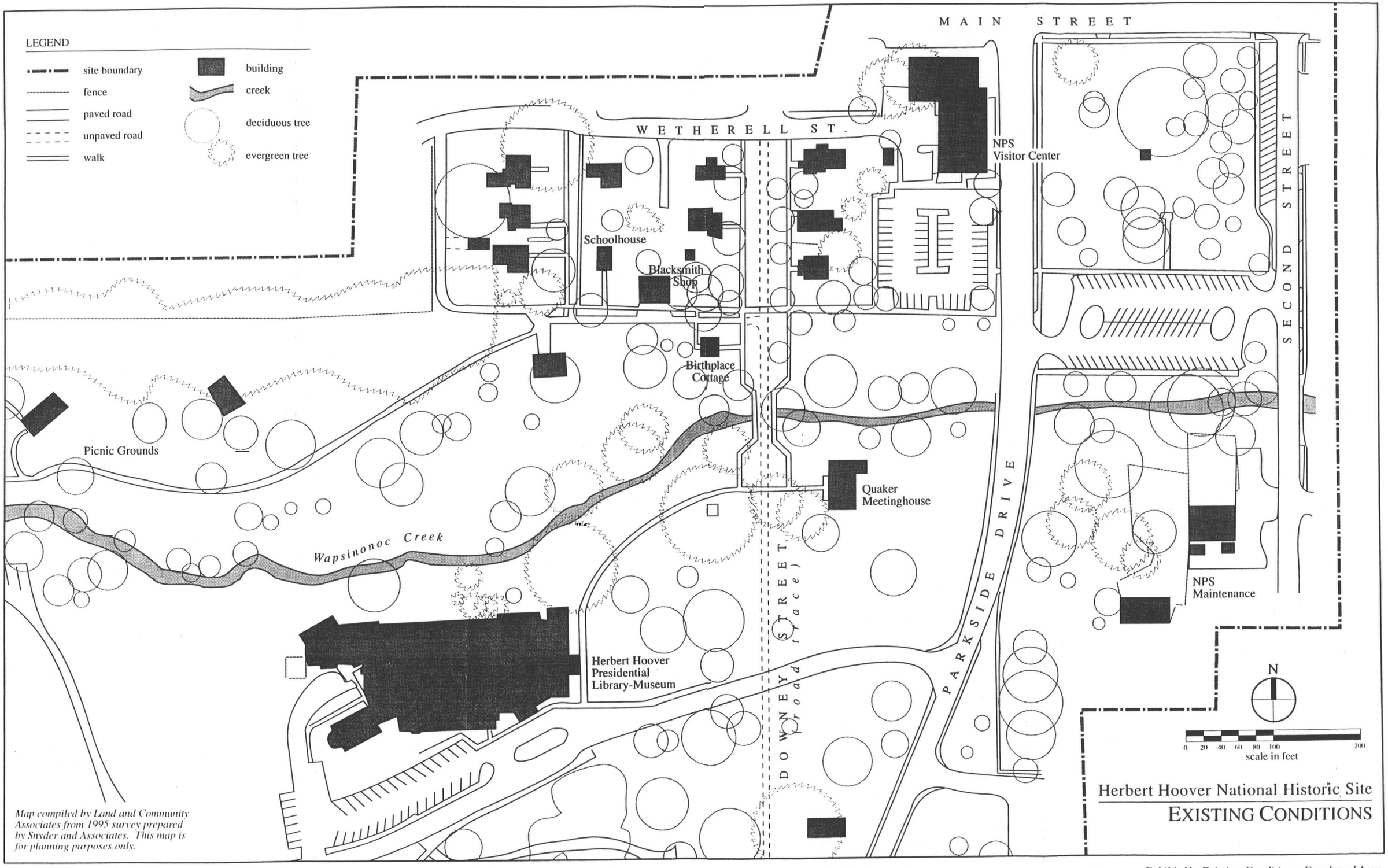


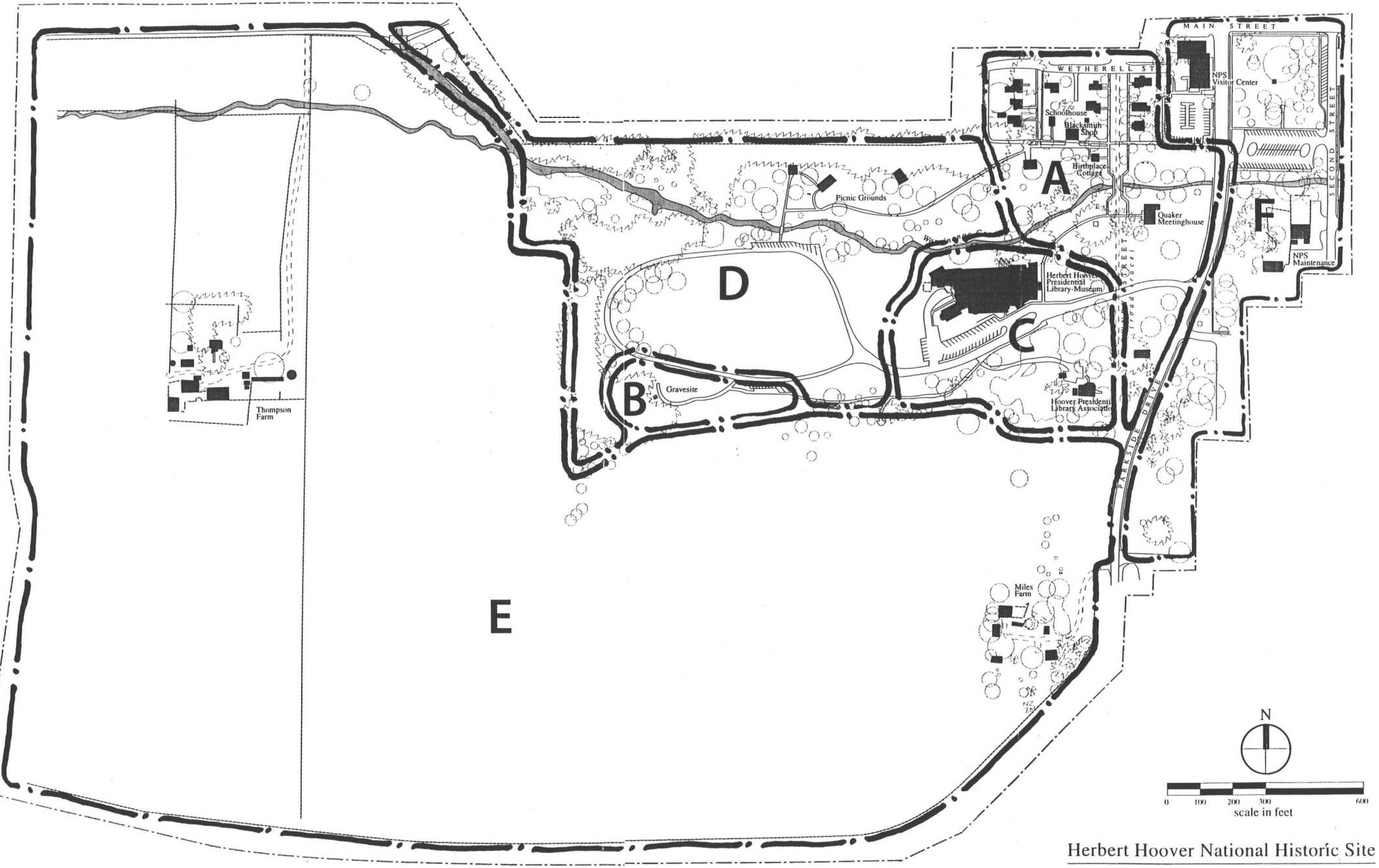
Exhibit H. Existing Conditions, Developed Area.

LEGEND

- site boundary
- fence
- paved road
- unpaved road
- walk
- building
- creek
- deciduous tree
- evergreen tree
- character area boundary

Landscape Character Areas

A. Historic Core
B. Gravesite
C. Presidential Library-Museum
D. Loop Drive Area
E. Rural/Agricultural Setting
F. Visitor Center & Park Support



Map compiled by Land and Community Associates from 1995 survey prepared by Snyder and Associates. This map is for planning purposes only.

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Exhibit I. Landscape Character Areas.

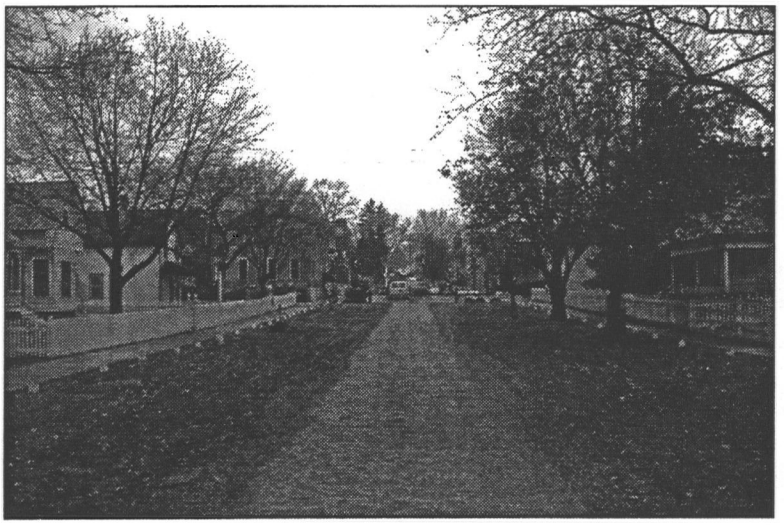


Figure 30. Downey Street road trace.

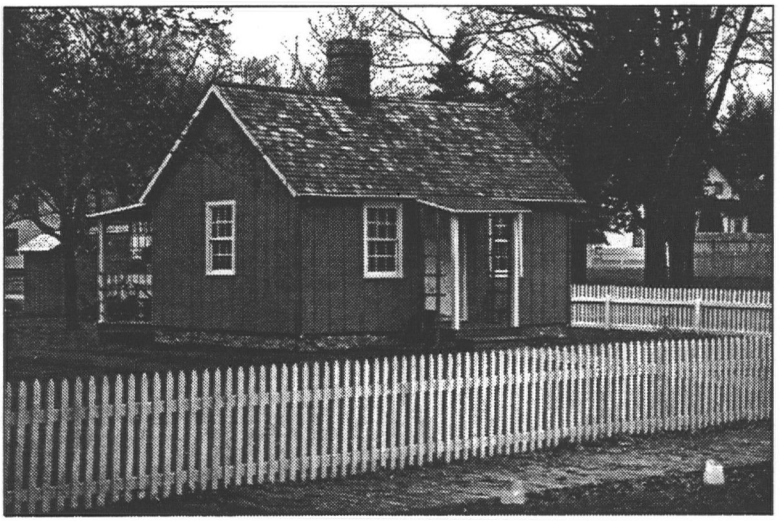


Figure 31. The Herbert Hoover birthplace cottage.

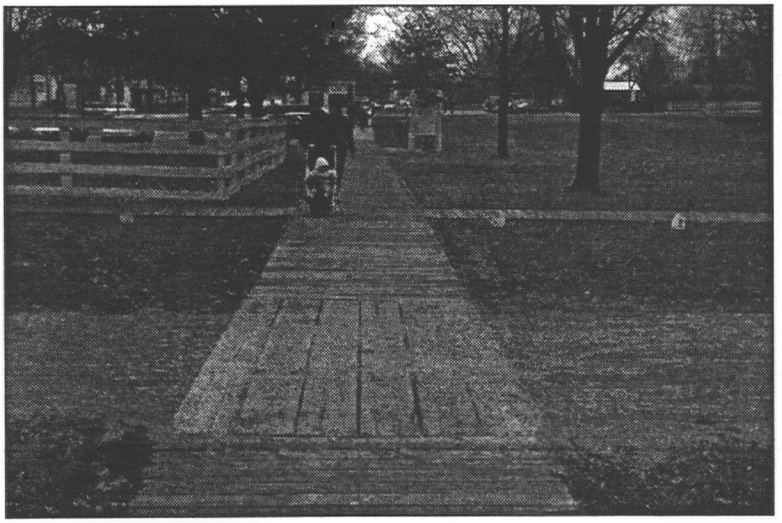


Figure 32. Pedestrian boardwalks in the historic core area.

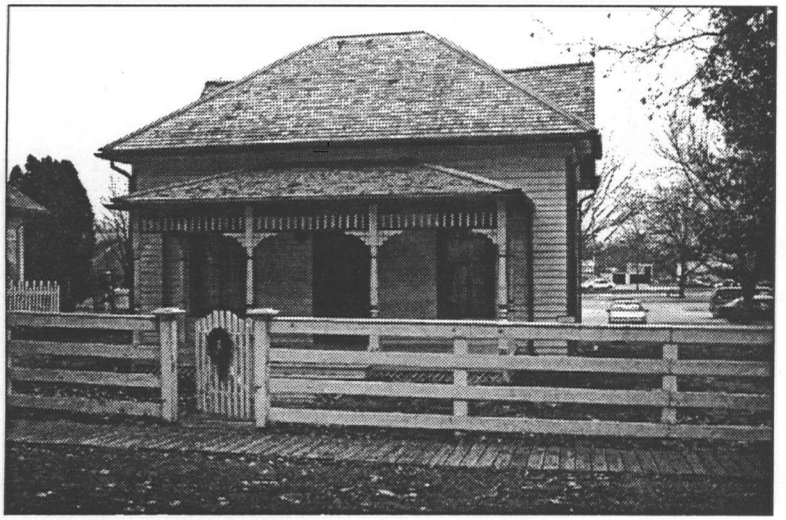


Figure 33. Many of the houses in the historic core area have distinctive fences and gates.

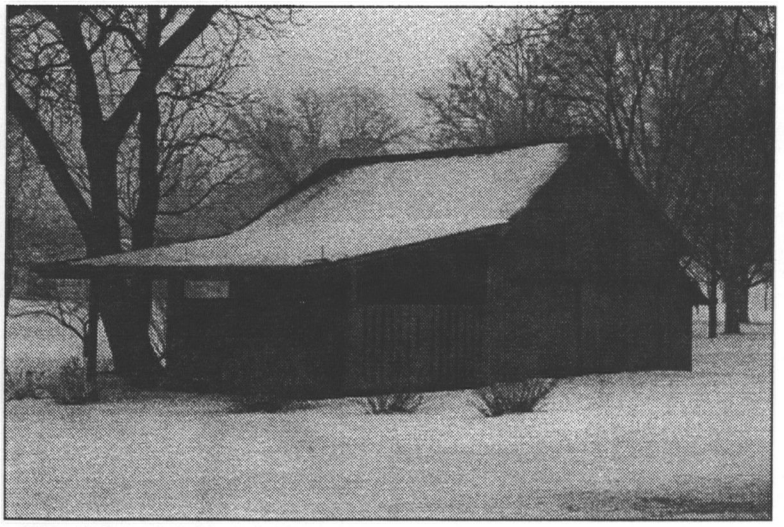


Figure 34. NPS maintenance structure in the historic core area.

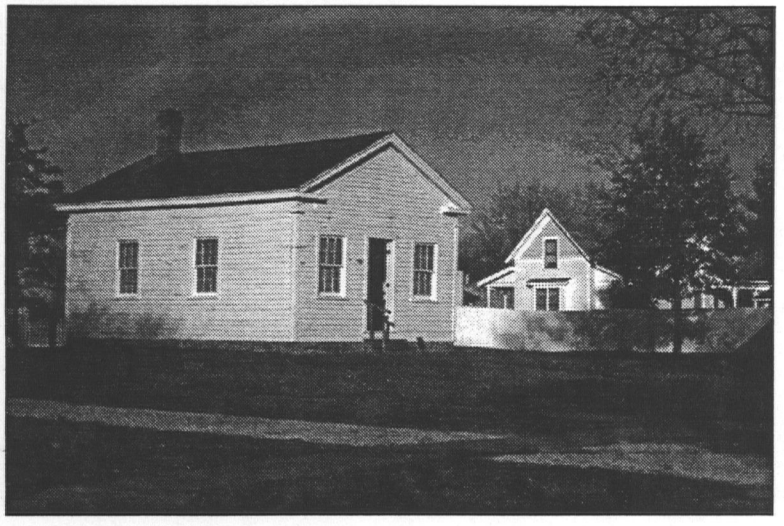


Figure 35. The schoolhouse was moved to the site in 1968.

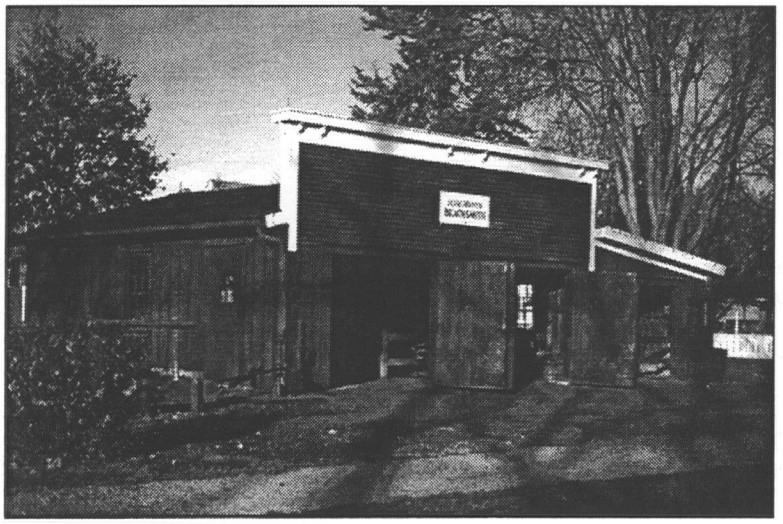


Figure 36. This replica of Jesse Hoover's blacksmith shop was constructed in 1957.

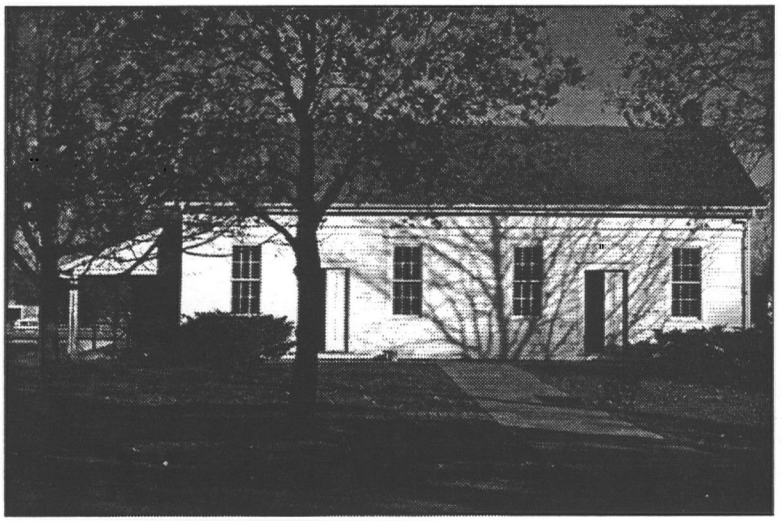


Figure 37. The Quaker meetinghouse.

Figure 38. Herbert Hoover's second home was located on this site.

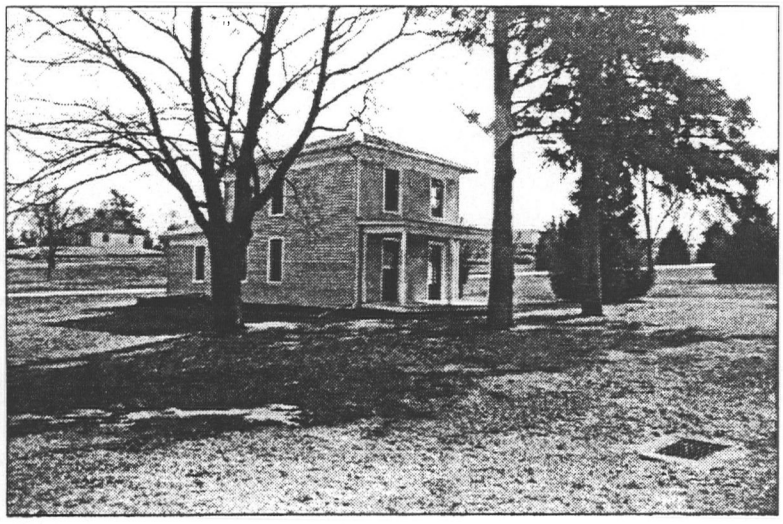


Figure 39. P.T. Smith residence.

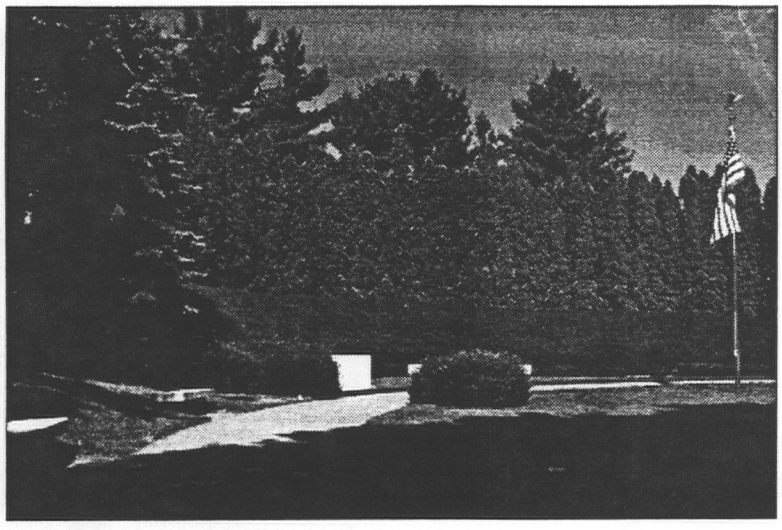


Figure 40. View to the gravesite.

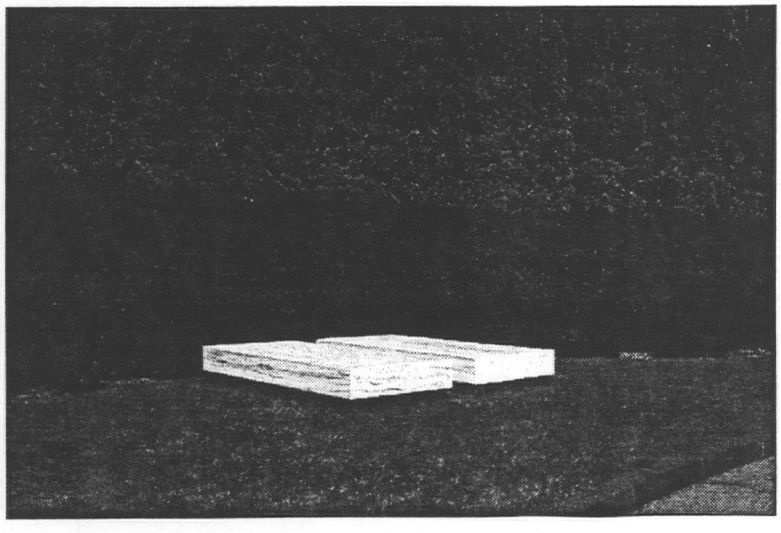


Figure 41. The graves of Herbert and Lou Henry Hoover.

The library-museum area southwest of the historic core area is centered on the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum *(Figure 42)*. It also contains vehicular and pedestrian circulation, parking areas, site furnishings, trees, shrubs, and lawn areas associated with the library. The library-museum is located west of Parkside Drive and is accessible from the drive via an entry drive and gate from Parkside Drive. Visitor and staff parking areas are located south and west of the building. The Hoover Presidential Library Association building is a former residence also known as the "Yellow House" *(Figure 43)*. The Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association property is located on a 1.1-acre lot south of the library-museum. The approach is a curvilinear drive that leads up hill from the library-museum entry drive. The area includes the gravel drive, a parking lot, and the associated plantings adjoining the facility.

The loop drive area is a park-like landscape west of the library-museum. There are large expanses of lawn and clusters of deciduous canopy trees, shrubs and evergreen trees, picnic areas, and open space. The loop road circles through a park-like setting of manicured lawn dotted with canopy trees and leads to a parking area near the gravesite. The picnic area *(Figure 44)*, which is west of the historic core area and across Wapsinonoc Creek from the memorial zone, contains two covered picnic shelters, open picnic sites, a comfort station, a paved walk, and open lawns. This area also includes an area to the northwest that serves as a buffer between the park and adjacent community development.

The rural/agricultural setting area includes the Isaac Miles Farm, the Thompson Farm, and the prairie. The Isaac Miles Farm *(Figure 45)* is located in the southeastern corner of the park, along Parkside Drive. There is a curvilinear approach drive. The nineteenth-century residence, barn, and other outbuildings are surrounded by open fields replanted as a native tall-grass prairie. The various barns, outbuildings, fenced areas, and agricultural fields of the Thompson Farm *(Figure 46)* comprise the western edge of the park. The farmstead approach is a long drive from the north. Evergreen trees are planted as a windbreak north and west of the farmstead cluster.

The prairie *(Figure 47)* is a 76-acre tract, planted in native Iowa tall grass, and located in the southern and western portions of the NHS. The prairie is an area of undulating topography with low herbaceous and woody vegetation, curvilinear pedestrian walks consisting of mown grasses, interpretive signs, and views back to the core area. The prairie includes a 1.3-mile hiking and cross-country skiing trail that was designated a National Recreation Trail in 1981 *(Figure 48)*.

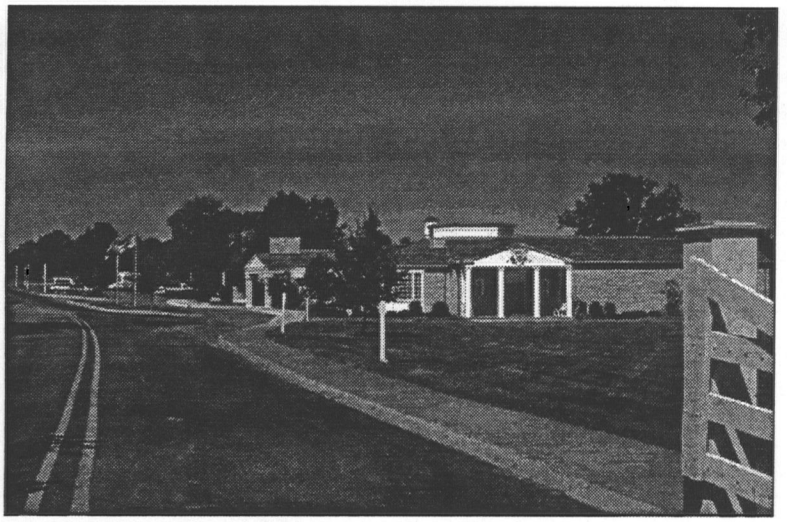


Figure 42. The Hoover Presidential Library-Museum.

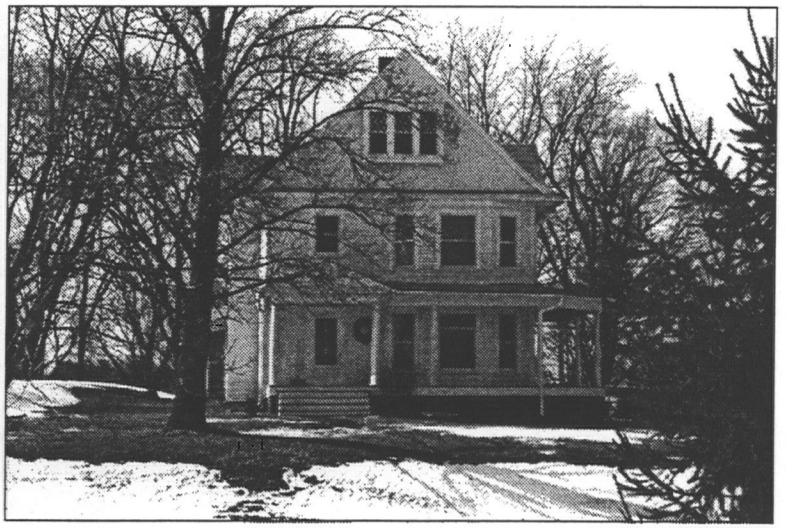


Figure 43. View to the Library Association looking east.

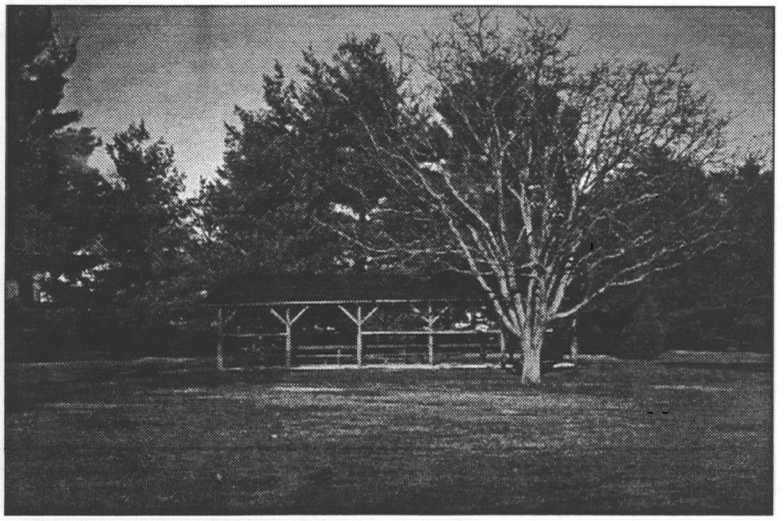


Figure 44. Picnic shelter located in the loop drive area.

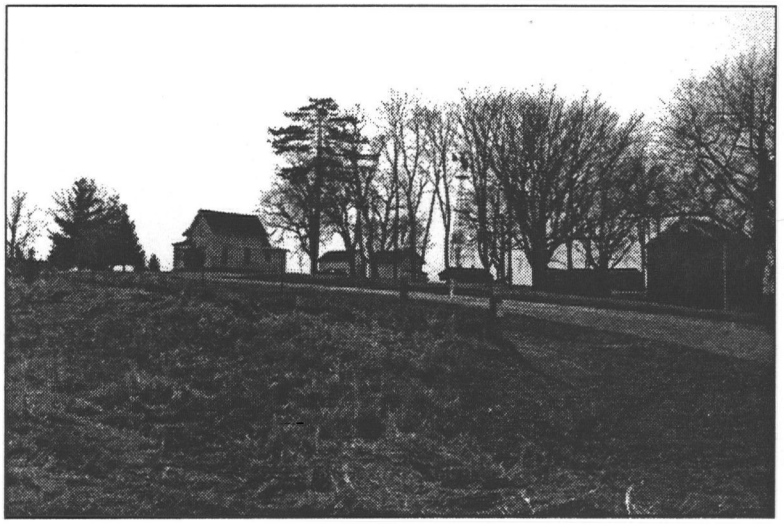


Figure 45. Miles farm.

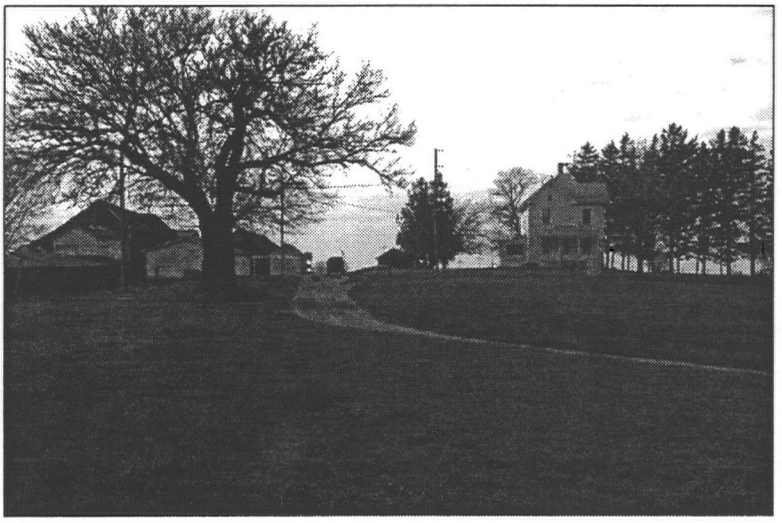


Figure 46. Thompson farm.

Figure 47. The prairie re-creation.

The remainder of the park, the visitor contact and park support area, has been developed and used primarily for visitor services and maintenance. An entry buffer area east of Parkside Drive is the primary visitor approach to the site. The federal office building, housing both the NPS visitor center and the U.S. Post Office, is northeast of the historic core *(Figure 49)*. In conjunction, there are brick and wood screen fences and walls, visitor parking facilities, site furnishings, pedestrian walks, and interpretive and directional signs. The NPS visitor center faces the visitor parking area. There is wooden screen fencing at the edge of the parking facility to the west. A brick wall screens views of a service area from the visitor parking lot to the north *(Figure 50)*. The Post Office is located adjacent to and north of the visitor center. Visitor access to the NHS from the parking area occurs along the southern edge of the parking area. The parking/visitor facilities area located east of Parkside Drive, and north of Wapsinonoc Creek, is composed of a park-like lawn area with trees and shrubs planted at the edges, a visitor parking area, picnic facilities, visitor parking areas, and "Parkside Green," an open space used for picnicking and community activities. The park maintenance area *(Figure 51)* is located east of Parkside Drive and south of Wapsinonoc Creek.

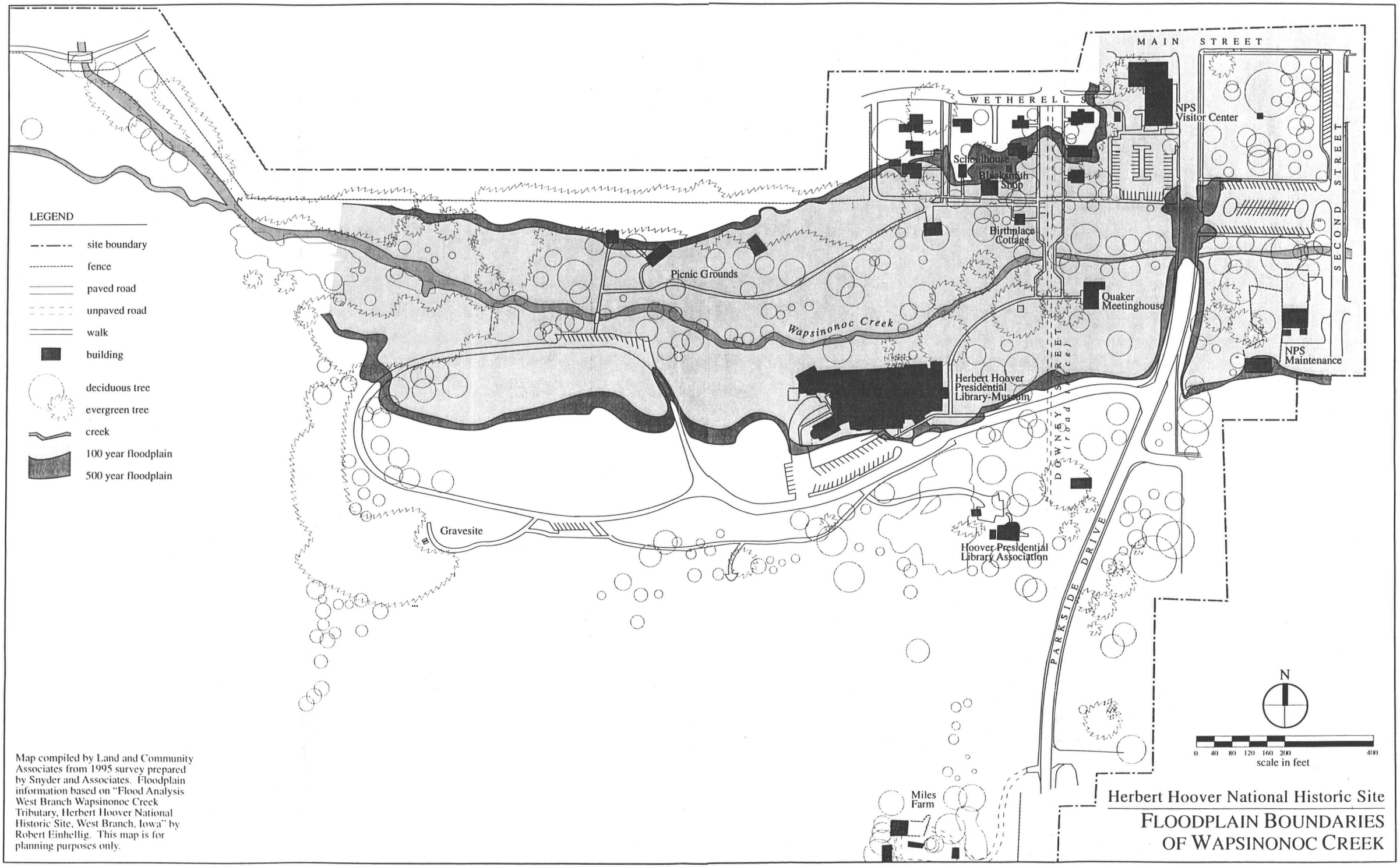
Natural Systems and Features

The tributary to the West Branch of Wapsinonoc Creek *(Figure 52)* is the major natural feature that has affected and continues to affect the development and use of the NHS. Generally, nineteenth-century development within the current NHS boundaries and near the creek appears to have occurred with concern for locating buildings and structures out of the creek's floodplain.

Most of the developed area in and near the village is flat to very gently rolling, except for the gravesite. The gravesite location is notable for its elevated topographic position and long panoramic view, most notably to the core area. Earth fill was used to align the semi-circle of earth behind the graves with the birthplace cottage. South of the loop road, the topography is more steeply rolling. The Miles Farm, the prairie, the Thompson Farm, and agricultural fields all have more steeply rolling topography than the core area. The prairie on a portion of the Miles Farm is an attempt to re-establish a natural vegetative condition that had been lost through a century of agricultural cultivation.

West Branch of Wapsinonoc Creek Tributary

The tributary crosses the site from west to east, and provides drainage for much of the core area. The tributary floodplain susceptible to frequent overbank flooding and bank sloughing in the vicinity of the library-museum and the birthplace cottage. There is concern about periodic site damage, but neither building has experienced direct effects from flooding. Downstream, the



Map compiled by Land and Community Associates from 1995 survey prepared by Snyder and Associates. Floodplain information based on "Flood Analysis West Branch Wapsinonoc Creek Tributary, Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, West Branch, Iowa" by Robert Einhellig. This map is for planning purposes only.

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site

FLOODPLAIN BOUNDARIES OF WAPSINONOC CREEK

Exhibit J. Floodplain Boundaries of Wapsinonoc Creek.

Figure 48. Bicycle trail in the northwest corner of the site.

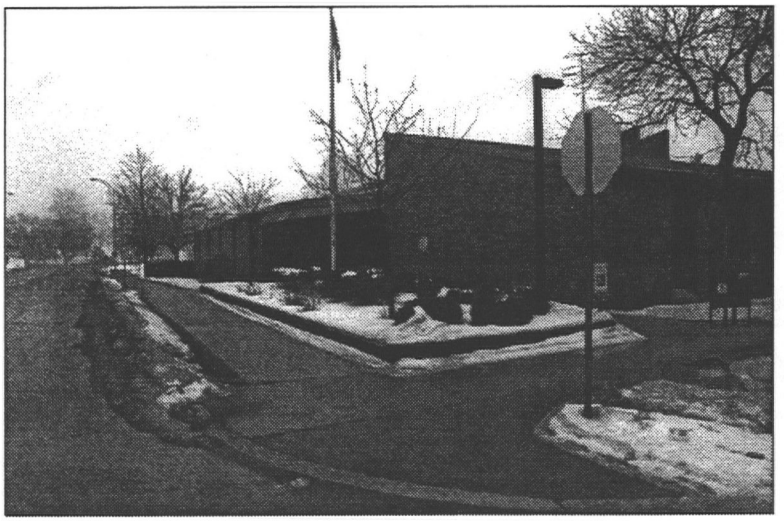


Figure 49. The visitor center and post office near the park entrance.

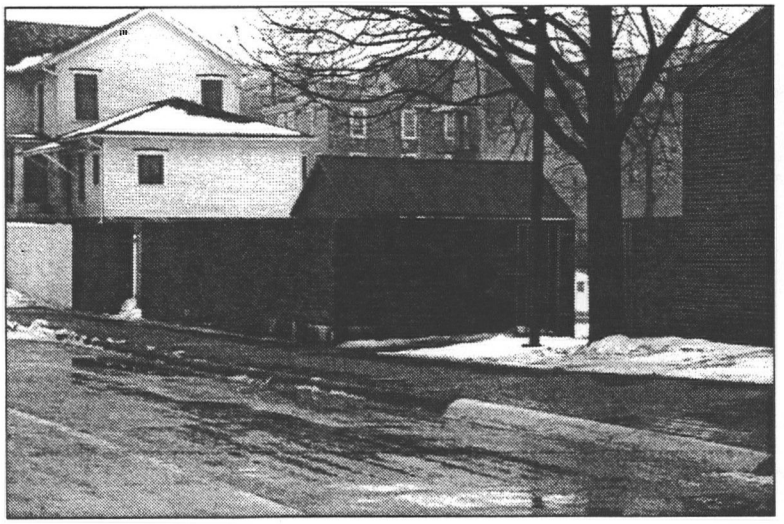


Figure 50. This brick wall next to the visitor center screens service and maintenance functions from view.

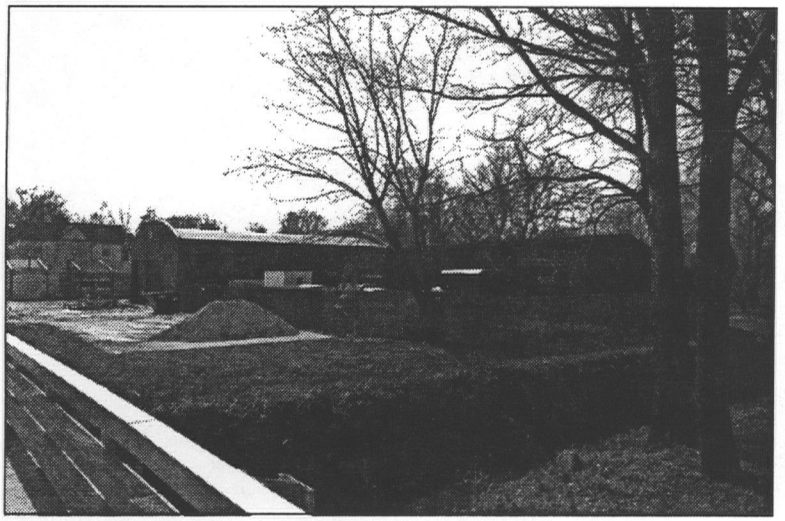


Figure 51. NPS maintenance facility along the east edge of the site.

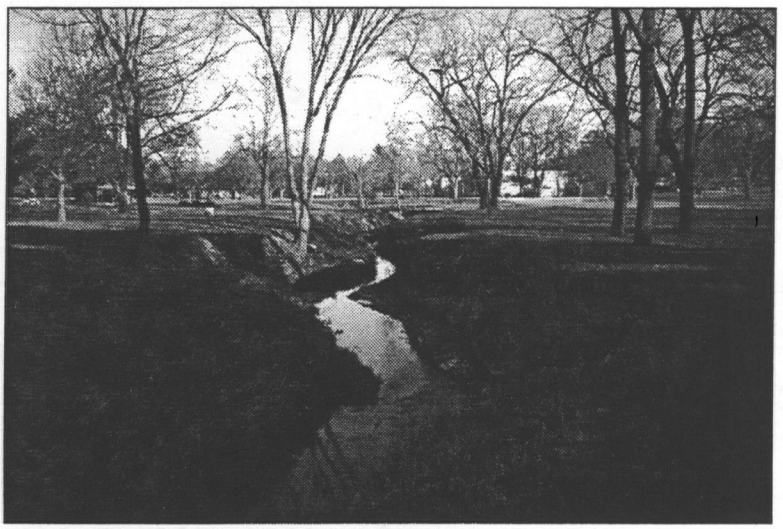


Figure 52. The West Branch of Wapsinonoc Creek.

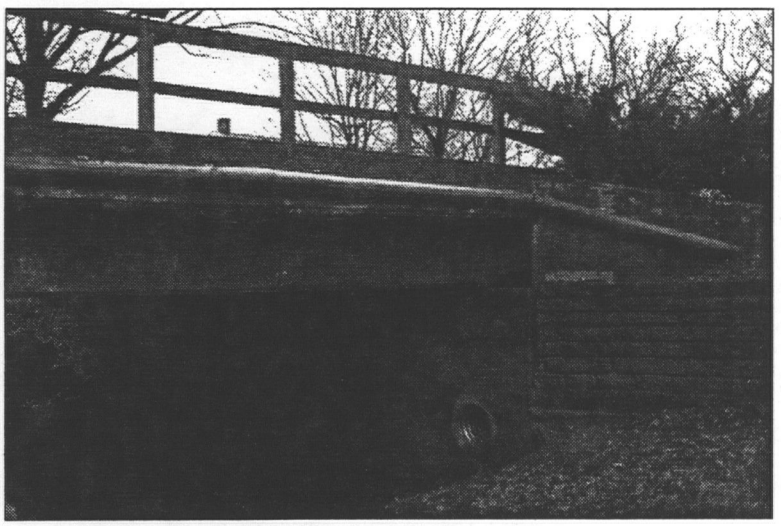


Figure 53. The Downey Street bridge over Wapsinonoc Creek.

maintenance facilities south of the creek and the parking area on the north are also subjected to flooding. Bank scour is a problem along the creek throughout the historic site.

The frequency and severity of flooding in recent years led to inclusion of a hydrologic conditions evaluation within the CLR. The flood analysis was conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey and interpreted by Joseph P. Martin, Ph.D, P.E. of Havertown, Pennsylvania for Andropogon of the consultant team. The precipitating event for the flood analysis was a severe storm on August 16, 1993. The study estimated the peak flow rate in the creek at 1,650 cubic feet per second (cfs). This rate was estimated to be a rare condition, representing a recurrence interval between the twenty-five-year and fifty-year flood events. The capacity of the creekbed by itself was computed to be 650 cfs. Flows in excess of this amount initiate overbank flow and were estimated to have a two-to-five-year recurrence interval. The stream capacity is affected, however, by backwater from local channel restrictions. Overbank flooding is in itself a natural occurrence causing streams to build up floodplains. Problems arise when such flooding interferes with human activities and cultural resources. Research in Iowa indicates that, on average, natural streams carve channels capable of carrying flow rates up to a one-to-three-year recurrence interval. This is consistent with the flood analysis estimate, but not with actual flood observations. NPS personnel report that about eighteen overbank floods have occurred in eleven years, an average of about 1.5 floods per year.

Upstream Conditions

Farming is the predominant local land use, with increased urbanization near West Branch. The Soil Conservation Service has proposed a flood control structure that will reduce peak flows in the 1,000-2,000 cfs range by temporary detention. The flood analysis also indicated that the risks of flooding of major buildings is, on average, once in twenty-five years or more. Only the NHS maintenance facilities, which are not contributing features of the cultural landscape, are at major risk. Continued flooding, however, is responsible for vegetative loss and damage, and debris collects in the channel as well as in the floodplain.

Downstream Conditions

The actual cause of frequent flooding, however, is downstream and due to the bridges located at Downey Street *(Figure 53)*, Parkside Drive, and Second Street. In rural areas, it is economical to build bridges and culverts with slightly less hydraulic capacity at natural flow levels than the streams. To drive the flood flow through the restriction, the headwater rises in extreme events, providing a surcharge. This produces a backwater condition upstream.

The hydraulic classification of the tributary is "downstream control," so backwaters extending upstream increase the tailwater elevation at the next bridge. The local headloss is imposed on that

elevated tailwater level, so the effect of the three bridges is somewhat cumulative. The flood level in the meadow was higher than the natural (no bridge) condition by about three feet in the 1993 flood.

The problem of downstream constriction is not easily solved. Widening the three bridges or channelizing the creek through the reach between Downey and Second Streets would be expensive and would affect the cultural landscape integrity of the site.

Streambank Stability

There are two separate types of bank instability along the creek. At the upstream side of the bridges, turbulence as streamlines converge on the opening and has caused soil grain-by-grain erosion. Gabions have been installed to mitigate the problem at Second Street.

Along the meadow, the physical condition is more massive sloughing of the banks. Because this is in the relatively quiescent backwater "pool" well above the Downey Street bridge, velocities are low and erosive scour is not the mechanism. Instead, bank slopes fail as floodwaters recede.

At the creek, the soil in the banks and under the floodplain also saturate in a flood. As a thunderstorm passes, however, the water level in the creek can drop quickly. This leaves the banks in an "unconsolidated-undrained" (excess water content and pressure, respectively) condition. The silty fine soil is weak, and the excess seepage force causes localized slumping.

Land Use

The NHS is primarily a commemorative and memorial site that also includes the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum. Other uses associated with the site are supportive of or incidental to these primary uses. As a result, a substantial portion of the site is open space. The vista between the gravesite and the birthplace cottage is maintained as open space to emphasize the visual connection between the two features. The fields and farmsteads adjacent to and at the edges of the site are in agricultural land uses or have been converted to prairie. Various buildings within the park serve as NPS offices; other buildings in the park are used as residences for park personnel and others. Service, support, supply, and storage uses occur in the maintenance facilities located east of Parkside Drive and other structures used to store equipment and materials.

Circulation Systems

Site circulation patterns have been developed for both pedestrian and vehicular use. Access to portions of the site, such as the birthplace cottage, is limited to pedestrians, while other portions, such as the loop road leading to the gravesite walk and picnic areas, are accessible to motorists and

cyclists. Vehicular drives are primarily constructed of concrete or asphalt, although there are a few isolated gravel drives. Pedestrian routes are composed of asphalt (including a short segment of bicycle trail), concrete, brick, boardwalk, limestone stepping stones, granite at the gravesite, gravel, and mown paths through the prairie.

The site is accessible from Interstate 80 by way of Parkside Drive, a two- to three-lane concrete roadway. Parkside Drive is the major West Branch entrance from the interstate. Portions of other streets such as Second Street, First Street, Cedar Street, and Wetherell Street are paved in concrete and, like Parkside Drive, are located within the boundaries of the NHS. According to the 1984 "Land Protection Plan":

> The 4.59 acres owned by the city of West Branch consists of road and alley rights-of-way. The city wished to donate these lands to the National Park Service when Herbert Hoover National Historic Site was established but was unable to do so at the time under Iowa State Law. Instead, a perpetual easement was granted to the National Park Service with the city reserving rights-of-way for electrical, water, sewer and "other utility lines and installations" together with the right to use, maintain, and replace the utilities. These rights provide no other particular problem since the National Park Service was granted the right at its own expense to reconstruct or relocate utility lines.[1]

Just north of Interstate 80, a gravel drive leading west from Parkside Drive provides access to the Miles Farm. Further north within the site, the concrete entry drive of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum also extends west from Parkside Drive. This drive crosses the gravel trace of Downey Street to provide access to the library museum's concrete-surfaced parking areas south and southwest of the library-museum. Opposite the parking area, a gravel drive leads southeast from the entry drive to serve the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association offices. The entry drive continues west to form the loop road that provides access to two asphalt parking areas. The northern parking area serves the picnic grounds across Wapsinonoc Creek. A wooden planked pedestrian bridge is located over Wapsinonoc Creek. A concrete walk leads from the southern parking area to the Hoover gravesite.

Parkside Drive also provides access (east) to the concrete-surfaced visitor parking lot in the northeastern portion of the park, and (west) to the concrete visitor parking lot south of the visitor center. There is also access to the east lot from Second Street, which also serves the NPS

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[1] United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, "Land Protection Plan," (1984), 1-2.

maintenance area south of Wapsinonoc Creek. Main Street, located outside the NHS boundary to the north, provides access to the gravel drive leading south to the Thompson Farm.

Pedestrian circulation types include wood boardwalks, concrete walks, brick and concrete walks, limestone paths, and asphalt walks. Concrete sidewalks flank Main Street, Second Street, and portions of Parkside Drive. In the vicinity of the visitor center there are four- to six-foot wide sidewalks with brick and concrete paving patterns *(Figure 54)*. In the vicinity of the birthplace cottage, four- to eight-foot wide boardwalks serve as the primary pedestrian route. Elsewhere within the historic core area, pedestrian routes along the Downey Street road trace include boardwalks, concrete walks, and limestone stepping stones, some of which provide access to the nineteenth-century residences that face Downey Street. An asphalt path meanders beyond the end of the boardwalk , with a twenty-foot segment of gravel drive between the asphalt path and the boardwalk, past the schoolhouse, and finally to the wood plank pedestrian bridge over Wapsinonoc Creek where it joins the north loop road parking area. A series of concrete and asphalt walks connect the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum area with the granite walks at the gravesite *(Figure 55)*. There is an asphalt bicycle path located in the northwest corner of the site adjoining Main Street. The path connects the sidewalks along Main Street with a continuation of the bicycle path that ultimately leads to West Branch High School west of the site. A concrete bridge provides a crossing over the south branch of Wapsinonoc Creek along this path.

A number of streets that existed historically have been substantially altered or are no longer extant. Downey Street formerly served as the entrance road into West Branch from the south, but was rerouted and replaced by Parkside Drive in 1970. The road trace within the site that runs between the birthplace cottage, Quaker meetinghouse, and a number of the nineteenth-century residences follows the former alignment of Downey Street right-of-way *(Figure 56)*. Water Street was an east-west street that is now the general location of various visitor walks south of the visitor center. Part of Water Street has been incorporated into the visitor parking lot at the visitor center. Penn Street was an east-west street that originally ran immediately north of the birthplace cottage. In 1956 it was rerouted eighty feet north of the present site of the blacksmith shop and was aligned approximately with the present site of the schoolhouse. The 1956 alignment of Penn Street is now a lawn. Poplar Street was a north-south street that occupied a site west of the current schoolhouse location and provided access to the western cluster of nineteenth-century residences. Cedar Street was an east-west street north of the P.T. Smith House that is also currently a lawn. Wetherell Street was a short east-west street in the neighborhood north of the birthplace cottage. It was extended to the west and east and that currently serves the contemporary residences north and west of the site and the visitor center.

Figure 54. Brick sidewalk in the historic core area.

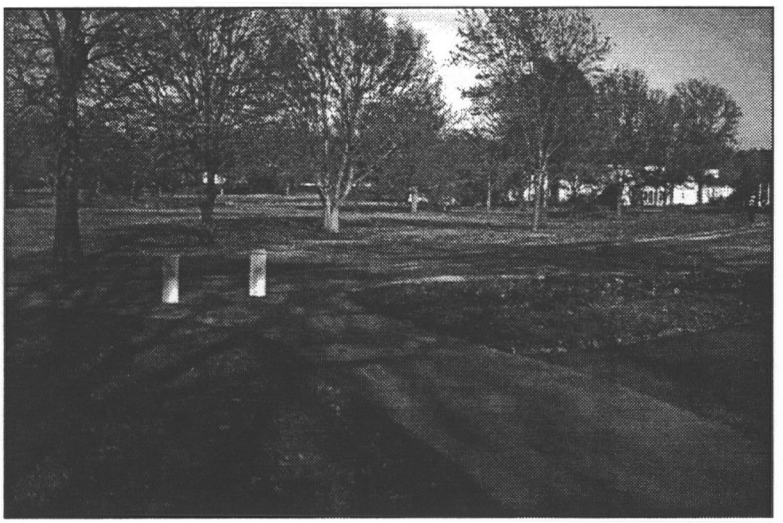

Figure 55. Asphalt sidewalk

Figure 56. Downey Street road trace looking north.

Vehicular Circulation

- Parkside Drive is a north-south road that connects Interstate 80 and West Branch. Approximately 1,600 linear feet of the Parkside Drive right-of-way is within the site. Within the right-of-way is a two-lane concrete street, without curbs. North of the entry drive to the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum, Parkside Drive widens to three lanes with concrete curb and gutter. The three lanes are divided into two northbound and one southbound lane. The northbound lanes include a right-turn-only lane, and a left turn/straight ahead lane at the intersection of Parkside Drive and Main Street. Parkside Drive provides access to the concrete entry drive to the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum and both visitor parking lots.
- Second Street is a north/south road located to the east of Parkside Drive. A portion of the right-of-way and paving of Second Street, including its intersection with Main Street to the north and the access yard of the NPS maintenance facility to the south, falls within the boundary of the NHS. Second Street is two lanes wide and is constructed of concrete with concrete curbing. It provides access to a sixteen-car head-in parking area east of Parkside Drive, the visitor parking lot also east of Parkside, and the NPS maintenance facility in the southeast corner of the site. The West Branch fire station, two residences, and several businesses and parking lots front on this section of Second Street. Second Street continues north and south into West Branch outside the NHS.
- Cedar Street is an east-west road constructed of concrete, without curbing. A short segment of Cedar Street and its right-of-way are located within the park boundary. Cedar Street terminates at its intersection with Parkside Drive south of the concrete entry drive to the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum. Cedar Street continues east through West Branch beyond the park boundary.
- First Street is a north-south road constructed of concrete, without curbing. First Street is on axis with the northern section of Parkside Drive. The western half of the First Street right-of-way, including a portion of the road, is located within the park boundaries. First Street intersects with Cedar Street within the park boundary.
- Wetherell Street is an east-west road, located south of Main Street, that is constructed of concrete with concrete curbing on both sides. The Wetherell Street right-of-way forms a portion of the northern park boundary; other portions of the right-of-way are located within the park boundary. The width of pavement varies; on-street parking regulations also vary. West Branch commercial building lots are located along Wetherell Street. A concrete-paved

extension of Wetherell Street east of its intersection with Downey Street is not sited within a right-of-way; it provides access to the concrete parking lot west of the visitor center.

- The entry drive for the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum is a concrete road, approximately twenty feet in width, that connects to Parkside Drive between the P.T. Smith House (HS-02) and the Friends meetinghouse (HS-03) and leads to the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum parking lot. The entry drive also accesses the gravel drive to the library association parking lot and the asphalt loop road to the gravesite parking lot. Approximately 200 feet west of Parkside Drive, the entry drive passes through a stone wall and wood entrance gate. After passing through the entrance gate, the entry drive changes to asphalt and gradually widens to approximately twenty-four feet before reaching the concrete library drop-off. The drive then continues west past the gravel library association drive, and the concrete drive to the staff and service parking area west of the library-museum; the drive later becomes the loop road that leads to the gravesite parking lot.
- The loop road, located west of the library-museum, is a 1,700-foot long, asphalt-surfaced route that connects the entry drive, the gravesite, and the picnic area. The loop road crosses the vista between the gravesite and the birthplace cottage. Approximately twelve feet wide, the loop road allows only one-way traffic in a counter-clockwise direction.
- The Hoover Presidential Library Association drive is a ten-foot-wide gravel drive intersecting with the entry drive south of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum visitor parking lot; it provides access to the library association's gravel parking lot. The entry has been moved.
- The Isaac Miles Farm drive is near the southern edge of the NHS; a gravel drive intersects Parkside Drive and provides access to gravel parking areas at the Miles Farm. This entry has been moved.
- The Thompson Farm drive is along the northern park boundary; a gravel drive intersects Main Street and provides access to the gravel parking areas at the Thompson Farm.
- The concrete drive west of the Garvin House, which is approximately twelve feet wide and eighty feet long, serves both residences and offices.
- A concrete drive, approximately twelve feet wide, provides access from Wetherell Street to a gravel parking area west of the J. Staples House, the concrete approach to the Wright Garage, and the asphalt and gravel continuation of the drive leading to the storage building at the former location of the Scellars barn.

Parking lots

- The visitor parking lot south of the visitor center is paved in concrete, has concrete curbs, and has forty-three (including four handicapped) spaces. There is a raised concrete divider with brick infills in the center of the lot and along its southern margin.
- The concrete-curbed and paved visitor parking lot east of Parkside Drive provides parking for approximately sixty-two vehicles. Raised concrete islands with grass areas are located at regular intervals within the lot. A directional sign along Parkside Drive directs trailers and buses to this lot. Concrete sidewalks are located along the northern and southern edges of this lot; the northern sidewalk leads to a painted crosswalk across Parkside Drive.
- A concrete slab at the NPS maintenance facility adjoins Second Street and provides access to various maintenance structures and the adjacent gravel parking lots.
- The parking lot west of the visitor center serves staff and service parking for the U.S. Post Office and visitor center. This parking lot is paved in concrete and has concrete curbs. A brick wall along its southern limits views from the visitor parking lot south of the visitor center.
- A sixteen-car, concrete-paved, head-in parking area is located along the western side of Second Street, near the Village Green.
- There are two parking lots adjoining the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum. One contains thirty-eight parking spaces, including two spaces reserved for the handicapped *(Figure 57)*, and is located south of the building; west of the building, there are thirteen spaces, including one reserved for the handicapped.
- There is a gravel parking area with space for approximately ten vehicles at the Hoover Presidential Library Association.
- A concrete and asphalt parking area for approximately nineteen vehicles located adjacent to the loop road provides picnic area parking. A structural steel pedestrian bridge with wooden platform and railings crosses the Wapsinonoc and links the picnic and parking areas. There are two oversized vehicle spaces.
- Gravesite parking along the loop road includes seven parking spaces, with two for oversized vehicles. A walk leads from the parking area to the gravesite.
- Gravel drives on the Miles Farm link buildings and structures; the informal parking areas have gravel surfaces.

- Gravel drives on the Thompson Farm link buildings and structures; the informal parking areas have gravel surfaces.

Vehicular Bridges

- The Parkside Drive bridge crosses Wapsinonoc Creek. The bridge has three round, painted, metal rails and concrete sidewalks on both sides.
- The Second Street bridge crossing Wapsinonoc Creek has three aluminum box rails and concrete sidewalks on both sides.

Pedestrian Circulation

There are a number of concrete walks in the NHS:

- Parkside Drive - Concrete walks adjoin portions of the length along Parkside Drive. The walks are primarily four- or six-feet wide, with integral curb along portions of the street; the walks are separated from the street by grass panels along other portions. The concrete walk continues along the east side of the vehicular bridge over Wapsinonoc Creek and continues south towards Cedar Street, although the walk stops just short of Cedar and turns east. The concrete sidewalk occurs on the western side of the vehicular bridge over Wapsinonoc Creek but does not connect to walks on either end of the bridge.
- Park area west of Parkside Drive - There are concrete sidewalks along Parkside Drive; Main Street; the west side of Second Street at the head-in parking lot; the north side of the visitor parking lot east of Parkside Drive; and the south side of the visitor parking lot, east of Parkside Drive.
- Second Street - A concrete sidewalk follows the eastern right-of-way of Second Street within the park boundary. Concrete sidewalks also parallel the western side of the street and lead to the NPS maintenance facility. There are concrete sidewalks on both sides of the vehicular bridge over Wapsinonoc Creek.
- Cedar Street - A short section of concrete sidewalk occurs along a portion of Cedar Street within the park boundary. This sidewalk is tied to another concrete sidewalk that extends from Parkside Drive beyond the park boundary.
- Wetherell Street - This concrete sidewalk is located outside of the northern park boundary, along the Wetherell Street right-of-way. An additional sidewalk provides access to the service area west of the Visitor Center. It is located along the northern side of Wetherell Street.

- Visitor Center - The concrete sidewalk located along the eastern side of the Visitor Center parallels Parkside Drive. Adjacent to the visitor parking area, there are combinations of concrete sidewalks, brick sidewalks, and concrete and brick sidewalks. Brick sidewalks are situated along the northern and western edges of the visitor parking lot south of the Visitor Center, and extend west to the boardwalk from the southwest corner of the visitor parking lot; concrete sidewalks occur along the southern edge of the parking lot; concrete sidewalk with brick panel infills are located along the eastern edge of the visitor parking lot next to Parkside Drive.

- Other concrete walks - A concrete sidewalk parallels the northern side of the asphalt entry drive between the entry gate and the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum, although there are no sidewalks that connect with Parkside Drive in this area. This sidewalk extends to a portion of the visitor parking area south of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum and through the raised traffic island near the library drop-off. Beyond the island, the sidewalk turns west and terminates in the asphalt walk that leads to the gravesite. A concrete sidewalk is also located along the eastern side of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum that extends north past the Isis statue to connect with the Downey Street trace boardwalks. A concrete sidewalk connects the parking area along the loop road to the granite walk at the gravesite.

- Boardwalks are the primary pedestrian circulation system within the NHS historic core. Boardwalks line both sides of the Downey Street road trace from the north end at Wetherell Street to the boardwalk leading to the Quaker meetinghouse. Boardwalks also follow the eastern side of the former alignment of Poplar Street from the intersection of Wetherell Street on the north to the boardwalk south of the schoolhouse. Boardwalks that run east-west connect the schoolhouse to the brick sidewalk leading to the visitor parking lot. An east-west boardwalk also connects the Downey Street boardwalks to the Quaker meetinghouse. Most of the boardwalks are either four feet or six feet in width, with two-by-six boards laid perpendicular to the direction of travel. There are a few short segments where two-by-twelve boards have been laid parallel with the direction of travel. Some sections are wider—the south side of the blacksmith shop— or narrower—the two-foot wide boardwalk connecting the parking at the Wright Garage to the back entrance of the E.S. Hayhurst House. Boardwalks also connect some of the houses to the boardwalks along the former streets. A four-foot wide boardwalk extends to the front porch of the birthplace cottage, and a boardwalk ramp provides universal access to the rear porch of the cottage. Short segments of concrete ramp provide transitions between the boardwalks and the street paving where the boardwalks intersect with Wetherell Street.

- Pedestrian circulation includes several asphalt-surfaced walks. An asphalt walk approximately four feet in width connects the wooden pedestrian bridge, comfort station, and picnic shelters to the core area. An asphalt walk runs from the south side of the wooden pedestrian bridge to the asphalt parking area south of the bridge. An asphalt walk south of the loop road approximately four feet in width connects the concrete walk leading to the gravesite to the concrete sidewalk across the entry drive from the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum. Along this asphalt path there is a short asphalt trail that leads to an asphalt pad, with two benches overlooking the prairie. South of Main Street in the northwest corner of the site, a segment of asphalt bicycle trail connects the concrete sidewalk along Main Street outside the NHS on the north, and the continuation of the asphalt bicycle trail on the south.
- Gravel walks are used as well. A twenty-foot wide segment of gravel walk connects the boardwalk south of the schoolhouse and the asphalt path leading to the wooden pedestrian bridge and picnic shelters. The gravel walk is also part of the service drive connecting Wetherell Street to the Scellars Barn (HS-29).
- Limestone stepping stones delineate some paths. Limestone stepping stones set flush with the surrounding turf provide access from the boardwalk along the west side of the trace to the park superintendent's office in the C.E. Smith House. Limestone stepping stones lead from the visitor parking lot south of the visitor center to the rear of the H. Varney House.
- An arc-shaped granite pedestrian walk, set in the form of an arc, extends through the gravesite northeast of the Hoover graves.
- Mown grass paths provide pedestrian circulation through the prairie.

Pedestrian Bridges

- A wood-planked structural- steel pedestrian bridge *(Figure 58)* connects an asphalt path from the parking area off the loop road to the comfort station across Wapsinonoc Creek.
- The Downey Street trace bridge *(Figure 59)* (HS-26, IDLCS 06162) has boardwalks on both sides for pedestrians and is paved with concrete in the center. It crosses Wapsinonoc Creek southeast of the birthplace cottage and northwest of the Quaker meetinghouse.
- A concrete bridge along the pedestrian and bicycle trail crosses Wapsinonoc Creek south of Main Street in the northwest corner of the NHS.

Figure 57. Library-museum parking area.

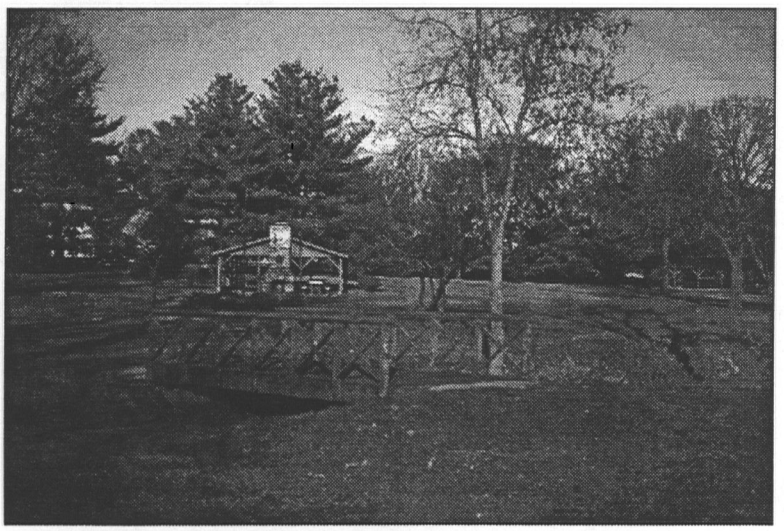

Figure 58. Bridge near picnic shelter.

Figure 59. Downey Street bridge over Wapsinonoc Creek.

Vegetation

Three general vegetative types have been identified within the NHS. The first is the well-tended lawn area encompassing the northeastern section—approximately one-fourth—of the NHS *(Figure 60)*. This lawn area extends from the birthplace cottage to the gravesite, around the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum, along Parkside Drive, near the farmstead buildings, and adjacent to the Visitor Center. This vegetative type is dominated by large expanses of manicured turf dotted with clusters of evenly spaced canopy trees. Scattered clusters of individually maintained flowering trees and a few shrubs also occur in this landscape. Evergreen plantings screen the northwest edge. Field observations and comparisons of contemporary and historic aerial photographs indicate very little historic vegetation in the historic core *(Exhibit K)*.

The second vegetative type is the large prairie *(Figure 61)* located in the southern half of the site and extending north to Main Street between the gravesite and the Thompson farmstead. This area was in crop cultivation for a century and prairie plants were installed only in the 1970s as part of a prairie re-creation. A number of quantitative surveys document the prairie population. The dominance of prairie grasses, particularly warm-season species such as big bluestem *(Andropogon gerardi)*, in the prairie is noted in those surveys. Field observations support those findings. Most of the prairie is dominated by grass species, although forbs are found in concentrations at certain locations and scattered throughout the prairie. Some groups of forbs appear to be intentionally concentrated at key viewing locations such as at information markers or near certain publicly visible sites. Individual forbs are also scattered throughout the prairie but appear to be thinly populated compared with the grasses. This situation suggests that the prairie re-creation has not achieved the vegetative composition of a true prairie, but is still in the process of being reconstructed.

The third vegetative type includes the agricultural fields in the western portion of the site *(Figure 62)*. These fields are currently cultivated in crops, although portions are often left fallow.

The following plant lists include the species that comprise the three major vegetative types on site. Species visible during site reconnaissance in January and February 1994 were identified.[2] Discussions with NPS personnel indicated that there are no significant herbaceous plants absent from the list.

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[2]All plant species were identified on the site by David D. DeBord of Dunbar/Jones Partnership. Some plants are not identified as to species, since precise identification is difficult without close examination of floristic characteristics or other detailed plant parts available only at other times of the year. Those plants found on the site but not specifically identified are shown on the lists with the species notation "*sp.*"

Figure 60. Grassy open area between historic core and gravesite.

Figure 61. A portion of the prairie re-creation.

Figure 62. Corn field at Thompson farm.

LEGEND

site boundary
fence
paved road
unpaved road
walk
building
creek
deciduous tree
evergreen tree
historic trees

MAIN STREET
WETHERELL ST.
SECOND STREET
PARKSIDE DRIVE
DOWNEY STREET (Trace)

NPS Visitor Center
Schoolhouse
Blacksmith Shop
Birthplace Cottage
Quaker Meetinghouse
NPS Maintenance
Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum
Picnic Grounds
Wapsinonoc Creek

N

0 20 40 60 80 100 200
scale in feet

Map compiled by Land and Community Associates from 1995 survey prepared by Snyder and Associates. Data on historic trees from Iowa Department of Transportation 1951 aerial photograph. This map is for planning purposes only.

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site

HISTORIC VEGETATION, DEVELOPED AREA

Exhibit K. Historic Vegetation, Developed Area.

Plant Lists

Manicured Area (includes areas around the farmsteads)

Evergreen Trees

White Fir	*Abies concolor*
Norway Spruce	*Picea abies*
White Spruce	*Picea glauca*
Blue Spruce	*Picea pungens glauca*
Austrian Pine	*Pinus nigra*
White Pine	*Pinus strobus*
Douglas Fir	*Pseudosuga menziesii*
Eastern Arborvitae	*Thuja sp.*
Canadian Hemlock	*Tsuga canadensis*

Deciduous Trees

Boxelder	*Acer negundo*
Black Maple	*Acer nigrum*
Norway Maple	*Acer platanoides*
Silver Maple	*Acer saccharinum*
Sugar Maple	*Acer saccharum*
River Birch	*Betula nigra*
Caltalpa	*Catalpa speciosa*
Hackberry	*Celtis occidentalis*
Eastern Redbud	*Cercis canadensis*
Downy Hawthorn	*Crataegus mollis*
Green Ash	*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*
Kentucky Coffeetree	*Gymnocladus diocum*
Butternut	*Juglans cinerea*
Walnut	*Juglans nigra*
Crabapple	*Malus sp.*
Dawn Redwood	*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*
Mulberry	*Morus sp.*
Sycamore	*Platanus occidentalis*
Cottonwood	*Populus deltoides*
White Oak	*Quercus alba*
Northern Red Oak	*Quercus borealis*
Burr Oak	*Quercus macrocarpa*
Pin Oak	*Quercus pallustris*
Black Willow	*Salix nigra*
Weeping Willow	*Salix (niobe?)*
American Linden	*Tilia americana*

Shrubs

Buttonbush	*Cephalanthus occidentalis*
Flowering Quince	*Chaenomelies sp.*
Redosier Dogwood	*Cornus stolonifera*
Juniper	*Juniperus spp.*
Honeysuckle	*Lonicera tatarica*
Elder Berry	*Sambucus canandensis*
Spreading Yew	*Taxus sp.*

Herbaceous Plants

Little Ragweed	*Ambrosia artemisifolia*
Bromegrass	*Bromus sp.*
Barnyard Grass	*Echinochloa sp.*
Plantain	*Plantago rugelli*
Kentucky Bluegrass	*Poa pratensis*
Dandelion	*Taraxacus officinalis*

Reconstructed Prairie

Shrubs

Gray Dogwood	*Cornus racemosa*
Raspberry	*Rubus sp.*

Herbaceous Plants (grasses and forbs)

Little Ragweed	*Ambrosia artemisifolia*
Giant Ragweed	*Ambrosia trifida*
Big Bluestem	*Andropogon gerardi*
Little Bluestem	*Andropogon scoparius*
Common Milkweed	*Asclepias syriaca*
Side Oats Gramma	*Bouteloua curtipendula*
Bromegrass	*Bromus sp.*
Canada Thistle	*Circium arvense*
Canada Wildrye	*Elymus canadensis*
Fleabane	*Erigeron sp.*
Rattlesnake Master	*Eryngium yuccifolium*
Sunflower	*Helianthus sp.*
Alfalfa	*Medicago sp.*
Bergamot	*Monarda fistulosa*
Evening primrose	*Oenothera biennis*
Switchgrass	*Panicum virgatum*
Purple Prairie Clover	*Petalostemon purpureum*
Kentucky Bluegrass	*Poa pratensis*
Cinquefoil	*Potentilla sp.*
Black-eyed Susan	*Ratibida hirta*
Yellow Coneflower	*Ratibida pinnata*
Foxtail	*Setaria sp.*
Goldenrod	*Solidago sp.*
Indian Grass	*Sorghastrum nutans*
Dandelion	*Taraxacus officinalis*

Agricultural Fields (plants found within or at edges of plowed or fallow fields)

Little Ragweed	*Ambrosia artemisifolia*
Giant Ragweed	*Ambrosia trifida*
Canada Thistle	*Circium arvense*
Alfalfa	*Medicago sp.*
Kentucky Bluegrass	*Poa pratensis*
Foxtail	*Setaria sp.*
Goldenrods	*Solidago sp.*
Dandelion	*Taraxacus officinali*

Cluster Arrangement

Clusters of buildings and structures identified at the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site include the rectilinear arrangement of the neighborhood streetscape within the historic core area and the informal picnic area cluster. The siting of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum facilities and library association building acknowledge the grid but are not aligned with it. They are oriented to the east. The maintenance facilities sited along Second Street also acknowledge the grid but their set-backs are not uniform. Clusters at both the Miles and Thompson Farms *(Figure 63)* reflect typical farmstead settlement for the area, namely a tightly clustered grouping of buildings and structures, including the farm residence, barns and outbuildings, which are sited around a central open space bordered on the north and west with a windbreak, and surrounded by fenced agricultural fields.

Buildings and structures located along the Downey Street trace, and those in close association with downtown West Branch, are oriented to the town's grid pattern of streets and rights-of-ways.

The birthplace cottage, blacksmith shop, Quaker meetinghouse, nineteenth-century houses, and ancillary structures located in the historic core area are oriented to the Downey Street trace and other roads and road traces in the area that occur as an irregular rectilinear grid. Also oriented to this grid are the visitor center and visitor parking lot.

The newer clusters, such as the picnic areas, that are located within the park-like landscape of the NHS are less formally arranged and appear to have been sited to take advantage of open space, views, or landform. The picnic area located north of Wapsinonoc Creek contains two picnic shelters and a comfort station that have been sited within an expansive lawn, dotted with canopy trees and edged by screen evergreens, at the NHS boundary adjacent to a West Branch neighborhood. Each structure orients to open space in a different direction.

The Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum is located just south of Wapsinonoc Creek, and faces a long, curving, concrete parking area *(Figure 64)*. A large, low building, it has been enlarged several times, always respecting the low-rise scale of the NHS. Its massing and large footprint, however, differ markedly from the clusters of small-scale buildings and structures clustered in other parts of the site. Across the parking area from the library-museum, the Hoover Presidential Library Association building sits atop a low hill. Both buildings are oriented due north in deference to the West Branch grid that continues within the site, although neither is associated with the grid directly.

The maintenance area contains a series of structures, of consistent setbacks, that are oriented to the West Branch grid along an extension of Second Street.

Buildings and Structures

Buildings and structures range from the nineteenth-century, vernacular birthplace cottage to the twentieth-century architect-designed federal building and Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum. Other buildings include the blacksmith shop intended to replicate the type of shop operated by Hoover's father, an 1853 one-room schoolhouse, an 1856 Quaker meetinghouse, and nine restored historic houses. The following lists note the individual buildings and structures found on the site with identification numbers (HS# , IDLCS#) following the name of each. Existing conditions photographs illustrate the character of many of these buildings and structures.

Buildings and Structures

- Birthplace cottage (HS-01, IDLCS 00659)
- Herbert Hoover Birthplace Cottage Privy (HS-20, IDLCS 06160)
- P.T. Smith House (HS 02, IDLCS 00662)
- Hannah Varney House (HS-04, IDLCS 06144)
- Laban Miles House (HS-06, IDLCS 06146)
- Laban Miles Shed (HS-36, IDLCS 06146), east of Laban Miles House
- Dr. Leech House (HS-05, IDLCS 06145)
- Amanda Garvin House (HS-07, IDLCS 06147)
- Shed (HS-28, IDLCS 06164) west of A. Garvin House
- Charles E. Smith House (HS-08, IDLCS 06148), used as site office
- James Staples House (HS-09, IDLCS 06149)
- E.S. Hayhurst House (HS-10, 06150)
- Blacksmith Shop and Wagon Shop (HS-16, IDLCS 06161)
- Schoolhouse (HS-17, IDLCS 06160)
- David Mackey House (HS-18, IDLCS 06156)
- William Wright House (HS-19, IDLCS 06157)
- Garage (HS-35, IDLCS 06170)) south west of W. Wright House

- Friends Meetinghouse (HS-03, IDLCS 06143)
- Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum (non-NPS)
- Hoover Presidential Library Association building (non-NPS)
- Visitor Center/Post Office (B 1)
- Isaac Miles Farmhouse (HS-11, IDLCS 06151)
- Isaac Miles Bank Barn HS-12, IDLCS 06152)
- Isaac Miles Corn Crib (HS-13, IDLCS 06153)
- Isaac Miles Garage (HS-14, IDLCS 06154)
- Isaac Miles Shed (HS-15, IDLCS 06155)
- Isaac Miles Windmill (HS-20, IDLCS 06158)
- Isaac Miles Pole Shed/Machine Shed (HS-53, IDLCS 70095)
- Isaac Miles Chicken House (HS-54)
- Thompson Farm House (HS-80, IDLCS 70097)
- Thompson Farm Garage (HS-81, IDLCS 70098)
- Thompson Machine Shed (HS-84, IDLCS 70101)
- Thompson Brooder House (HS-85, IDLCS 70102)
- Thompson Hog House/Corn Crib (HS-86, IDLCS 70103)
- Thompson Corn Crib (HS-87, IDLCS 70104)
- Thompson Barn (HS-88, IDLCS 70105)
- Thompson Chicken House (HS-89, IDLCS 70106)
- Thompson Storage Bins (HS-92, IDLCS 70109)
- Bandstand (B 66) in the park space between Parkside Drive and Second Street
- Brick wall (eight-foot high brick screen wall separating the service area west of the Visitor Center from the visitor parking area)
- West Shelter (Boy Scout Shelter) (B 56)
- East Shelter (Negus Family Association Shelter) (B 57)
- Comfort Station (B 68)

- Gazebo (B 67) south of C.E. Smith House
- Lighting/Irrigation System Shed and Fire Cache (B 62) west of the gravesite within the pines
- Maintenance Building (B 29) west of the birthplace cottage
- NPS Maintenance Building (B 52) along Second Street
- Gas Shed (B 53)
- Garden Shed (B 54), associated with the maintenance building along Second Street
- Maintenance Machine Shed (B 55)

Archeological Resources

Archeological services are not included in this scope of work. Some archeological information is included in the NPS *Archeological Inventory and Evaluation Package #149* and the Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Herbert Hoover National Historic Site Historic Structures Report, titled *Buildings in the Core-area and Jesse Hoover's Blacksmith Shop*, dated November 30, 1970. William Hunt of the Midwest Archeological Center conducted excavations at the birthplace cottage in 1991 in conjunction with a structural restoration program. The most recent archeological work at the NHS was conducted by the Midwest Archeological Center, which conducted an excavation program to mitigate impacts to archeological resources at the Laban Miles and Hayhurst houses prior to and during adaptive restoration activities. The Midwest Archeological Center report of the 1989 field work summarized archeological investigations to that date at the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site. Archeological research at the NHS has led to the discovery of features such as cisterns, wells, and structural foundations.

Small-Scale Features and Objects

Small-scale features and objects identified at Herbert Hoover National Historic Site include various examples of site furnishings, walls and fences, lighting, sculptural objects, signs, and circulation-edging features. The types and individual features inventoried include the following:

Site Furnishings

Benches

- Marble benches are located along the granite walk at the gravesite *(Figure 65).*
- Metal frame benches with wood slats *(Figure 66)* are found at various locations across the site including in the vicinity of the Isis statue, at the southwest corner of the visitor parking

Figure 63. Barns and other outbuildings at Thompson farm.

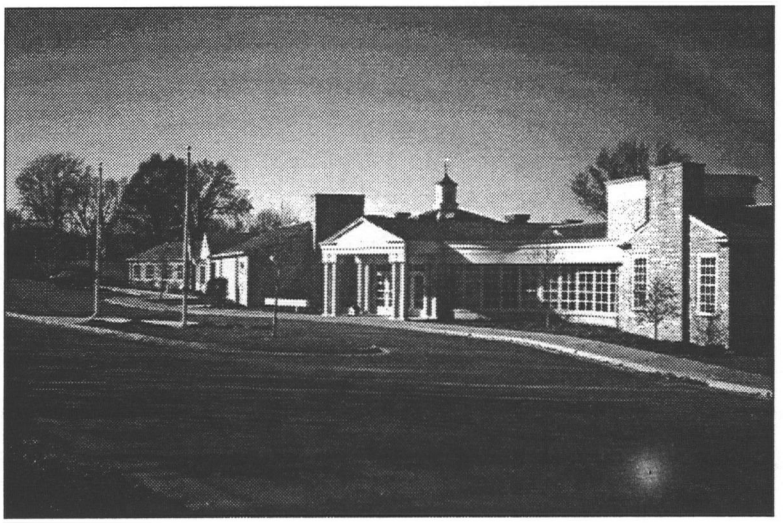


Figure 64. The Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum.

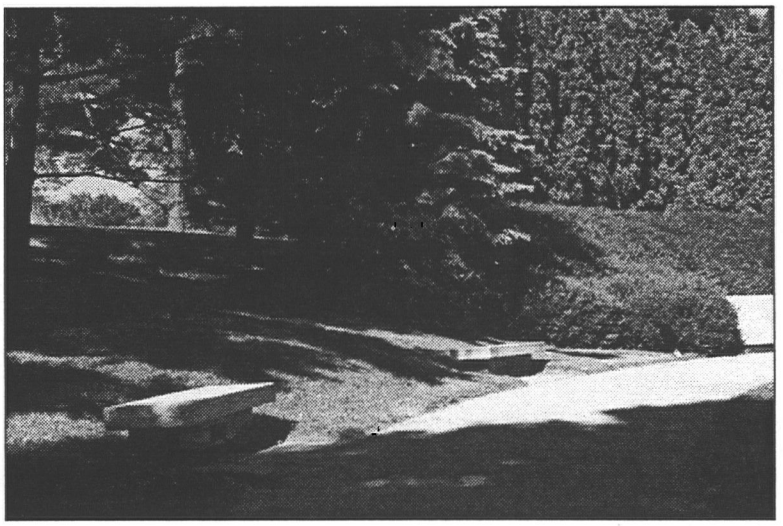


Figure 65. Marble bench near the gravesite.

lot south of the Visitor Center, south of the C.E. Smith House(HS #8), and along the asphalt path that leads from north of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum to the gravesite.

Bicycle racks

- A metal bicycle rack for approximately eight bicycles is located at the south end of the visitor parking lot near the Visitor Center.

Drinking fountains

- Metal drinking fountains *(Figure 66)* are located just west of the Isis statue and on the Village Green east of Parkside Drive.

Flags

- American flags set on metal poles mark the entrance to the U.S. Post Office, are located within the arc of the granite pedestrian walk at the gravesite, and there are two flags on poles at the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum.

Hitching posts

- Wooden hitching posts *(Figure 67)* are located along traces and near historic buildings and structures within the historic core area.

Picnic tables

- Wooden picnic tables are located throughout the historic site. Many are associated with the two picnic shelters. There are also aluminum-planked tables in the picnic area.
- There are also picnic tables located near the bandstand *(Figure 68)*.

Trash receptacles

- Wood and metal trash receptacles *(Figure 69)*, such as the receptacle near the southwest corner of the visitor parking lot south of the Visitor Center, are sited at various locations throughout the NHS.

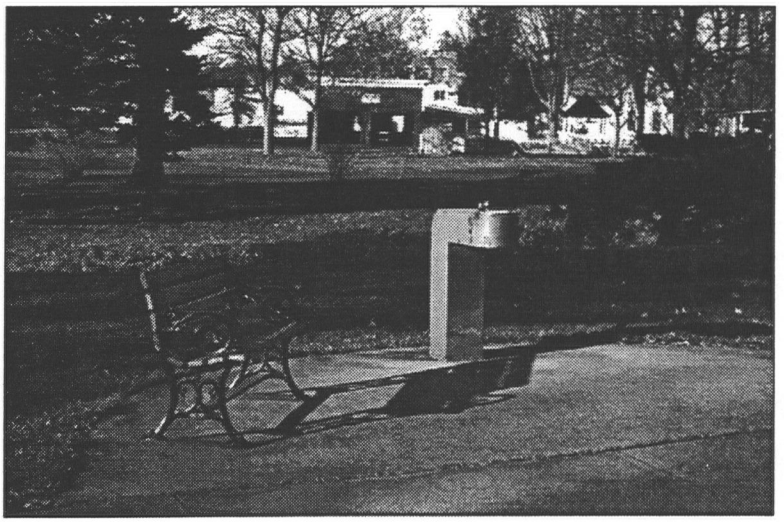


Figure 66. Metal-frame bench and drinking fountain near the historic core.

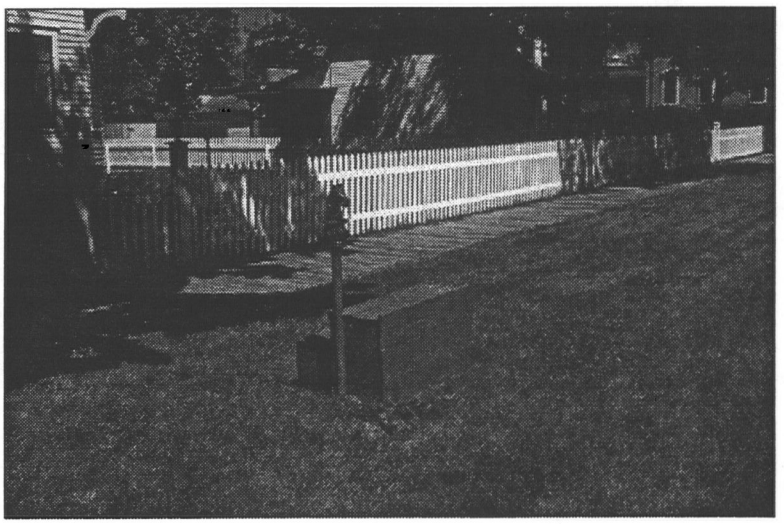


Figure 67. Hitching post on the Downey Street road trace.

Figure 68. Bandstand in the village green.

Walls and Fences

Entry wall

- An entry wall constructed of limestone blocks with limestone piers and caps, and a wooden gate flank the entry drive near the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum.

Fences

- A variety of wood fences define residential lots in the historic core area. There are a variety of types and several styles of picket, board, and solid board fences *(Figure 70)*.
- Chain link fencing encloses part of the NPS maintenance facility west of Second Street.
- Woven-wire or woven-wire/barbed wire fences *(Figure 71)* are typically used at the Thompson Farm, park boundaries, and other locations outside the historic core area.

Gabion walls

- Gabion walls are located along the banks of Wapsinonoc Creek west of the Downey Street bridge and west of the Second Street bridge for erosion control.

Posts and gates

- Wood posts and wood posts with gates control access to the trace in various locations.

Lighting

Feature lights

- Spotlights and up-lights are used to illuminate the gravesite at night.
- Other spotlights are found at various locations, including a recently installed pair that highlight the birthplace cottage.

Pedestrian lights

- Pedestrian scale lights set on wood poles flank the walks within the core area *(Figure 72)*.

Street lights

- There are "cobra head" fixtures on metal poles along Parkside Drive, Main Street, Second Street and other publicly traveled streets.

Figure 69. Trash containers such as this are located throughout the site.

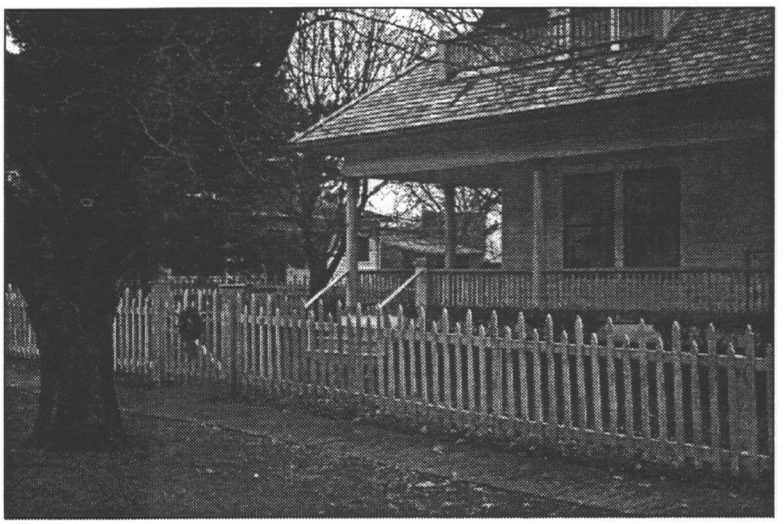


Figure 70. Fence in front of the Leech house.

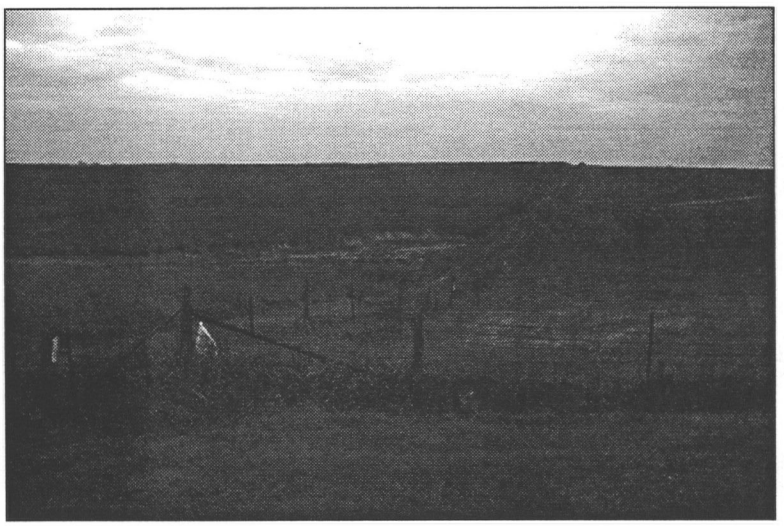


Figure 71. Wire fences in an agricultural area.

Sculptural Objects

Isis statue

- A statue of Isis is sited in a grove of evergreen trees along the concrete walk between the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum and the end of the boardwalk on the west side of the Downey Street trace *(Figure 73)*.

Signs

Highway

- Signs along Interstate 80 identify the site *(Figure 74)*.

Street

- Along Parkside Drive, Main Street, Wetherell Street, First Street, Cedar Street, and Second Street, assorted typical street signs designate speed limits, parking rules, and other information.
- Several signs identify the site along Parkside Drive and direct visitors to the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum, Visitor Center, visitor parking lots, and other facilities.

Historic site

- Wooden street signs on wood poles are used in the historic core *(Figure 75)*.
- Informational signs throughout the NHS include signs mounted on the fences in front of various nineteenth-century residences.
- Signs at other buildings and structures within the core area.
- An interpretive sign at the Isis Statue recounts the history of the statue.
- Interpretive signs at the prairie.

Views and Viewsheds

There are a number of views into, within, and out of the site. Important views occur throughout the site between various buildings, structures, features, and open spaces. The vista between the birthplace cottage and the gravesite was intentional and designed *(Figures 76 and 77)*. In addition, NPS consciously maintains other views, directing views along Downey Street and to the birthplace cottage from Parkside Drive. The 1,600-foot vista between the gravesite and the birthplace cottage

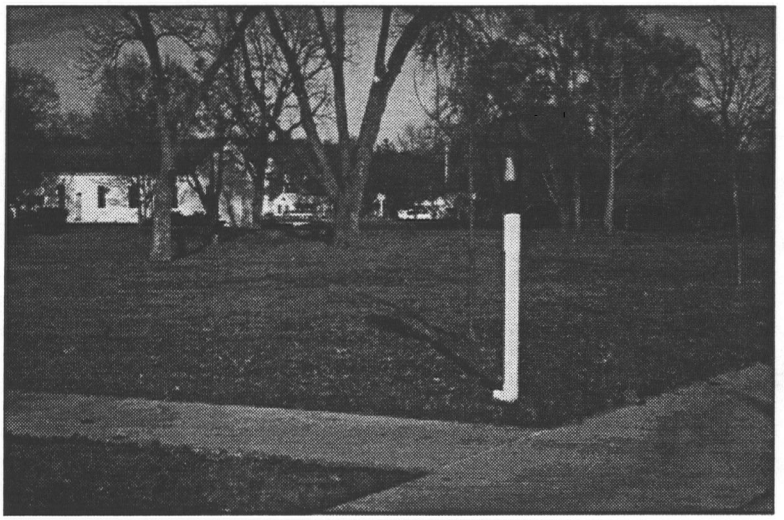


Figure 72. Pedestrian-scale street lamp in the historic core.

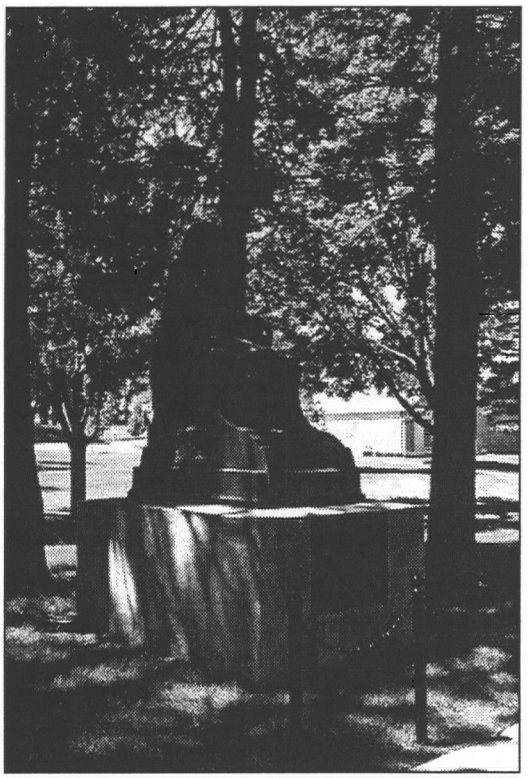


Figure 73. Isis statue.

Figure 74. Information sign on I-80.

Figure 75. Wooden street sign at the corner of Downey and Penn Streets.

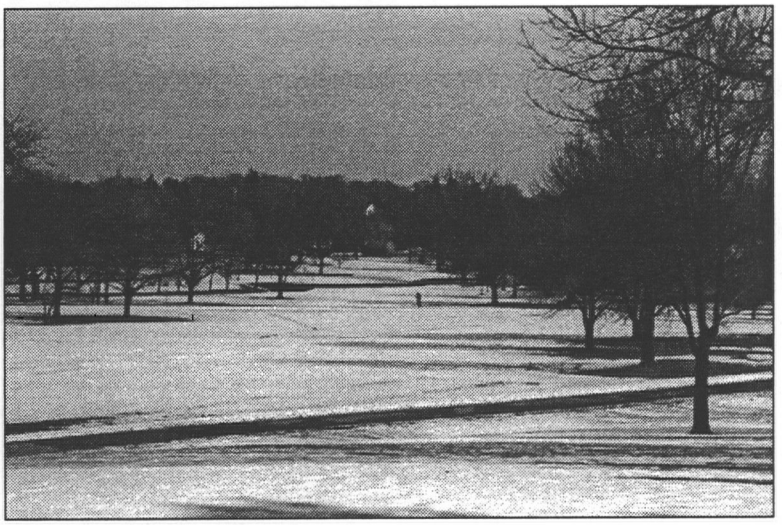


Figure 76. View to the birthplace cottage from the gravesite.

Figure 77. View to the gravesite from the direction of the birthplace cottage.

is maintained across a well-tended lawn area. The concept for the vista has been attributed to either Herbert Hoover or Allan Hoover and has been articulated through a planting design. The loop road crosses the vista and the road surface is visible from the elevated gravesite. Vehicles on the loop road are visible from both the birthplace cottage and the gravesite. No trees or shrubs exist within this vista, but large trees define the edges; the trees are not aligned in any recognizable geometric pattern.

NPS deliberately maintains an open view along the trace occupying the former Downey Street right-of-way. At the south end of Parkside Drive near Interstate 80, there is a long view north along the trace, through the site, to the gazebo on Main Street in West Branch. The opposite view from the gazebo south extends through the site, along the trace, and terminates at the south end of Parkside Drive. There are many views along the trace where there are historic structures. NPS also maintains an open view between the birthplace cottage and Parkside Drive. Some views, such as the Cookson view, are not necessarily historic views but are controlled through agreements between the NPS and property owners. Local residents have considerable affection for the site and concerned with maintaining unobstructed views to the site from their properties and public rights of way.

General views include the following:

- The Thompson Farm is visible from Interstate 80; the Miles Farm is also visible near the Exit #254 interchange.
- A small portion of the prairie is visible along Interstate 80, but the birthplace cottage, gravesite, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum, and most other facilities on the site are not visible from the highway.
- The Thompson Farm is visible from the western extent of Main Street.
- Views to other buildings and structures and portions of the site are available from surrounding locations; many views into the site from various directions are limited by on-site vegetation and West Branch residences, commercial buildings, and vegetation. There are some important controlled views into the site, however.
- Views within the site consist of open panoramas, long vistas, and enclosed views to specific buildings or structures.
- Much of the central area of the site can be seen from vehicular and pedestrian locations in and around the site.

LEGEND

- site boundary
- fence
- paved road
- unpaved road
- walk
- building
- creek
- deciduous tree
- evergreen tree

See *Exhibit M* for photographic station points within the developed area.

MAIN STREET
WETHERELL ST.
SECOND STREET
DOWNEY STREET (road)
PARKSIDE DRIVE
NPS Visitor Center
Schoolhouse
Blacksmith Shop
Birthplace Cottage
Picnic Grounds
Quaker Meetinghouse
Wapsinonoc Creek
NPS Maintenance
Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum
Hoover Presidential Library Association
Thompson Farm
Miles Farm
Wildlife Refuge
Visitor Center
Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum
Hoover Presidential Library Association
Schoolhouse
Blacksmith Shop
Birthplace Cottage
Quaker Meetinghouse
NPS Maintenance
Thompson Farm
Miles Farm

N

0 100 200 300 600
scale in feet

Map compiled by Land and Community Associates from 1995 survey prepared by Snyder and Associates. This map is for planning purposes only.

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site

PHOTOGRAPHIC STATION POINTS, SITE

Exhibit L. Photographic Station Points, Site.

LEGEND

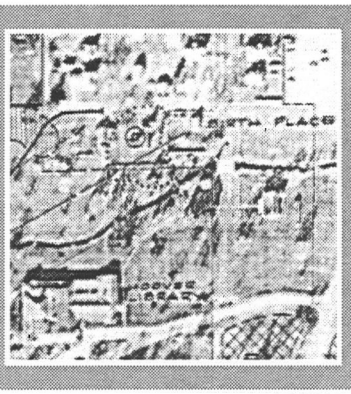
site boundary
fence
paved road
unpaved road
walk
building
creek
deciduous tree
evergreen tree

MAIN STREET
WETHERELL ST.
SECOND STREET
PARKSIDE DRIVE
DOWNEY Road (Place)
Wapsinonoc Creek
NPS Visitor Center
Schoolhouse
Blacksmith Shop
Birthplace Cottage
Quaker Meetinghouse
Picnic Grounds
Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum
NPS Maintenance
N
0 20 40 60 80 100 200
scale in feet

Map compiled by Land and Community Associates from 1995 survey prepared by Snyder and Associates. This map is for planning purposes only.

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site
PHOTOGRAPHIC STATION POINTS, DEVELOPED AREA

Exhibit M. Photographic Station Points, Developed Area.



4 Analysis and Evaluation

4 Analysis and Evaluation

Significance

The NHS is listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its significance as the birthplace of Herbert Hoover; the Isaac Miles Farm is significant for its associations with the Hoover family and also contributes to an understanding of the rural setting of the birthplace. Recently NPS and the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office have concurred that the Thompson Farm also is eligible for the National Register.[1]

In addition, investigations and evaluations undertaken for this CLR appear to support the following areas of significance for the NHS:

Criterion A[2]

- as one of a limited number of presidential libraries that have developed in the United States during the second half of the twentieth century
- nationally as a site that reflects the historical evolution of presidential memorialization in the United States and perhaps, as an influential early example, of both memorial and presidential library

Criterion B

- national significance as the birthplace of Herbert Hoover, president of the United States (1929 to 1932)

Criterion C

Both the Isaac Miles and Thompson farms possess significant agricultural resources that represent the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Iowa farmstead, which provided the rural setting that Hoover associated with the West Branch community. The Isaac Miles Farm represents the period of Hoover's youth; while the Thompson farm with its later structures more appropriately represents the Iowa farm from 1916 to 1975. The Isaac Miles Farm retains a barn that is the only

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[1]Copy of Determination of Eligibility, 21 September, 1994, provided to LCA by Mary Hughes, NPS.

[2]The site's significance under criterion A must be considered in light of special exception criteria for properties that may have achieved aspects of significance within the last fifty years. The significance of the presidency to the American public and the development of presidential commemorative sites within the last fifty years merit such consideration.

agricultural structure in the immediate vicinity of the NHS that survives from the period of Hoover's youth. It contributes substantially to the rural setting of the NHS and West Branch and is an important and well-preserved example of an early Iowa barn. The Thompson farm is a well-preserved, intact turn-of-the-twentieth-century agricultural cluster. Although its individual parts may lack distinction, taken as a whole, the farm cluster is representative of the construction techniques, materials, design, spatial organization and arrangement associated with the Iowa family farm during the general farming era. It contributes to the agricultural setting that existed during the period of significance.

Other resources of the NHS do not appear to be significant for either their original vernacular or architectural design or as exemplary examples of preservation projects. At this time, neither the original Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum nor any of its additions or alterations have achieved significance according to Criterion C for architectural distinction and do not warrant application of the special exemption criteria of the National Register for designs less than fifty years old. The birthplace cottage is significant under Criterion B for its association with Herbert Hoover, not for its design and construction under Criterion C. The designers (primarily architect Wagner and landscape architects Fitzsimmons and Dyas) associated with the preservation, memorialization, and enhancement of the site appear to be representative regional practitioners. It does not appear that application of the special exemption criteria of the National Register for designs less than fifty years old should be considered at this time.

Period of Significance

The period of significance for the NHS extends from 1874-1966, a ninety-two year period that begins with Hoover's birth in 1874, continues through his death and on-site burial in 1964, and culminates in 1966 with the implementation of the gravesite design and acknowledgment of the birthplace-to-grave vista. By 1966 the birthplace and memorial site, as envisioned and guided by the Hoover family since 1935, was essentially complete. Within this extended period, two distinct sub-periods appear to have the strongest and most direct associations with Herbert Hoover and to reflect both the influence of West Branch on Hoover as a boy and of Hoover, a prominent politician and statesman, on West Branch. These sub-periods are 1874-1885, the Hoover boyhood which was spent in West Branch, and 1935-1966, the post-presidential period during which the Hoover family actively participated in and/or approved aspects of site preservation and memorialization as well as the transition to a memorial site that occurred following his death and on-site burial.

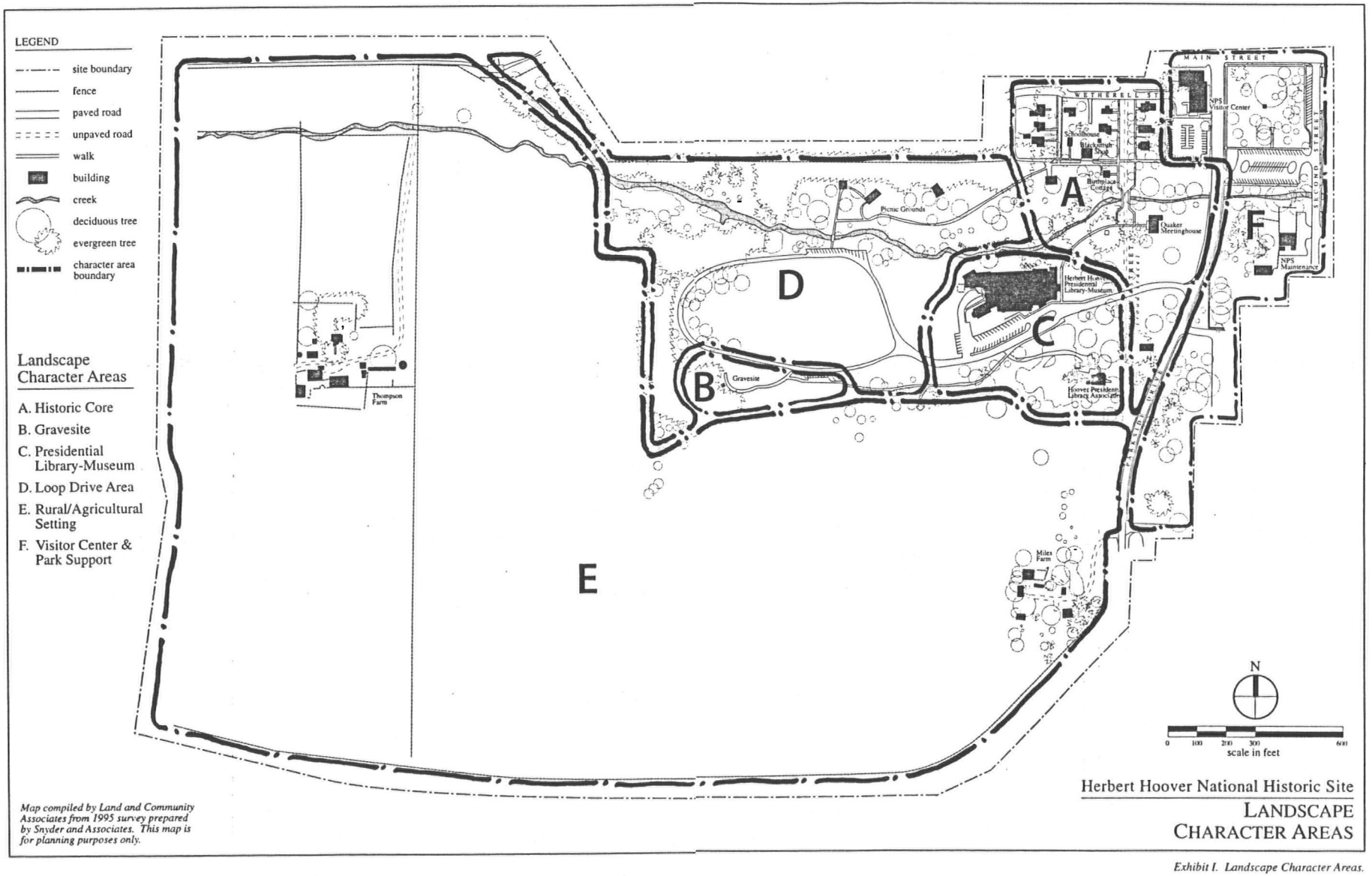


Exhibit I. Landscape Character Areas.

Integrity Evaluation and Character-defining Features

Although the overall period of significance extends from 1874 to 1966, actions over time have diminished some of the site's integrity for the Hoover boyhood (1874-1885). The composite commemorative landscape and public park that Herbert Hoover and his family and associates actively participated in creating from 1935 to 1966, however, retains considerable integrity and includes features of the boyhood landscape that have endured over time. These features give the site its unique identity as a presidential birthplace and boyhood home. The 1874 to 1966 period of significance includes and encompasses all extant features that were present on the site during the Hoover boyhood and which provided the basis for the development and memorialization that occurred in the period 1935-1966.

The NHS, as it exists currently, more accurately represents the efforts to create a Hoover memorial than it does the community of Hoover's actual boyhood years. There are significant implications to this assessment. Under NPS management, re-creation of the historic scene known to Herbert Hoover as a boy has become a major focus of previous landscape management goals and treatment. Continuing to try to re-create only the historic scene of 1874-1885 will mean continued loss and alteration of authentic resources from the 1935 to 1966 period, resources that have direct associations with Herbert Hoover and that help to reveal the history and evolution of the site from presidential birthplace to presidential memorial site. To retain integrity of the 1935-1966 period, new strategies will need to address resources dating from 1935 to 1966 as well as those that survive from or have been re-created to represent the period from 1874-1885.

Each character area identified in Chapter 3 has been evaluated for integrity based on the survival of character-defining features and its ability to represent authentically the historic character of the site. Some character areas have distinct sub-areas contained within them that have distinct histories, identities, or uses that warrant separate analysis. Features present in the NHS have been evaluated as character-defining if they were extant during the period of significance, relate to the historical or design significance of the NHS, and retain the ability to represent adequately their appearance during the period of significance.

Historic Core

The historic core possesses integrity, not only for its historic association as the boyhood home of Herbert Hoover but also for its ability to continue to portray the site chosen by Herbert Hoover to commemorate and interpret his life. Associations with Herbert Hoover during his boyhood and following his presidency are integral to the significance and integrity of the historic core. The

core's integrity is diminished for both periods of significance as a result of changes that occurred following each period. Some of these changes are reversible and others affect only some aspects of integrity. The historic core retains integrity of association; some aspects of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling have been diminished for both periods of significance. The core retains more of these aspects of integrity for the period 1935-1966 than it does for the period 1874-1885.

The birthplace cottage restoration is a static representation of a dynamic and evolving property occupied briefly by the young Hoover family; but it is the primary resource associated with the period of significance. The birthplace retains historic fabric from the boyhood period but much of its existing character and appearance are the result of the events initiated by Lou Henry Hoover that occurred between 1935-1966. It contributes to the site's strong integrity of association and retains some aspects of integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship. The birthplace cottage takes on even more importance to the site since the second house where Hoover lived as a boy does not survive.

Landscape treatments have changed over time; the post and horizontal board fence that was part of the Lou Henry Hoover restoration was replaced by a picket fence following the NHS designation. The entry walk changed as well, going from concrete prior to the Hoover purchase, to flat stone pavers following acquisition by the Hoovers, and to boardwalk in the NPS re-creation. A photographic comparison of frontal views of the birthplace and its environs between 1928 and 1994 illustrates the transition from the larger two-story house that Jennie Scellars occupied in 1928 and identified as the Hoover birthplace *(Figure 78)* to its 1994 appearance *(Figures 78-84).* The photographic series also documents the transience of such site features as the gateway and boulder that have been moved farther from the cottage.

Although reliable documentation has been a problem, the cottage retains perhaps as much as forty percent historic fabric, according to park staff. Given the nature of the construction ("structural siding") and the degree of manipulation of the structure, it actually possesses an unusually high portion of historic fabric in the wooden superstructure. The episodes of construction read very clearly at the present time but integrity of the birthplace cottage could diminish incrementally with any future speculative restoration. Although it retains integrity, it still remains that the cottage has been reoriented on its original site twice, was attached to a later house that was subsequently removed, and has changed in appearance and setting over time *(Figures 85-90).*

A totally accurate restoration to the boyhood period has not been possible; there has been some disagreement among family and community members concerning the historic appearance of the

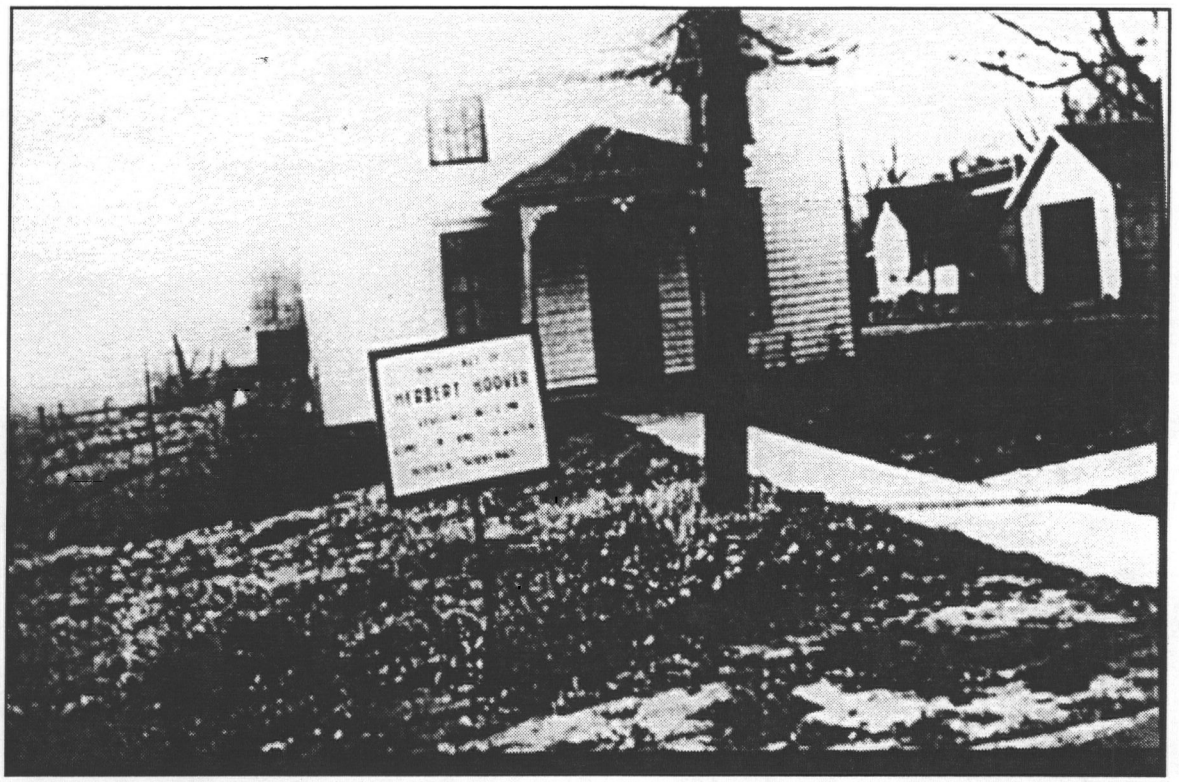


Figure 78. Scellar's addition with the birthplace cottage to the rear (not visible), 1928.

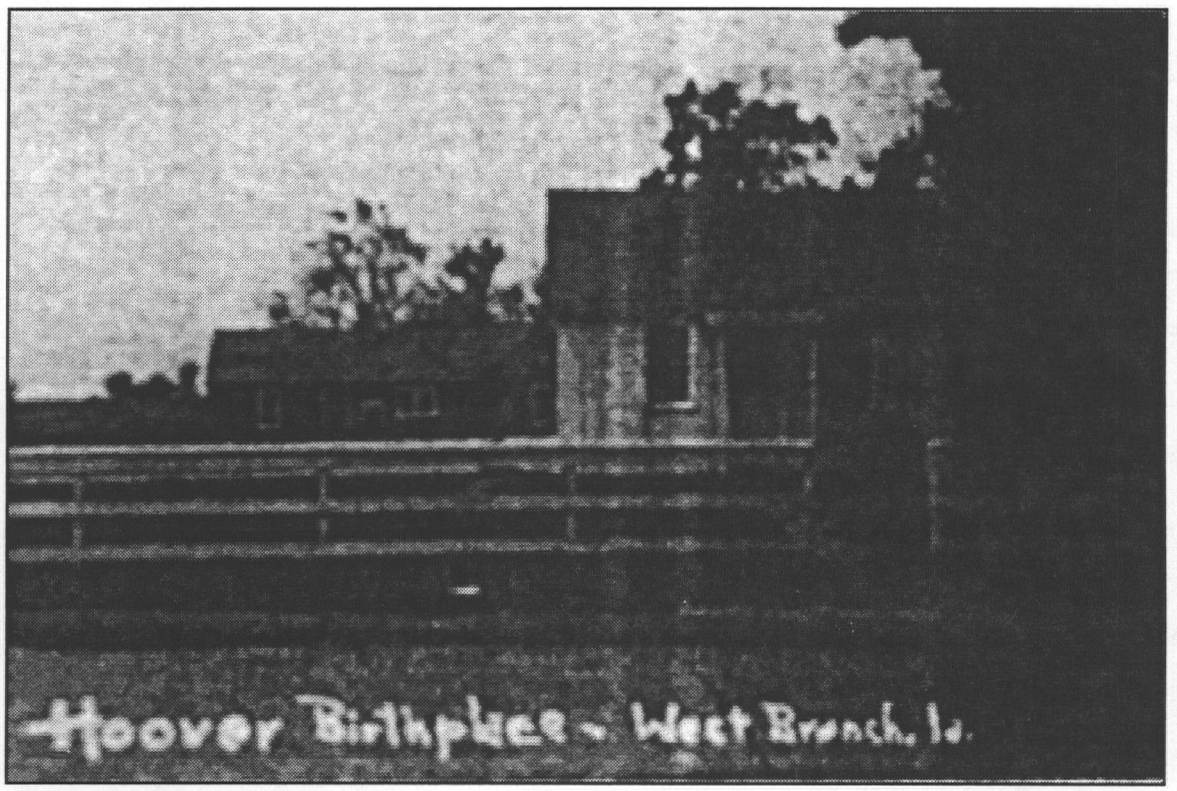


Figure 79. The birthplace cottage after restoration. The new caretaker's cottage visible in left background, 1938.

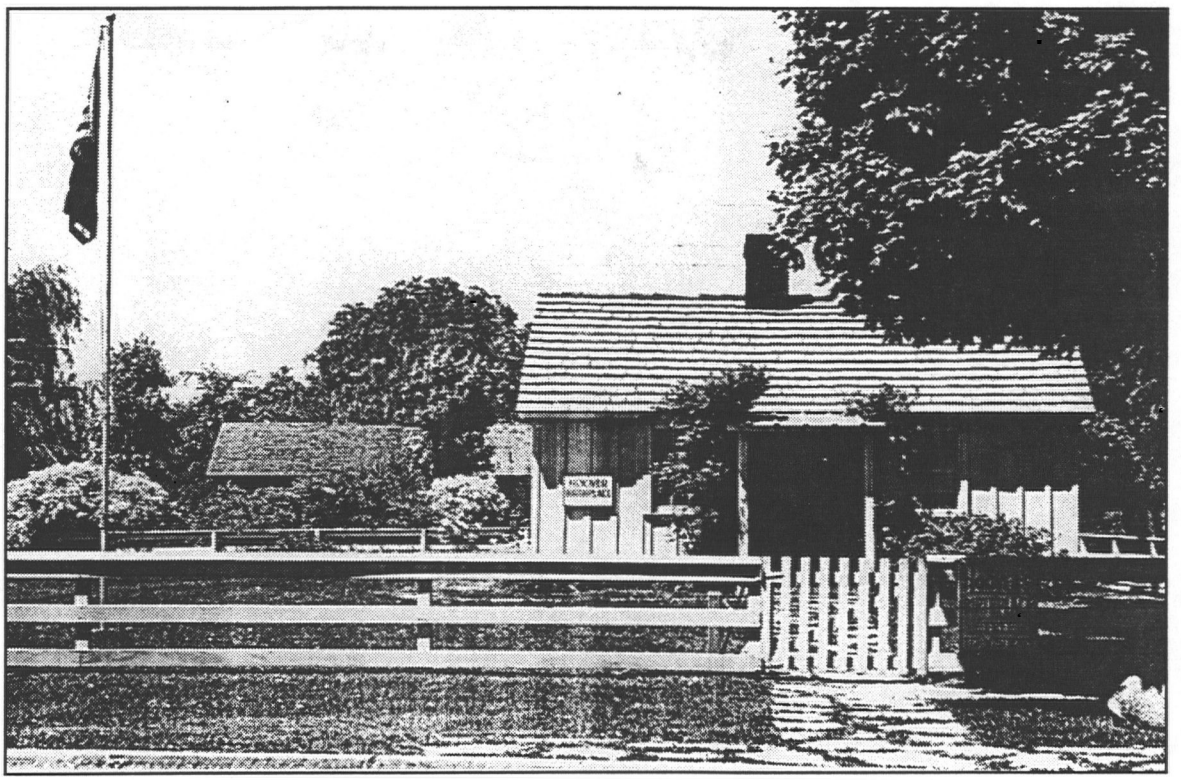


Figure 80. The birthplace cottage ten years after restoration, 1948.

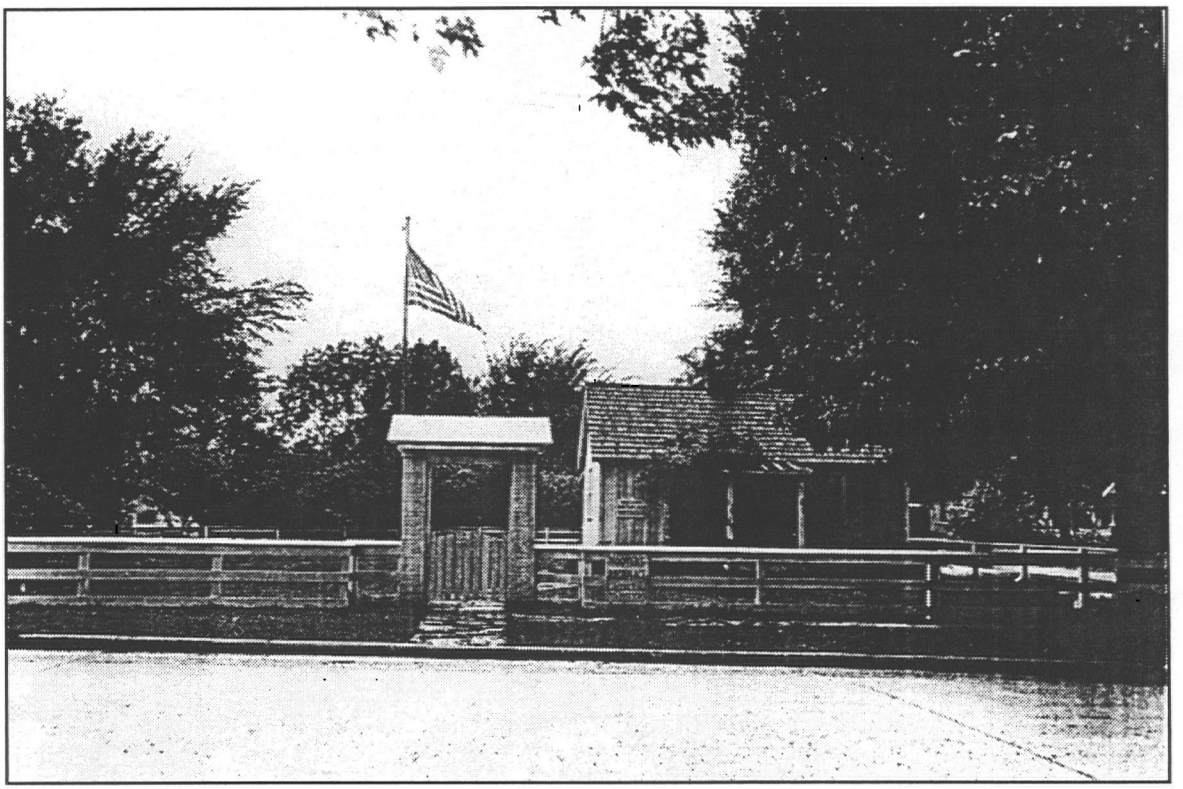


Figure 81. The birthplace cottage and gateway in the newly dedicated Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, 1952.

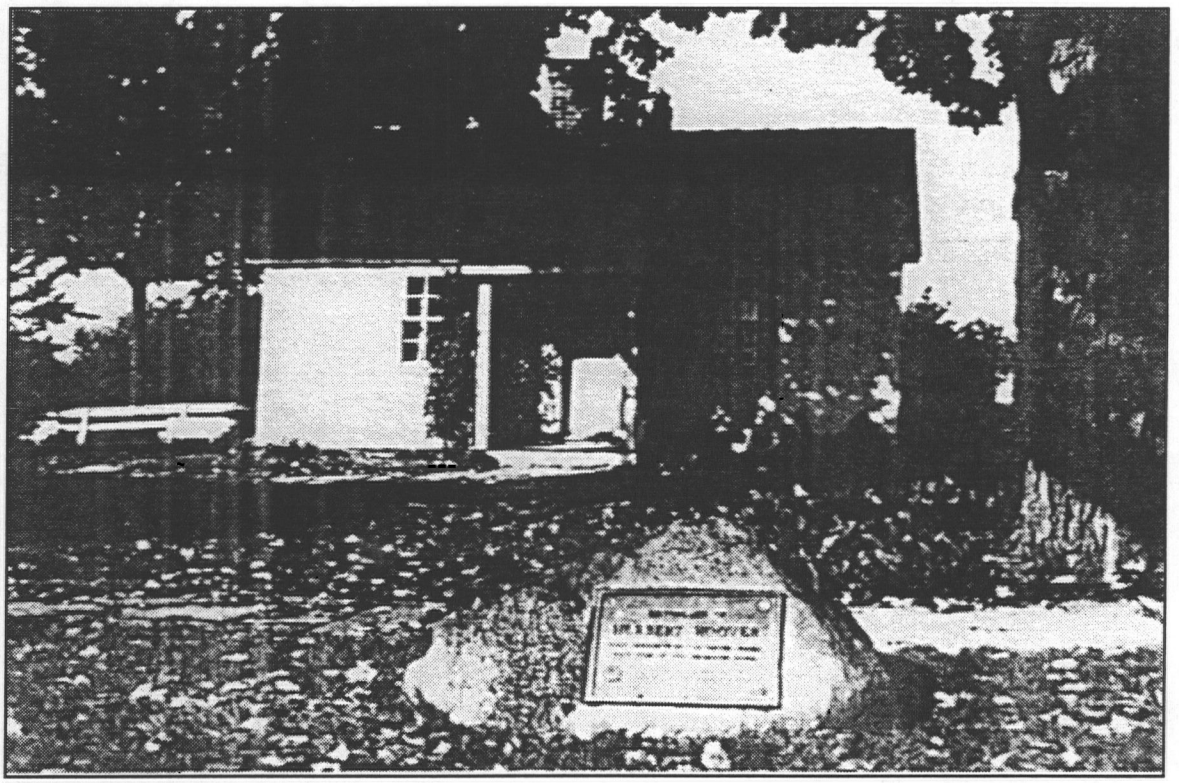


Figure 82. The birthplace cottage with the ca. 1929 boulder and plaque in the foreground, 1971.

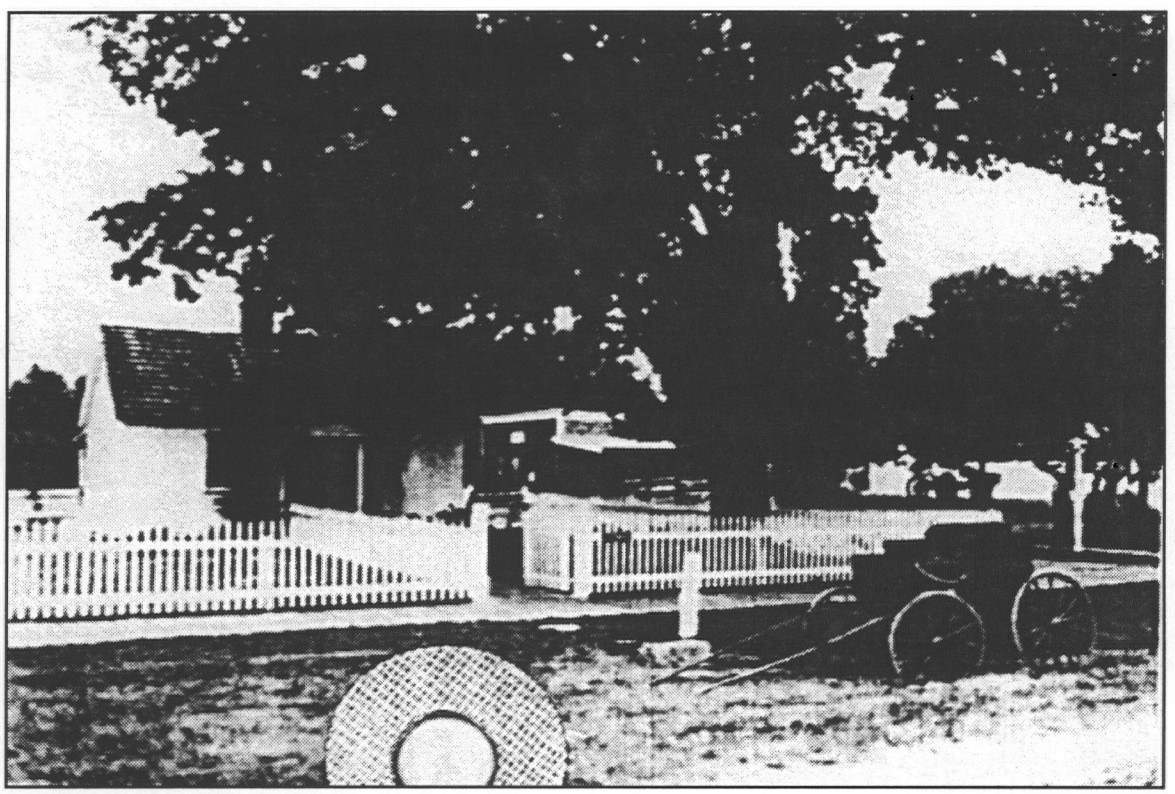


Figure 83. New fencing at the birthplace cottage, 1974.

Figure 84. The birthplace cottage as it currently appears, 1994.

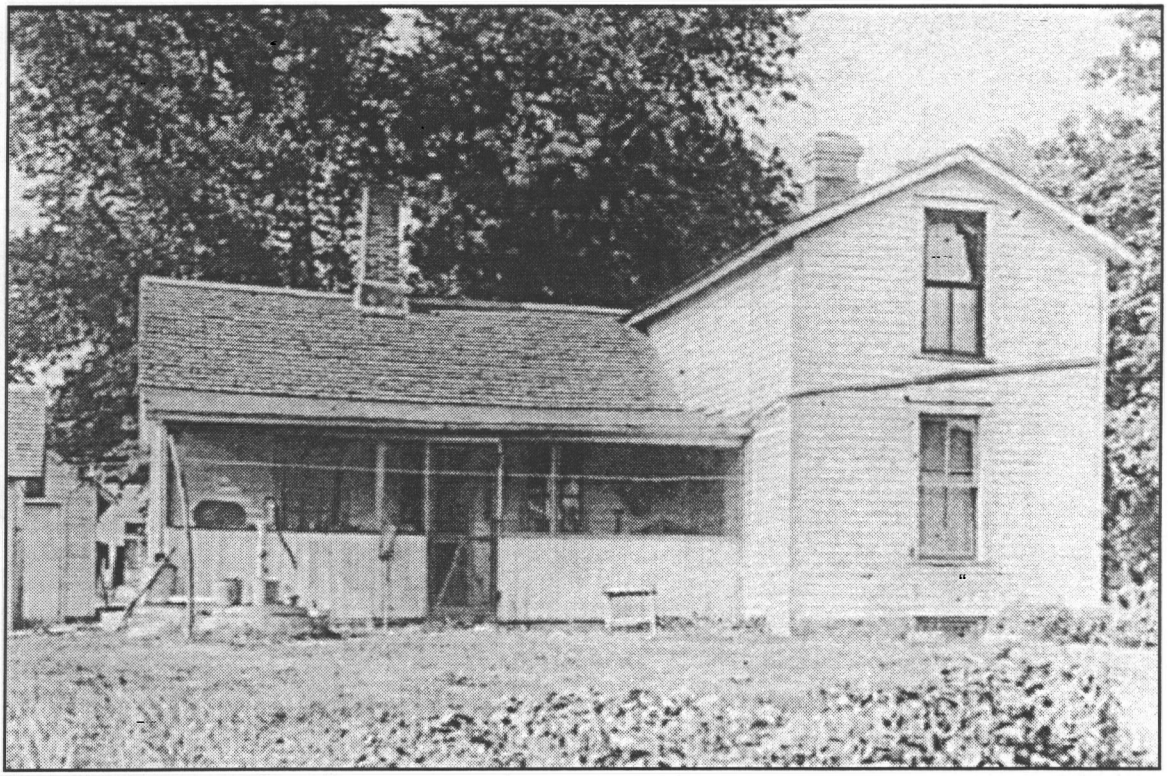


Figure 85. Birthplace cottage after being turned 90 degrees with Scellars' two-story addition, 1928.

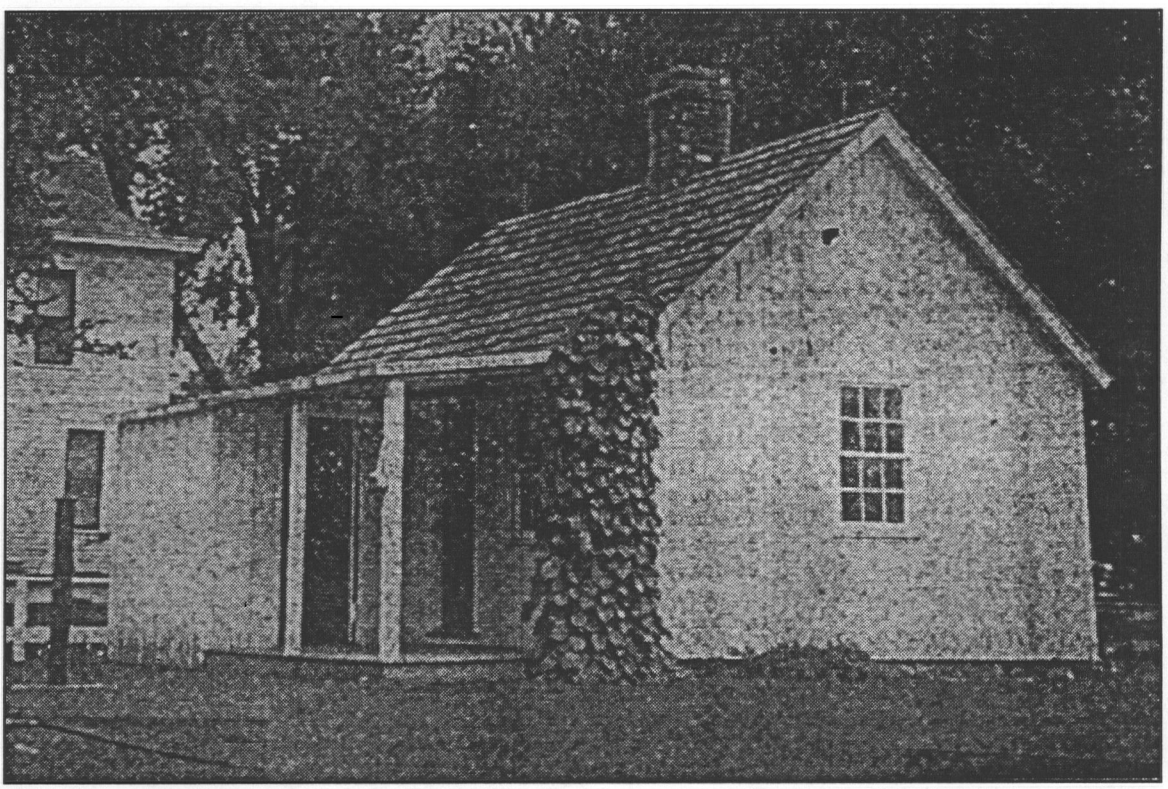


Figure 86. Birthplace cottage after restoration turned 90 degrees to its original orientation, 1939.

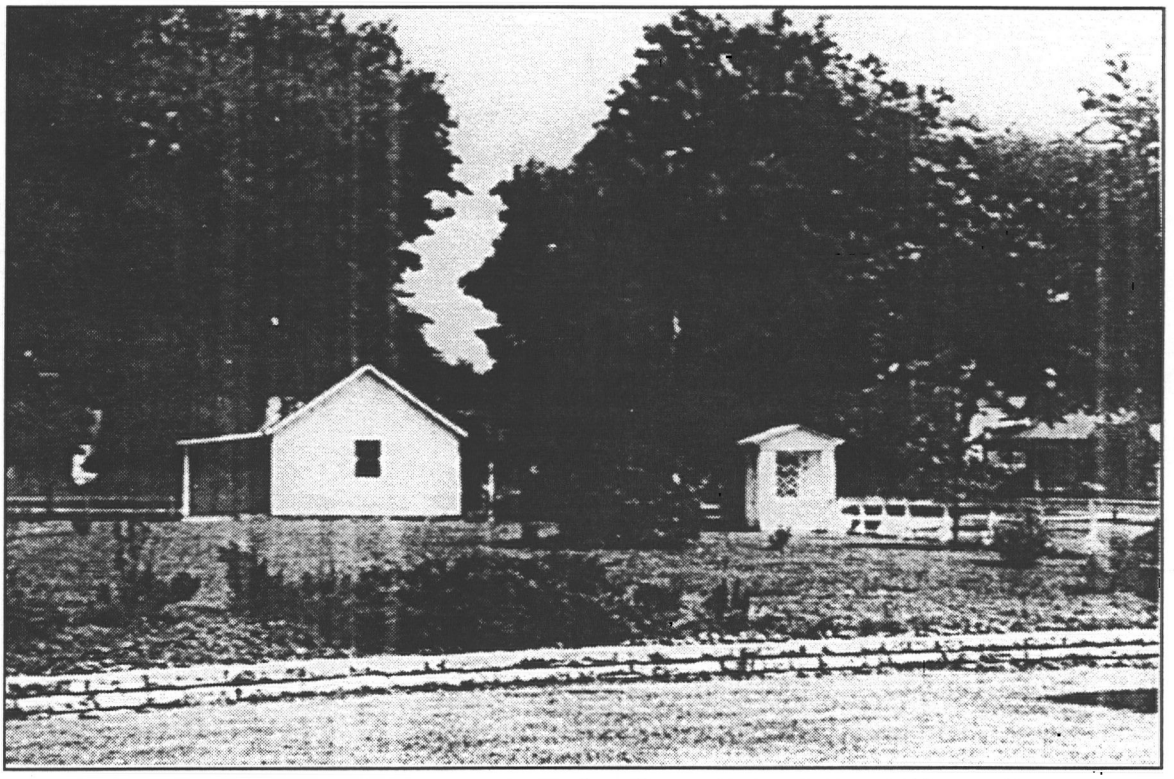


Figure 87. Birthplace cottage and gateway at the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, 1952.

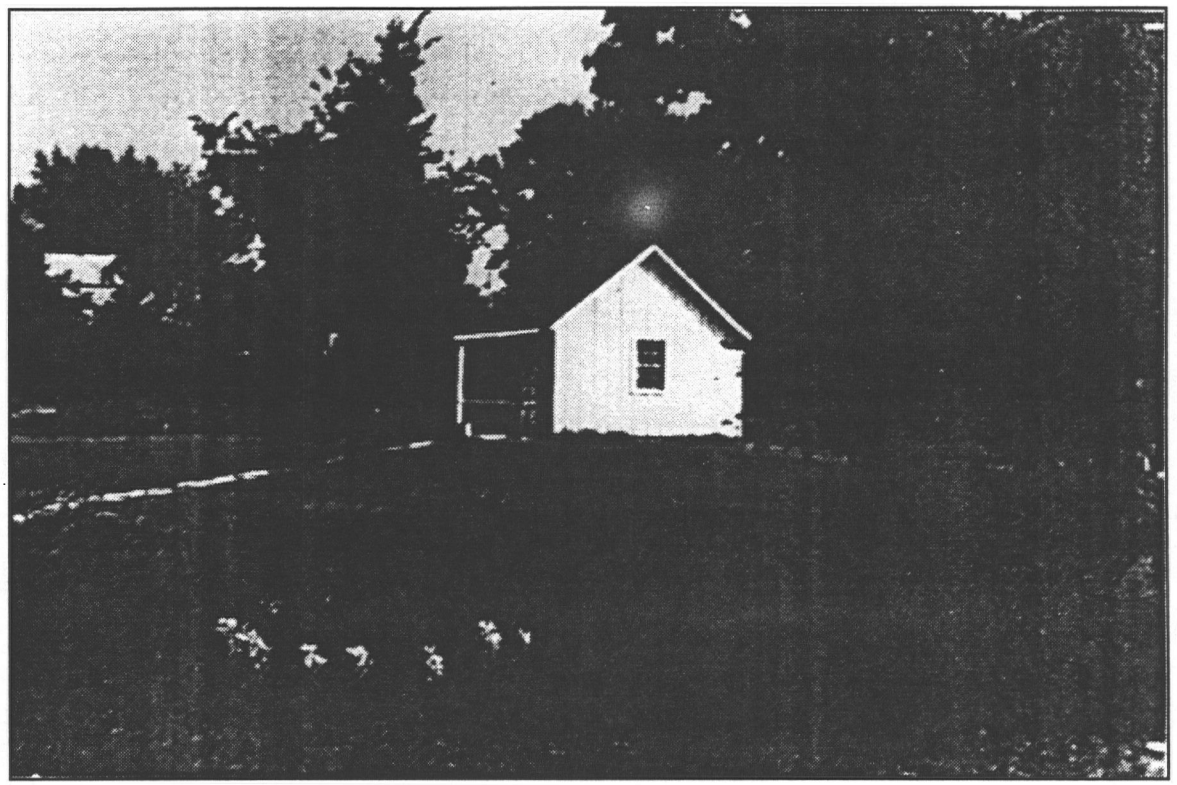


Figure 88. Birthplace cottage under NPS administration, 1971.

Figure 89. Birthplace cottage, painted brown, as it currently appears, 1994.

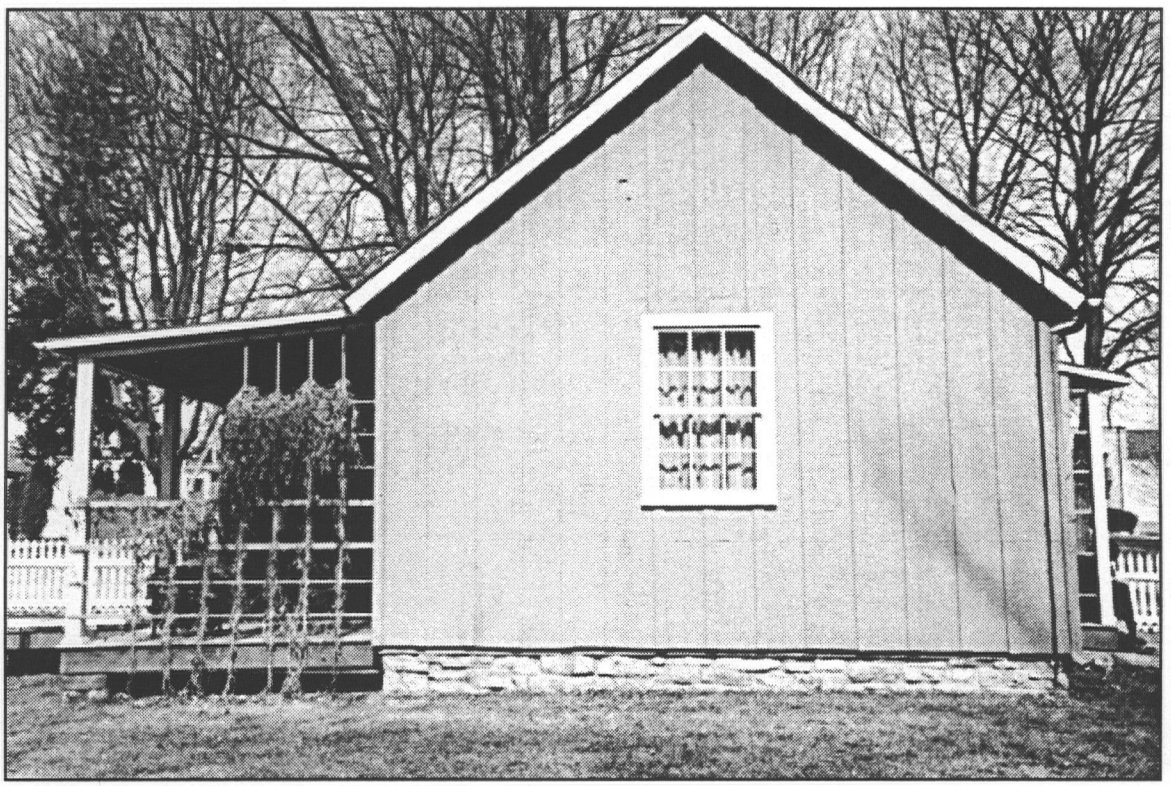


Figure 90. Detail of birthplace cottage, 1994.

birthplace. As a result, the existing configuration does not necessarily match any one particular remembrance. Nor does the current configuration coincide with all physical evidence. Some physical evidence suggests that there was a full lean-to addition and that the cottage may have sat at least a foot off the ground with only a crawl space beneath it. A series of rear photographic views taken between 1939 and 1994 show the one-third lean-to addition that was actually implemented *(Figures 91-95).*

There also has been much discussion concerning the appropriate painting or other exterior treatment of the cottage wood siding. The painting history of the cottage is interesting in terms of period practice but has little effect on an integrity assessment since paint colors are not irrevocable. Paint analysis based on construction detailing has revealed that the original siding was subject to very limited weathering and had no evidence of whitewash. This evidence indicates that the cottage stood uncoated for only a few years at most. It is still not clear if the house was painted during the Hoover residency. When the clapboard siding that the Scellars family used to cover the cottage and match it with their newer and larger attached house was removed, the painted cottage was revealed beneath. With the approval of the Hoover family, the cottage was painted white during the 1935-1966 period. This chronology indicates that the cottage was, in all likelihood, painted for most of its history.

The current cottage color is not historic and does not approximate the appearance of the cottage during the Hoover boyhood or as the Hoovers knew it in the post-presidential years. Its present neutral color is in direct contrast to Lou Henry Hoover's written assumption, or perhaps even intention, that the birthplace be white or a light color. Those comments referred to the birthplace in comparison to the no-longer extant caretaker's cottage that was to have a neutrally colored dark stain so that the birthplace would be dominant and visible. Instead, the birthplace now blends with its surroundings as the caretaker's cottage that has been removed from the site *(Figure 79)* was intended to do. The birthplace, the symbolic center of the site, recedes into the background with its current neutral exterior color.

The historic core with its village re-creation appears self-contained and somewhat independent of the community of West Branch. West Branch developed originally as a simple crossroads with a cross axis of two rural roads following section lines. At the time Jesse Hoover occupied the site, the town had spread in a linear fashion more or less equally from the intersection of Main and Downey Streets. Businesses, including the Hoover blacksmith shop, also spread out from the core and followed the two roads. Subsequent modifications have obscured the simple, straightforward connection among the town's commercial enterprises, adjoining residences, the blacksmith shop, and the surrounding farms. These changes have diminished integrity of design, feeling and setting.

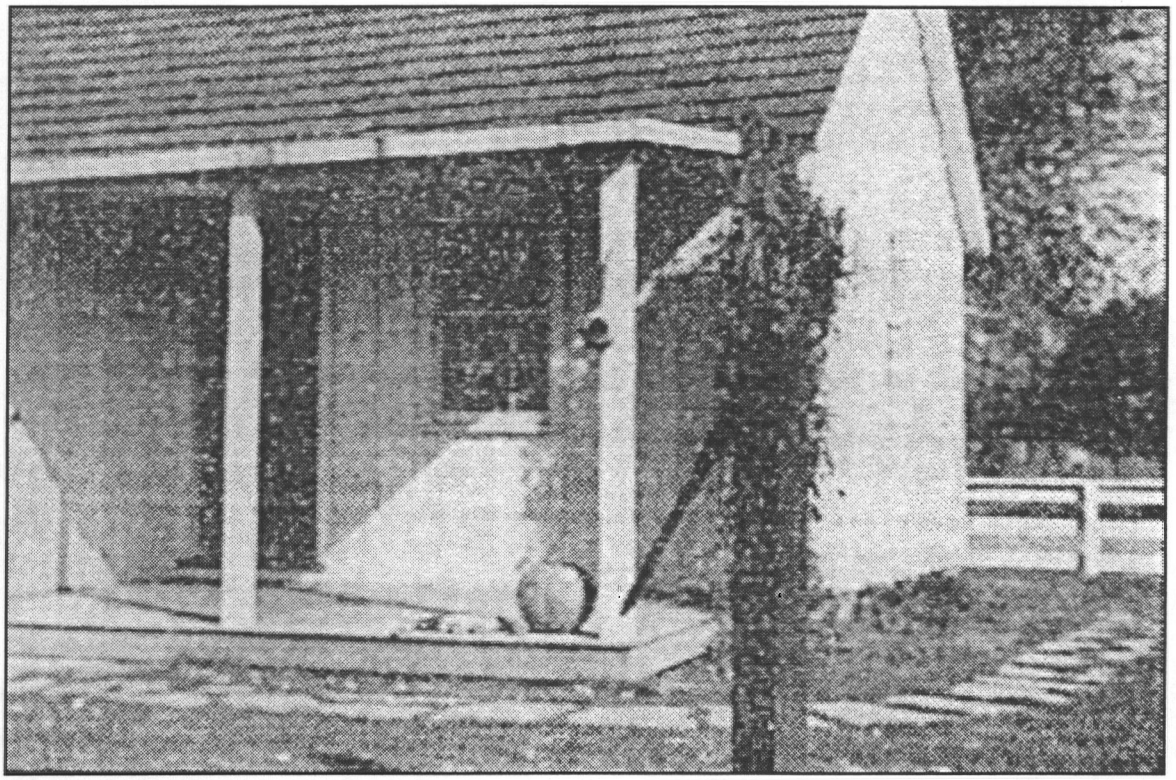


Figure 91. Birthplace cottage immediately after restoration, 1939.

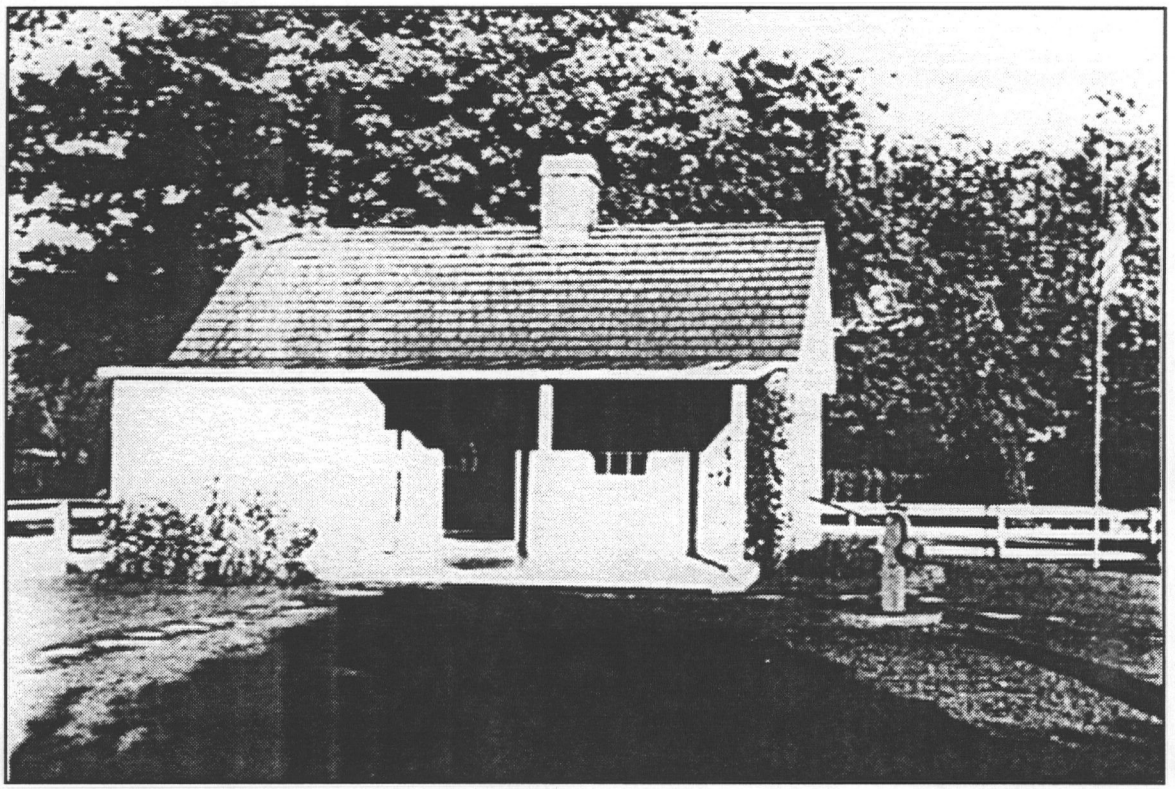


Figure 92. Birthplace cottage ten years after restoration, 1948.

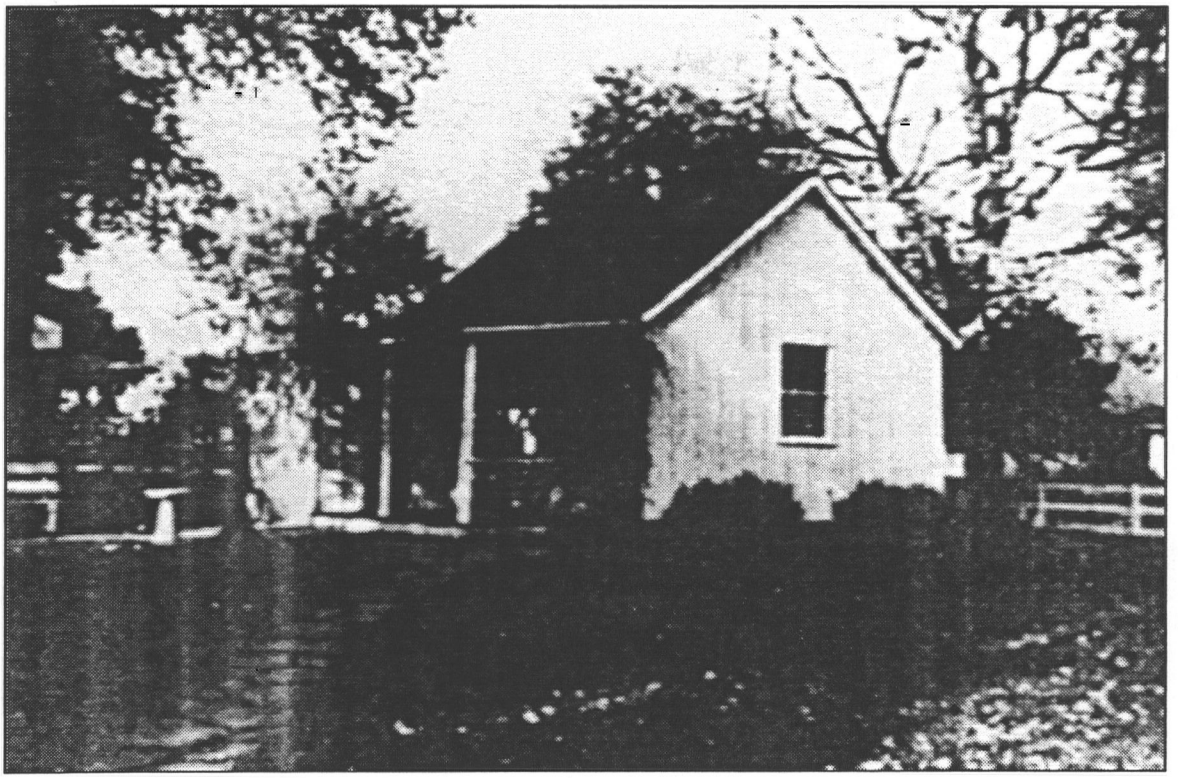


Figure 93. Birthplace cottage the year before Herbert Hoover's death, 1963.

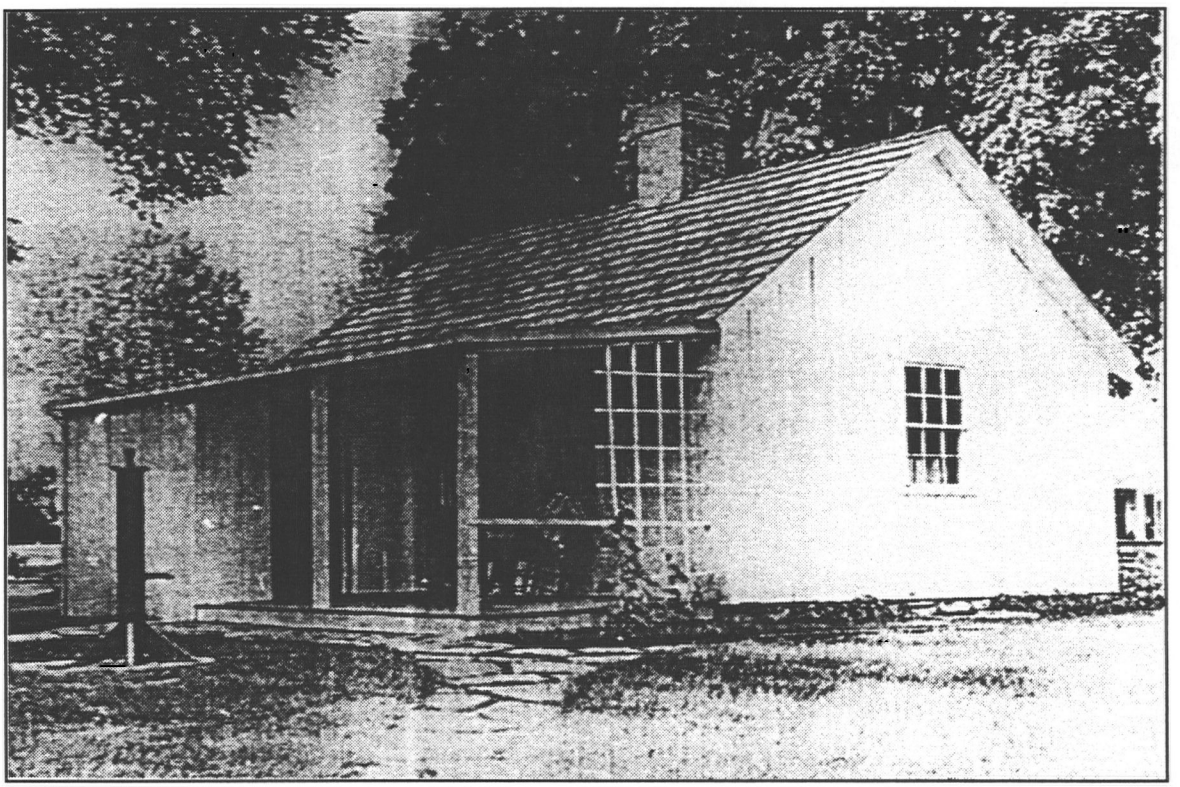


Figure 94. Birthplace cottage under NPS administration, 1970.

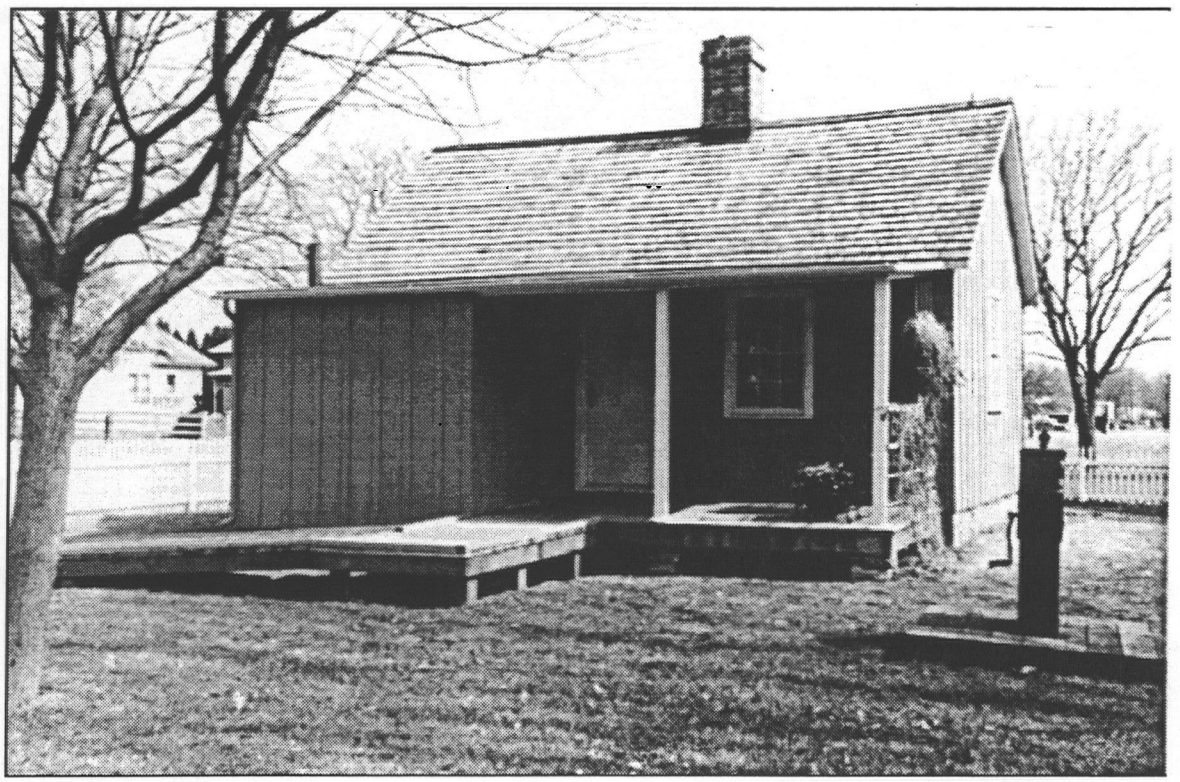


Figure 95. Birthplace cottage with universal accessibility ramp as it currently appears, 1994.

In particular, the links among Hoover's boyhood neighborhood, the existing village re-creation that consists largely of residential structures, the town's central business district, and the surrounding agricultural landscape have been weakened.

The existing residential buildings in the historic core are a combination of buildings that had remained on the site from the Hoover boyhood era and those that have been relocated to this site as part of the historic village scene re-creation. The individual buildings have experienced a variety of preservation treatments, including restoration and reconstruction. Some retain substantial integrity of design, material, and workmanship; others do not. Integrity of location is not strong for the residential area given the considerable degree of manipulation that has occurred in the neighborhood. There is some integrity of feeling and setting. The over-riding characteristic of the area, however, is its remarkably strong sense of association with Hoover and the West Branch community that he remembered and valued from his boyhood. Despite their diminished integrity in other aspects, the historic residences possess substantial integrity of association and contribute to the integrity of the historic core and the entire NHS.

The historic core appears somewhat isolated from the rest of the community. The intent of the neighborhood acquisition and re-creation was not to separate the historic core from the rest of West Branch but to protect its residential character from potential commercial encroachments that may have developed in close proximity to the birthplace. Ironically, the actions that isolated the historic core also appear to have stemmed from Herbert Hoover's expressed desire for his birthplace not to be an isolated shrine but to be presented as part of a neighborhood. The village re-creation that was intended to impart a neighborhood feeling, however, owes much of its present character to its post-1966 development. In the attempt to re-create Hoover's boyhood neighborhood, the connection to the larger West Branch community was obscured. The isolation of the historic core is equally ironic given the boosterism of the West Branch community in promoting the establishment of the Hoover commemorative site and the active involvement of West Branch community leaders and business people.

The historic rectilinear layout of adjacent farmland has been replaced by prairie. As a result, there has been a corresponding loss of the traditional agrarian geometry for some of the surrounding farm fields and some diminished integrity of historical setting.

Landscape features, such as boardwalks, have been installed as part of the NHS village re-creation. Boardwalks, however, have become primary circulation instead of secondary to streets. As a result, circulation within the site has become unnatural *(Exhibit N)*. The traditional organization and hierarchy of roads, walks, alley, and fence lines have been subordinated to the contemporary need to direct visitor circulation, frame or block views, and invite or deny access to

individual properties. The current walks are well-maintained to ensure the safety of NHS visitors and staff. Their material and workmanship appear undeniably uniform and twentieth-century in execution. Although there is reliable information that boardwalks existed and documentation for them, the existing walks dominate the site in some areas, making streets and other features appear insignificant. Streets have shrunk to mere symbolic "traces." The street width appears so narrow that the historic vehicular use of the space is not apparent visually. With the existing circulation system, the backs of properties function as fronts in certain areas because of the current circulation pattern. The walks are used to link buildings such as the meetinghouse, schoolhouse, and blacksmith shop that were not part of the Hoover boyhood. The existing circulation system also physically and visually cuts off the P.T. Smith House and second Hoover house site from the rest of the historic core. Penn Street has been moved and Cedar Street closed. The circulation system, in particular, contributes to a somewhat false historic impression of the area's appearance. The walks have become an overwhelming character-defining feature of the NHS when, historically, they were simply a utilitarian, ancillary feature.

Despite their effect on the integrity of the site's spatial organization and circulation system, the boardwalks are currently among the most popular and imageable features of the site. They have become an important interpretive device for school children and other groups. There is considerable sentiment for the boardwalks among park staff, West Branch residents, and visitors. It is difficult to keep the walks free from leaves and other debris; they also become slippery when wet and are impassable at times during periods of winter snow and ice. The staff finds retention of the boardwalks desirable despite associated maintenance and safety issues. The integrity issues associated with boardwalks do not necessitate an abandonment of the system, but rather their subordination into the overall landscape in an appropriate manner.

Within the NHS, the sense of the village grid layout with its individual rectilinear lots also has been lost through manipulation of building sites. Although integrity of association and location are strong for some houses which remain on the sites they occupied during Hoover's boyhood, integrity of design, setting, and feeling are weak. Many of the residences in the Hoover neighborhood have been moved; others have been removed; several houses that were moved to the village re-creation postdate the boyhood era they are intended to evoke. Several houses still occupy the same lots that they occupied during Herbert Hoover's boyhood *(Exhibit O)*. The exact locations of these houses vary somewhat from their nineteenth-century locations as a result of changes in street width and modification to the foundations of some houses. Houses that postdate the Hoover boyhood and that were moved to the site lack integrity of location and association. Removing and adding several houses has given the village an artificial feeling where features are neither old nor new. The color palette of the NPS-owned buildings feels contrived. Despite a healthy amount of

LEGEND

- site boundary
- paved road
- unpaved road
- road dating from post-presidential period (1935-1966)
- walk
- building
- creek

MAIN STREET

WETHEREL ST.

NPS Visitor Center

Schoolhouse

Blacksmith Shop

Birthplace Cottage

SECOND STREET

Picnic Grounds

Wapsinonoc Creek

Quaker Meetinghouse

NPS Maintenance

Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum

DOWNEY STREET (road/trace)

Gravesite

Hoover Presidential Library Association

PARKSIDE DRIVE

Thompson Farm

Miles Farm

N

0 100 200 300 600

scale in feet

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site

INTEGRITY OF LOCATION FOR STREETS AND ROADS FOR POST-PRESIDENTIAL YEARS

Map compiled by Land and Community Associates from 1995 survey prepared by Snyder and Associates. This map is for planning purposes only.

Exhibit N. Integrity of Streets and Roads.

LEGEND

- site boundary
- paved road
- unpaved road
- walk
- residence dating from Hoover boyhood (1874-1885)
- other buildings and structures
- creek

MAIN STREET

WETHERELL ST.

SECOND STREET

PARKSIDE DRIVE

DOWNEY STREET (*road trace*)

Staples house

Wright house

Hayhurst house

Mackey house

Schoolhouse

Blacksmith Shop

Garvin house

Laban Miles house

NPS Visitor Center

Birthplace Cottage

Quaker Meetinghouse

P.T. Smith house

Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum

Picnic Grounds

Wapsinonoc Creek

NPS Maintenance

N

0 20 40 60 80 100 200

scale in feet

Map compiled by Land and Community Associates from 1995 survey prepared by Snyder and Associates. This map is for planning purposes only.

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site

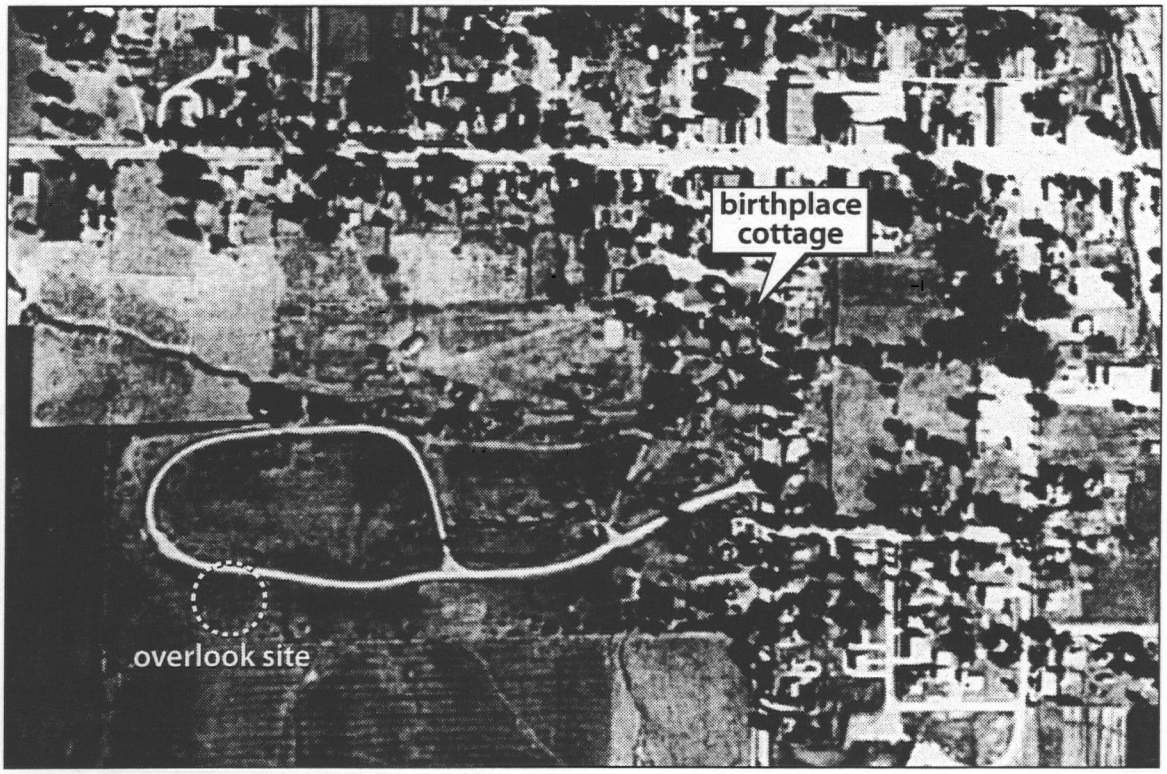
INTEGRITY OF RESIDENTIAL LOCATION FOR HOOVER BOYHOOD

Exhibit O. Integrity of Residential Location.

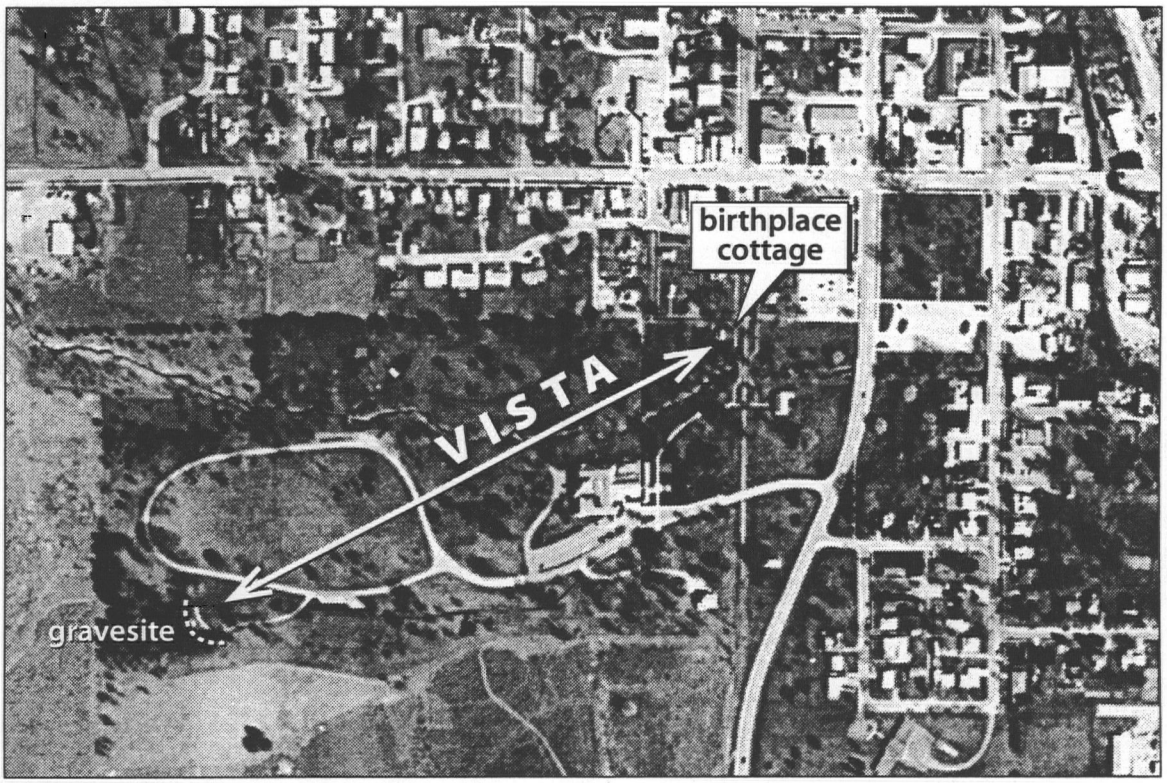
weathering, maintenance still appears uniform. Maintenance is a complex issue since local residents prefer meticulous maintenance while many historic preservation professionals feel that evenly applied maintenance is artificial and creates false impressions of the historical appearance of an actual neighborhood. The raised foundations also contribute to the same sense of visual confusion of whether buildings are old, new, or reconstructions. The removal of buildings and structures and the terminus of Downey Street have isolated the P.T. Smith House and the site of the Hoover family's second house from the rest of the historic core. Given that Hoover's most distinct memories of his boyhood were associated with the time that he lived in the second house, these changes also diminish integrity for the 1874-1885 period.

Major interpretive buildings, such as the meetinghouse and schoolhouse, were not present during the Hoover boyhood; and the blacksmith shop, which was built to represent a typical shop of the boyhood era, is not the actual structure where Jesse Hoover worked, nor is it in exactly the same location. These latter buildings are intended to strengthen the site's ability to portray significant associations with Hoover's boyhood—religion, education, and his father's occupation—and they are effective in meeting that goal. They do not, however, enhance the integrity of the site for the Hoover boyhood. They actually diminish integrity of location, workmanship, and material since they were not actually part of the site during that sub-period. Instead, they are part of the commemorative and interpretive history of the site. The blacksmith shop and the meetinghouse that were added to the site during the 1935 to 1966 period contribute to integrity for the post-presidential sub-period but not for the Hoover boyhood. The schoolhouse, which was added to the site in 1970, does not contribute to integrity.

Another aspect of integrity associated with the historic core as well as with the loop drive area and the gravesite is the vista between the birthplace and the gravesite. Based on statements of Franz Lassner, former director of the library-museum, and architect William Wagner, strengthening and defining the vista can be attributed to either Herbert or Allan Hoover. Lassner maintained, in working with the Cedar Rapids Garden Club, that Herbert Hoover had hoped a symbolic vista would be created; Wagner, however, attributes the concept to Allan Hoover who espoused strengthening the memorial aspects of the site once it included the graves of his parents. In either case, there is a strong association with either Herbert or Allan Hoover who, along with Lou Henry Hoover, had been closely involved with the preservation and development of the site since 1935. The vista from the gravesite, formerly called and used as an overlook, was an existing site characteristic. The plantings intended to define and emphasize the vista post-date the period of significance; as a result integrity of design, material, and workmanship are absent since implementation occurred several years after Hoover's death and burial *(Exhibit P)*. The vista, however, possesses integrity of location, association, and feeling and is a character-defining aspect of the site.



1957 aerial.



1990 aerial.

Exhibit P. Birthplace/Gravesite Vista, 1957 and 1990.

Wapsinonoc Creek as it meanders through the site is a degraded, but still character-defining, feature of the site that is closely associated with Hoover's boyhood memories and that has influenced community and site development over time. Although portions of the existing Downey Street bridge date from its 1917 construction, the bridge retains little integrity of material or workmanship, which are essential aspects of the character of a work of engineering. The crossing of the creek at Downey Street, however, is a character-defining feature of the site even if the bridge in its current condition is not. Similarly retaining walls associated with the creek and developed during the period of significance also have deteriorated to a point where they no longer contribute to the integrity of the site.

The historic core has integrity as a layered landscape that contains tangible cultural resources representing and spanning the entire period of Herbert Hoover's life. The historic core is the actual location of Hoover's birth and boyhood and possesses many features that survive from the Hoover boyhood period and that have endured on the site throughout its history. The historic patterns of development, in particular, have endured. The characteristic spatial organization of streets, street trees, sidewalks, and fences is still present today, although the actual materials may have changed. Their presence contributes to integrity of feeling and design. As in many similar landscapes, the actual historic landscape material has been replaced. The historic core, however, also possesses integrity as an early twentieth-century presidential memorial site that reflects the direct influence of a U.S. president and first lady in its preservation, development, and management. The core is directly associated with the Hoover family and Hoover's post-presidential years.

The historic core retains the following character-defining features from the period of significance (1874-1966); features that survive from the boyhood period (1874-1885) are preceded by *:

- * birthplace cottage (HS-01, IDLCS 00659)
- * Wapsinonoc Creek
- historic street alignments
    - * Downey Street alignment including its crossing of Wapsinonoc Creek
    - * Wetherell Street alignment
    - * Penn Street alignment
    - * Poplar Street alignment
- neighborhood houses occupying the same site as during the periods of significance
    - * P.T. Smith (HS 02, IDLCS 00662)

* Laban Miles House (HS-06, IDLCS 06146)

* Amanda Garvin House (HS-07, IDLCS 06147)

* James Staples House (HS-09, IDLCS 06149)

* E.S. Hayhurst House (HS-10, 06150)

* David Mackey House (HS-18, IDLCS 06156)

* William Wright House (HS-19, IDLCS 06157)

Dr. Leech House (HS-05, IDLCS 06145)

- interpretive structures from 1935-1966

  Blacksmith Shop and Wagon Shop (HS-16, IDLCS 06161)

  Friends Meetinghouse (HS-03, IDLCS 06143)

- vista to gravesite
- * rural view toward Isaac Miles Farm
- deciduous trees in yards and adjacent to streets
- view north to brick commercial blocks

Gravesite

The gravesite retains considerable integrity as the burial place of Herbert Hoover and Lou Henry Hoover. It possesses substantial integrity of location, design, materials, feeling, and association. Integrity of association for the entire Hoover family is especially strong. The gravesite design remains substantially that developed by William Wagner for this site prior to Hoover's death in 1964 and that was substantially complete by 1966. Some plant material has been replaced and added but the most serious detriment to integrity of material and workmanship has been the overpruning of the gravesite vegetation. The setting characteristic of the 1935 to 1966 period has been altered somewhat by the prairie re-creation and the library-museum expansion but the site still retains its original strong visual relationship to the historic core, the loop drive, and picnic area.

Character-defining features include the following:

- overlook location
- simplicity of design
- sparse evergreen vegetation

- semi-circular earthen form
- closely trimmed turf
- Hoover Graves (HS-41, IDLCS 06174)
- low-lying evergreen massed planting defining inner portion of the semi-circle
- vertical evergreen planting providing a backdrop behind the lower evergreen plantings
- concave, elliptical granite block walk with marble curb and end blocks
- flagpole with American flag
- concrete approach walk
- two marble benches
- vista to the historic core

Library-Museum Area

The Herbert Hoover Presidential Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum contributes to integrity for the post-presidential sub-period. Herbert Hoover directly participated in the decision for it to be located on the site, attended its dedication, and supported its development. Established and dedicated late in that period, the earliest exterior portion of the library-museum and its entry drive and gates contribute to integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship. Although dating from the period of significance and possessing direct Hoover associations, the library-museum has changed substantially since that period with the several additions to the building and site changes. Although later additions to the building relate to the building's mission and purpose, they postdate the period of significance and do not contribute to integrity.

Some features that post-date the Hoover boyhood contribute significantly to integrity for the post-presidential years. The statue of Isis, for example, has a direct association with Hoover and his reputation as an international humanitarian. The Hoovers personally made the decision to locate on this site the statue, which has strong associations with Hoover, the statesman.

The Library Association Building, an inholding within the NHS, is part of the visual environment and setting of the NHS. The former residence has an appearance today that differs little from its appearance during the period of significance. The entry road has been altered, but the site retains a characteristic rural landscape setting of grass lawn and tall deciduous trees. Although not actually part of the NHS, it nevertheless contributes to integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association for the period 1935-1966.

Character-defining features include the following:

- east entry zone to original section of the library-museum, including entry gate, drive, east facade of the building, associated lawn area and shade trees, wooden light posts and luminaires, and path alignment leading from original entry to Isis
- statue of Isis
- Hoover Presidential Library Association (HPLA) Building (owned by HPLA)
- Hoover Presidential Library Association Building residential lawn and deciduous tree canopy

Loop Drive Area

The loop drive area retains strong associations with Herbert Hoover, who attended celebratory functions in the area during his lifetime. The loop drive also appears to approximate a portion of the western alignment of the oval racetrack that existed during the Hoover boyhood. The drive as it exists today was known to Hoover in his post-presidential years. The Hoover family was very much aware and supportive of the park-like character that developed in the post-presidential period. The picnic shelters have direct Hoover associations; Hoover, an avid supporter of the Boy Scouts, attended the Boy Scout shelter dedication and lunch in his honor to celebrate his eightieth birthday. Character-defining features include the following:

- loop road and *race track alignment (HS-48, IDLCS 70090)
- Wapsinonoc Creek and its pedestrian crossing
- Boy Scout Shelter (HS-45, IDLCS 70087)
- Negus Family Association Shelter
- open vista between birthplace cottage and gravesite
- open lawn with shade trees

Rural / Agricultural Setting

Both the Isaac Miles and the Thompson farms possess integrity as Iowa family farms from the general farming era. They substantially retain aspects of integrity of location, design, association, workmanship, feeling, materials, and setting. The Isaac Miles Farm contributes to integrity of association for the NHS because of the kinship of the Miles and Hoover families. Most changes on the farms relate to their evolving use as agricultural properties and strengthen rather than diminish integrity since the changes may reveal important information concerning the incremental changes in

family farming from the nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries. The integrity of the farm cluster of the Thompson Farm and of the bank barn at the Isaac Miles Farm are especially strong. As part of the NHS, they have not experienced the same degree of recent change as other farms that remain in private ownership. The significance and integrity of the Thompson Farm are related to its vernacular layout and character. The entry drive for the Isaac Miles Farm has changed as a result of circulation changes associated with the development of I-80. The Isaac Miles Farm barn's visibility from other parts of the NHS especially contributes to integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, and association.

The prairie slightly diminishes integrity of the agricultural setting for the historic core, the library-museum, the gravesite, the Isaac Miles Farm, and the Thompson Farm. Although the appearance of the prairie is different from that of cropped land, it still provides a visual impression of open land. That appearance is not substantially different in appearance when viewed at distance than land left fallow or in pasture. Historical research indicated that portions of the farm may have been uncultivated at times during the period of significance.

The prairie has no Hoover associations, was developed following the period of significance, and cannot be evaluated as possessing historic integrity. Originally part of the Isaac Miles Farm, the prairie overlays historic cultivated fields that existed during the period of significance. Its relatively recent establishment and the absence of any compelling evidence that special exception criteria should be considered in terms of National Register eligibility preclude an evaluation of historical significance for the prairie. As it ages, however, the prairie may come to be viewed as a representative prairie re-creation of the 1970s and may be re-evaluated as significant in the future.

The prairie does not detract from the present rural character of the site. Establishment of the prairie was a pragmatic solution to hillside erosion and is related to similar prairie re-establishment efforts throughout the region. The prairie is compatible with current NPS goals for sustainability, is cost-effective to maintain, and can be interpreted to promote environmental awareness as well as the presettlement history of the site and the region. Despite its current lack of historical significance and integrity, the prairie provides traditional countryside views and a rural, open space buffer for the historic core.

Character-defining features from the rural/agricultural setting era include the following:

- Thompson Farm cluster and its component parts:

  farmhouse (HS-11, IDLCS 06151)

  bank barn HS-12, IDLCS 06152)

corn crib (HS-13, IDLCS 06153)

garage (HS-14, IDLCS 06154)

shed (HS-15, IDLCS 06155)

windmill (HS-20, IDLCS 06158)

hand pump HS-51, IDLCS 70093)

concrete walks HS-52, IDLCS 70094)

chicken house (HS-54)

deciduous tree row west of house

- Isaac Miles Farm cluster and its component parts:

  house (HS-80, IDLCS 70097)

  garage (HS-81, IDLCS 70098)

  machine shed (HS-84, IDLCS 70101)

  brooder house (HS-85, IDLCS 70102)

  hog house/corn crib (HS-86, IDLCS 70103)

  corn crib (HS-87, IDLCS 70104)

  barn (HS-88, IDLCS 70105)

  chicken house (HS-89, IDLCS 70106)

  storage bins (HS-92, IDLCS 70109)

  concrete walks (HS-82, IDLCS 70099)

  cistern and pumps (HS-83, IDLCS 70100)

  farm road

  fence posts in house yard

  adjacent fields

  cattle guard (HS-91, IDLCS 70108)

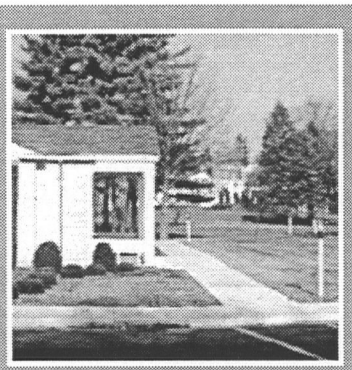
  evergreen windbreak

  fence and entry gate (HS 90, IDLCS 70107)

Visitor Contact and Park Support Area

The visitor contact and park support area does not contribute to the integrity of the NHS. The area does, however, have traditional site entry features that were located originally in the historic core near the birthplace cottage. The site's first commemorative feature, a small boulder that was donated to the site in 1929 by the DAR, has been moved to this area as has Herbert Hoover's Iowa Award plaque. While the features are character-defining, they do not contribute to integrity of location. Character-defining features of the NHS, but not the area, include the following:

- DAR boulder monument and bronze plaque (HS-44, IDLCS 06177)
- Iowa Award Plaque (HS-43, IDLCS 06176).



5 Cultural Landscape Treatment Recommendations and Alternatives

5 Cultural Landscape Treatment Recommendations and Alternatives

Introduction

This chapter includes recommended cultural landscape treatments for distinct landscape management areas and their sub-areas. It also includes conceptual designs for future consideration by the planning team when the DCP is completed. Appendix C includes more detailed cultural landscape discussions of alternatives related to visitor contact, circulation, expanded parking, and relocation of the NHS maintenance facilities, and possible hydrological solutions are outlined in Appendix D.

A preliminary outline of the recommended treatments for the landscape management areas and sub-areas and selected DCP alternatives were included in an interim submittal in February 1995 as background material for a workshop held at the NHS on February 23 and 24, 1995. NPS personnel from both the NHS and the Midwest Region as well as representatives of the consultant team participated in the two-day session. The preliminary designs, guidelines, and recommendations contained in the CLR were refined and developed further during and following the workshop.

All recommendations are based on preservation of significant character-defining characteristics and features of the NHS and enhancement of the site's integrity for its period of significance which extends from 1874 to 1966. Within this period of significance are two important sub-periods: 1874-1885, the Hoover boyhood in West Branch, and 1935-1966, the post-presidential years during which the site was protected and developed as a presidential memorial and burial site. The NHS possesses significance as the birthplace and burial site of Herbert Hoover, president of the United States from 1929 to 1932. In addition, it is one of a limited number of presidential library sites that have developed in the United States during the second half of the twentieth century. The NHS, with its presidential birthplace, library-museum, and presidential gravesite reflects the historical evolution of presidential memorialization in the United States. This memorialization is directly associated with and was guided by the former president Herbert Hoover and former first lady Lou Henry Hoover in the post-presidential years. The Isaac Miles and Thompson farms also possess significant agricultural resources that represent the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Iowa farmstead, which provided the rural setting that Hoover associated with the West Branch community. The Isaac Miles Farm represents the period of Hoover's youth; while the Thompson farm with its later structures more appropriately represents the Iowa farm from 1916 to 1975. The

prairie re-creation developed in the 1970s on a portion of the Isaac Miles Farm does not possess historic significance but contributes to the rural setting of the NHS.

Cultural Landscape Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation, a flexible preservation treatment approach, is appropriate for the NHS, which is a complex site that combines multi-faceted and diverse uses: presidential birthplace and re-created nineteenth-century village; presidential library and museum functions; presidential gravesite; public picnic grounds; a twentieth-century prairie reinterpretation; two historic farmsteads; and park administrative, maintenance, and residential uses. The NHS not only requires preservation treatments for a variety of diverse uses—it has a mixed design character that includes restored, reconstructed, relocated, and rehabilitated nineteenth-century features as well as twentieth-century institutions. The NHS also requires design changes necessary for expansion; universal accessibility; residential and administrative uses; improved visitor contact and interpretation; more efficient circulation, entrances, and parking; and other contemporary needs that can be met through rehabilitation treatments.

In addition, there is limited historical information concerning the actual physical appearance and construction of many vanished cultural landscape features from the period of significance, particularly vegetation. This lack of accurate information for the Hoover boyhood sub-period has created difficult situations for NPS planners and designers grappling with the park's existing policy of re-creating the historic scene of Hoover's youth. This policy — if continued throughout the NHS — also could result in the future loss of resources with direct associations with Hoover in the post-presidential years and alteration of the site as he knew it in those years. As a result, the overall rehabilitation approach should be based on preservation of the existing character-defining characteristics and features from the post-presidential 1935-1966 sub-period, which also includes surviving and restored or re-created features from the boyhood subperiod of 1874 to 1885. In addition, restoration of the birthplace cottage environs to the 1874 to 1885 sub-period and of the gravesite to its 1966 as-completed appearance are appropriate within the overall rehabilitation of the site. Restoration is appropriate for both the birthplace environs and the gravesite because of their central importance and value in interpreting the story of Herbert Hoover to the public.

In restoring the birthplace cottage and its immediate environs, substantial attention should be paid to Lou Henry Hoover's original restoration of the 1930s and 1940s. Those efforts were based on first-hand recollections of Herbert Hoover's relatives who knew the family and the cottage well, were directly associated with the former president and first lady, and were based on well-organized and comprehensive information collected by Lou Henry Hoover. Subsequent restoration efforts in

the 1970s following the establishment of the NHS were often motivated by interpretive and programmatic goals and focused on living history exhibits which have since been discontinued.

Restoration and reconstruction are not appropriate treatments for re-creating the historic neighborhood of Hoover's boyhood. Limited and partial documentation for the nineteenth-century neighborhood as well as the presence of resources that post-date the Hoover boyhood have created confusion and made decision-making difficult in the past for planners, designers, historian, managers, and interpreters. The practical solution is to accept and interpret the existing neighborhood as a product of twentieth-century preservation and interpretive efforts and to continue to evoke the feeling of a nineteenth-century neighborhood to the extent possible without creating a "false sense of history."

Cultural Landscape Treatment Recommendations

Recommendations have been developed to retain and enhance cultural landscape integrity within the NHS and its six landscape character areas. Substantial change occurred following the Hoover boyhood with a corresponding loss of integrity for that period. There is also an absence of comprehensive documentation for the boyhood period. Considerable information exists, however, for the cultural landscape as it existed between 1935-1966. As a result, treatment of resources dating from the 1874-1885 period should be consistent with treatment policies developed for them during the 1935-1966 period.

Continued restoration and reconstruction of the nineteenth-century boyhood

Cultural landscape recommendations have been developed for the site as a whole as well as for each of the identified character areas: the historic core, the gravesite, the library-museum, the loop road area, the rural/agricultural setting, and the visitor contact and park support area. Each character area can be considered a landscape management area; some have specific landscape sub-areas *(Exhibit Q).*

NHS General Recommendations

- Increase awareness of the larger community landscape that Herbert Hoover knew both as a boy and as an elder statesman through pedestrian and visual connections between the NHS and the West Branch downtown.
- Acknowledge and interpret the period of significance as 1874-1966, emphasizing the Hoover boyhood years and the Hoover family's role in the preservation and memorialization of the site during the post-presidential period. Respect the birthplace

cottage and gravesite and their environs as the sites most directly associated with the Hoover family; use the birthplace and gravesite environs only for interpretive and memorial uses. Site and visitor services can be accommodated in other parts of the site.

- Avoid implementing conjectural re-creations of the past that will increase confusion about what is old and what is new, and what is authentic and what is re-created.
- Maintain and strengthen the primary visual connection, a primarily native vegetation planting, referred to as "the vista," between the birthplace cottage and the gravesite.
- Preserve the existing visual connection between the Isaac Miles Farm and other sub-areas because it enhances the story of Hoover's youth in the West Branch community.
- Maintain views between the Thompson Farm and the prairie that provide the rural/agricultural setting for the NHS.
- Preserve and strengthen the visual connection between the historic core and the adjacent historic downtown commercial area, which retains the characteristic Midwestern grid pattern.
- Discuss and coordinate changes in screen plantings with adjacent and nearby property owners and with local government.
- Diminish the visual prominence of Parkside Drive from the NHS because it post-dates the period of significance and departs from the characteristic Midwestern grid.
- Rehabilitate the estuarine ecosystem of Wapsinonoc Creek because it is a character-defining feature of the cultural landscape and figured prominently in Hoover's memories of his youth.
- Follow NPS sustainability design approach to engineering solutions and vegetative planting policies. Sustainable approaches are likely to re-establish the general estuarine character of the creek environs and the types of native tree species that predominated during the period of significance.
- Continue to explore turf management policies that will result in a turf management plan with appropriate levels of management that are based on both the cultural and natural resource values and constraints of each distinct management area of the NHS. A weed-free turf is not desirable for the entire NHS. Weed-free turf is not acceptable throughout because of the costs of pesticides and the inconsistency with NPS management policies and pesticide guidelines. The historic core, the library-museum, and the gravesite are memorial sites which demand a higher level of intervention; weed-free turf is desirable for the

LEGEND

- site boundary
- fence
- paved road
- unpaved road
- walk
- building
- creek
- deciduous tree
- evergreen tree
- management area boundary
- sub-area boundary

Landscape Management Areas and Sub-areas

A. Historic Core
1. Core Historic Area

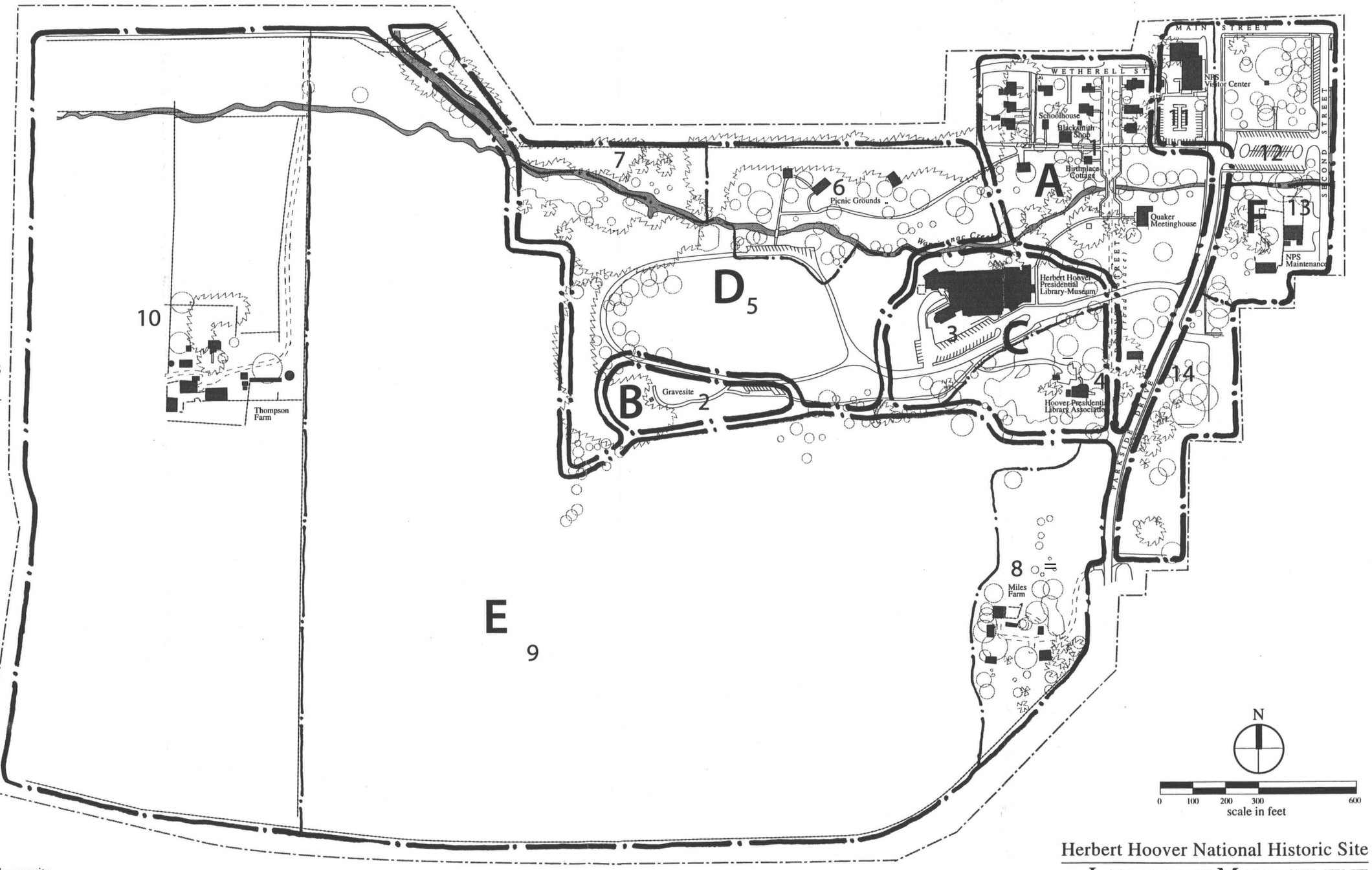
B. Gravesite
2. Gravesite

C. Presidential Library-Museum
3. Presidential Library-Museum
4. Library Association Building

D. Loop Drive Area
5. Loop Drive
6. Picnic Area
7. Northwest Buffer Area

E. Rural/Agricultural Setting
8. Miles Farm
9. Prairie
10. Thompson Farm

F. Visitor Center & Park Support
11. Visitor Center
12. "Parkside Green" Overflow Parking
13. Park Maintenance
14. Entry Buffer Area



Map compiled by Land and Community Associates from 1995 survey prepared by Snyder and Associates. This map is for planning purposes only.

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT AREAS AND SUB-AREAS

Exhibit Q. Landscape Management Areas and Sub-areas.

majority of each area. A greater tolerance for weeds is acceptable and appropriate in other areas.

- Limit night-time lighting to what is essential for personal safety and the security of the site. Lighting should be aligned along streets to the extent possible to reinforce the characteristic grid pattern. Spotlighting and uplighting to highlight individual buildings or site features is not appropriate.
- Undertake a thorough horticultural inventory and analysis to document current vegetative species and condition and to identify surviving vegetation from the period of significance. Retain and replace historic species in-kind as they become diseased or damaged.
- Develop a nursery, perhaps in an inconspicuous location on the Thompson Farm, where extra specimens of vegetation for the gravesite and other locations can be grown until replacements are needed.
- Develop an interpretive plan that will make the evolution of the NHS and West Branch cultural landscape understandable to the visitor. The plan should include both a permanent exhibit and outdoor exhibits that interpret the cultural landscape through historic photographs rather than through conjectural restorations and reconstructions.

Historic Core

General

- Acknowledge the significance of both the Hoover boyhood sub-period and the post-presidential sub-period. As a result, adopt a treatment and interpretive policy that recognizes the contributions of the post-presidential sub-period in the evolution of the site as well as those of the Hoover boyhood sub-period.
- Continue to evoke the overall nineteenth-century feeling and setting that was first established by Lou Henry Hoover's initial restoration efforts and continued by NPS. Discontinue restoration and reconstruction treatments intended to recreate an actual nineteenth-century scene. Both availability of existing resources and inadequate documentation prevent an accurate representation of the Hoover boyhood sub-period. Similarly, avoid restoration, reconstruction, and relocation activities intended to re-create the 1935-1966 period.
- Preserve existing buildings and structures in their present locations. Given the degree of change that has occurred since 1966, accept the existing physical locations of all buildings and structures—despite their inaccuracies for the period of significance. Adopt a preservation approach for the exteriors of all buildings and structures, rehabilitating the

interiors as necessary to meet NHS needs. Meet exterior ADA requirements as necessary when uses change.

- Avoid costly treatments to "correct" the historic scene re-creation.
- Use interpretation rather than reconstruction or relocation to inform visitors about buildings and structures that no longer exist on their original locations. Rely upon interpretive methods to convey more accurate representations of the cultural landscape at various points in time during the period of significance.
- Develop design guidelines for the rehabilitation of the Historic Core. Such guidelines would offer specific guidance for both buildings and landscapes. New guidelines would be intended to supersede the existing historic structure reports which were prepared to accomplish the goal of restoration to a nineteenth-century appearance.
- Acquire preservation easements on facades facing Wetherell Street and work with local property owners to rehabilitate building facades in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Work with the town, local groups, and local businesses to develop incentives for facade rehabilitation.
- Re-establish a native stream bank ecology within the historic core east of Downey Street by planting native species and discontinuing weeding, pruning, and similar practices *(Exhibit R)*. Allow natural wetland vegetation, such as Siberian elm, box elder, and mulberry, to grow along the stream bank. Strive for a naturalistic appearance rather than a manicured setting for the immediate creek environs. Continue weed-free maintenance along the stream bank west of Downey Street.
- Consider, based on the hydrologic analysis of Joseph Martin, developing a stream meander north of the current channel and direct flow to this channel to divert water away from the library-museum vicinity. Retain existing channel to serve as a detention basin during moderate flooding.

Birthplace Cottage Landscape

- To the greatest extent feasible, undertake a landscape restoration treatment based on the documentation and physical work that resulted from the well-researched, early twentieth-century restoration efforts led by Lou Henry Hoover. Attempting to reconstruct the landscape as envisioned in the Wagner plan developed following Hoover's death would increase maintenance and staffing burdens. Reconstruction of such features also would rely on conjecture since there is incomplete documentation for actual physical work. Moreover, the Lou Henry Hoover restoration has a clear and direct association with Herbert Hoover

LEGEND

- site boundary
- fence
- paved road
- unpaved road
- walk
- building
- creek
- deciduous tree
- evergreen tree
- well-maintained park-like setting
- restoration of natural stream-bank ecology
- new meander

MAIN STREET
WETHERELL ST
SECOND STREET
DOWNEY STREET (road to Wapsie)
PARKSIDE DRIVE
NPS Visitor Center
Schoolhouse
Blacksmith Shop
Birthplace Cottage
Picnic Grounds
Wapsinonoc Creek
Quaker Meetinghouse
NPS Maintenance
Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum
Gravesite
Hoover Presidential Library Association
Thompson Farm
Miles Farm

N

0 100 200 300 600
scale in feet

Map compiled by Land and Community Associates from 1995 survey prepared by Snyder and Associates. This map is for planning purposes only.

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site

STREAM BANK REHABILITATION

Exhibit R. Stream Bank Rehabilitation.

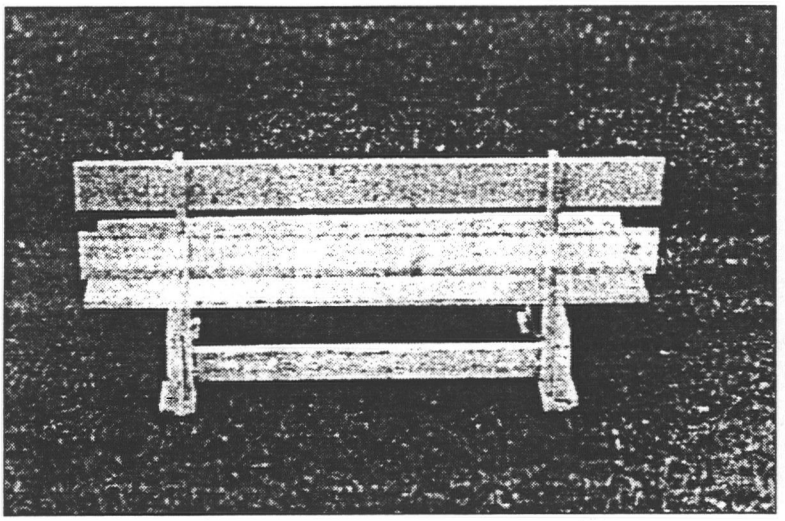
and his family that has interpretive value. Missing features addressed in the Wagner plan, such as the vegetable garden and chicken house, can be interpreted through brochures, exhibits, and other interpretive methods rather than through actual reconstruction.

- Preserve the birthplace cottage to avoid disturbing extant physical evidence of its evolution over time.
- Paint the birthplace cottage white. Prevent damage to the wood surface of the birthplace cottage by keeping it painted and avoiding cleaning methods intended to remove paints and stains. As a result of the restoration activities directed by Lou Henry Hoover, the cottage was painted white for most of the sub-period between 1935 and 1966 although it is likely that it was unpainted at least for a part of Herbert Hoover's boyhood. Painting it white also will help integrate the cottage into its residential neighborhood setting and enhance its visibility from the gravesite.
- Keep an open vista between the birthplace cottage and the gravesite.
- Re-establish the green open space view from the front door of the birthplace cottage looking east.
- Re-establish a pedestrian bridge between the birthplace cottage and the statue of Isis that meets ADA and sustainability standards and that takes into account the most recent hydrological information available. Any new construction should be clearly modern but compatible in design as appropriate for a site rehabilitation activity. There is a strong historical association between the Isis statue and the birthplace cottage restoration efforts of the Hoover family that could be emphasized.
- Continue the use of vegetation remembered by Herbert Hoover and other family and community members as associated with the birthplace cottage landscape in keeping with the commemorative and interpretive intent of the cottage. Plant material is to be used more for textural qualities, fragrance, color and other characteristics that evoke the feeling of the cottage environs as remembered by Hoover and others than with an intent to re-create an actual physical scene that was transitory, even within the period of significance, and for which there is insufficient documentation and physical evidence.

Streetscape

- To accommodate local preferences, which are an important aspect of a NPS unit located within a community, and to meet ADA standards, retain the existing boardwalks but widen and replace the street surfaces in the historic core.

- Retain the grass planting strip between the boardwalks and the street surface but decrease its width.
- Remove any trees within the traditional vehicular path of the street.
- Widen the streets and replace the existing street surface paving with either a consolidated earth surface that is visually reminiscent of the nineteenth-century sub-period or asphalt that was used during the twentieth-century sub-period. In either case, the end result will not be an accurate representation of the period of significance given the degree of physical change that has occurred adjacent to the streets and the de-activation of the streets for vehicular traffic. The nineteenth-century street was much more varied in character than it is presently. The boardwalks had more variation than the existing re-creations, and historic photographs indicate utility poles and wires, retaining walls, and ditches, and a number of features that were not included in the historic re-creation. Early NPS proposals for the area actually recommended including utility poles and wires in the re-creation but this recommendation was never implemented. Widening the street surface, however, can re-establish the historic hierarchy of vehicular and pedestrian ways in which the street was more dominant than the walk. The existing boardwalk and street system does not contribute to integrity for either the 1874-1885 period or the 1935-1966 period and does not meet ADA standards.
- As necessary in the future in light of maintenance, safety, and ADA issues, re-evaluate retention of the boardwalk system; consequently do not extend the boardwalk system into other areas.
- A number of small-scale features—hitching posts, carriage steps, lamps and posts, and street signs—have been installed as part of the historic scene re-creation and are associated with site circulation. Retain these features as long as the boardwalk system remains in place. If the boardwalks are replaced, design a comprehensive system of walks and landscape features that meet current visitor needs. Any new system should be compatible but contemporary in design to avoid visual confusion about what is old or new on the site.
- As Victorian-style benches, wooden litter barrels, and other existing site furniture require replacement, select simple, contemporary furniture that cannot be confused as historic by the visitor, or model new wooden benches on the simple wooden bench prototype visible in site photographs from the 1960s *(Figure 96)*. The 1960s benches have an understated, vernacular character that would be compatible with the existing character of the core.
- Do not add a footbridge linkage to the meetinghouse; such a connection will further confuse the physical history of the site and could be interpreted by the visitor as the traditional pedestrian way to a community place of worship. Although there was a wooden bridge in



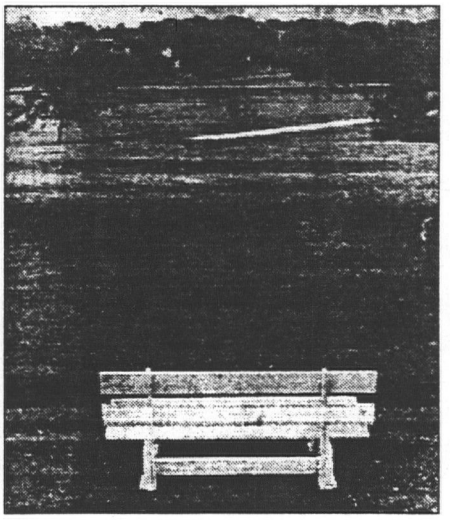


Figure 96. This simple wooden bench, shown in a detail from a c. 1964 photograph of the Herbert Hoover gravesite before construction (above right), may serve as a prototype for contemporary site furnishings that do not convey a historic appearance.

this location that was removed in 1937, it never existed in conjunction with the meetinghouse which was not moved to the site until 1964.

- Document the current Downey Street bridge to HABS/HAER standards and replace it with a bridge without concrete embankments that restrict stream flow. The bridge—portions of which date from 1917—is in poor condition, has diminished integrity, and impedes the free flow of water during high water. Also document and remove the deteriorated creek retaining walls.
- Extend the Downey Street widening and resurfacing south to its intersection with the Parkside Drive right-of-way where an interpretive wayside terminus should be developed (see Miles Farm). Extension of Downey Street will strengthen and improve the pedestrian connection between the birthplace cottage and Main Street on the north and the P. T. Smith House and the second Hoover house site on the south.
- Delineate the historic Cedar Street intersection with Downey Street that was located between the P.T. Smith House and the second Hoover House site.
- Extend the fence pattern and a canopied deciduous street tree planting along the east side of Downey Street to a new terminus near the Isaac Miles Farm. Fences should be traditional in character but not historic reconstructions. Street tree plantings should be native species in keeping with both historical precedent and current NPS sustainability policies.

Neighborhood Landscape

- Develop architectural and landscape design guidelines to provide additional guidance for the future.
- Continue to define individual house lots with fences and/or hedges to reflect the grid of the street and the historic subdivision of the landscape when photographic documentation from either period of significance is available for a particular house and lot. Avoid developing new boundary definitions based on conjecture. Use a traditional, but not historic, fence type or leave the lot undefined and acknowledge that no historic documentation was available.
- Accept and preserve the existing individual house yard landscape. Retain existing features, such as walks, pumps, gazebos, clotheslines, and vegetation. As existing features deteriorate, replace in-kind or with substitutes most useful to the interpretive program. Clearly delineate through interpretation, which features are based on documentation and which are not.

- Develop a planting plan for each individual house yard that is based on the current individual landscaped yards of the West Branch community and on retention of existing landscape fabric. Consult historic nursery catalogues from Iowa City and Des Moines— such as *Dorr's Iowa Seed* from 1884, Beimford's Nursery's *1898 Annual Plant List,* and the circa 1913-1917 *Capital City Nursery Price List* —to identify ornamental species that were available in the West Branch vicinity historically and that continue to be used today. The planting plans should change from time to time for each house just as individual yards do over time. Consider enlisting the assistance of area residents and/or Iowa State University students and faculty (both groups have a history of involvement in the site) to participate in the plant selection and design process on a periodic basis. The intent is to re-establish a residential landscape character based on the popular and vernacular use of plant materials and landscape features and not to re-create any historical period or point of time— either collectively or for any individual house and yard. Acknowledge that these yards will not be accurate restorations or reconstructions. The collective result of relocating, restoring, and reconstructing houses in the historic core has resulted in a visually confusing landscape that never existed in any historical period. Although historic photographic documentation does exist for some individual yards, the adjacent house is likely to have been altered to portray an earlier period or removed from its original landscape setting. Photographic documentation also has the limitation of documenting only a single moment in time. In addition, attempting to reconstruct or restore individual yards will inevitably lead to conjecture since no yard is fully documented. The collective result inevitably will lead to a composite landscape that never could have existed at one point in time in the past.
- Develop a non-uniform landscape maintenance plan for residential yards. Adopt a varied approach to turf management. Pursue a weed-free turf for some residential yards; accept dandelions and clover in others to represent a more realistic neighborhood setting.
- Continue historical research and archeological investigations to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the residential cultural landscape during the Hoover boyhood. Using the results of this comprehensive investigation, develop a permanent interpretive exhibit and publication as an alternative to physical treatment. Develop photographic interpretive panels to be incorporated into the front fence for each house for which historical photographic landscape documentation exists.

Properties Used for Park Housing

- Try to involve the occupants of the historic houses in vegetative selection, planting, and care to contribute a more realistic residential character.

Gravesite

- Respect the design intent of the commemorative concept developed by William Wagner, in consultation with the Hoover family, and implemented in 1965-1966. Respect Wagner's interpretation of Herbert Hoover's desire for simplicity.
- Avoid above-ground construction or installation of any additional plantings, site furniture, commemorative or patriotic objects, markers, or memorials, other than those used temporarily for special events and observances.
- Rehabilitate the gravesite with as little variation as possible from the original design concept.
- Adopt a routine repair and maintenance program that is in keeping with both the simplicity concept endorsed by Hoover and in accordance with current NPS sustainability policies.
- Avoid damaging marble gravestones and protect the contemplative and quiet character of the site by adopting a hand-trimming policy in the immediate grave vicinity.
- Adopt sustainable practices—not highly technical solutions—when addressing drainage, irrigation, and moisture issues at the gravesite.
- Explore the alternative of installing a turf that does not require as high a degree of maintenance and irrigation as the existing grass, but maintain a weed-free turf. Dandelions and clover are not appropriate in the solemn, memorial setting and are incompatible with the original design intent.
- Consider installing substitute plant materials that are well-suited to climactic and other characteristics of the site. Use substitute species that—while similar to the original in form, texture, and color—are more appropriate to site characteristics. Acquire and nurture in an inconspicuous location elsewhere on the site additional specimens of the same replacement species so that they can be replanted at the gravesite should the original replacements become diseased or damaged. Strive for groupings of even-aged plant materials that will produce the overall effect associated with the original design intent.
- When new plant materials are installed, return to the gravesite's original design intent of a less-sculpted and more naturalistic appearance.
- Keep an open vista between the gravesite and the birthplace cottage.
- Maintain the existing prairie edge. Even though the prairie post-dates the period of significance, it provides an appropriate open setting in keeping with the intended simplicity of the site.

- Avoid using fencing to deter deer and other wildlife.
- Install additional seating only in the immediate environs of the parking area; avoid any site furnishing installations within the vista between the gravesite and the birthplace cottage. Retain marble benches; replace other benches as needed with replicas of the original wooden benches documented in photographs from the 1960s.
- Retain vegetation planted as implementation of the Dyas planting plan; replace damaged or diseased vegetation in-kind or with similar species known to be hardy varieties suitable to this site.
- Avoid developing additional parking in this area.

Library-Museum Area

Library-Museum

- Preserve the exterior appearance and historic fabric of the eastern facade of the original 1962 portion of the library-museum, including its original entry and entry area landscape. Retain path, lighting, and plantings that date from the original installation.
- Maintain an appropriate institutional feeling and setting in the immediate vicinity of the library-museum. Avoid over embellishing the immediate environs of the library-museum; keep landscape treatments simple in keeping with the original character of the landscape. Maintain an appropriate weed-free turf.
- Maintain the original path and associated landscape that connects the library-museum to Isis.
- Re-establish the connection between Isis and the birthplace cottage. Develop a pedestrian connection over the creek.
- Maintain the integrity of the original entry area landscape with its strong Hoover associations. Avoid introducing new landscape features and plant material.
- Preserve the original entry gates and road as historic features that existed during the 1935-1966 period of significance.
- Preserve the vista between the gravesite and birthplace.
- Only consider expansion of the library-museum to the south. Expansion to the north is inappropriate because of the environmental constraints of the creek; to the east because of the strong associative value of the original east facade, entry area, and the view to the Isaac Miles Farm; and to the west because of the vista between the birthplace cottage and the gravesite.

- Meet additional parking needs only in the areas south and west of the library-museum.
- If the vehicular entry sequence is changed in the future, retain the portion of the existing entry drive from Downey Street to the library-museum as a pedestrian way that connects the library-museum visitor to the Downey Street trace. Retain the historic gate and posts.

Presidential Library Association Building

- Maintain the residential landscape character of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association property; develop a maintenance policy that does not impart an institutional feeling to the former residential grounds.
- Retain the existing vegetative character of canopied, deciduous trees that allows views to and from the core area. Avoid evergreen plantings in this highly visible location.
- Avoid new construction.
- Avoid additional encroachment of parking into the former residential grounds.
- If a south entry road alternative is implemented, reduce the effects of potential circulation changes south of the building by installing new signs and/or a lift gate to discourage public access.

Loop Drive Area

Loop Drive

- Acknowledge the importance of this area as the visual center of the NHS and in providing the setting for the vista between the birthplace and the grave.
- Avoid new construction to keep the characteristic open quality of the area.
- Preserve the vista between the gravesite and birthplace.
- Retain the characteristic loop concept that was associated with the nineteenth-century racetrack which was located in the area. While the basic alignment should be retained, it could be modified in terms of elevation and configuration as long as its elliptical nature is maintained.
- Continue to provide a vehicular and pedestrian loop connecting the birthplace cottage, the picnic area, and the gravesite.
- Keep a continuous loop free of additional access points that will diminish the integrity of the elliptical configuration.
- Avoid developing additional parking in this area.

- Adopt a uniform maintenance policy designed to keep the existing park-like character, but do not strive for a weed-free turf because pesticides are expensive and inconsistent with NPS management policies and pesticide guidelines. Dandelions and clover are tolerable but vegetation needs to be managed to continue to provide a pleasant setting.
- Remove the evergreen buffer screening views of the Thompson Farm along the western boundary of this area to re-establish the rural/agricultural setting that existed during Hoover's lifetime. Replace evergreens with mixed native deciduous hardwood trees commonly found along fencelines in the West Branch vicinity to provide seasonal and understory views to the farm.
- Continue to use the Dyas planting plan that emphasizes native plants as the guide for the types and locations of plantings. The plan is not historically significant but is still a viable plan that meets current needs, and is cost-efficient and sustainable.
- The creek bank should have two different treatments: the first reflecting the natural system in the area adjacent to the northwest buffer sub-area and the remainder of the creek taking on a more open, park-like quality. Near the northwest buffer area, re-establish a native stream-bank ecology by planting native species near the Wapsinonoc Creek and discontinuing weeding, pruning, and other maintenance practices that would discourage the establishment of natural streambank growth. Strive for a naturalistic appearance rather than a manicured setting for the immediate creek environs in this area.
- Retain the vegetative windbreak west of the gravesite; use the Dyas planting plan as a guide for replacement.
- Consider replacing the existing turf with a "Victorian mix" that will have a more textured, colorful appearance, which can be cut less frequently, and which can be allowed to grow higher than the existing groundcover. Conduct experimental patches of "Victorian mix" in discrete areas of the NHS where they can be observed and maintained over time. Choose areas with little visibility to the public for test patches.
- Continue accommodating overflow parking for special events only; consider the use of different soil mixes to alleviate the effects of parking on grass, and avoid the use of grasscrete.
- Do not provide night lighting in this area.
- Explore use of northwest corner as a wetland detention area that may reduce the impacts of periodic, but moderate, flooding.

Picnic Area

- Continue to maintain a park-like character with uniform maintenance.
- Retain the existing cluster arrangement with the picnic shelters as the dominant features.
- Return to a darker color as used historically for the wooden structure of the shelters to give a more rustic look.
- Avoid new construction; rehabilitate and repair existing structures; do not expand beyond the footprint of the existing structures.
- Maintain the Dyas planting plan that provides for the existing visual connection with the core area, the loop road, and the gravesite.
- Update and replace site furnishings as necessary; adhere to the use of a contemporary but rustic style.
- Preserve and replenish an evergreen buffer along the northern property line that provides visual separation with the adjacent residential development.
- Continue the replenishment policy already begun of establishing a secondary row of evergreen trees south of the existing tree line. As the new trees mature, the existing row could be removed. Adopt a rotational planting plan for two adjacent evergreen rows to ensure the continuity of screening vegetation. Continue the policy of avoiding unnecessary understory pruning of evergreen plantings. Pruning is currently used only for diseased vegetation and to avoid encroachment on adjacent properties.
- Maintain the well-tended, park-like quality of the stream bank in this area, but do not strive for a weed-free turf which is expensive because of the costs of pesticides and inconsistent with NPS management policies and pesticide guidelines. Tolerate dandelions and clover as long as they do not interfere with the enjoyable use of the site.
- Avoid developing additional parking in this area.
- Retain and repair existing paving for walks.
- If either the Thompson Farm or the former Radford Motors site is developed for the relocation of the maintenance facility, connect the new facility with a road introduced through the Northwest Buffer Area to intersect with the path leading from the parking area to the picnic shelters. The portion of the existing path that connects to the parking area could be widened and rebuilt to accommodate maintenance vehicles.
- Do not provide night lighting in this area.

Northwest Buffer Area

- Re-establish a native stream bank ecology throughout this area by planting native species and discontinuing weeding, pruning, and similar practices that would discourage the natural wetland vegetation. Allow natural wetland vegetation, such as Siberian elm, box elder, and mulberry, to grow along the stream bank. Strive for a naturalistic appearance rather than a manicured setting for the immediate creek environs to provide a natural visual buffer for the NHS. Do not strive for a weed-free turf because pesticides are expensive and inconsistent with NPS management policies and pesticide guidelines.
- Explore use as a wetland detention area to reduce the impacts of periodic, but moderate, flooding.
- If either the Thompson Farm or the former Radford Motors site is chosen for relocation of the maintenance facility, develop the necessary vehicular connection in this area to connect with the existing access road for the picnic shelters.

Rural / Agricultural Setting

Isaac Miles Farm

- Preserve the rural setting as an edge for the NHS.
- Acknowledge significance of the Miles Farm to the Hoover story.
- Retain and rehabilitate historic buildings and structures, including the windmill. Recognize the barn as the only agricultural structure within the NHS that survives from the period of significance.
- Compile oral history to support future physical planning.
- Avoid maintenance policies and practices that would introduce an even, uniform appearance which would give the farm cluster an institutional feeling and setting.
- Avoid new construction other than small agricultural or storage buildings added to the cluster. Design new construction to be compatible in scale, materials, form, massing, and color; any new construction should be substantially smaller in size than the house and barn.
- Maintain the visual connection with the historic core area to provide the rural cultural landscape context of West Branch.
- Avoid actions that would prohibit future visitor or interpretive uses.
- Re-establish a pedestrian connection with the historic core area if the farm is to be interpreted in the future.

- Since the existing entry road is not historic, rework the entry as necessary but ensure that any new road is rural in character.
- Remove the evergreen visual screen to emphasize the farm's rural setting.
- Do not strive for a weed-free turf because pesticides are expensive and inconsistent with NPS management policies and pesticide guidelines.
- Install fences that are traditional in character—but not historic reconstructions—and native street tree plantings along Downey Street, which should be widened and resurfaced in the historic core and extended to this area (see Historic Core). Develop an interpretive wayside at the southern end of Downey Street at the point where it intersects with the right of way of Parkside Drive. Incorporate the circa 1880 photograph depicting the view down Downey Street towards West Branch into the wayside interpretive exhibit.

Prairie

- Retain the prairie as an effective, but not historic, visual buffer that contributes to the rural setting of the NHS.
- Manage the prairie as an experimental prairie that responds to current trends in native grass restoration and management.
- Re-establish a native stream bank ecology by planting native species near the Wapsinonoc Creek and in its floodplain. Allow natural wetland vegetation, such as Siberian elm, box elder, and mulberry, to grow along the stream bank.
- Explore use of the Wapsinonoc Creek area as a wetland detention area to reduce the impacts of periodic, but moderate, flooding.

Thompson Farm

- Preserve the agricultural setting as an edge for the NHS. Keep fields in agricultural use, either with crops or pasture.
- Acknowledge Thompson Farm as a significant agricultural cluster in its own right with little association to the Hoover story.
- Retain and rehabilitate historic buildings, structures, and landscape features, including small-scale features and objects, as part of a significant Iowa farm. Ensure the stabilization of individual buildings and structures to protect the integrity of the cluster.
- Maintain special vegetative areas, such as the windbreak and grape arbor.

- Do not strive for a weed-free turf which because pesticides are expensive and inconsistent with NPS management policies and pesticide guidelines.
- Retain the existing circulation system, including both internal vehicular and pedestrian linkages as well as the entry road.
- Re-establish fencelines and the interior fence around the farmhouse yard.
- Compile an oral history to support future physical planning.
- Begin planning for the transition from its current life tenancy to appropriate adaptive uses that will allow preservation of its existing and historic agricultural uses.
- Avoid maintenance policies and practices that would introduce an even, uniform appearance that would give the farm cluster an institutional feeling and setting.
- Site any essential new buildings related to NHS operations outside the cluster and away from important sight lines.
- Pursue the adaptive use potential of existing buildings before constructing new buildings.
- Site any new development so that it is hidden from the gravesite, Parkside Drive, and the core area.
- Plan new development to be visually secondary to the cluster; physically and visually separate new development from the cluster. New construction needs to be both distinguishable from the farm's buildings and structures, and compatible with them.
- Plan any new buildings and structures so that they are compatible with the rural, vernacular/popular architectural character of the site. Pay considerable attention to the massing, height, form, materials, and color of new buildings.

Visitor Contact and Park Support Area

Visitor Center

- Develop an electronically signaled cross walk at the Parkside Drive and Main Street intersection.
- Relocate the major entry to the visitor center on the northeast corner of the building directly opposite the crosswalk.
- Plan any necessary building expansion to the south but not to the west to protect the setting of the birthplace cottage and the Downey Street houses. Do not develop within the sightline of the birthplace cottage.

- Remove the existing parking directly south of the visitor center to create an appropriate entry sequence for the birthplace cottage.
- Re-establish a native stream bank ecology along the southern edge of this area by planting native species and discontinuing weeding, pruning, and similar practices. Allow natural wetland vegetation, such as Siberian elm, box elder, and mulberry, to grow along the stream bank. Strive for a naturalistic appearance rather than a manicured setting for the immediate creek environs.
- In areas of intensive public use, adopt a weed-free turf management approach which will be more acceptable to both community residents and visitors who expect a high level of maintenance in national parks.
- Explore use of the floodplain as a wetland detention area to aid in flood control.
- Design an appropriate, contemporary landscape setting that incorporates an interpretive wayside and a path between the visitor center and the birthplace cottage. Use the wayside to present a comprehensive overview of the NHS, the Presidential Library, and the town of West Branch as they exist today.
- Incorporate the boulder and plaque into the new path sequence or relocate it to its historic location near the birthplace cottage.

Parkside Green

- Expand and relocate the parking area from the northern portion of the site to the southern portion adjacent to Main Street.
- Relocate the park from the northern portion to the southern portion of the site to restore and enhance the view from the front of the birthplace cottage which is due west of the existing parking area. The view from the cottage toward this area during the period of significance was primarily of an open space area.
- Establish major pedestrian circulation from the northern portion of the site along Main Street to connect the visitor with the historic central business district of West Branch.
- Develop a deciduous street tree planting along the Main Street edge.
- Re-establish a native stream bank ecology along the southern edge of this area by planting native species and discontinuing weeding, pruning, and similar practices. Allow natural wetland vegetation, such as Siberian elm, box elder, and mulberry, to grow along the stream bank. Allow natural wetland vegetation, such as Siberian elm, box elder, and mulberry, to grow along the stream bank. Strive for a naturalistic appearance rather than a

manicured setting for the immediate creek environs to provide a natural visual buffer for the NHS.

- In all other parts of this area, adopt a weed-free turf management approach which will be more acceptable to both community residents and visitors who expect a high level of maintenance in national parks.
- Explore use of the floodplain as a wetland detention area to aid in flood control.

Park Maintenance Area

- Use native vegetation along the western edge of this area in support of NPS sustainability policies, to buffer the NHS from the adjacent residential neighborhood, and to reduce the maintenance responsibilities of NPS.
- Re-establish a native stream bank ecology along the northern edge of this area by planting native species and discontinuing weeding, pruning, and similar practices. Allow natural wetland vegetation, such as Siberian elm, box elder, and mulberry, to grow along the stream bank. Strive for a naturalistic appearance rather than a manicured setting for the immediate creek environs to provide a natural visual buffer for the NHS.
- As long as a facility is maintained in this area, adopt a weed-free turf management approach for areas that are not part of the stream bank ecological system. This approach will be more acceptable to community residents who expect a high level of maintenance in national parks.
- If a new maintenance facility is developed in another location, consider removal of existing structures and explore use as a wetland detention area to aid in flood control. Document the existing conditions of the site as part of the environmental review process.

Entry Buffer Area

- Avoid new construction.
- Use native vegetation in support of NPS sustainability policies, to buffer the NHS from the adjacent residential neighborhood, and to reduce maintenance responsibilities of NPS.

Design Concepts For Selected DCP Alternatives

During the February 1995 workshop to discuss possible DCP alternatives and preliminary recommendations, NPS chose three alternatives that were of particular interest for additional development in the CLR process. The goal was to develop conceptual designs that would complement and enhance the NHS cultural landscape while meeting DCP goals. These alternatives were explored for future consideration by the planning team when the DCP is completed.

Realignment of Parkside Drive and Expanded Visitor Center Parking

Realigning Parkside Drive and expanding and relocating visitor center parking can eliminate vehicular / pedestrian conflicts and enhance the visitor experience *(Exhibit S)*. Relocating parking can reinforce the grid of the community and the NHS relationship to Main and Downey Streets. Implementation of this alternative can also re-establish the physical and social links between the NHS and the living West Branch community that continues to this day. Moving parking to the north facilitates this connection and provides a larger parking area. It also provides open space along the creek that can be used as a detention area and that provides a pleasant visual backdrop if viewed from the cottage. Realigning Parkside Drive from First Street to Second Street provides the opportunity for flood relief and improves Fire Department access at the time of flooding. The landscape in this area has been dramatically altered since the period of significance. While this alternative is not intended as a reconstruction, its implementation will re-establish some of the feeling and setting of the views and environmental relationships that existed during the period of significance.

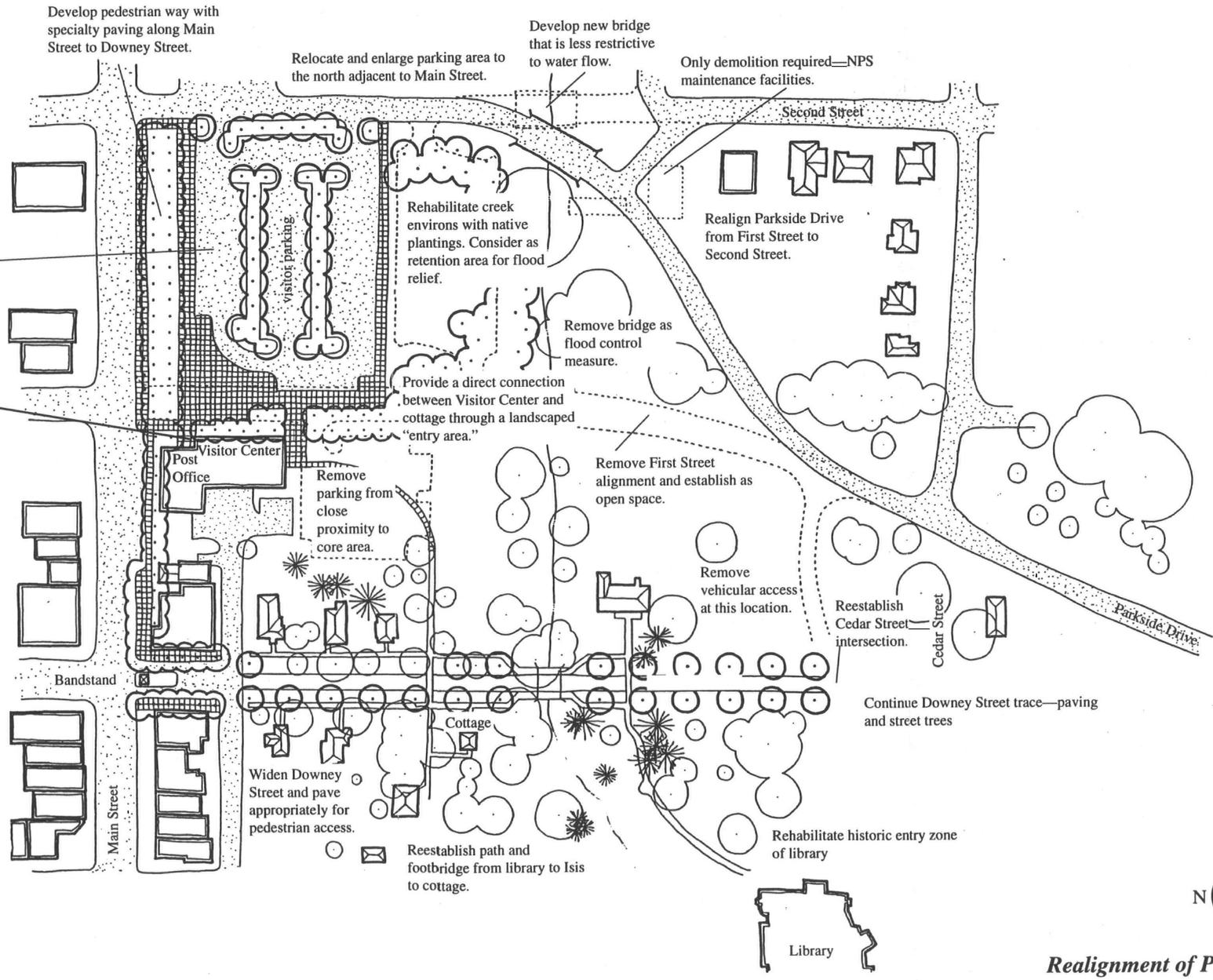
Expansion of Parking at Library-Museum and New Entry Road South of the Library Association

Under almost any scenario, expanded parking is essential at the library-museum to meet existing and projected needs. The challenge is to increase parking without a substantial effect on cultural landscape resources and values. The DCP alternative of a new entry road south of the library association takes vehicular traffic out of close proximity to the core area—both physically and visually. Linking the two objectives—a new entry and increased parking—improves site circulation and will improve the visitor experience in historic core as well *(Exhibit T)*. The entry road design concept has been developed so that the road would be depressed at its beginning and, due to its east-west orientation, not visible from the greater historic core. As it continues, it assumes a north-south orientation. At that point the library-museum provides a visual screen between the road and the historic core to the north. that would have an east-west orientation to prevent the new entry from being visible from the historic core. Depressing the road conceals it from the view of the gravesite and the path to the gravesite.

By making the noted modifications to areas of diminished integrity, areas of integrity such as Main Street and Downey Street are enhanced.

Connect the visitor to West Branch by providing parking adjacent to Main Street.

Consider relocating Visitor Center entry to northeast corner of building to improve pedestrian circulation along Main Street.



Realignment of Parkside Drive and Expanded Visitor Center Parking

Exhibit S. Realignment of Parkside Drive and Expanded Visitor Center Parking

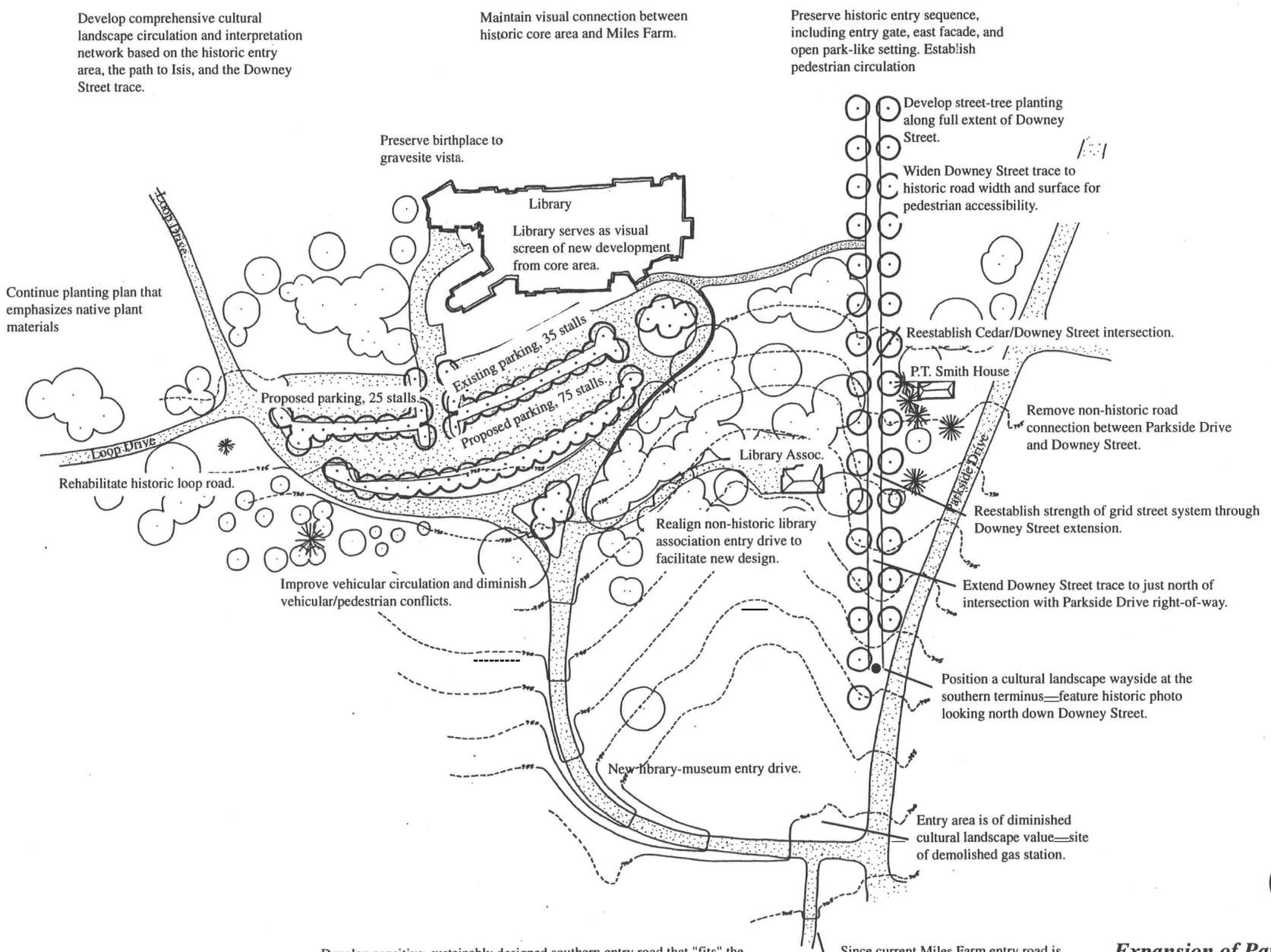


Exhibit T. Expansion of Parking at Library-Museum and New Entrance Road

Thompson Farm Rehabilitation for Maintenance Facility Relocation

Relocating the maintenance facility to Thompson Farm would provide a large site that is relatively convenient to the remainder of the NHS, provide a NHS-related use for the farm, and could provide opportunities for adaptive use of the farm's many agricultural structures *(Exhibit U)*. Since the farm is likely to be found eligible for the National Register on its own merits, consideration of its cultural landscape values as an exemplary example of an intact turn-of-the-twentieth-century farmstead is essential in any relocation scenario. Relocation, however, could be accomplished without substantial diminishment of the cultural landscape if protection of the rural character of the site is a priority.

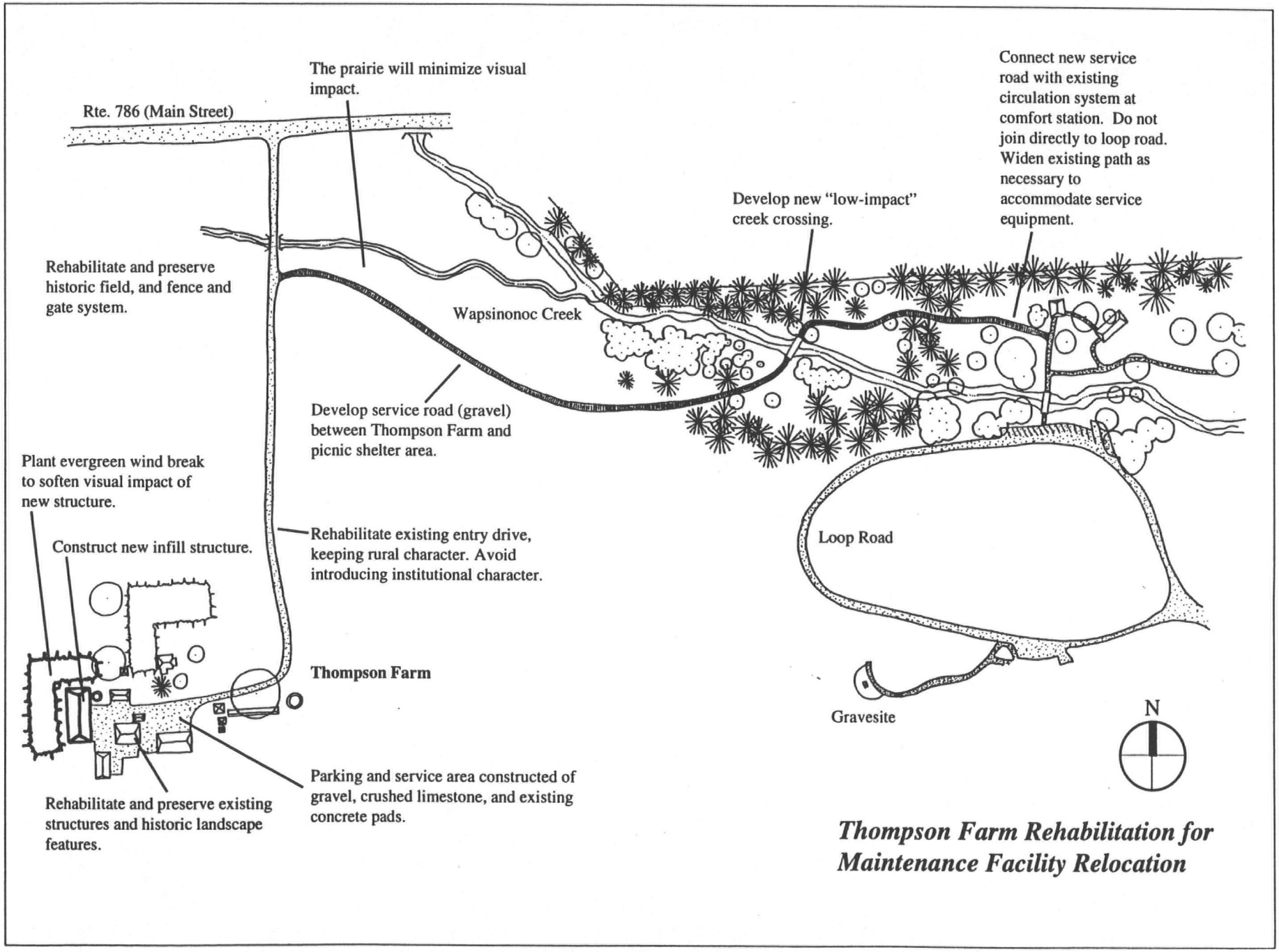
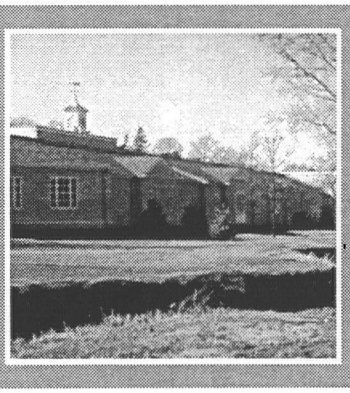


Exhibit U. Thompson Farm Rehabilitation for Maintenance Facility Relocation



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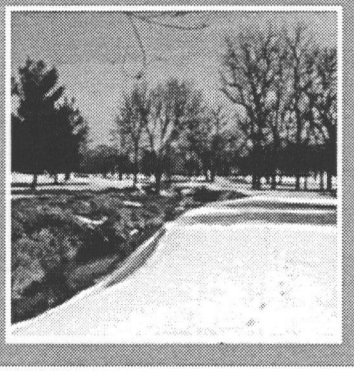

Appendices

Appendix A

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site
List of Buildings and Structures

Number	*Structure*	*IDLCS*	*Number*	*Structure*	*IDLCS*
HS-01	Hoover Birthplace Cottage	00659	HS-37	Historic Sidewalks	06172
HS-02	Peter T. Smith House	00662	HS-38	Methodist Church Streetlamp	06173
HS-03	Friends (Quaker) Meeting House	06143	HS-41	Hoover Graves	06174
HS-04	Hannah Varney House (moved from ???)	06144	HS-42	Isis Statue	06175
HS-05	Dr. Leech House	06145	HS-43	Iowa Award Plaques	06176
HS-06	Laban Miles House	06146	HS-44	D.A.R. Monument	06177
HS-07	Amanda Garvin House	06147	HS-45	Boy Scout Shelter and Plaque	70087
HS-08	Charles E. Smith House	06148	HS-46	Gravesite Memorial Benches (2)	70088
HS-09	James Staples House	06149	HS-47	Gravesite Memorial Flagpole	70089
HS-10	E.S. Hayhurst House	06150	HS-48	Loop Road	70090
HS-11	Isaac Miles Farmhouse	06151	HS-49	Dr. Leech Retaining Wall	70091
HS-12	Isaac Miles Bank Barn	06152	HS-50	Wapsinonoc Creek Retaining Wall	70092
HS-13	Isaac Miles Corncrib	06153	HS-51	Isaac Miles Hand Pump	70093
HS-14	Isaac Miles Garage	06154	HS-52	Isaac Miles Concrete Sidewalks	70094
HS-15	Isaac Miles Shed	06155	HS-53	Isaac Miles Pole Shed/Machine Shed	70095
HS-16	Jesse Hoover Blacksmith and Wagon Shop	00661	HS-54	Isaac Miles Chicken House	70096
HS-17	First West Branch Schoolhouse	00660	HS-80	Thompson Farm House	70097
HS-18	David Mackey House	06156	HS-81	Thompson Garage	70098
HS-19	William Wright House	06157	HS-82	Thompson Walkways	70099
HS-20	Isaac Miles Windmill	06158	HS-83	Thompson Pumps (2)	70100
HS-21	Historic Roads and Alleys	06159	HS-84	Thompson Machine Shed	70101
HS-23	Hoover Birthplace Cottage Privy	06160	HS-85	Thompson Brooder House	70102
HS-26	Downey Street Bridge	06162	HS-86	Thompson Hog House/Corn Crib	70103
HS-28	Amanda Garvin Cottage Shed	06164	HS-87	Thompson Corn Crib	70104
HS-30	Hoover Birthplace Cottage Well and Pump	06166	HS-88	Thompson Barn	70105
HS-31	Amanda Garvin Cottage Well and Pump	06167	HS-89	Thompson Chicken House	70106
HS-33	Hoover Birthplace Fences and Gates	06169	HS-90	Thompson Fence/Entrance Gate	70107
HS-35	William Wright House Garage	06170	HS-91	Thompson Cattle Guard	70108
HS-36	Laban Miles House Shed	06171	HS-92	Thompson Storage Bins	70109

Appendix B

(transcription of Kaiser plant list, 1941)

Plantings at Hoover Birthplace

By Kaiser's Wayside Nursery, Cedar Rapids, in 1941.

Along the fence between the two houses. From North to South:

Syringa Varinella
Snowball
Sistina Plum
(Gate)
Sistina Plum
Snowball
Honeysuckle
Lilac, white
Golden Elder
Black Haw
Fern Leaf Sumac
Coral Commers Dogwood
Lilac
American Highbush Cranberry
Golden Elder
Lilac
Black Haw
Coral Commers Dogwood
Syringa
Sumac
Honeysuckle
Spirea Thunbergia

Along West fence, East of pond: North to South:

Persian Lilacs
American High Bush Cranberry
Persian Lilacs

Around Brown House:

Southeast corner = Pyramid Comunus (Juniper), Juniper Spruce
Southwest corner = Spirea Thungergia, Spirea Anthony Waterer
Dining Room = Blue Spruce, Anthony Waterer
Northwest corner dining room = Anthony Waterer Spirea
By Bathroom Window = Spirea Thungergia
Northeast corner = Pyramid Comunus, Concol or Fir, Juniper Spruce
South Bedroom window = Spirea Thunbergia
South of Kitchen windows =
Either side of Porch = Green spruce

Along Street = Hedge, Spirea Von Houti
Along south line = Hedge, High bush cranberry, Lantana

Behind Statue = Douglas fir, Norway Spruce, Douglas Fir
Sides of Statue = Blue Spruce
Front side of Statue = Mugho Monana Pine

By tables = 3 Scotch Pines

North of creek = 3 Concolor Firs

By Grape Arbor = Austrian Pines

East of Statue = Austrian Pine

By Creek and on Retaining Wall = Pfitzer Junipers

Appendix C

DCP Visitor Contact, Circulation, and Parking Alternatives

The August 1992 DCP discusses complex and interrelated issues and recommendations concerning points of visitor contact, circulation, and expanded parking for the NHS.[1] The following aspects of DCP alternatives have been evaluated for their potential to affect the cultural landscape if implemented:

- visitor circulation route based on joint visitor orientation located at the library-museum,
- expansion of parking and alteration of the visitor circulation route with creation of a new entrance road to the library-museum at the south end of the trace (DCP option 4), and
- realignment of Parkside Drive with resulting visitor circulation and NPS visitor orientation and expanded parking at the current location as well as expanded parking at the library-museum (DCP option 5).

These alternatives have been explored to provide a cultural landscape point of reference for the planning team to consider when completing the DCP.

Additional alternatives and variations on the above alternatives were discussed at the February, 1995 workshop and have been developed conceptually for the CLR.

1. Expanded parking and visitor circulation route based on joint visitor orientation located at the library-museum (Figure 1)

The DCP outlines the need for an expanded parking lot at the library-museum to meet capacity on days of peak visitation. The existing forty-space lot is in poor condition. All visitor contact and parking alternatives discussed in the DCP include additional parking southwest of the library-museum.[2] The DCP explores the concept of a single point of visitor contact at the site in which an expanded Presidential library-museum would serve as the primary initial point of contact and orientation for the entire site, including properties managed and interpreted by NPS.[3]

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[1] "Development Concept Plan" for the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office, August 1992, 8.
[2] DCP, 32.
[3] DCP, 21.

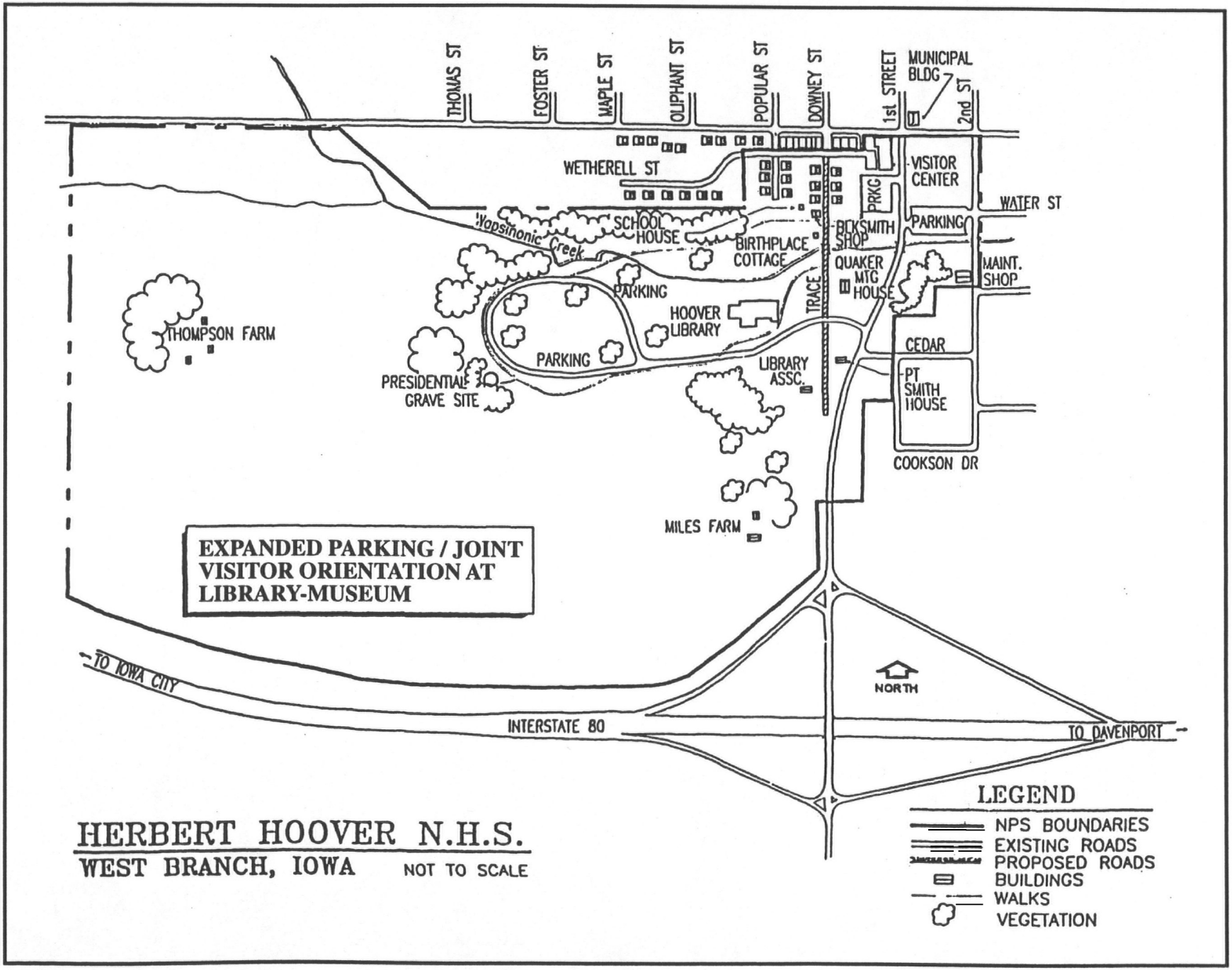

Figure 1. DCP Alternative 1

2. Expanded parking and visitor circulation route with new entrance road to the Library-museum at the south end of the trace (DCP option 4) (Figure 2)

This alternative, which also includes expanded parking at the library-museum, explores development of a new entrance road to the library-museum at the south end of the trace. A road south of the Presidential Library Association Building would provide site access; the alternative includes development of a new entrance road to the library-museum. The road would come off Parkside Drive just south of the library association building and swing west to join the existing library-museum entry road in the vicinity of the current parking lot. This alternative calls for eliminating the existing library road from Parkside Drive to the entrance pillars, although the stone fence might remain.[4]

3. Realignment of Parkside Drive with resulting visitor circulation and NPS visitor orientation and expanded parking at current Post Office location as well as expanded parking at the Herbert Hoover Library. (DCP option 5) (Figure 3)

This alternative also calls for expanded parking at library-museum as well as for expanding parking at the existing U.S. Post Office location and explores the realignment of Parkside Drive.

Evaluation Criteria

The DCP was prepared in 1992 prior to commencement of the CLR process for the NHS. A substantial amount of information concerning cultural landscape features and values has been identified since that time. The following criteria for evaluating effects on the cultural landscape have been developed in light of the more specific information concerning cultural resources now available. These criteria have been developed as a series of inquiries that can be directed to any proposed alternative or any individual element of an alternative:

- Does the alternative require new construction in or adjacent to the setting of character-defining cultural landscape resources?
- Is new construction likely to require an alteration of landform,

  ...removal of character-defining vegetation,

  ...removal of character-defining buildings and structures,

  ...alteration of natural systems,

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[4]DCP, 36- 37

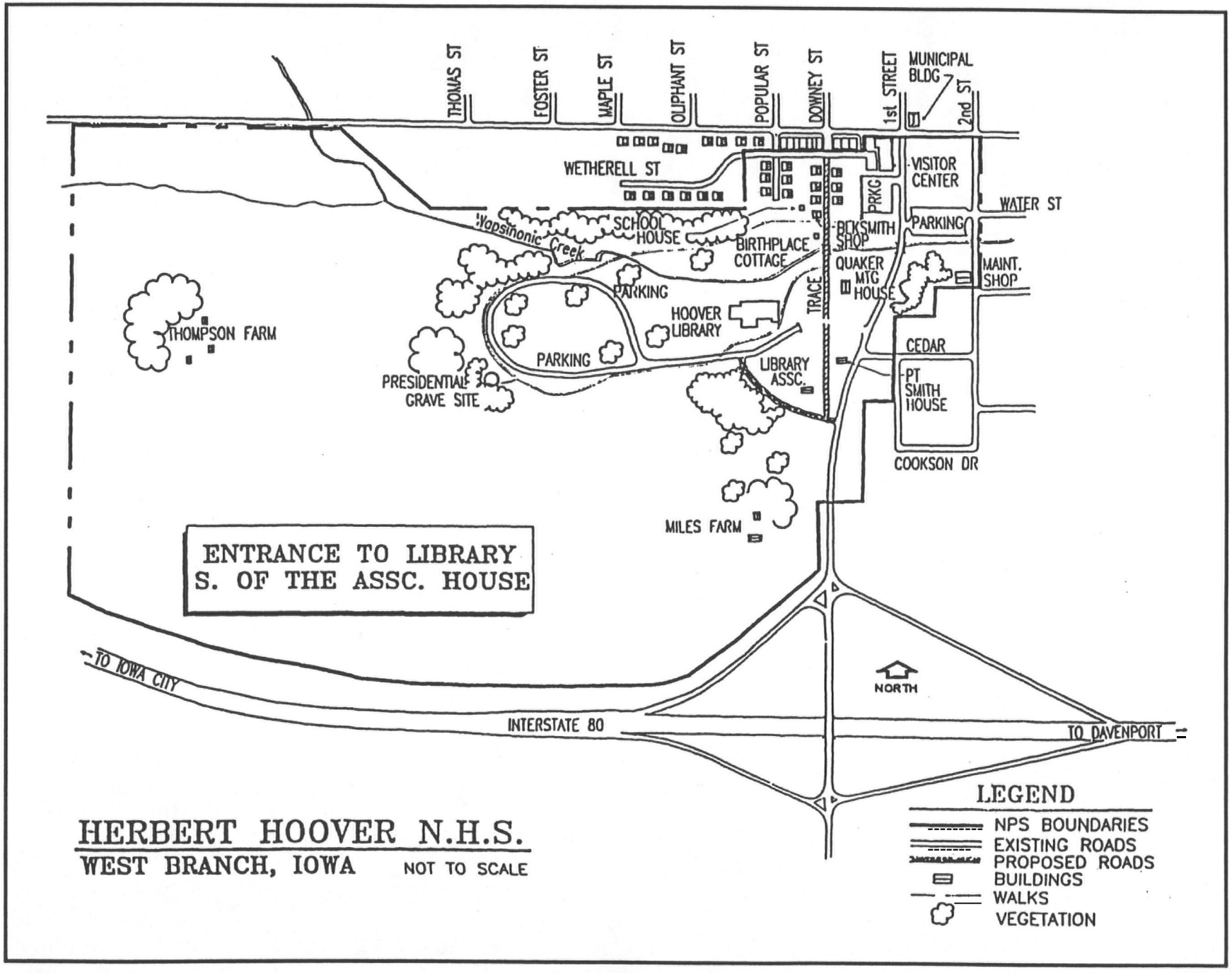


Figure 2. DCP Alternative 2

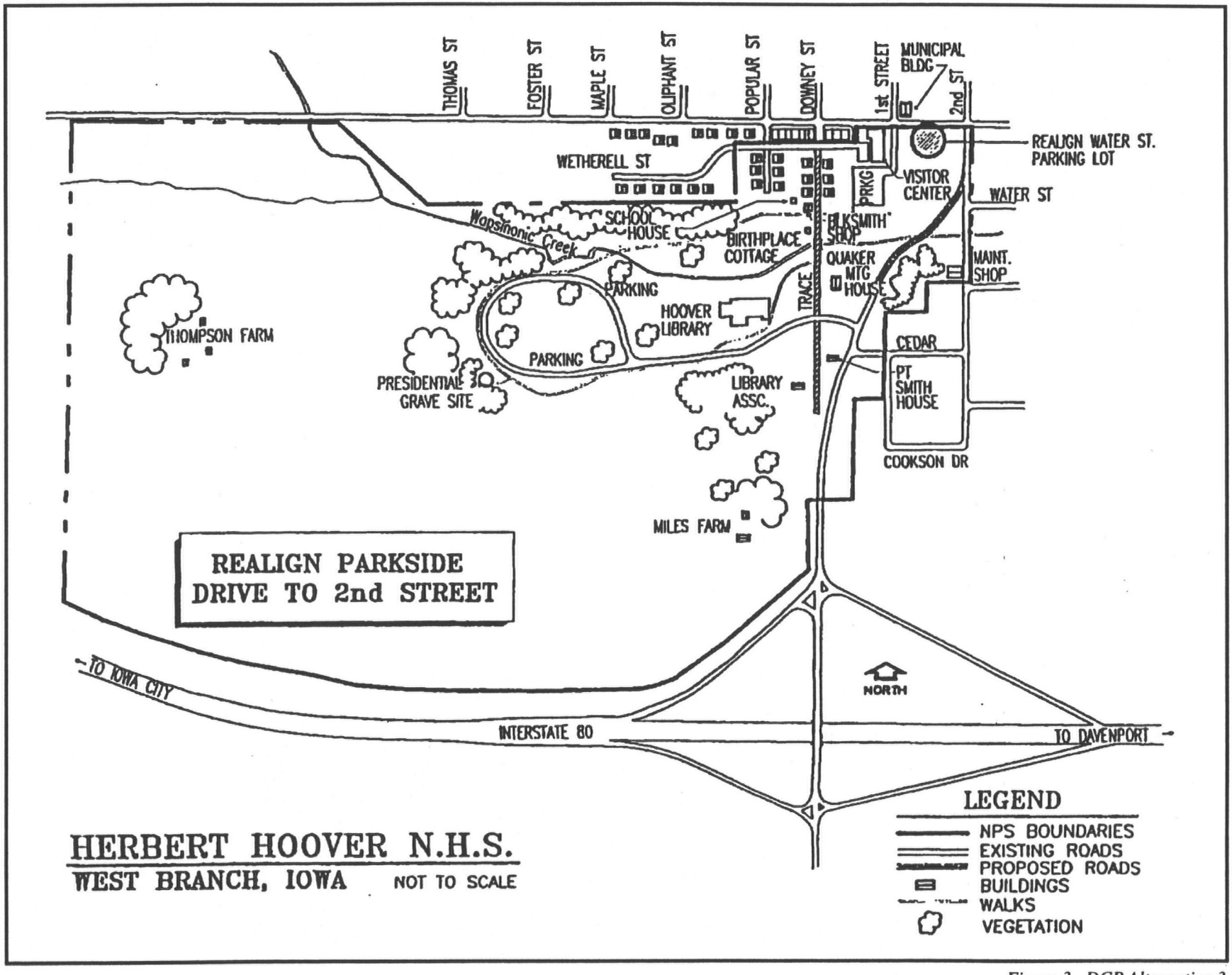


Figure 3. DCP Alternative 3

...alteration or removal of a historic circulation system,

...a site selection that will alter an existing spatial organization, such as a village grid or agricultural cluster?

- Is the proposed alternative likely to create a demand for physical expansion of existing buildings and structures or infrastructure?
- If so are adjacent areas likely to be able to absorb such expansion without significant effects on cultural landscape features or the existing setting?
- Is the proposed use consistent with or compatible with historic and/or existing land use in the area proposed for change?
- Will the proposed alternative result in appropriate use or overuse of fragile or vulnerable cultural landscape features?
- Can the proposed alternative be implemented without significant effects on important views to and from character-defining cultural landscape units of the NHS?
- Will implementation of the proposed alternative have the potential to assist in increasing the visitor's understanding of the cultural landscape or increase opportunities for experiencing the cultural landscape?
- Will implementation of the proposed alternative have an adverse effect on interpreted areas of the NHS or other areas where there is existing or potential visitation?
- Will implementation reduce or eliminate existing conditions that are inappropriate or damaging to the site's most significant cultural landscape resources, the historic core and the gravesite?
- Will implementation of the proposed alternative have an adverse effect on the site's most significant cultural landscape resources, the historic core and the gravesite or on the visitor experience in the historic core or the gravesite?
- Are appropriate mitigation measures possible if adverse effects are identified?

Cultural landscape Evaluation

Each alternative related to visitor contact *(Exhibit 1)*, circulation *(Exhibit 2)*, and expanded parking *(Exhibit 3)* has been evaluated using the above criteria. This evaluation emphasizes cultural landscape concerns but also includes other related concerns, such as sustainability, visitor amenity and safety, and visual quality as they relate to cultural landscape protection, planning, interpretation, and appreciation. The individual components of each of the alternatives has been evaluated individually by projecting the cultural landscape effects of implementing each potential visitor contact, circulation, and expanded parking option as a single action. This section builds on that evaluation by considering the effects of implementing the various combinations of the potential visitor contact, circulation, and expanded parking options combined in each of the alternatives.

Determining the location of the primary visitor contact point for the NHS is a critical decision which is interrelated with the issues of circulation and expanded parking. Although visitor contact is more properly a management, programmatic, and interpretative issue, visitor contact point locations have both direct and indirect cultural landscape consequences. Making decisions about the NHS visitor entrance and circulation is interrelated with the issues of circulation and expanded parking. Determining appropriate locations in the NHS for expanded parking also is interrelated with the issues of primary visitor contact and visitor entrance and circulation.

The potential cultural landscape effects of implementing each alternative is evaluated in terms of its three components. Projected effects which have been evaluated as positive are preceded by + and those evaluated as negative are preceded by -.

Alternative 1. Expansion Of Parking And Visitor Circulation Route Based On Joint Visitor Orientation Located At The Library-museum (Exhibit 4)

joint visitation at library-museum

= The concept of joint visitation and primary contact at the library-museum was dismissed as unrealistic during the February, 1995 workshop sessions. Both the NHS and the library-museum have distinct missions which would be difficult to interpret and fulfill with joint visitation.

existing entrance and circulation

+ Retaining the existing circulation creates no additional disruption of the existing cultural landscape.

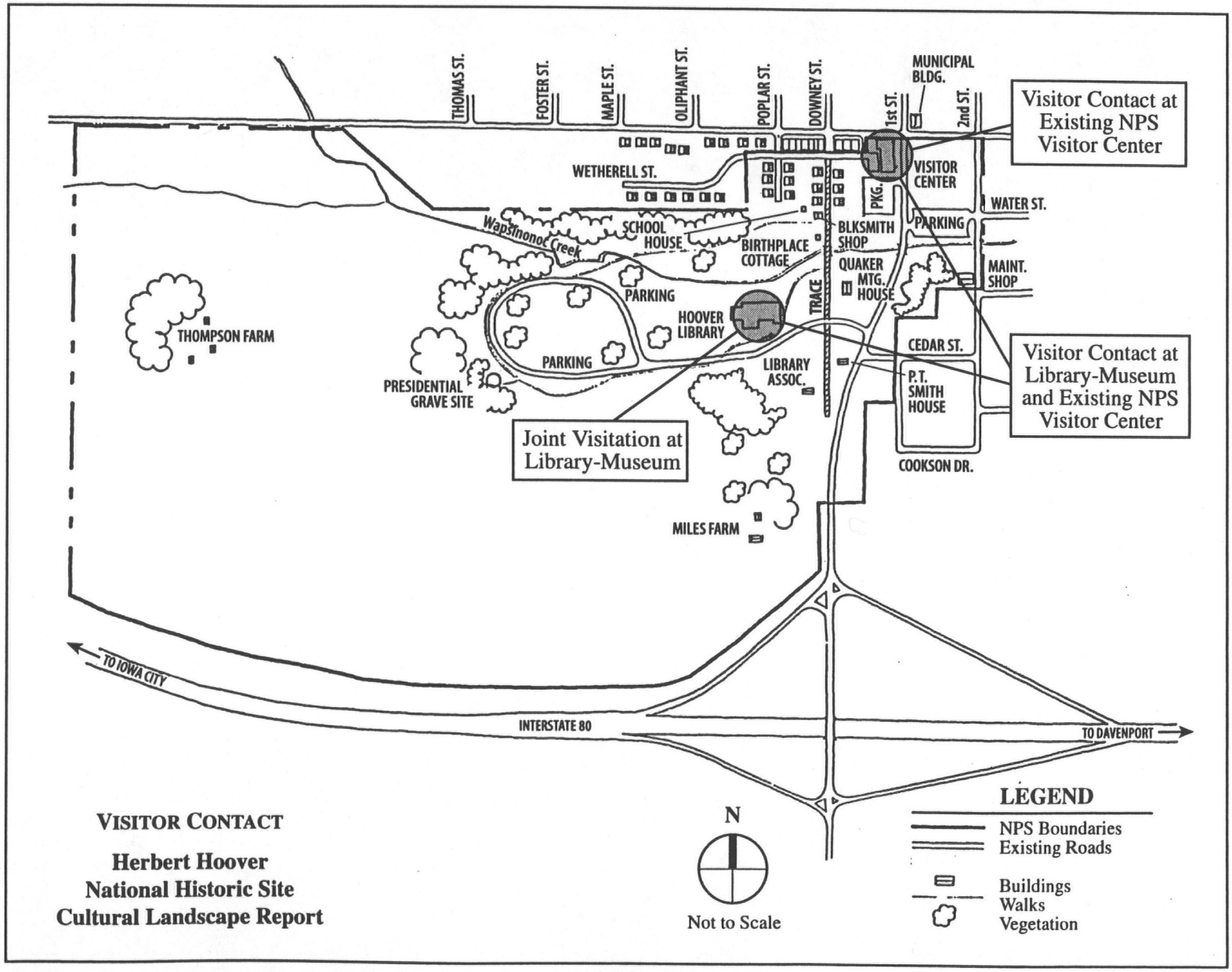


Exhibit 1. Visitor Contact

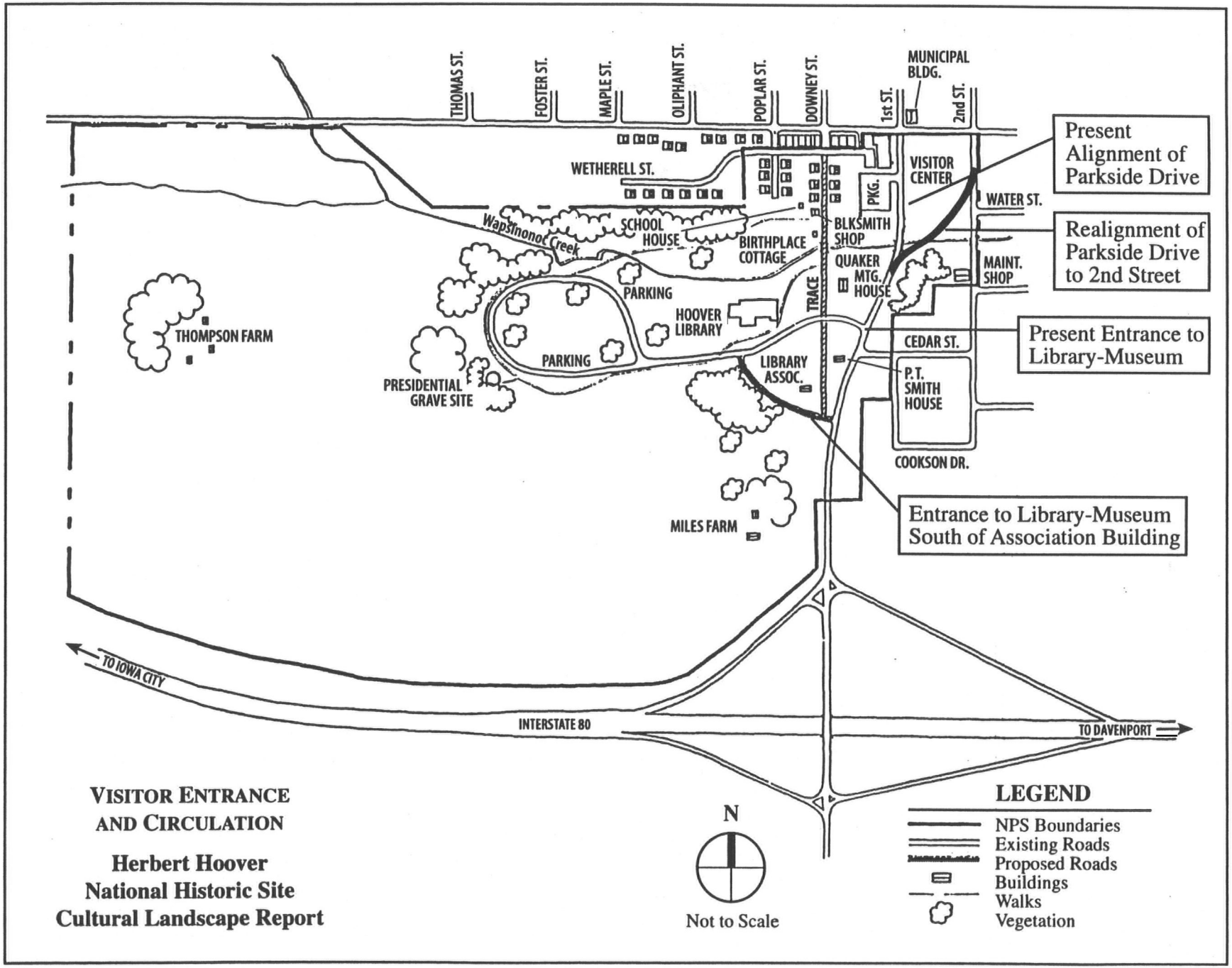


Exhibit 2. Visitor Entrance and Circulation

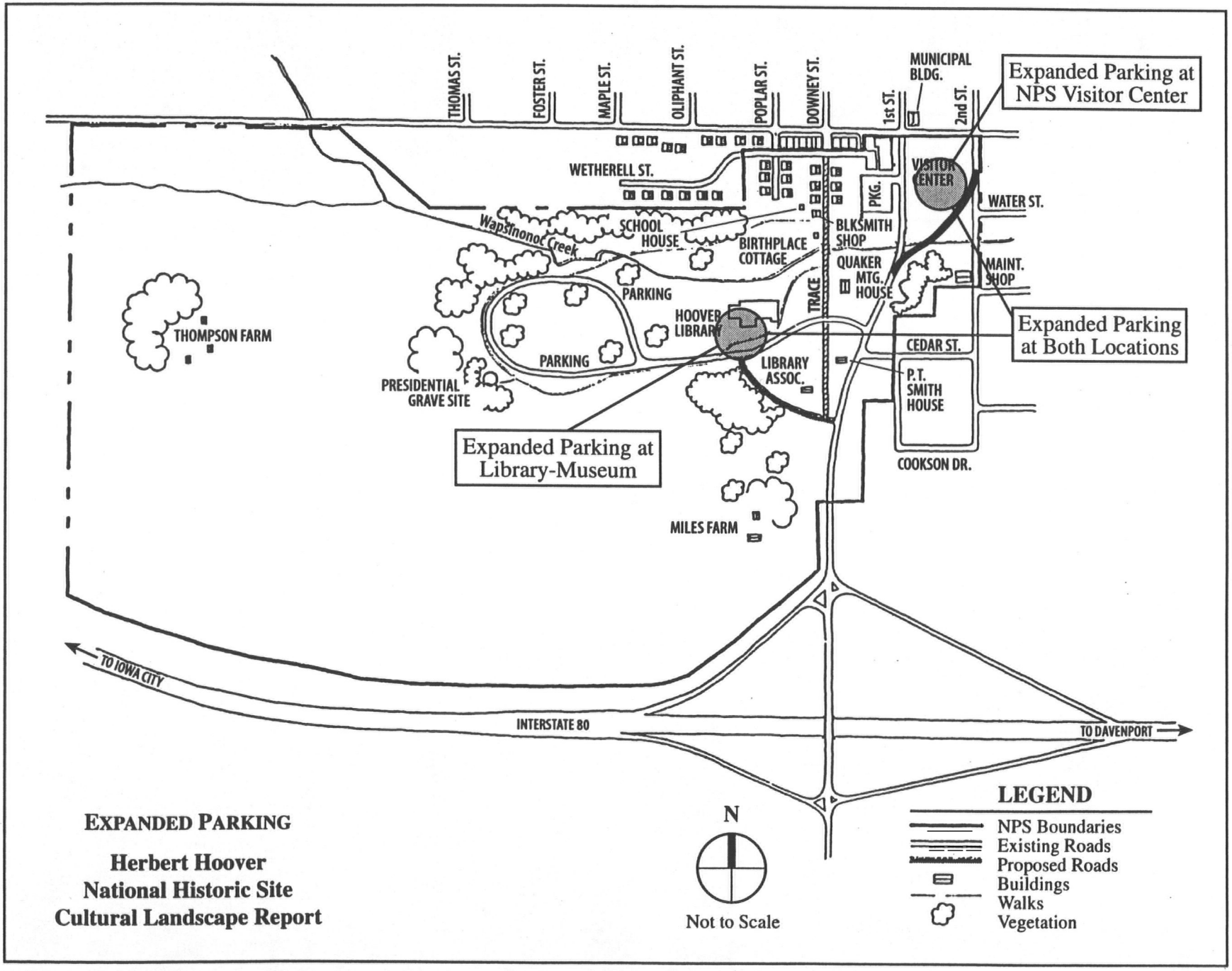


Exhibit 3. Expanded P[illegible]ing

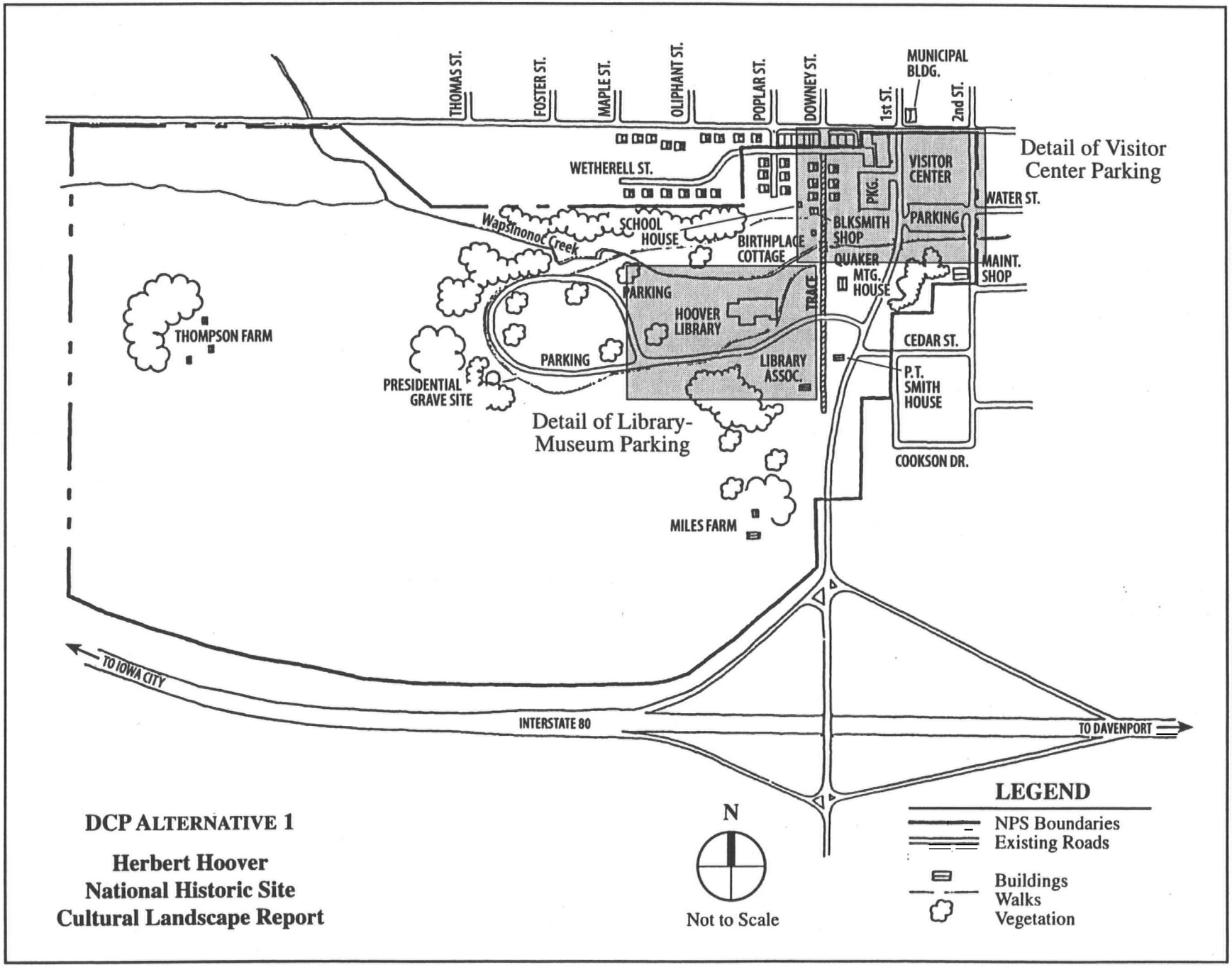


Exhibit 4. DCP Alternative 1

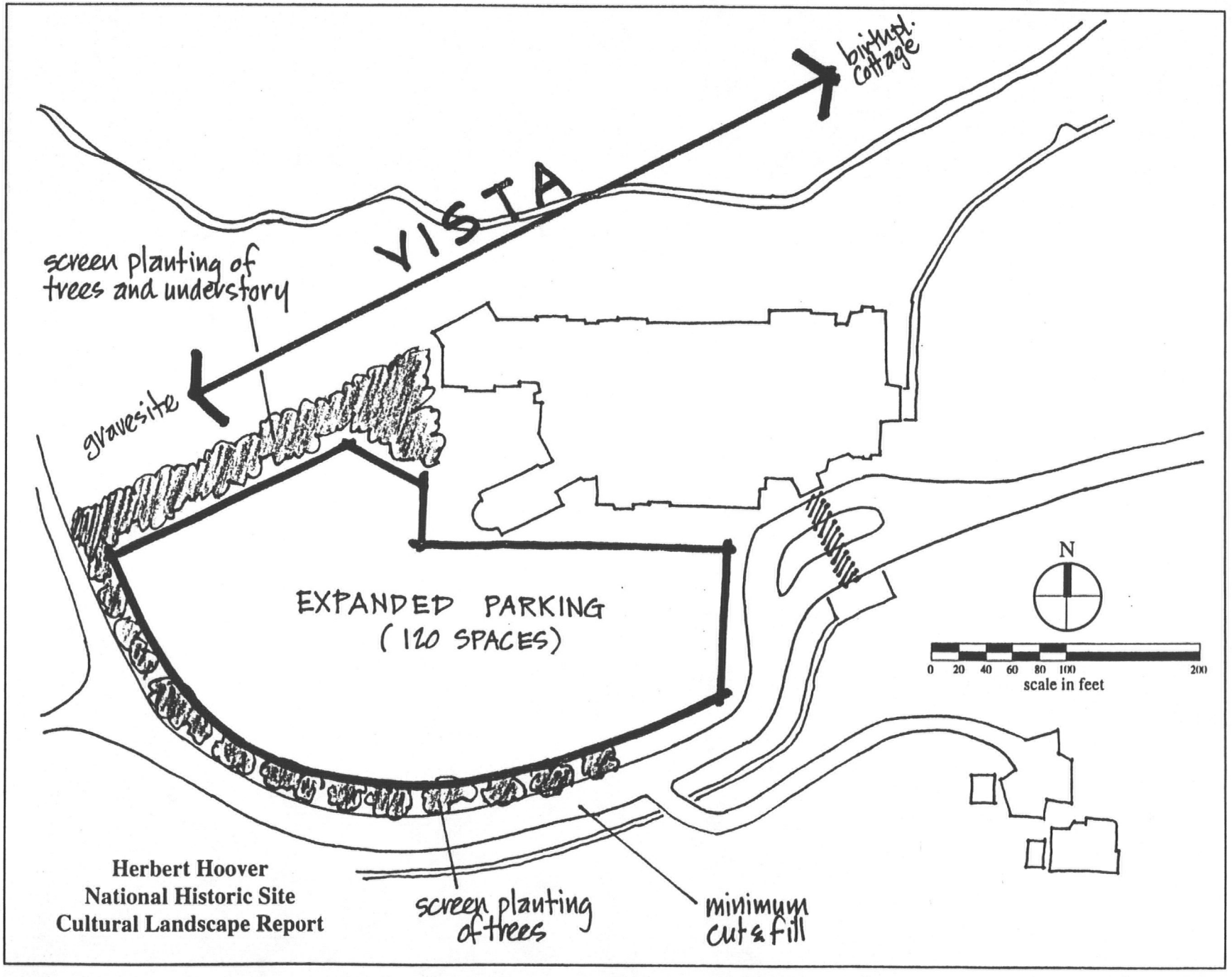


Exhibit 5. Expanded Parking at Library-Museum, DCP Alternative I

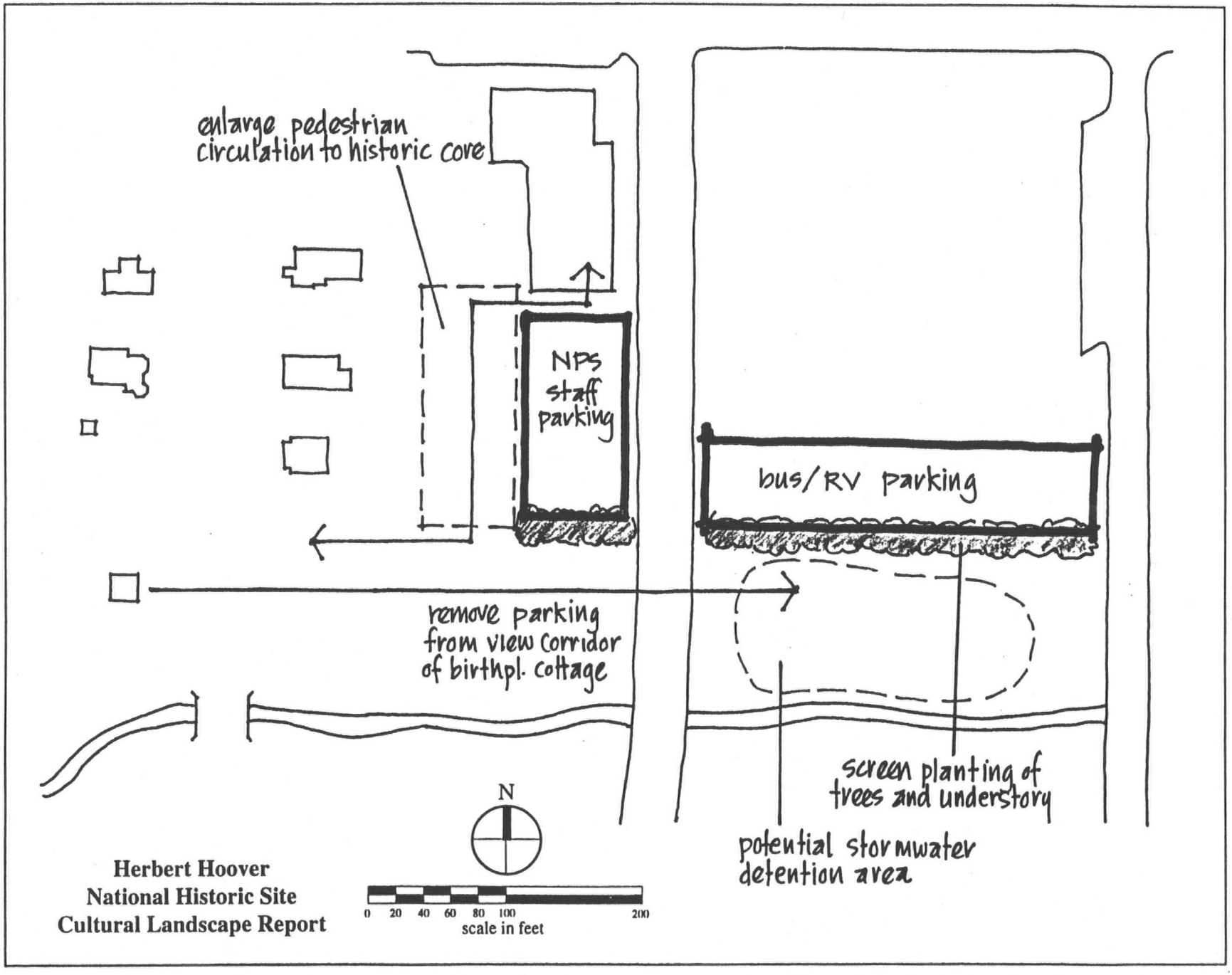


Exhibit 6. Parking at Water Street Lot, DCP Alternative 1

= The existing vehicular traffic cutting across the Downey Street trace between the existing center and library-museum creates vehicular/pedestrian conflicts and is visually disconcerting in the historic core.

= The existing pattern keeps the P.T. Smith House and the second Herbert Hoover House site disconnected from the rest of the historic core.

= Keeping the present patterns retains the Water Street parking lot which is visible from the birthplace cottage.

+ Retention of the existing entry would preserve the entry known to Hoover near the end of the period of significance.

= The existing entry which departs from the traditional West Branch grid provides an inaccurate impression of the traditional cultural landscape's street pattern.

expanded parking at library-museum

southwest of library-museum

+= Expansion provides opportunities through redesign of the entry road sequence and parking area to reduce existing effects on the cultural landscape.

+ Carefully sited additional parking in the area southwest of the library-museum will not be visible from the cottage or from the vista between the birthplace cottage and the gravesite.

= Expanded parking in this area will be visible from the gravesite, the loop drive, and the recreational area north of the creek.

= Expanded parking will increase the total developed area of the already visually prominent library-museum in relation to the rest of the site.

= Expanded parking will result in a loss of open space and increase the amount of paved surface near the historic core.

+/= There is a possibility of increased runoff into the creek from parking lot development but good design can eliminate the possibility of runoff.

+ Development of a parking lot in this location would not destroy existing cultural landscape features.

+ The effects of parking can be reduced if good design is the primary criterion. Dividing the parking area with green strips can reduce the visual impact of double aisles of parking; vertical changes can lower parking and raise surrounding areas to reduce visual access to the parking; and an emphasis on pedestrian movement within the parking area can reduce the lot's utilitarian appearance.

east of library-museum

+ Expanded parking east of the library-museum will not be visible from the gravesite or loop drive.

= Expanded parking east of the library-museum will be visible from the historic core, Parkside Drive, the recreation area north of creek, the library association building, and the P.T. Smith House.

= The site is located in within the 100-year flood boundary.

= This area contains a significant cultural landscape feature. It was the original entrance area to the library-museum and retains the pedestrian walk to Isis.

Design Requirements and Schematic Designs for Alternative 1

A schematic design plan has been developed to illustrate parking concerns related to each of the parking areas related to this alternative while still preserving the character-defining features and qualities of the cultural landscape *(Exhibits 5 and 6)*.

Alternative 2. Expansion Of Parking And Visitor Circulation Route With Creation Of A New Entrance Road To The Library-Museum At The South End Of The Downey Street Trace (DCP Option 4) (Exhibit 7)

new library-museum entrance south of the Library Association Building

+ A new entrance south of the Library Association Building would eliminate vehicular traffic crossing the Downey Street trace.

+ The entry would permit unification of the P.T. Smith house and the second Hoover house site landscapes with the landscape of the historic core as they were during the Hoover boyhood.

= The entry will require a reduction of the amount of vegetation and open space in the new entry location.

= Creating a new entrance south of the library association building will increase the vehicular presence in the vicinity of the library association building.

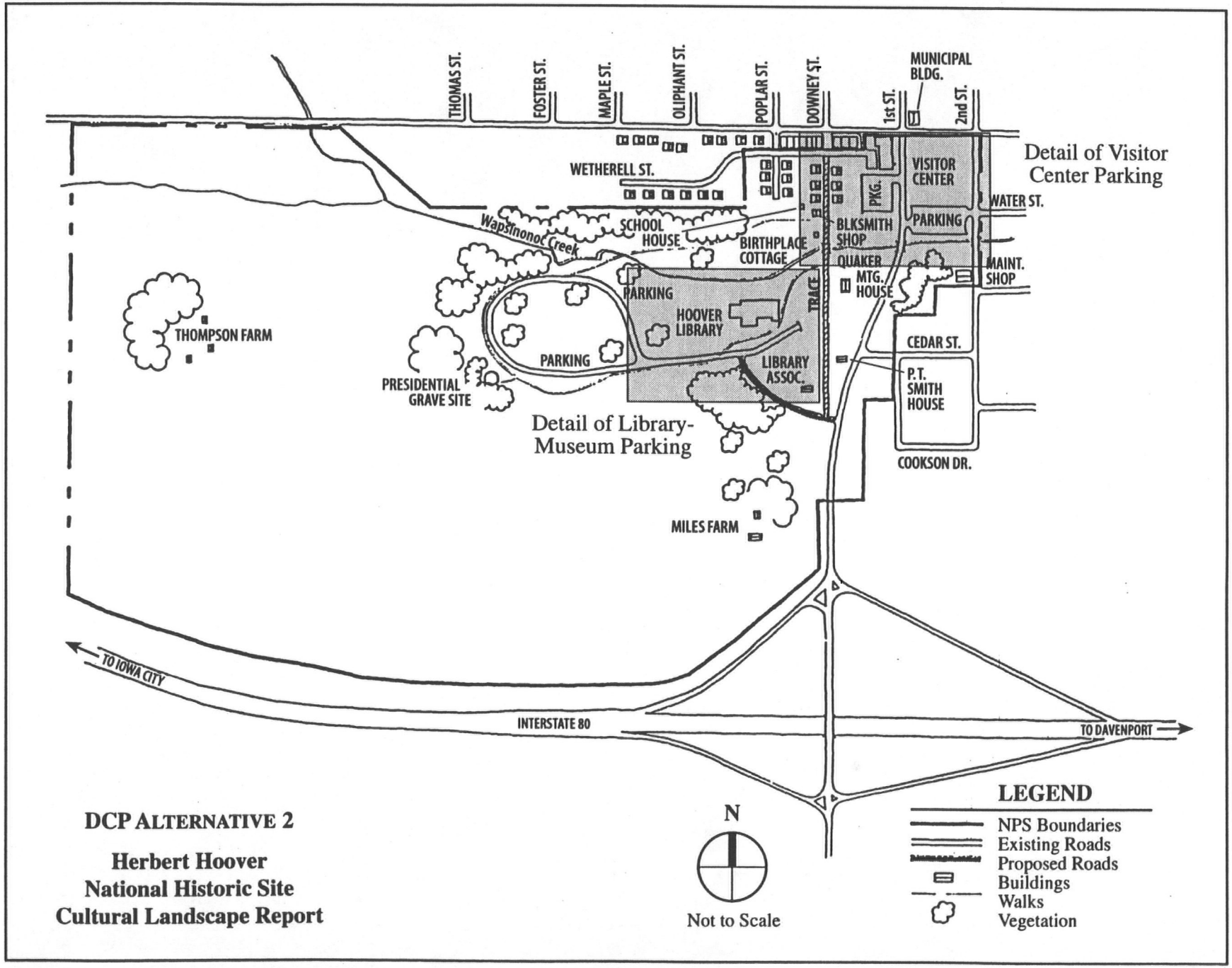


Exhibit 7. DCP Alternative 2

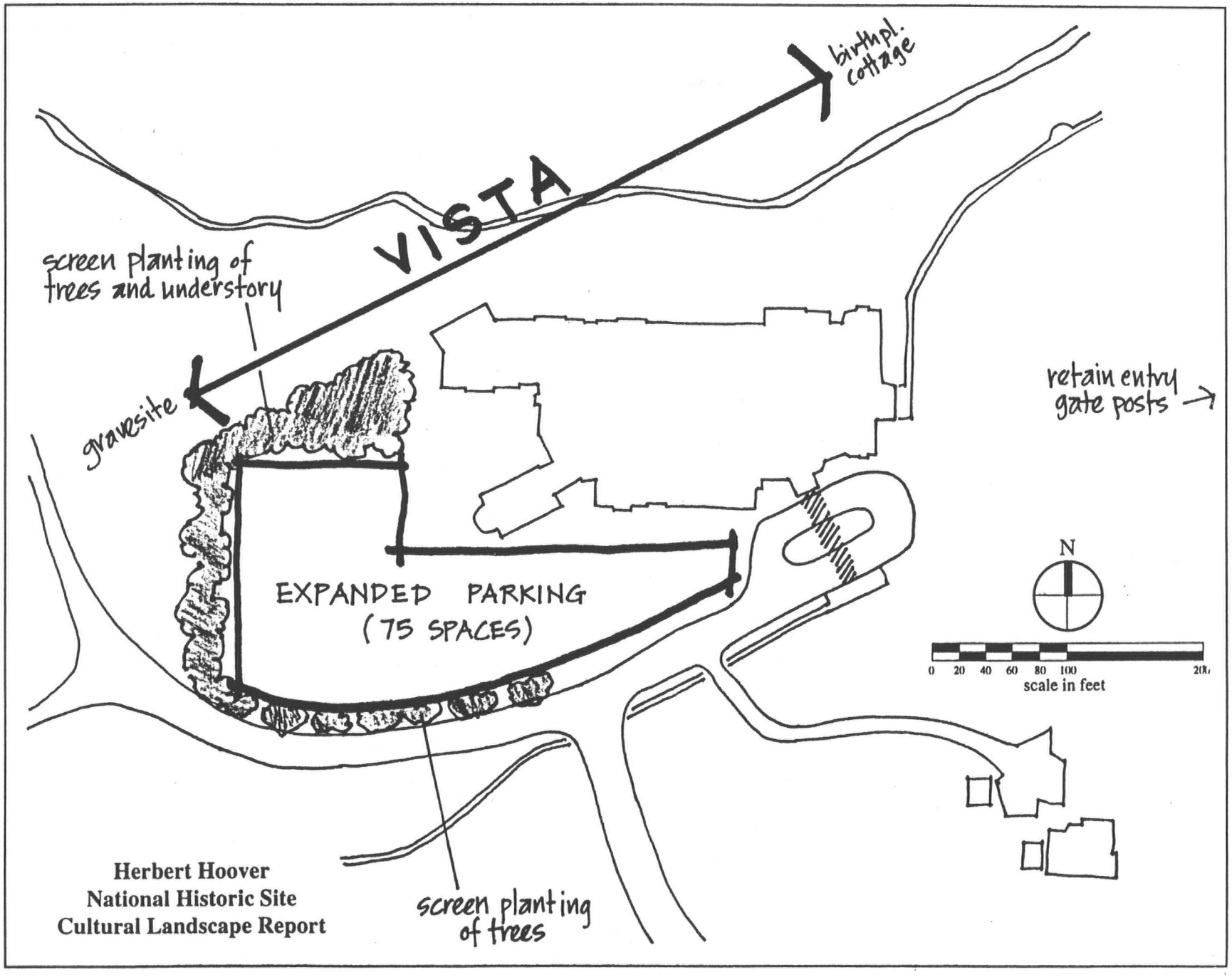


Exhibit 8. Expanded Parking at Library-Museum, DCP Alternative 2

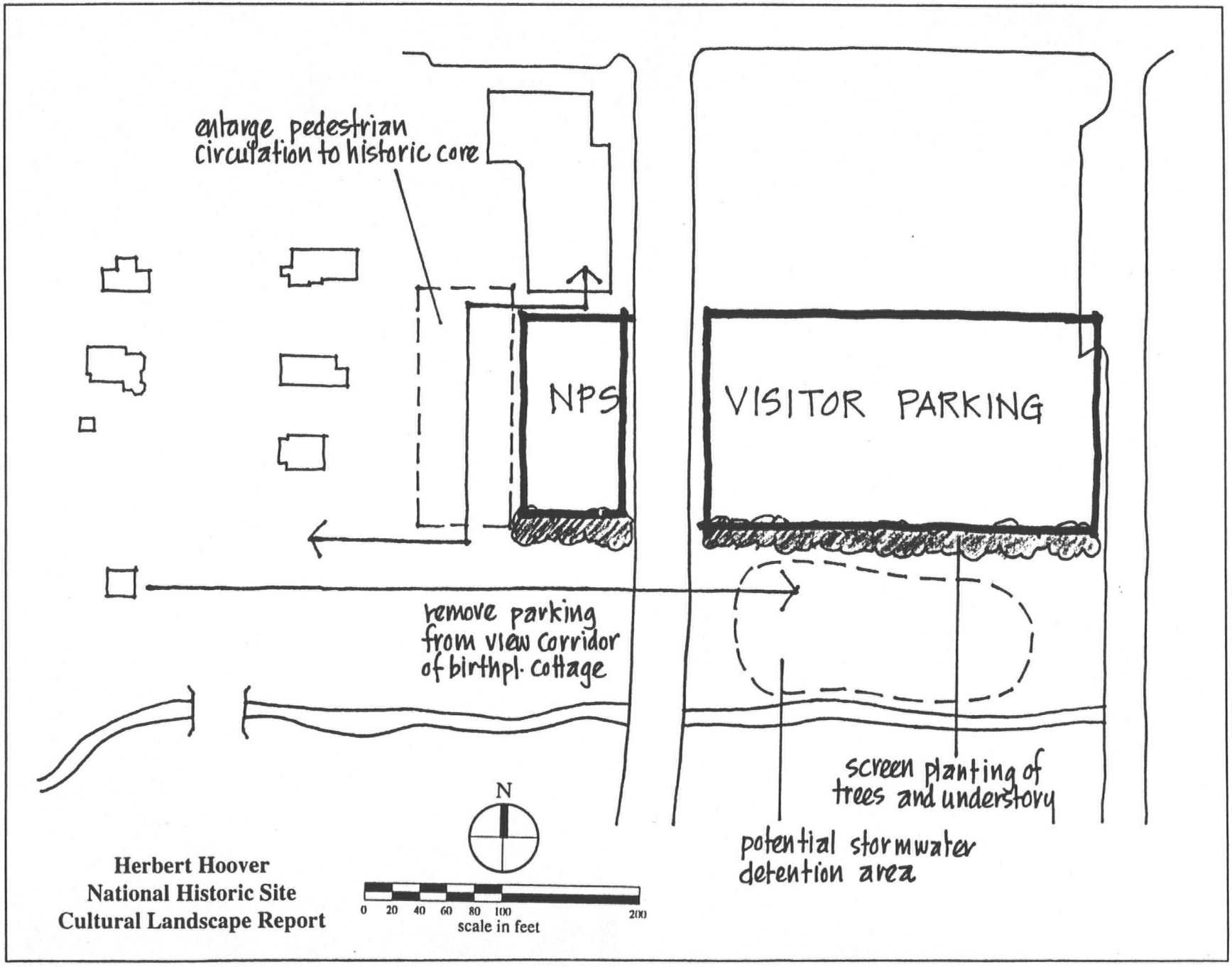


Exhibit 9. Expanded Parking at NPS Visitor Center, DCP Alternative 2

= A new entrance will introduce a new circulation pattern without a historic precedent.

= The new entry could create additional vehicular/pedestrian conflicts on the path to the gravesite.

= The existing entry, which dates from the period of significance, would not be used for vehicular circulation.

+ The existing entry could be used as a pedestrian connection to the trace.

+/- There could be possible effects on the prairie experience.

= The alignment through an area of steeper topography could result in topographic alterations, potential erosion, and potential runoff into the creek if not designed appropriately.

+ The alignment could be well-designed and integrated into the landscape so that it does not create erosion and is designed not to increase runoff into the creek.

+/- The entry will emphasize views to the library association building.

+ The entry location is more distant from the historic core but distant views to the site may be more expansive views.

expanded parking

See expanded parking from Alternative 1.

visitor contact at existing NPS visitor center

= The existing center provides a post-period of significance setting as the initial visitor contact point. The existing facility and its environs are not highly imageable; the building is indistinguishable from a standard office building; and the facility has no direct linkages to Hoover.

+ This location tends to encourage visitation that begins with the birthplace cottage, circulates through the village, and then moves to the gravesite. This pattern which coincides with a historical chronology is assumed to be logical and easily understood by the visitor.

= The visitor enters the historic core by first glimpsing the backyards of houses fronting on Downey Street.

+ This location is near the birthplace cottage and village re-creation which presents the Hoover story in a cultural landscape context; it is also near the West Branch commercial district which has

the potential for visitors to place the village and birthplace in the evolving context of a rural Iowa community; its location may encourage visitation to West Branch businesses.

+ If there is potential to expand the existing facility into the post office section of the building, the center would have a front door on Main Street and enhance its physical linkages to West Branch.

+ The site's proximity to the historic core and West Branch commercial area promotes visitation to actual cultural landscape resources rather than to exhibits and audio-visual presentations.

= This location in the northeastern corner of the NHS tends to encourage vehicular rather than pedestrian exploration of portions of the site which are somewhat distant or not visible from the parking area, especially the gravesite and library-museum. Some visitors currently drive from this lot and to the gravesite and the library.

= There is insufficient parking without expansion into the cultural landscape; additional spaces, however, are located in the Water Street lot.

+ Continued use for visitor contact does not require installation of additional paths or infrastructure that will affect the cultural landscape.

= The existing Water Street parking lot is on axis with the birthplace cottage.

Design Requirements and Schematic Designs for Alternative 2

A schematic design plan has been developed to illustrate how this alternative might be implemented while still preserving the character-defining features and qualities of the cultural landscape *(Exhibits 8 and 9).*

Alternative 3. realignment of Parkside Drive with resulting visitor circulation and NPS visitor orientation expanded parking at the current location as well as expanded parking at the Herbert Hoover Library. (DCP option 5) (Exhibit 10)

realignment of Parkside Drive to Second Street

= Realignment will introduce a new circulation pattern without a historic precedent.

+ Realignment has the potential to increase the amount of green space east of the birthplace cottage and adjacent to the Downey Street properties.

+ Realignment will move vehicular traffic farther away from the birthplace cottage.

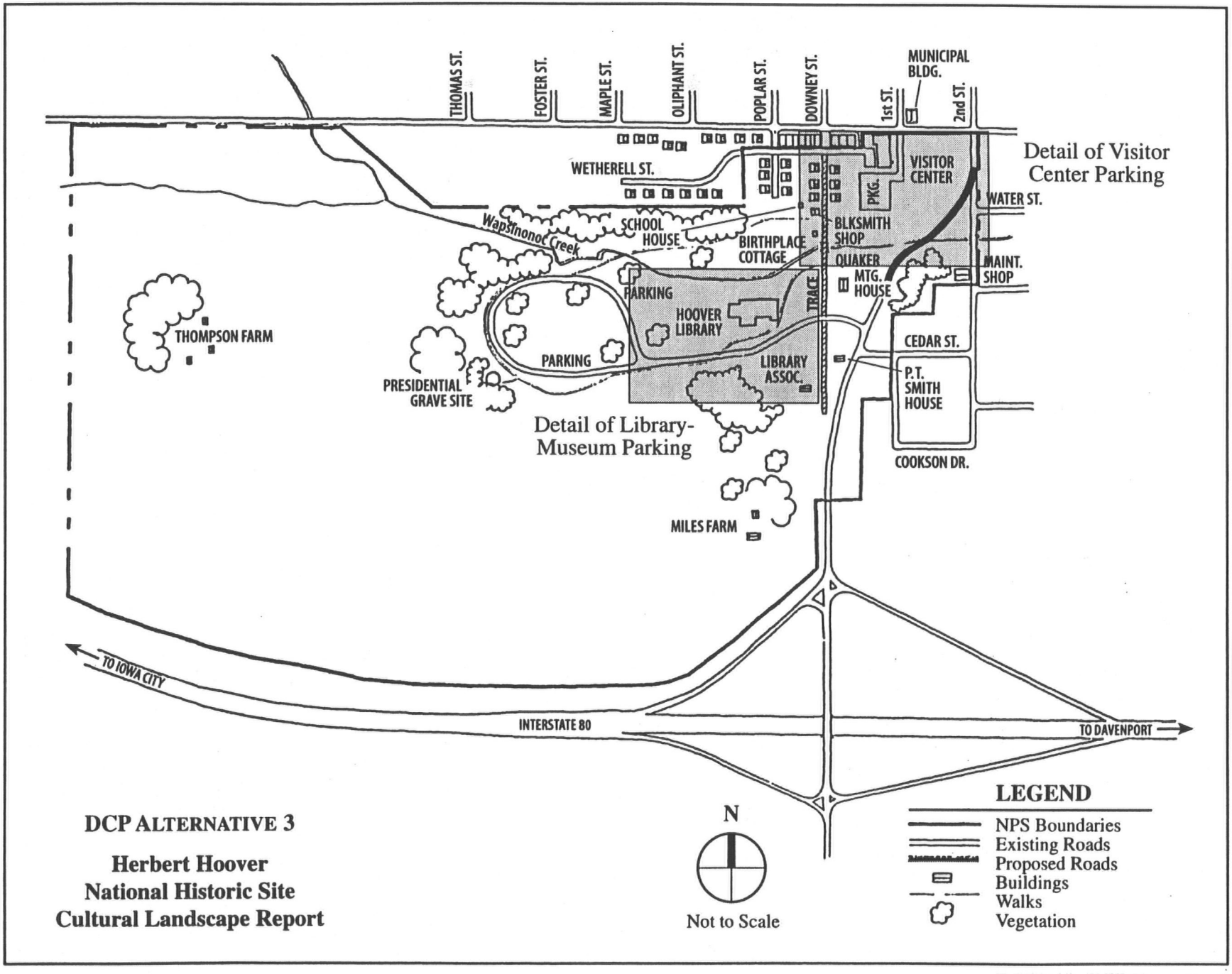


Exhibit 10. DCP Alternative 3

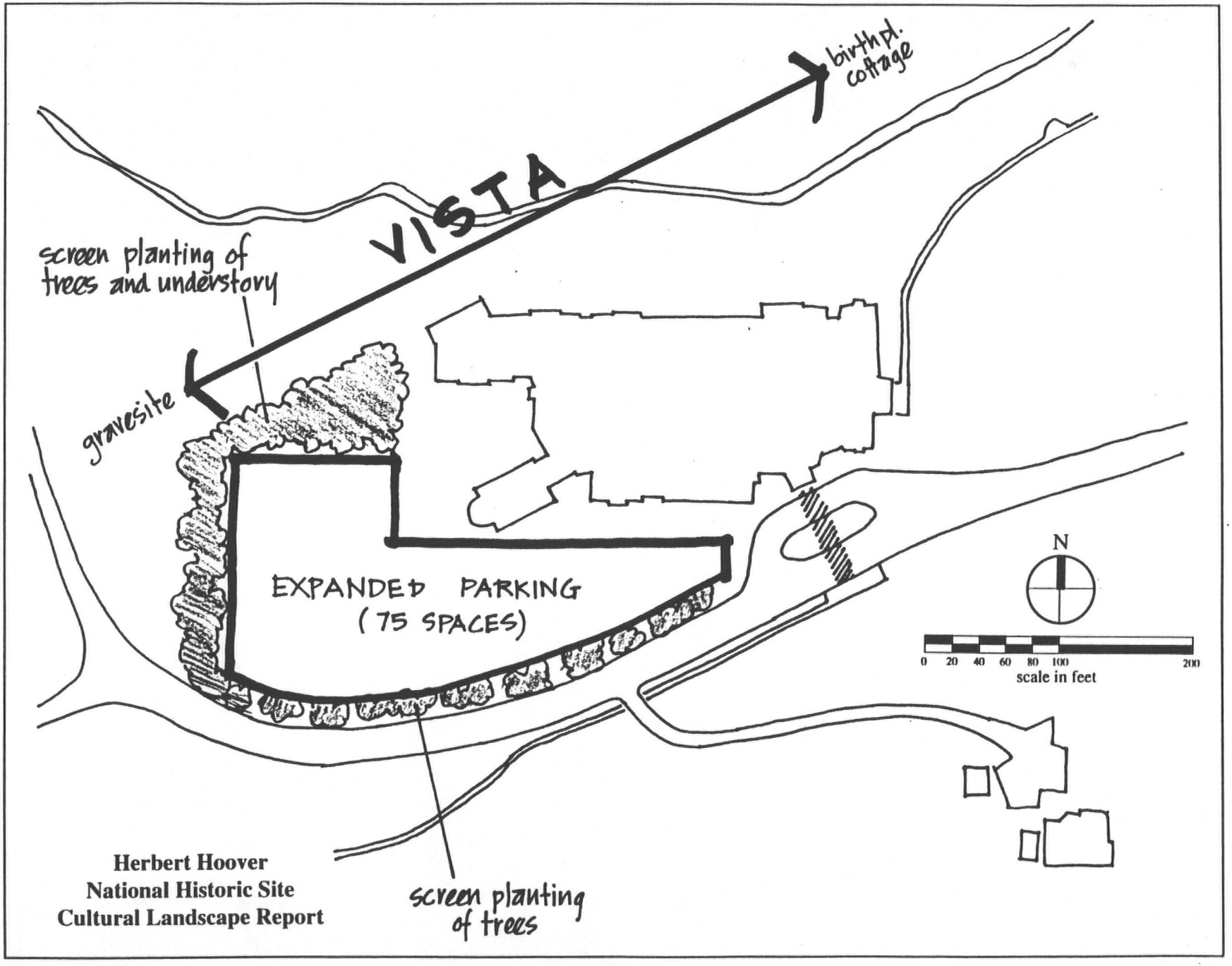


Exhibit 11. Expanded Parking at Library-Museum, DCP Alternative 3

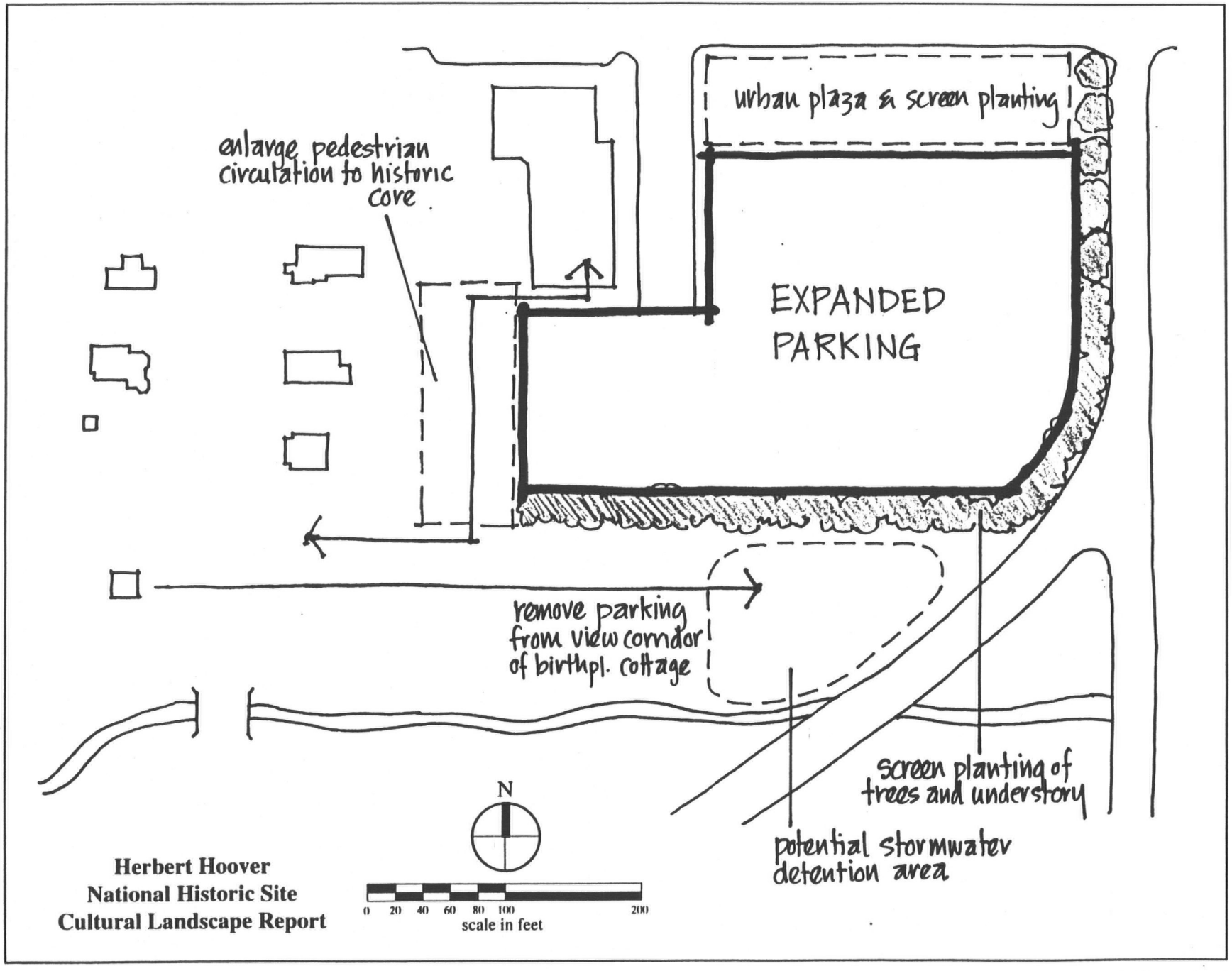


Exhibit 12. Expanded Parking at NPS Visitor Center, DCP Alternative 3

= Realignment will require construction of a new bridge over Wapsinonoc Creek and implies abandonment of the old bridge and First Street alignment.

= Realignment reduces the potential for views of birthplace cottage upon entry into town because the sight line is moved to the east away from the birthplace cottage, the historic core, the gravesite, and the library-museum.

= Realignment affects the location of visitor center parking, particularly the Water Street lot and will result in elimination of a major portion of the current Parkside Green open space for parking (See also below).

expanded parking at current post office current location (expansion of Water Street parking lot between First and Second Streets)

= Expansion would result in the loss of some open space for Parkside Green; the extent will be determined by whether Parkside Drive is realigned.

= The lot may increase in visibility from the birthplace cottage and the historic core.

+ If parking is pushed north in conjunction with the realignment, there is potential opportunity for reducing parking lot visibility the from historic core.

= Realignment has the potential to increase runoff to Wapsinonoc Creek.

= The realignment is located within the 100-year flood boundary.

Design Requirements and Schematic Designs for Alternative 3

A schematic design plan has been developed to illustrate how this alternative might be implemented while still preserving the character-defining features and qualities of the cultural landscape *(Exhibits 11 and 12).*

Maintenance Facility Relocation Alternatives

Three of the locations identified in the DCP for consideration as a potential relocation site for the NHS maintenance facility include the Thompson Farm, the Isaac Miles Farm, and the former Radford Motors site *(Exhibit 13).* The DCP finds the existing maintenance facility inadequate for a number of operational needs: it is not capable of storing the majority of the site's materials; does not provide adequate standard workspace for several maintenance functions; has been flooded several times; and there have been occasional complaints of odors, noise, and outside storage of materials. The cost of necessary repairs to the existing building make consideration of an

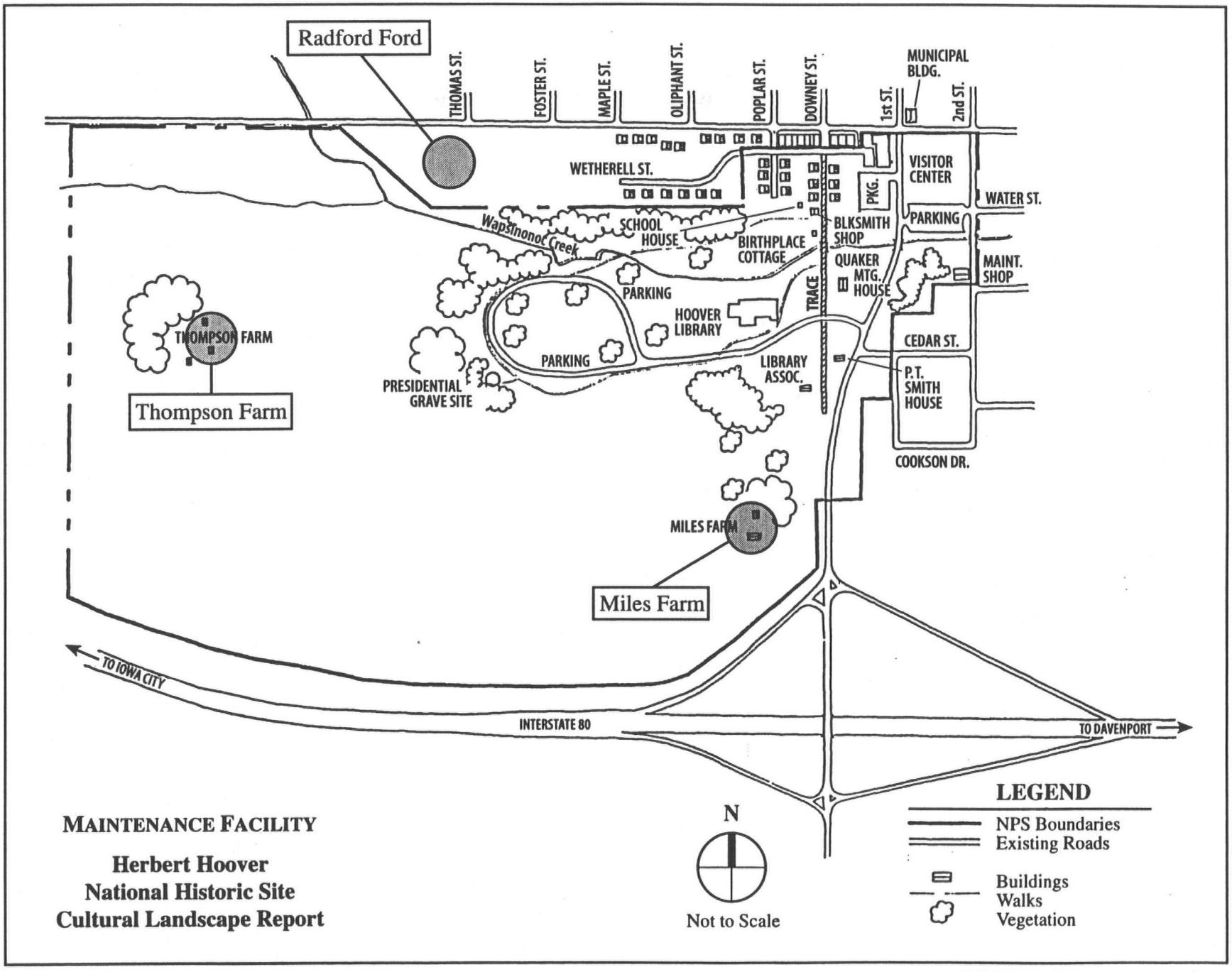


Exhibit 13. Maintenance Facilities

alternative facility timely. The maintenance operation requires a 10,000 square foot unified facility for operations and storage and an approximately one-acre site to meet its needs.[5]

Cultural Landscape Evaluation Criteria For Maintenance Facility Relocation

Although preserving cultural landscape values was not the primary focus of the DCP, cultural landscape was one of many concerns considered in the DCP process and evaluations of alternatives for relocation of the maintenance facility. The DCP, however, was prepared in 1992 prior to commencement of the CLR process for the NHS. A substantial amount of information concerning cultural landscape features and values has been identified since that time. For example, one of the alternative sites, the Thompson Farm, has been evaluated subsequently by the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office as potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. As a result, the criteria for evaluating the effects of on the cultural landscape have been developed with access to more specific information concerning cultural resources than was unavailable at the time that the DCP was developed. The criteria have been developed as a series of inquiries that can be directed to any proposed alternative or any individual element of an alternative. The criteria for evaluating the effects of relocating the maintenance facility follow below:

- Is site located outside an area of visitation or area with potential for interpreting cultural landscape values?

- Does the alternative require new construction in or adjacent to the setting of character-defining cultural landscape resources or is there the potential for adaptive use of an existing building or structure to meet the 10,000 square foot requirement of a new facility?

- Is new construction likely to require an alteration of landform,

  ...destruction or alteration of natural systems or features

  ...removal of character-defining vegetation,

  ...removal of character-defining buildings and structures or small-scale features,

  ...location in a site that will make it part of an existing spatial organization, such as a village grid or agricultural cluster,

  ...location that will diminish the integrity of setting of existing cultural landscape units and features

---

[5]DCP, 4.

- Is the proposed alternative likely to create a demand for physical expansion of existing buildings and structures or infrastructure? If so, are adjacent areas likely to be able to absorb such expansion without significant effects on cultural landscape features or the existing setting? Can existing buildings and structures on the site meet expansion needs?

- Will relocation eliminate existing conditions that are inappropriate or damaging to the site's most significant cultural landscape resources, the historic core and the gravesite? For example, is there the potential for circulation that avoids vehicles passing through or adjacent to the historic core for routine maintenance of other parts of site.

- Is the proposed use consistent with or compatible with historic and/or existing land use in the area proposed for change and in adjacent areas?

- Will the proposed alternative result in appropriate use or overuse of fragile or vulnerable cultural landscape features?

- Does implementation require creating new existing circulation patterns rather than using existing ones?

- Can the proposed alternative be implemented without effects on significant views to and from character-defining cultural landscape units of the NHS?

- Can stored materials, parked vehicles, and other visible maintenance functions be located in areas that are not visible from the historic core, gravesite, the library-museum, Parkside Drive, and other areas that attract visitors, are interpreted, or within the viewsheds of existing or potential vehicular and pedestrian approach routes? If so, can these uses be screened from view without adverse effects?

- Will siting have an adverse effect on the site's most significant cultural landscape resources, the historic core and the gravesite or on the visitor experience in the historic core or the gravesite?

- Will siting have an adverse effect on interpreted areas of the NHS or other areas where there is existing or potential visitation?

- Are appropriate mitigation measures possible if adverse effects are identified?

Evaluation of DCP Alternatives

Miles Farm (Exhibit 14)

The following potential effects of relocating the maintenance facility to the Miles Farm have been identified:

= There is a potential negative effect on the integrity of National Register eligible resources

+ Many other agricultural clusters now have large auxiliary buildings that have been added to store large farm equipment; large buildings of the type needed by the maintenance facility are part of the region's current agricultural design vocabulary.

= Miles Farm does not allow opportunities for interior circulation to other areas of the park without substantial effects on the cultural landscape.

= Miles Farm is located in a visually prominent area where it would be difficult to site a 10,000 square foot building without affecting the visitor entry sequence, and views associated with the library-museum and the gravesite.

= Adaptive use of the existing structures could not provide a significant portion of the square footage requirement.

+ A gentle slope in the cluster area allows for new construction without major land disturbance.

Thompson Farm (Exhibit 15)

The following potential effects of relocating the maintenance facility to the Thompson Farm have been identified:

= There is a potential negative effect on the integrity of a National Register eligible cluster arrangement.

+ There is potential to use current circulation from Route 786

= There may be a desire to add a new road cutting through the prairie to connect with other portions of the NHS; no road has existed in this location previously.

+ Historic field patterns could provide the basis for a new circulation route to connect the Thompson cluster with the rest of the NHS.

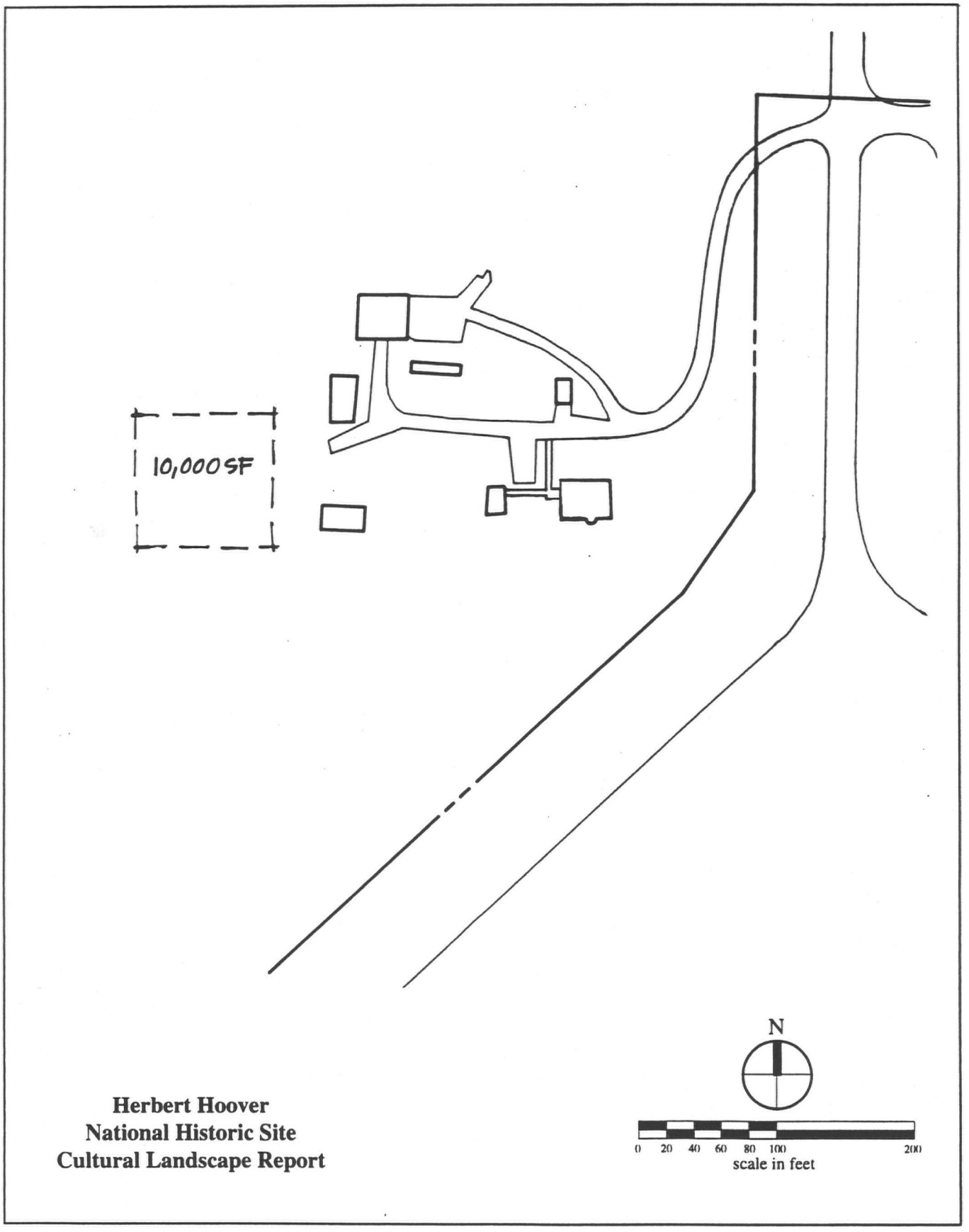
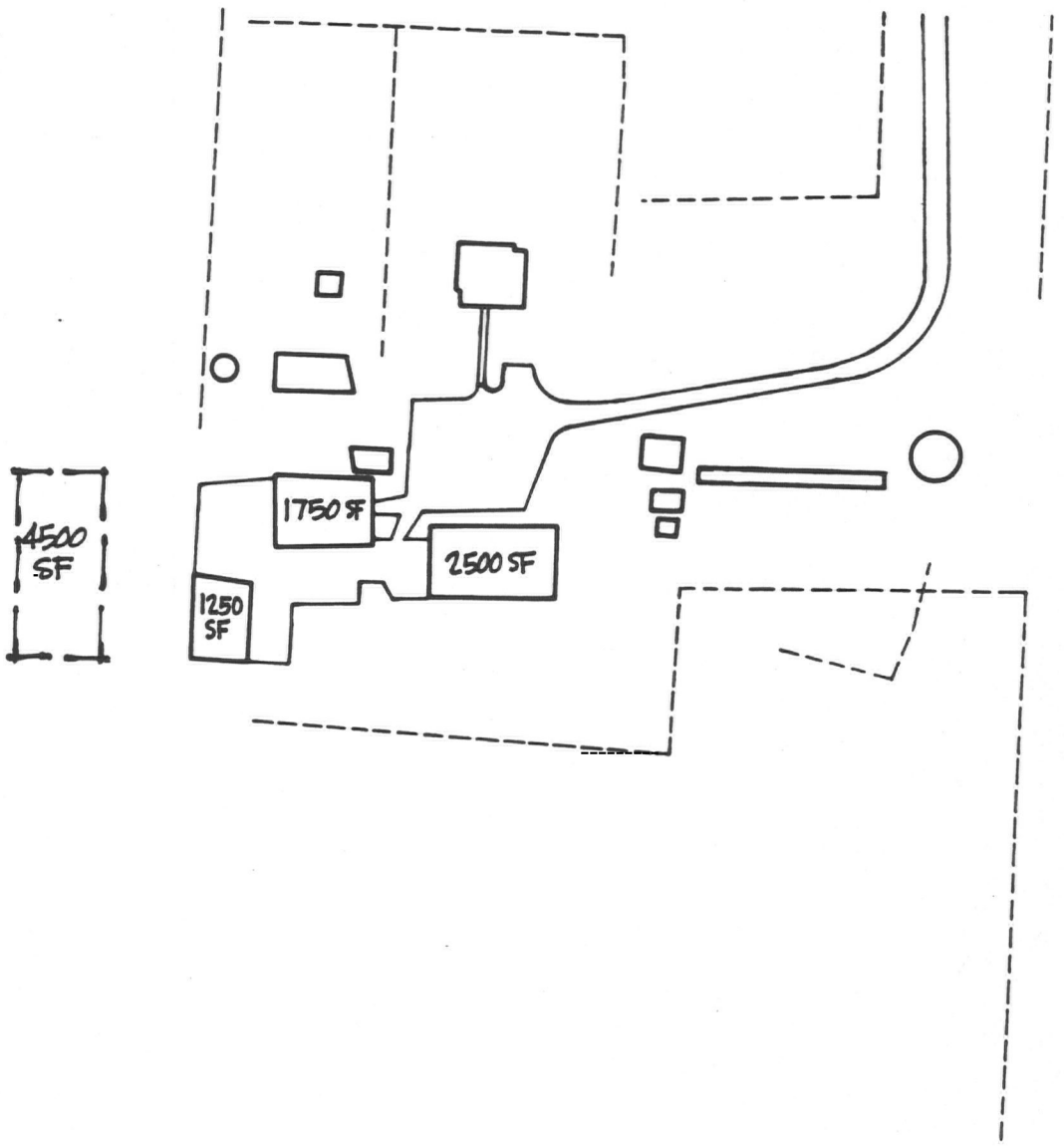


Exhibit 14. Miles Farm



Herbert Hoover
National Historic Site
Cultural Landscape Report

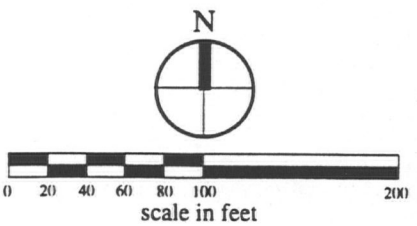


Exhibit 15. Thompson Farm

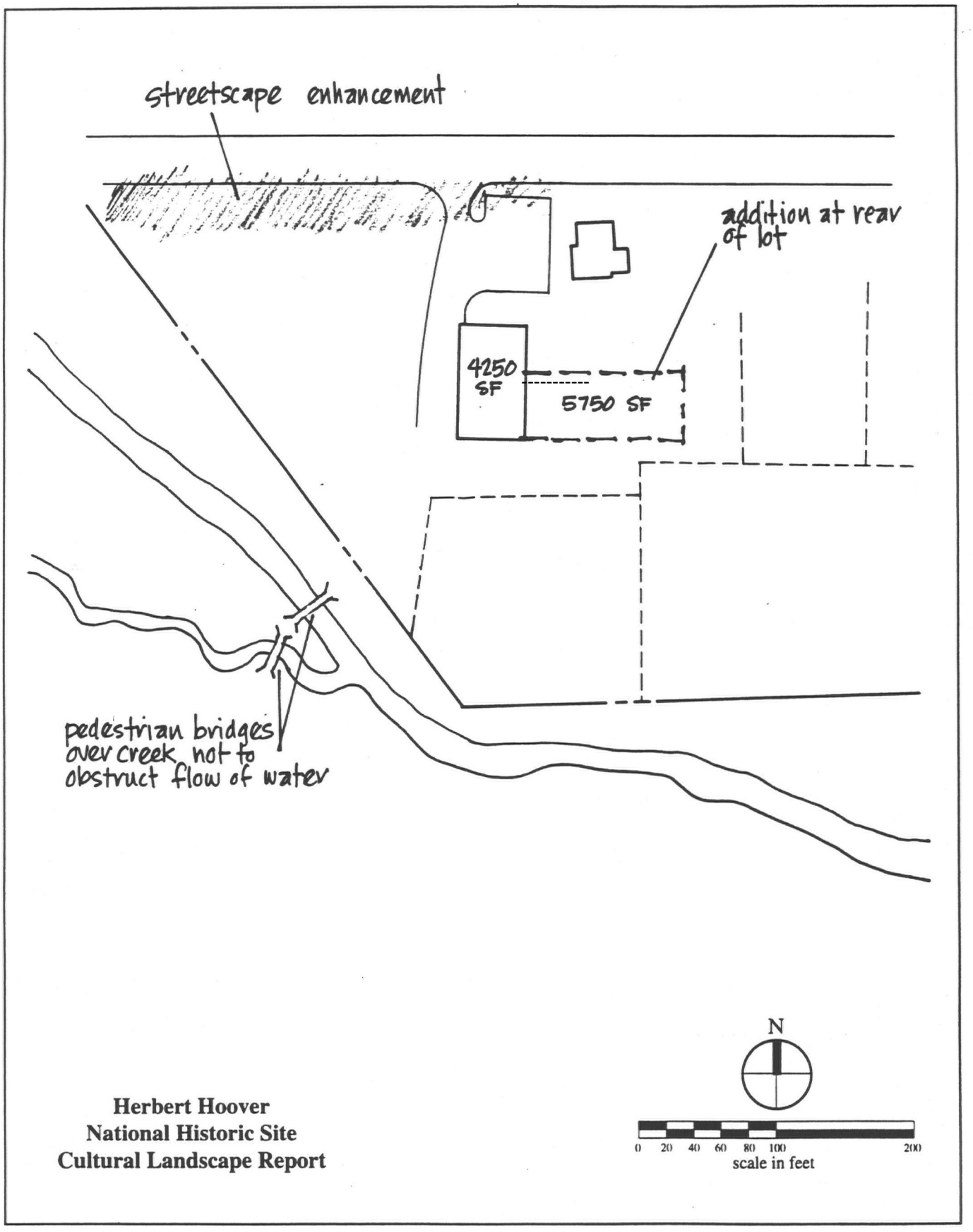


Exhibit 16. Radford Ford Car Dealership

+ Adaptive use of the existing structures could provide a portion of the square footage requirement.

+ A gentle slope in the cluster area allows for new construction without major land disturbance.

Former Radford Motors Site (Exhibit 16)

There are no known cultural landscape features in this location. The following effects of relocation have been identified:

+ Relocation to this site would avoid negative effects on cultural landscape features in the existing NHS.

= If construction of a bridge over the creek and a short road segment to connect the site with the park is desirable, environmental alterations would result.

+ Rehabilitation of the current building could enhance the appearance of the western edge of Main Street.

Design Guidelines and Schematic Design Plans

Each of the following schemes illustrates how the maintenance facility might be relocated to one of the three alternative sites with the least effect on character-defining cultural landscape features.

Miles Farm

The cultural landscape effects of relocating the maintenance facility to the Miles Farm would be significant. It is not a recommended alternative.

The effects of relocating the maintenance facility to the Miles Farm, however, could be reduced by adhering to the following design guidelines:

- Maintain current entry road which is not historic as the primary circulation to the maintenance area for employees.
- Develop parking in barnyards (on current concrete pads) and south of the cluster. Avoid altering landform to accommodate parking.
- Rehabilitate existing outbuildings and continue to use to meet some storage needs.
- Avoid use of historic barn for storage.
- Continue to rehabilitate farm house for park housing.

- Rehabilitate small structures such as the corn crib.
- Retain evergreen windbreak.
- Develop new maintenance facility west and/or south of the existing cluster but directly adjacent to it in a manner similar to that found on contemporary Iowa farmsteads where a new large structure has been developed apart from the traditional cluster.
- Design the new structure so that it is compatible with the existing cluster in form, roof form, fenestration, materials, and color.
- Site the new structure so that it does not dominate the view of the cluster from 1-80, the gravesite, and Route 786.
- A new windbreak could be installed to reduce the visual effect of the new building.
- Develop new interior road that connects the road at the east side of the barn to the library-museum entry drive or the proposed south entry drive.

Thompson Farm

A maintenance facility could be accommodated at the Thompson Farm; implementation, however, may be more expensive and time-consuming because of its cultural resource value as a significant farm cluster. The effects of relocating the maintenance facility to the Thompson Farm could be reduced by adhering to the following design guidelines:

- Maintain current entry road from Route 786 as the primary circulation to maintenance area for employees.
- Preserve the farm cluster and all of its character-defining features.
- Retain the residential use of the farm house to provide active signs of domestic life.
- Maintain and rehabilitate existing fence lines, gates, and cattle grates associated with farm road. Consider locked gate, if necessary, at farmstead, not at Route 786.
- Develop parking in barnyards (on current concrete pads) and south of the cluster. Avoid altering landform to accommodate parking.
- Rehabilitate for adaptive use all existing outbuildings to meet storage and other maintenance needs.

- Rehabilitate small-scale features such as the well, pumps, cistern, and grape arbor.
- Retain evergreen windbreak.
- Develop new maintenance facility west and/or south of the existing cluster but directly adjacent to it in a manner similar to that found on contemporary Iowa farmsteads where a new large structure has been developed apart from the traditional cluster. The square footage should be reduced to reflect the amount of space gained from the adaptive use of the existing cluster.
- Design the new structure so that it is compatible with the existing cluster in form, roof form, fenestration, materials, and color.
- Site the new structure so that it does not dominate the view of the cluster from 1-80, the gravesite, and Route 786.
- A new windbreak could be installed to reduce the visual effect of the new building.
- A new farm road that follows historic field patterns (See 1936 aerial) should be developed of the entry road to connect to the loop drive area.
- Avoid hard-surfacing interior roads.

Former Radford Motors Site

There appear to be few direct cultural landscape effects of relocating the maintenance facility to the former Radford Motors site. In fact, relocating outside the NHS is the only alternative that can avoid affecting cultural landscape features. The following guidelines primarily address the effects of relocation to this site:

- Restrict development to the southern portion of the property.
- Keep height of any new construction low in scale.
- Provide adequate defined parking areas; avoid developing as-needed parking areas.
- Provide a visual edge along Main Street.
- Develop a bridge over the creek without abutments that would restrict the flow of water from the creek during flooding.
- Provide visual edge definition between the maintenance facility and the current park boundaries.

Appendix D

Alternative Hydrologic Solutions

After considering the causes of the flooding and bank distress, three alternative concepts addressing specific individual problems have been identified by Joseph P. Martin, Ph.D, P.E. of Havertown, Pennsylvania for Andropogon of the consultant team. Martin conducted a flood analysis as part of this CLR as a result of a severe storm on June 7, 1993. These alternatives are, by no means, the only workable solutions, but they have been determined as appropriate for the NHS.

There are three separate problems:

- frequent inundation of the meadow
- constriction of extreme flows, threatening cultural resources
- bank collapse due to poor internal drainage of weak soil.

Alternative solutions specific to each include the following:

- off-stream limited detention in a built wetland in the meadow
- swale overflow spillway around Downey and Parkside bridges
- replacement of some of the bank soil with more permeable material

Meadow Detention Basin

To extend the interval between landscape floodplain inundation, the peak flow in the channel must be reduced to its capacity with the bridge capacity in place, i.e., below 650 cfs. Some of the excess flow can be diverted or skimmed to an off-stream detention basin for later re-release to the creek. The wide meadow on the north side presents an opportunity to provide such relief storage by an excavated basin. To divert enough water from flows in the 400-700 cfs range and reduce general overbank flooding to a three-to-five year interval, it would be necessary to provide about 120,000 to 150,000 cubic feet of storage.

It is essential that this storage volume be preserved "in the dry" until the creek level approaches the bank height. to accomplish this, an entrance spillway, weir or sill approximately one-half foot below bank level will be necessary. Overflow into the basin will then skim 100-200 cfs for ten-to-

twenty minutes, thus reducing the peak flow rate through the bridge openings. This requires less inlet headwater, producing a lower backwater level up into the meadow area.

When the detention basin is filled, it will serve no further purpose. Unlike a large upstream detention basin which continuously dampens the peak flow with a controlled outlet and a large storage surface area, this small detention basin will have minimal effects on ten year or longer storms of ten or more years recurrence.

Excavating the basin will represent an abandoned stream channel meander. Many such old channels are actually buried under the meadow flood plain. The basin could become an attractive, positive part of the NHS, meet sustainability goals, and even provide cultural landscape interpretive value. The existing channel bank remaining between the basin and the creek would have the appearance of a natural levee. If the bottom of the basin is excavated to about two feet above the dry-weather stream level, it will probably be about one foot above the water table. The silty soil will be saturated under tension by capillary rise, supporting a cattail-type wetland. Overexcavation in some areas will expose the groundwater seeping under the floodplain in small pools. Such pools left in the borrow pits along I-80 in Nebraska appear to attract waterfowl, yet not be stagnant due to the groundwater flow through them. The result in succession from the north side of the library-museum, will be a diverse set of habitats varying primarily by the hydrologic condition. The habitats would include the following:

- upland habitat on the south bank in front of the library-museum,
- aquatic habitat for the creek,
- hummock habitat for the north bank levee,
- cattail wetland and pools habitat for the detention basin, and
- an upland habitat for the remainder of the meadow sloping up to the village.

The basin will also assist to some degree with draining the north bank, depending upon how the basin is dewatered following storms. It is essential that the outlet not cause premature basin filling. This can be accomplished with an outlet pipe with a flap valve on the end. The valve would not open until the creek water level dropped below that in the basin. The outlet would be designed to empty the basin over a period of a day or so; a faster dewatering may cause local scouring problems.

Overflow Spillway

In contrast to the meadow detention basin, this proposed facility is a channel, not a storage facility that would only be in use during extreme storms that threaten structure flooding. The minimum intent is to assure that the risk factors shown in the hydrologic analysis are indeed assured by an alternate flow route if the water level rises above a certain level. Further levels of protection would require re-working of the model program for various spillway capacity options.

The spillway would be a wide, shallow grassed swale. It could originate on the south bank just above the Downey Street bridge, crossing Downey Street and Parkside Drive in "dips," and continue to a weir discharge above the Second Street bridge, perhaps at the gabion wall. It would function just like an emergency spillway on a reservoir, providing a higher channel capacity at extreme flows. The reasons for providing the bypass around only the upper two bridges are that they appear to have the higher constriction effect and that a dip in Second Street would disrupt non-park traffic during severe storms. It is reasonable to expect that a flow six-to-twelve inches deep crossing the two streets for a few hours on a decades-long recurrence interval is not an unreasonable restriction on internal park circulation.

While the hydraulic efficiency will be slightly reduced, the spillway alignment can be designed to illustrate another abandoned channel that has not yet been filled. Since the spillway would only carry heavy flows in extreme storms, it could be grassed and the road dips repaved to blend with the existing surroundings. It is not economical to armor the spillway. The present worth of avoided regrading after a flood of one-tenth to one-twenty-fifth annual risk is nil.

Meadow Bank Stabilization

The intent is not to drain waterlogged floodplain deposits rapidly, but to depress the local water table or phreatic surface in the few feet behind the bank face, so that water can drain from the soil below the creek water surface. In this regard, if the soil at the base of the bank is more permeable than the floodplain silt, flow net analysis will show that the stability goal is reached. It is also desirable to use soil whose shear strength is not as sensitive to moisture content as the silt, i.e., a granular, frictional material.

Many variations are possible. The following is only one viable cross-section.

- Lower three feet: french drain six feet wide (into bank), consisting of sand and gravel protected from scour by a geotextile filter wrap

- Upper three feet to four feet: exposed bank, six feet wide, consisting of silt admixed with sand and gravel to provide a granular "skeleton" yet preserve fertility to support vegetation. This soil could be reinforced with willow brush, perhaps, in the form of fascine bundles.