



*Historic Structures Report*

# **VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**

Franklin Township, New Jersey



Prepared for the Meadows Foundation  
with funding from  
The Somerset County Historic Preservation Grant Program



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June 15, 2002

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FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP  
NEW JERSEY

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*15 June 2002*

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

The attached Historic Structures Report (HSR) was commissioned in 2000 by the Meadows Foundation, Inc., a not-for-profit organization. The purpose of the report is to document the history, physical fabric, and current conditions of the Van Liew-Suydam house and its surrounding site. With evidence collected by the team of architects, conservators and engineers, a recommended program of rehabilitation, re-use and restoration actions has been drafted for consideration by the Meadows Foundation and Somerset County, the granting agency for this report. This summary offers a synopsis of the report and its recommendations.

A Historic Structures Report serves both as a historical document and as a planning tool. Its format and methodology are recognized as standard by the National Parks Service, New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office, the DEPE, the New Jersey Historic Trust, and other agencies charged with the stewardship of historic resources in the region. The HSR can serve as a basic tool for planning re-use and development strategies, as a baseline document for restoration, and as a component of grant applications to the New Jersey Historic Trust. In fact, it is an essential first step in establishing the significance and physical condition of virtually any historic structure.

The report contains three major sections: a documentation of the historical and architectural development of the site and its structures informed by archival and physical research; a survey of the existing conditions of the historic resource written by a licensed architect, engineer and conservator; and a chapter containing recommended actions to stabilize, restore, or adaptively re-use the resource.

### **Historical and Architectural Development**

The farm property on which the Van Liew-Suydam house stands had several major owners before its purchase by the state in the early 1970s. The property was initially a part of the Frederick Van Liew tract, acquired in 1701 as portion of a land deal between former Dutch colonial residents of Flatbush on Long Island and New Jersey speculators John Harrison and John Willcocks. In 1811 the 71-acre farmstead opposite Skillman's Lane was sold to Joseph Suydam with three other lots by Joseph Skillman, who had acquired the land from the Van Liew family. Suydam was himself a Dutchman from Brooklyn, born there in 1772. Our research indicates that the present house was constructed by his son, Peter, in 1875. Suydam and his heirs farmed the property until the 1920s, when it changed hands twice before being sold to John B. French. He continued to work the land until a storm destroyed several of the

original farm buildings in 1950. The final owners of the house, Robert & Dorothy O'Connell, bought the property in 1961 and converted the house to a modern residence and demolished several more of the outbuildings. Nonetheless, the agricultural land around the residence continued in cultivation prior to state acquisition as part of the Six Mile Run Reservoir Project in 1973. The Meadows Foundation began leasing the structures and the land from Franklin Township in October 1988.

The architectural form and development of the house have been somewhat obscured by both recent renovation work and the building campaign of Peter Suydam in the mid 1870s. The overall form of the building places it firmly in the tradition of Italianate farmhouses common throughout the United States during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Following a pattern employed often by thrifty New Jersey farmers, Suydam reused pieces of an earlier house or houses in the construction of his large 1875 dwelling. He also built on the site of an earlier dwelling that now forms the better part of the dining room wing. How much of the fabric of this earlier wing is intact is not clear. Our team, assisted by David Brook, examined the foundation and framing of the dining room wing for conclusive evidence of its date, but were frustrated by a lack of consistent physical evidence that could be corroborated in the property history. This wing may have been constructed by either of the previous owners of the property, Joseph Skillman, or Joseph Suydam (Peter's father), although map documents do not clearly indicate a dwelling on this site. It was probably a story and a half, braced frame dwelling or farm building with a small lean-to on the north side. The current roof, which also re-uses older timbers, was raised and constructed with the 1875 building. The 1875 farmhouse was only minimally altered during the twentieth century when the north kitchen lean-to was rebuilt, and a southern room added to serve as an auxiliary kitchen.

Only one of the outbuildings on the farm, numbering approximately a dozen in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, exists today. This structure, called the granary, was used by the last occupants of the building as a retail facility for sales of produce and farm goods. It is in good condition.

## Conditions Summary

### Exterior

The building was rented for a period of more than ten years between the state's acquisition of the property for the Six Mile Run Dam in the early 1970s and the Meadows Foundation's stewardship in 1988. During this time, little or no maintenance was performed. Deterioration took its toll on both the exterior and interior. Work during the 1990s by volunteers from the Meadows Foundation replaced the roof with wood shingles, rebuilt the chimneys, removed the front porch, and generally stabilized the shell. However, the building has not been painted for decades, and the masonry foundation is in need of re-pointing. The exterior is generally in fair condition, and requires extensive repair to wood components, stripping and preparation for repainting. The specific scope of work is outlined in the construction documents for the exterior rehabilitation.

## Interior

A large renovation program was begun in 1988 to repair structural and building systems deficiencies, resulting in some loss of interior finishes in the house, mainly in the large double parlors of the first floor. In general, interior woodwork, stairs, doors and other features of the 1875 house remain intact and in fair to good condition. However, because of the loss of fabric and the intended re-use as a cultural education center, we do not recommend the restoration of the major historic finishes in any rooms. Ceilings, floors and walls throughout the building are in various states of integrity with much missing evidence of their historic colors, finishes and materials. The room-by-room assessment of interior conditions is found in sections V.2 and V.3 below.

## Building Systems

The structural framing employed in the house is disparate, ranging from balloon frame studs and plates with sawn lumber, to hand-hewn braced frame construction. The Suydam house building campaign in 1875 re-used older material in a somewhat haphazard manner, resulting in a somewhat confusing structural hybrid. When renovations were completed by the late 1990s, Meadows volunteers and some professional builders had considerably enhanced the first floor structure with columns and sistered beams, and fixed problems above the parlors using steel sections. In addition, the entire plumbing and much of the heating systems were replaced with modern materials. Because this work is now virtually complete, the house needs little in the way of upgrades to building systems. We have recommended the installation of a security system, as well as a new air conditioning system for the house.

## **Program Recommendations**

The Meadows Foundation has maintained and renovated the building for over ten years. Its current plan is to convert the house into a Center for Cultural Diversity that will serve the entire township and New Brunswick region. In accordance with this plan, we have recommended that the exterior of the house be restored to its 1875 appearance with the rebuilding of the porch, and that the interior be renovated to serve as classrooms, meeting rooms and offices for the center. The current caretaker's apartment will continue in its present use. Our proposed re-use is described both in the drawings and text below, in sections 6 and 7.

## **Rehabilitation Priorities**

### Overall Recommendations:

1. The exterior of the house, which retains the greatest degree of integrity from the 1875 period, should be restored as fastidiously as possible to its configuration at that time, including the removal of the c. 1900 south kitchen wing, and the rebuilding of the Victorian porch on the west side. The only addition required on the exterior will be an ADA standard ramp for handicapped accessibility, on the south side.

2. The interior of the first floor, which retains much of its 19<sup>th</sup> century character, if not fabric, should be rehabilitated for use as an educational facility. In order to take advantage of UCC Rehab Code considerations for a historic building, occupancy should be limited to 50 persons and no “assembly” occupancies should be contemplated. Where finishes, woodwork, doors, mouldings and other elements exist, these should be conserved in situ or rebuilt. However, flooring, plasterwork, ceilings and other historic finishes now partially destroyed or deteriorated, should not be restored. New finish materials will serve better for the intended use.
3. The interior of the second floor, now approximately 50% renovated, should be completely renovated for use as offices and a caretaker’s apartment. New gypsum board and wood finishes and room configurations should maintain the character of the historic spaces. Fabric in the north side of the house is too far deteriorated for restoration, and the spaces are not functional in their current configuration.
4. Since the foundation, roof, and structural system of the building are now in satisfactory condition for the intended use, only minor repairs are contemplated for these components. All repairs should conserve and protect historic materials and features to the greatest extent possible.
5. The existing heating system, using an oil fired boiler and hydronic piping, should be maintained and will serve adequately for many years. A new air conditioning system, either small duct/high velocity, or standard ducted, should be installed to service both the first and second floor. We do not anticipate any intrusive impact on the interior spaces when this system is in operation.
6. The site around the house should be conserved to save its agricultural character and existing flora. Any parking areas or pathways should be designed to afford safe auto and pedestrian circulation, but should not intrude on the character of the farmstead as it presently exists. A new program of signs and site lighting should be installed to allow visitors to enter the site and park safely.
7. Should the Center for Cultural Diversity be successful and require expansion of programs and facilities, the Meadows Foundation and Franklin Township may wish to consider alternate locations for additional space. As currently contemplated and planned, the building and site will not support expansion.
8. The property should be individually listed on the New Jersey and National Register of Historic Places to insure its continued protection under federal law.
9. The rehabilitation of the house and property should be undertaken in three phases: 1) the exterior envelope, 2) the interior renovation for use as a cultural center, and 3) site improvements.

#### Phase I – Exterior Restoration and Rehabilitation

Timetable: years 1 and 2.

Cost: \$75-85,000.

- Repoint all deteriorated joints in the house foundation.
- Reconstruct/restore the decorative Victorian porch (including doorway components and glazing) on the west side of the house, using salvaged components where possible, and in-kind replicas of wood components where there are missing pieces.
- Replace all flat or low-sloped roofs with EPDM systems.



- Repair the porch and porch roof on the east side of the house, adjacent to the old dining room wing.
- Repair all damaged eaves, gutters, brackets or trim at the roof levels of the house. Inspect the roof for wear or damage and repair where necessary.
- Repair the gutter and leader system and install replacement components were required.
- Remove all existing storm/screen units and install new units in the first floor windows. These should replicate historical window sash and be made of wood.
- Repair all deteriorated window, door and decorative trim using identical wood, Dutchman patches, or epoxy resin systems. Replace all damaged window flashing with new copper.
- Repair all cracked or broken window panes, as well as sash and stops.
- Install new windows in north kitchen and south entry.
- Retain paint conservator. Sample all exterior paint and get lab analysis of colors.
- Strip paint from all clapboard and trim surfaces. Repaint the house using data from paint analysis to replicate 1875 color scheme.
- Install new security system linked to police headquarters.
- Upgrade hard-wired fire alarm system.
- Initiate pest control program; test framing and foundations for infestation.
- Connect to city water system for future public use.

#### Phase II—Interior Renovation for Center for Cultural Diversity

Timetable: years 3 and 4

Cost: \$350-400,000.

- Design and build a new ADA standard access ramp on the south side of the house, entering the old south kitchen area. Install new wide door at this entrance.
- Create new kitchen in Room 100 to serve the public functions of the new Center for Cultural Diversity. New wallboard, ceiling, window trim, lighting, etc.
- Restore Room 101, Dining Room, with new paint finishes to match early color scheme. Furnish the room for classroom use and install new lighting. Replace new doors with four panel to match c. 1875 doors.
- Stair halls: 102 and 204: strip, repair and refinish stair and balustrade. Strip and repaint all existing mouldings and walls. Repair plaster. Install new lighting fixture in ceiling (replica of c. 1875 gasolier) and upstairs sconces. Restore stained or cut glass in transom window.
- Finish installation of plumbing fixtures and finishes in Bath 104. Tile floor, new lighting, door, paint finishes.
- Install ADA compliant fixtures in bath 103, including grab bars, door hardware, etc.
- Room 105: install new wallboard, lighting, mouldings to match Victorian décor in other 1875 rooms. Create new classroom/reading room in this space. Re-hang sliding doors salvaged from nearby house. New paint finishes.
- Room 106: as above, create new classroom space around restored décor and finishes.
- Room 107: create new entry and office/Xerox space with new wallboard, ceiling, trim, doors, and paint finishes.

- Sand, repair and refinish all finish flooring in first floor. Install new wood flooring in Room 107 and new tile flooring in Rooms 100, 103 and 104.
- Rehabilitate Rooms 200, 201, 202 for office uses, retaining plaster walls and ceilings where possible and installing new wallboard where necessary. Repaint walls and ceilings; refinish wood floors. Install new lighting.
- Repair, rehab and refinish Caretaker's Apartment (Rooms 203-207).
- Install new air conditioning system using basement and attic areas for ductwork.
- New sign system for house and site, marking it for use as the Center for Cultural Diversity.
- Upgrade the existing electrical service to handle A/C loads and new lighting.
- Perform all necessary upgrades and repairs to electrical system throughout the house.

### Phase III—Site Improvements

Timetable: year 5.

Cost: \$100-150,000.

- Construct new parking lots at north and south areas near house. At least two handicapped parking spaces should be provided nearest the ramp at the south side.
- Rehabilitate the old barn/granary for possible interpretive uses associated with the farm and fields surrounding the building.
- Undertake an archaeological investigation at areas surrounding the house, barn and other known outbuildings to determine the potential for excavation of significant artifacts from history or pre-history on this site.
- Repair and rehabilitate the existing approach road and install new signs at South Middlebush Road.
- Install new site lighting to increase safety and visibility on the site and approach road.
- Rehabilitate gazebo, well and other outbuildings near the house for possible interpretive use.
- Develop a comprehensive landscape and planting plan for the site, using the services of professional landscape architects.
- Develop a long-range maintenance plan for the site and buildings that will help to manage the work in the future.



# I. Introduction

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Project Description

The Meadows Foundation, a not-for-profit conservation and educational corporation based in Somerset County, New Jersey, commissioned this Historic Structure Report in 1999. The report follows the format suggested by the State of New Jersey's Historic Preservation Office in its latest guidelines. The subject property is one of several early Dutch houses listed as contributing resources in the Six Mile Run Historic District (SR 7/14/93; NR 10/25/95). It is owned by the Township of Franklin and operated by the Meadows Foundation as part of a long-term lease arrangement with the Township. The Van Liew-Suydam House is now located on a 0.88-acre parcel of the original farmstead, at the intersection of South Middlebush Road and Blackwells Mills Road. This HSR has been funded, in large part, by a grant from the Somerset County Cultural and Heritage Commission. Work began in the spring of 2000, and concluded in late 2001. The office of Mark Alan Hewitt, AIA directed the project team during the yearlong study under a contract with the Meadows Foundation dated May 11, 2000.

The Meadows Foundation is one of New Jersey's most successful conservation organizations. For over 20 years its mission has been to "Give the Past A Future" by saving and maintaining historic properties in Somerset County for the enjoyment of the public. The organization began as a grass-roots effort by local citizens to save the Symen Van Wickle house from demolition by developers. In 1976, when the owners put the house and 6 acres of prime land up for sale, a group of concerned people in Franklin Township took action to insure the preservation of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Dutch dwelling and its site. Applying to the State of New Jersey under the Green Acres land conservation program, the group secured an initial purchase grant of \$45,000.00 in 1977. In succeeding years it successfully restored the building for community use, installed a new septic field and heating system, and landscaped the property on Easton Avenue. Today a full schedule of cultural events at the Van Wickle house offers the public concerts, picnics, educational seminars, an annual canoe race, and outdoor activities for scouting groups.

Building upon its extraordinary success at the Van Wickle house, the Meadows Foundation (named for the traditional title of that estate) expanded its preservation activities by taking on the stewardship of three other historic properties in Franklin Township. Several of these, including the Van Liew house, are located within the boundaries of the Six Mile Run preserve. They include the Franklin Inn on Amwell Road, the Blackwells Mills Canal House at 598 Canal Road, and two properties within a mile of the Van Liew farmstead—the Hagemann Farm (205 S. Middlebush Road) and Wyckoff-Garretson House. Since several of the farm properties are related in style and type, the Foundation has begun to plan for a multiple-site interpretive program that will allow the public to visit traditional Dutch-American agricultural sites. For instance, the Hageman barns are currently under restoration and re-use as a community performing arts center. The Van Liew-Suydam house will become a teaching center for cultural diversity in the Somerset-Middlesex area. All of the

houses and outbuildings maintained by the Meadows Foundation are open to the public and will remain accessible to the entire community. The Foundation takes its responsibility seriously as a vital community steward by preserving the heritage of this area of Somerset County. This project is only one of several publicly-funded studies that will extend the outreach of the organization and help to fulfill its long-range goals.

## **1.2 Purpose of Study**

Although the area of Franklin Township known as Middlebush has long been associated with Dutch heritage and material culture, individual dwellings and farm buildings have not been studied in great detail. During the 1930s the Historic American Buildings Survey documented several of the Dutch houses in the area, using available research and physical dating techniques. But much has been learned since then. It has long been the intention of the Meadows Foundation to complete research projects on all of its six historic properties, and eventually to restore or rehabilitate the houses and farm structures. Thus, when funding became available through the county, the Foundation submitted grant applications for several of its buildings.

The Van Liew-Suydam House is a late-19<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse located on a picturesque hilltop site near the center of the township. Because of its visibility, accessibility and relatively modern construction, the Meadows Foundation has elected to re-use the building as a community education center that will bring residents of Franklin Township to the beautiful Six-Mile Run area on a year-round basis. The new Center for Cultural Diversity will occupy the interior of the farmhouse, while the exterior of the building and grounds will be restored to approximate the character of a 19<sup>th</sup> century Franklin Township farmstead. With this re-use strategy as a blueprint, this study is intended to document the existing conditions of the house and site, recommend strategies for conservation and re-use of the historic fabric, and set out a long-range plan for the implementation of the Meadows Foundation's planned Center for Cultural Diversity.

## **1.3 Location of Property**

The Van Liew-Suydam House is located at 280 South Middlebush Road in Franklin Township, New Jersey. The farmstead lies a few miles east of the Millstone River and Blackwell's Mills, and about six miles southwest of New Brunswick (hence its historic designation as "Six Mile Run"). The property is a rectangular parcel of land on the east side of the road, approximately 0.88 acres in area. The house is located on the USGS New Jersey Quadrant, Datum WGS84, and is designated on the latest survey as Franklin Township, Block 85, Lot 7. It stands at approximately 105 feet above sea level.

## 1.4 Personnel

The office of Mark Alan Hewitt, AIA, Architect, with Acroterion, LLC, James B. Huffman, PE, researched and wrote the Historic Structures Report. The following personnel contributed to the document:

Mark Alan Hewitt  
Mark Alan Hewitt, AIA, Architect  
Principal-in-charge, Documentation, Research, Cost Estimating and Writing

Janet Foster, Director  
Acroterion, LLC  
Historical Research, Writing and Conservation Assessment

James Huffman, PE  
Structural and Building Systems Evaluation  
Structural and Mechanical Engineering

Jerry Bruno, Jr.  
Senior Designer & CAD Specialist  
Mark Alan Hewitt, AIA, Architect  
CAD drawings, perspectives, documentation

Dalibor Fikr  
Junior CAD Specialist  
Mark Alan Hewitt, AIA, Architect

## 1.5 Acknowledgements

The professional team gratefully acknowledges the support and assistance of members of the committee on the restoration of the Wyckoff Garretson House.

Mark Else  
Meadows Foundation President

David Brook, Esquire  
Van Liew Project Director  
Meadows Foundation

Kathleen Williamson, Past President  
Meadows Foundation

Joanne Kaiser  
Meadows Foundation



## 2. Methodology

David Munyak  
Meadows Foundation

## 2. Methodology

The consultant team followed a methodology consistent with New Jersey state and national standards on the research and production of Historic Structures Reports. This method reflects the latest revisions to the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Structures*. Physical fabric from all periods was considered equally in the evaluation of the structure's historical and aesthetic significance.

The first phase consisted of research in archives, libraries and county records to determine the property history and ownership succession. During this phase, the architectural historian consulted local and state library collections to determine where pertinent material on the Van Liew site could be found. She prepared a bibliography and copied relevant material for use in the writing of the historical portions of the HSR. Both primary and secondary source materials were consulted. At the end of the research period, findings were employed to corroborate observations made in the field.

Second, the architect and engineer performed a comprehensive documentation and field survey of the site and house. This survey included field notes, sketch drawings, photography of the interior and exterior of the building (much recorded with a digital camera), and consultation of existing source materials on the history and physical condition of the site. After measurements and survey work were complete, the team prepared a set of plans, sections, and elevations of the existing conditions on AutoCAD R2000 files. The drawings were used as baseline documents for all subsequent work.

The team performed a thorough investigation of the physical fabric of the building using both non-invasive and invasive techniques. Once the likely areas of significant physical evidence were identified, further investigations were made to determine the structural and constructional characteristics of various building elements, and establish a firmer chronology for the building's main phases. In addition, David Brook of the Meadows Foundation provided a chronology of work done since the house was acquired in 1988.

In the investigation of the physical fabric of the building, methodical room-by-room observation of the interiors and elevation-by-elevation of the exterior produced much of the necessary information. In selected areas of the building, probing beneath the surface was required to answer questions about materials, structure, and form.

The team met several times with David Brook and other members of the Meadows Foundation to collect data on potential programmatic needs and discuss potential rehabilitation strategies. Final recommendations have been prepared using information obtained from the Meadows Foundation, Somerset County, and other interested parties. The consultant team has critically evaluated the program in relation to preservation and



conservation standards, and formed its recommendations to conform to both client needs and protection of the historic fabric of the farmhouse and its site.

Once a complete range of historical, program, and architectural data was collected and analyzed, we drafted a final report outlining the history, significance and potential rehabilitation strategies for the property. This document reflects both the empirical evidence and the best current professional practice in historic property management and conservation of physical artifacts. Recommendations are listed in order of priorities for protection of the physical fabric, health safety and welfare of occupants, applicability to program needs, cost of the work, and a timeline for improvements over the near-term life cycle of the building. We hope that the final draft of the document will serve as a planning and conservation tool that may be used for 10 or more years, as the property enters a new phase in its useful life.



### 3. The Farmstead

## 3. The Van Liew Suydam Farmstead

### 3.1 Location and Ownership

The original Frederick Van Liew farmstead occupied some 300 acres on the west side of the “middle line” of the Eastern Precinct of the earliest surveyed map of Somerset County, published by Benjamin Morgan in 1766. The original Dutch settlers had been drawn to this area of bottom land for its agricultural potential. Indeed, geographers mark the belt of the Inner Coastal Plain below the Raritan and along the lower Delaware as the state’s richest farming region, containing a large percentage of the best Jersey soils. Following the earliest trading settlements along the river, Dutch farmers from Long Island purchased substantial tracts from the Twenty-four Proprietors just after 1700 and established a church and village at Middlebush. The nearest other villages were Hillsborough, Blackwell’s Mills, and New Brunswick—soon to become the cultural heart of the area. Farming sustained the economy in this region until the mid-twentieth century. Because the agricultural activities on the land changed marginally from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present, Dutch heritage and folkways have lingered in this unique region of the state. For instance, many of the best-preserved Dutch barns in the state have been found in the Middlebush area.

As discussed below, the farm property on which the house stands had several major owners before its purchase by the state in the late 1970s. The property was initially a part of the Frederick Van Liew tract, acquired in 1701 as portion of a land deal between former Dutch colonial residents of Flatbush on Long Island and New Jersey speculators John Harrison and John Willcocks. In 1811 the 71-acre farmstead opposite Skillman’s Lane was sold to Joseph Suydam with three other lots by Joseph Skillman, who had acquired the land from the Van Liew family. Suydam was himself a Dutchman from Brooklyn, born there in 1772. The present house was constructed by his son, Peter in 1875. Suydam and his heirs farmed the property until the 1920s, when it changed hands twice before being sold to John B. French. He continued to work the land until a storm destroyed several of the original farm buildings in 1950. The final owners of the house, Robert & Dorothy O’Connell, bought the property in 1961 and converted the house to a modern residence and demolished several more of the outbuildings. Nonetheless, the agricultural land around the residence continued in cultivation prior to state acquisition as part of the Six Mile Run Reservoir Project in 1973. The Meadows Foundation began leasing the land from Franklin Township in 1988.

### 3.2 Site Description

Visitors to the Six Mile Run area south of the modern village of Middlebush see a landscape little changed from its agricultural beginnings in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. Proceeding south from the village are farms on both west and east sides of the narrow road, which maintains its historic hedgerows and southwest trajectory despite modern improvements. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture continues to lease the divided fields to farmers, maintaining the historic land use and conserving the topos and vegetation. The farms on the western side of

the road are spaced approximately 1500 feet apart, and are divided by distinctive European field patterns running east-west. These long, narrow fields are remnants of the ancient Dutch land subdivision that characterized the Hudson Valley. The farms on the eastern side of the road are larger, and the topography more varied than on the west. Preservation of this landscape, and the Dutch family land divisions, will insure that future generations understand the hardships, striving and innovation of these early settlers as they made their way in a new land.

Aerial photogrammetric maps flown in the 1970s for the Six Mile Run Reservoir project (Fig. 1) show the configuration of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century farm buildings on the Suydam acreage. The present entrance (aligned with Blackwell's Mills Road) off of Middlebush Road may have been a secondary access during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as the road through the farm passes around the house and veers south to connect to Skillman's Lane. Three of the major outbuildings were standing during the early 1970s: the granary, the machine storage shed, and a cow barn nearest Blackwell's Mills Road. There may also have been a chicken coop to the south of the house. Of these, only the granary-garage remains today, although the foundations of other buildings are visible just below grade. Archaeology may uncover significant artifactual evidence of life on the farm when these buildings are excavated. The farmhouse stands at the center of the farm plot, several hundred feet east of Middlebush Road. To the north, a major hedgerow divides the farmstead from its nearest neighbor. Otherwise, the buildings remain in their traditional agricultural landscape, relatively undisturbed by modern development.

### 3.3 Cultural and Historical Significance

As outlined in the Federal criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, the Van Liew-Suydam house and property possess significance for the cultural history of not only New Jersey but the nation. Indeed, the site qualifies under three pertinent criteria recognized by the National Parks Service in its latest bulletin: B) persons or families of historical significance; C) outstanding or characteristic building design or construction; and D) potential to yield important information about cultural history.

Under Criterion B, the site is associated with two prominent Dutch-American families with early ties to the settlement of central New Jersey during the colonial period. Both the Van Liew and Suydam clans are well-documented in historical genealogies and played important roles in the history of Somerset county.

Furthermore, the farmhouse represents a fine example of a Victorian agricultural dwelling common to the eastern seaboard during the mid- and late nineteenth century. Illustrations in the *American Agriculturalist* (Fig. 5) show plans and massing designs very similar to this house throughout the 1870s. Although not an elaborate farmhouse by standards of its era (for the Suydams were not among the wealthiest farmers in the state), its elegant porch and fine exterior details are highly characteristic of both style and type as stipulated in Criterion C. Although many of these houses existed on their original farm sites until well into the late

1900s, their number has diminished in recent years, making the preservation of this house especially timely.

Perhaps most importantly, the relatively undisturbed agricultural land around the house, including the sites of outbuildings and barns, makes this site a prime venue for archaeology. Given the rich finds in nearby farms, such as the Wyckoff and Hagemann properties to the north, it is likely that digs in the area around the house and barns will yield “important information about cultural history,” particularly about life and husbandry of Dutch Americans during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. We therefore recommend that the house and site be nominated for individual designation on both the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places.



## 4. Historical Development

## 4. Historical and Architectural Development

### 4.1 Historical Background: The Dutch Settlement on the Raritan

Dutch settlers came to New Jersey with the earliest white colonists in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century and were quickly drawn to its agricultural potential. With the founding of New Netherland and the charter of the Dutch West India Company in 1621, an area of influence in the lands of the Lenape native Americans, between the Delaware and Hudson Rivers, was opened to Dutch farmers. However, the Dutch land grants in Pavonia (present-day Jersey City) were unsuccessful and Indian conflicts dissuaded further settlement. Oddly, after the British ousted the Dutch from control of New Netherland in 1664, Dutch-American settlers from Long Island began to set their sights on the rich farmland of the Raritan River valley.<sup>1</sup>

Following the Restoration of the English monarchy under William of Orange, relations between the English and Dutch thawed, but tensions remained in the New World. The increasingly prosperous Dutch and Huguenot merchants of New York City dominated politics and culture in the colony at the end of the century. When New Jersey's Proprietary government opened the way for settlement, many Dutch were compelled to leave New York as religious persecution increased under the English colonial governor, Lord Cornbury (1702-08). Early in the new century a group of well-established merchants from the area called Flatland or Beverwyck (now Brooklyn) purchased a 10,000-acre tract from John Harrison. This land was located south of the Raritan River (a waterway soon to be opened to trade), and between the Millstone River and a prominent Indian path running northeast and southwest toward Philadelphia that came to be known as the "middle line." The Dutch speculators included Cornelius Wyckoff, Peter Cortelyou, Stoffel Probasco, Theodore Polhemus, Hendrick Lott, Hendrick Hendricks, Jacques Cortelyou, and Denis Tunis. The area promised rich farm land, and was strategically located between the new villages of Raritan (Somerville) and New Brunswick.<sup>2</sup>

In 1703 a Dutch Reformed congregation was formed at the Three Mile Run, near New Brunswick. One of its founding elders was the Frieslander, Symen Van Wickle, who built a sturdy house nearby in the 1720s. Although its members labored to gain a permanent pastor, none was supplied and the congregation moved closer to the large farms at Six Mile Run. There in 1717, near the common of Middlebush village, was founded a Reformed Church that would figure prominently in the religious history of not only New Jersey but the nation. The elders of this church included two sons of Cornelius Wyckoff, Simon and Jacob (see family history, below). With a larger and more prosperous congregation and a growing

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<sup>1</sup> See John E. Pomfret, *Colonial New Jersey: A History*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons: 1973, pp. 13-18; Pamela & J.W. Smit, *The Dutch in America: 1609-1970*, Dobbs Ferry, NY, Oceana, 1972, pp. 1-7.

<sup>2</sup> James P. Snell, *A History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties*, Philadelphia, Everts & Peck, 1881, pp. 803-804.

Dutch population, the mother church could not ignore a request for a pastor. In 1719 Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen (1691-1748) decamped from the Netherlands to take up preaching to four New Jersey churches in the area around New Brunswick, including Middlebush. His fiery sermons and zealous spirituality quickly gained him fame and followers throughout the middle colonies.<sup>3</sup> At the center of the first “Great Awakening,” he is now credited with fostering the beginnings of evangelicalism in the New World. Clearly the Dutch cultural presence in the Raritan valley was robust during the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Estimates of population by Charles Stansfield indicate that from a base of nearly 1000 settlers in 1700, the Dutch expanded their numbers in New Jersey to 16% of the 184,139 state residents in 1790 (a total of 29,462 persons).<sup>4</sup>

The Middlebush area of Franklin Township maintained its predominantly Dutch heritage throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the 20<sup>th</sup>, as families passed their land on to relations and friends. The 1873 Beers Atlas (Fig. 3) shows Dutch ownership of many of the approximately 300 farms in the township in that year. Prominent families included the Voorhees, Wyckoff, Garretson, Hageman, Schenk, Van Arsdalen, Nevius, Suydam and Van Liew clans, who often intermarried. As we shall see, the Wyckoff-Garretson house amply demonstrates the continuity of Dutch family lines and traditions in this area of Somerset County.

## 4.2 The Building and Its Owners

In the unfinished attic, on the south gable end wall of the Van Liew-Suydam house, is a curious inscription, in white paint, reading “Bilt 1875”. Although there is generally no reason to rely on graffiti in dating a building, this “signature” provides strong documentation for a farmhouse in the Italianate style, which reached its zenith in rural America in the decades following the Civil War. The house is set far back from the road, commanding a view of the Six Mile run valley, and the fertile fields which supported the family who lived in the house. The house is not oriented with its front to the south, which is the typical pattern for the earliest houses in the region. In the earliest houses, the main rooms of the house faced to the south and east to gain more light and what little solar warmth could be gained in the winter months.

The siting of the Van Liew-Suydam House is based on considerations of view, of orientation to a road, and for interior size. This arrangement has formal, little-used front rooms facing north, while the everyday family rooms face the sunny rear of the house. All of these are characteristic of 19<sup>th</sup> century vernacular architecture, rather than traditional 18<sup>th</sup> century rural building practice.<sup>5</sup> These and other characteristics of the house point to a new building or large renovation in the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>3</sup> Snell, pp. 818-819; Pomfret, pp. 219-220.

<sup>4</sup> Charles A. Stansfield, Jr., *A Geography of New Jersey*, New Brunswick, Rutgers Univ. Press: 1988, pp. 108-109.

<sup>5</sup> Gabriel Lanier and Bernard Herman, *Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic: Looking at Buildings and Landscapes*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997, pages 278-280.



Local tradition (cited by Betty Scott) also dates the house to 1874, constructed for Peter Suydam.<sup>6</sup> It also notes that he moved an older building “up the hill further away from the road” and enlarged the house to its present size. But this is curiously at odds with map evidence from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Investigation of the house suggests that an old house was dismantled and its timber framing used for some of the existing house. This is notable in beams in the basement, supporting the first floor, and a few heavy timbers elsewhere in the building. However, the structure that stands on the north side is a house of the mid-1870s, with the size, plan, and details one would expect to find in a farmhouse of that time. The fact that it re-uses timbers from an earlier house would not necessarily make it an “enlargement” of an 18<sup>th</sup> century dwelling. For this, physical evidence, discussed below, suggests that a small farm dwelling in the location of the present dining room pre-dated the 1875 build, and that the larger house was in fact a virtually complete renovation and addition to this earlier dwelling.

There is a complex story behind the property and the families who occupied a farm here at the corner of South Middlebush Road and Skillman’s Lane. Among the early Dutch settlers who came to Franklin Township, beginning in 1701, was one Frederick Van Liew.<sup>7</sup> One of eight members of a Dutch company from New York, they purchased 10,000 acres of land from John Harrison and John Willcocks. The Harrison tract, as it came to be known, was located between the Millstone River and the “Old Indian Path”, today’s Route 27, southwest of New Brunswick. The “Middle line” of the tract, which was an important property line divider, became South Middlebush Road.

Van Liew acquired Lot 3 in the land division, two separate tracts not quite parallel to each other and on opposite sides of the Middlebush Road. The homestead was at Three Mile Run, at a location later known as Voorhees Station.<sup>8</sup> The Van Liews owned considerable land, and came to acquire more through marriage and purchase throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is not clear from deeds when Frederick Van Liew acquired the land where the present Van Liew-Suydam house stands, but it is certain that he never lived there himself.

The earliest deed found for the property dates to 1800, when Peter Van Liew sold an approximately 100-acre tract of land to Joseph Skillman. Skillman purchased this and three other small, non- contiguous tracts of land from the Van Liews for 550 pounds (not dollars). Peter had no deed to the property, but was required to swear in front of judges that he owned the property, which he had received as inheritance from his father Frederick Van

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<sup>6</sup> Betty K. Scott, *Somerset’s History Blooms in “The Meadows”*, “The Van Liew-Suydam-French House”, privately printed, 1998, page 34.

<sup>7</sup> Frederick Van Liew, birthdate unknown, died 1756; son of Frederick Hendrickson, who emigrated to Jamaica, New York from Holland in 1670; married Helena Denice (1700-1784). They had five children, all of whom settled in Somerset County. From James P. Snell, *History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey*, Everts and Peck, Philadelphia, Publishers, 881, page 809.

<sup>8</sup> William Brahm, *Franklin Township, Somerset County, NJ: A History*, Printed by Franklin Township Public Library, 1998, page 52-53.

Liew<sup>9</sup>. The deed notes that Frederick Van Liew had purchased the property from William Jones,<sup>10</sup> but the date and nature of that transaction is unrecorded. The deed further states that Peter Van Liew “now lives” on the property being sold, thus proving that a house stood for at least some time in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>11</sup>

From 1800-1811, Joseph Skillman owned the farmstead we know as the “Van Liew-Suydam House”. His tenure on the farm was brief, and in 1811 he re-sold the property to Joseph and Magdalena Suydam.<sup>12</sup> The Suydams purchased the main house lot, now 71 acres, as well as the three small lots that Skillman had purchased from the Van Liewes. The Suydams paid \$ 4, 524 for the four lots, all in Franklin Township.

Joseph Suydam was a member of another Dutch family of long descent in Franklin Township. Although the Suydams were not among the original purchasers of the Harrison Tract, Cornelius Suydam, grandson of a Dutch immigrant to Flatlands (Brooklyn), New York, was settled in Raritan by 1717.<sup>13</sup> Joseph Suydam was born “on the old homestead” in 1772, and grew up to be a farmer like his father and grandfather before him. Joseph Suydam (1772-1867) married Magdalena Brown (1774-1851) in 1797. Deeds and census information list her name as Magdalena, although Snell’s *History of Somerset* refers to her as Mary. The Suydams had seven children.

The 1850 Map of Somerset County (Fig. 2), generally an accurate view of the rural community, clearly shows the intersection of South Middlebush road and Skillmans’s Lane. There is no house where the present one stands, but a notation for “J. Suydam” and a mark for a house to the northeast, a house which was still set well back from the road.

The years passed, and the Suydams lived, in the words of Snell’s local history, “a quiet and unostentatious life.” The detailed 1860 census gives the first look at the family. In that year, Joseph, the patriarch, was 87 years old, still listing himself as a farmer and head of household. His real estate was worth \$15,000; his personal estate only \$1,000. He was “Land Rich, Cash Poor”. He had purchased other farms than the one where he lived, in 1814 and

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<sup>9</sup> This Frederick Van Liew (1727-1758) was the son of the Harrison Tract purchaser. Frederick (2) had at least two sons; the elder, also Frederick (3), remained living on the Van Liew homestead farm located west of the village of Middlebush; son Peter Van Liew inherited other lands from his father and established his home there. From Snell, *History of Somerset County*, page 809. Frederick (3) was the builder of the Somerset County Courthouse constructed in 1799-1800.

<sup>10</sup> William Jones may or may not be related to on “R. Joans” who owned property north of the Harrison Tract about 1700. The notation is noted on a map created by Anne B. Cook, titled “*Lots South of New Brunswick*”, and created in 1929 from information she had gathered in researching the Proprietors of East Jersey. The map is at Rutgers University, drawer 13.022. While not directly relevant to the history of the Van Liew-Suydam House, it introduces another historic character into the area whose land dealings reflect the rich, speculative history of the area.

<sup>11</sup> Somerset County Book of Deeds, Book B, page 112.

<sup>12</sup> Somerset County Book of Deeds, Book F, page 460.

<sup>13</sup> Snell, *History of Somerset County*, page 832.

1828.<sup>14</sup> Joseph lived with his son Peter, also a farmer. At 50, Peter was still waiting to inherit land, and still working on the farm for his father.

This was a traditional pattern in Dutch-American communities, although by the 1850s it had broken down in many families and communities. The Suydams stuck to the old ways, however, and probably to the old house mentioned as extant in 1800 as well. The household in 1860 included Peter and his wife, Willominna, age 39, their son Cornelius, age 21, a son George, age 14, and a daughter Eliza J., age 12. Harry Brady, age 24, a laborer from Ireland, and Betsey Sullivan, age 33, also from Ireland, lived on the farm and helped with the farm chores.<sup>15</sup>

In 1867, the old man died, leaving a will dividing his lands among three sons; his other four children already having predeceased him. The eldest, Abraham J. Suydam, served as executor, and organized the inheritance. Abraham J. had some financial acuity or at least interest, and had served as Franklin Township Tax Collector from 1856-60, and previously served on the Township Committee in 1842 and 1843.<sup>16</sup>

As a result of the settling of the estate, Peter Suydam, who had lived and worked with his father daily, had to purchase the farm from his brothers Abraham and Andrew for \$10,000 in 1868.<sup>17</sup> Peter Suydam's holdings now included the 104 acre farm parcel, "along Middlebush Road and Skillman's Lane", a separate tract of meadowland, and 7 acres of woodland. Sale of other farmland provided cash to the three brothers, and seems to have set Peter to thinking of building a new house and becoming a "gentleman".

The 1870 Census shows Peter J. Suydam at age 60, with \$30,000 worth of real estate, and \$10,000 in personal wealth, putting him well above the average for Franklin Township's farmers. His wife, Willimina, is listed as age 40, only one year older than the census takers noted a decade before! Their older son Cornelius had moved out of the house to start his own family, while George, age 23, and Eliza Jane, age 20, remained at home.<sup>18</sup> Peter did not entirely abandon his father's habits of land acquisition and thrift. In 1869, he purchased 42

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<sup>14</sup> Somerset County Book of Deeds, Book G, page 742 and Book M, page 649.

<sup>15</sup> United States Bureau of the Census, *1860 Population Census of the United States*, Franklin Township, Somerset County, page 54. The 1850 Census is the first detailed census, and would provide valuable information about the family from a decade earlier, but the original Franklin Township records were damaged and are illegible. The manuscript Census was reviewed on microfilm at the Morristown and Morris Township Free Public Library Local History Room.

<sup>16</sup> Snell, *History of Somerset County*, page 813-14, 833.

<sup>17</sup> Somerset County Book of Deeds, Book X, No. 3, page 555.

<sup>18</sup> *1870 Population Census of the United States*, Franklin Township, Somerset County, N.J.

more acres along Middlebush Road<sup>19</sup> and in 1878, he purchased a 20-acre tract “along the bend of the road leading from Middlebush to the Millstone River”<sup>20</sup>

The 1873 Beer’s Atlas of Somerset County (Fig. 3) does not show a house in the location of the present “Van Liew-Suydam House” but notes that “P. J. Suydam” owned the property with a blacksmith shop on the property directly opposite Blackwell Mills Road. A neighboring house, reached by a long driveway off Skillman’s Lane, was noted as P.J. Suydam’s as well, and was presumably his residence at the time the map was made. That house is still extant, although greatly altered on the exterior.

The Suydams may have been renting a neighbors’ house because their own new house was already under construction. The house shown on the 1850 County map is no longer visible on the 1873 map; quite possibly because it was demolished, and its timbers salvaged for re-use in the new house the Suydams were building. Peter Suydam lived to see and enjoy his new farmhouse, with its fashionable Italianate style porch overlooking the valley of Six Mile Run, and the fields he toiled in for so long. Peter died at age 77, in August 1887. His will divides his property between his three children, Cornelius, George, and Eliza Jane, now the wife of Abraham Voorhees.<sup>21</sup>

Cornelius Van Nuys Suydam and his wife Elsie inherited the house and seemed to have moved in. They farmed, and began selling off some of the parcels of land which were not related to the house lot. In 1888, they sold the 20 acre parcel Peter purchased in 1878<sup>22</sup> and in 1892 they sold additional acreage.<sup>23</sup> They actively farmed the remaining 100 acre parcel on which Cornelius’ fathers house stood. When Cornelius died in 1920, his wife Elsie inherited the farm; she died in 1922 and their daughter Annie Suydam Campbell became executrix of the estate.<sup>24</sup>

Annie lived in Middlebush, but chose to sell her parents farm in 1922 rather than move there herself. The deed notes that the sale was made for the house and 104 acres, “together with all growing rye, all growing oats, all growing corn and all growing hay now on said premises”. Annie held a \$ 5000 mortgage on the land from the buyer, David Setzer.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Somerset County Book of Deeds, Book B-4, page 186.

<sup>20</sup> Somerset County Book of Deeds, Book O-5, page 295.

<sup>21</sup> Somerset County Book of Wills # 9265, Book M, page 80.

<sup>22</sup> Somerset County Deed Book O-5, page 295.

<sup>23</sup> Somerset County Deed Book, R-6, page 130.

<sup>24</sup> Somerset County Book of Wills, # 9465, Book W, p. 12.

<sup>25</sup> Somerset County Deed Book, T 18, page 359.

David Setzer also had taken a mortgage with Jacob and Anna Pinnolis of Manhattan, and was forced to sell the farm in 1924 to settle his debts. The new buyer was John B. French of New Brunswick.<sup>26</sup>

The twentieth century life at the French farm is chronicled in Betty Scott's research, *Somerset's History Blooms in "The Meadows"*. During this time, it remained a working farm of over 100 acres, where the French's raised chickens, pigs, and cows, and grew corn, hay, asparagus, and strawberries. The house served as a two-family home for the purchaser, Mr. and Mrs. John French and their daughter in the smaller wing, and the French's son and his wife and two children in the larger wing. The recollections also note that a hired man lived in the house, in the small rear room over the service wing.<sup>27</sup>

The declining economics of a family farm are reflected in this property. A 1950 storm destroyed the chicken house, and severely damaged other outbuildings. The French family did not have the resources to repair the damage, and outbuildings were deteriorated and removed, marking the end of the property's useful life as a farm.

John French held the farm for nearly forty years. After his death in 1961, his executrix, Florence Gulick sold the farm to Herbert and Anna Gaub of Old Bridge for \$38,000. They divided the farm, separating a five-acre house lot from the rest of the land, and sold the house lot in 1962 to Robert and Dorothy O'Connell in 1964.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Somerset County Deed Book N 19, page 442.

<sup>27</sup> Scott, page 37-38.

<sup>28</sup> Somerset County Deed Book 1011, page 129 (1962) and Book 1147, page 448 (1964).

It was the O'Connells who transformed the property from a 19<sup>th</sup> century working farm to a 20<sup>th</sup> century residence. They added electricity and running water, rendering the old well and cistern obsolete, fixed up the house, and demolished several more useless and deteriorated old outbuildings. Oddly, they named the property "Middle Wind Farm" and used the old granary (still extant) as a store for home grown produce during the growing season. The "suburbanization" of the house, and then of the landscape might have taken place from there except for a plan by the State of New Jersey to develop a reservoir for water in the valley of the Six Mile Run. Three thousand acres were acquired by the state beginning in the early 1970s. The O'Connells sold the property to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection in 1973.<sup>29</sup> According to David Brook, the following is a history of Meadows Foundation stewardship of the building since that time:

"The State of New Jersey acquired the property for the purpose of water supply development in the 1973 with the house and outbuildings in a well-maintained condition. The house and outbuildings were rented by the State of New Jersey from the early 1970's through at least 1984. It is unclear if the last tenants had even paid their rent. During that time the tenants performed no maintenance on the house and systems within the house failed. At the time of departure, the tenants left the house with no running water, a failed boiler, failed plumbing, a collapsing main structure, deteriorated and broken chimneys, leaking roofs, rotted walls, a rotted front porch, inferior electric service and large quantities of garbage in the house and on the property, including animal feces in three rooms of the house. Once the tenants left, the property was left vacant for approximately three years and was ransacked and damaged by trespassers and local residents. Members of the Meadows Foundation and specifically David Brook began in 1987 to acquire the property from the State of New Jersey for historic preservation and community use. The Meadows Foundation, with the assistance of Franklin Township negotiated the purchase of the structures for \$100.00 from the State and the agreements were signed in October 1988. Deterioration had taken its toll by then on both the interior and exterior of the house.

"Once the Meadows Foundation took control of the property it embarked upon a detailed rebuilding and restoration of the house and each individual system. In 1988, the house and property was cleaned of the well over approximately 100 cubic yards of garbage and debris including tons of recycling of cars and farm waste. The first system to be rebuilt was the electrical service to the house. Two new 100-amp panel boxes were installed. A new entrance driveway and parking lot was installed with over 550 tons of quarry blend installed. A side driveway and handicap access parking lot was later installed on the south side of the house with over 100 tons of ground roadway added. Work during the 1990's by the Meadows Foundation, volunteers and volunteer craftsman began the arduous task of rebuilding virtually every system within the house.

"Work during the 1990's by volunteers for the Meadows Foundation constructed all new footings for the large portion of the house and then jacked-up and re-supported that portion of the house on new columns, the old large failed boiler was disassembled and removed and a new oil fired boiler was installed. All four zones of hot water baseboard had been allowed to

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<sup>29</sup> Somerset County Deed Book 1285, page 195.

freeze and all sections burst in different locations. The entire hydronic system was rebuilt and each zone was repaired, with new sections of copper added where necessary. All plumbing in the house was replaced, from the pump in the well, all lines from the well, all water pressure lines and waste and vent lines from the roof to the septic tank. The plumbing to three bathrooms was reconstructed as was the plumbing to one kitchen. All three chimneys in the house were rebuilt, with ceramic flue liners, The north chimney was reconstructed with a three cubic yard footing and two flue liners for the two fireplaces associated with it. The southeast chimney was reconstructed from the second floor with two flues and a flue line was added to the basement for the house boiler. The southwest chimney was reconstructed from the first floor with the ability to add a parlor stove on the first floor. All exposed chimney locations were constructed of brick. The corbel pattern on the exterior portions of the chimney was reconstructed to match the prior chimneys.

“All roofs on the house were replaced. The flat roofs previously had tin (metal) roofs with asphaltic materials placed on top. The asphalt had deteriorated and the metal had rusted through. The flat roofs were replaced with a torched-down MB roof. The pitched roofs were each reconstructed initially with the box gutters (yankee gutters) being rebuilt and each roof had consisted of asphalt shingles over a 24 inch cedar lath and shingle roof. The roofs were replaced with perfection shingles with a 5 1/2 inch exposure. The box gutters were reconstructed using an MB torchdown roofing membrane.

“Other improvements made to the house include the installation of underground utilities to the house, and the planting of over 75 trees to the property, including sugar maples along the driveway. Exterior siding was replaced on the east facade of the house. Due to extensive deterioration, the front porch of the house was removed as a precursor to its reconstruction. The exterior of the house has not been painted in many years and the masonry foundation is in need of repointing.”

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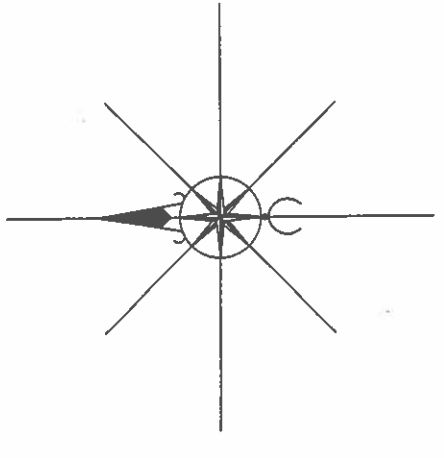
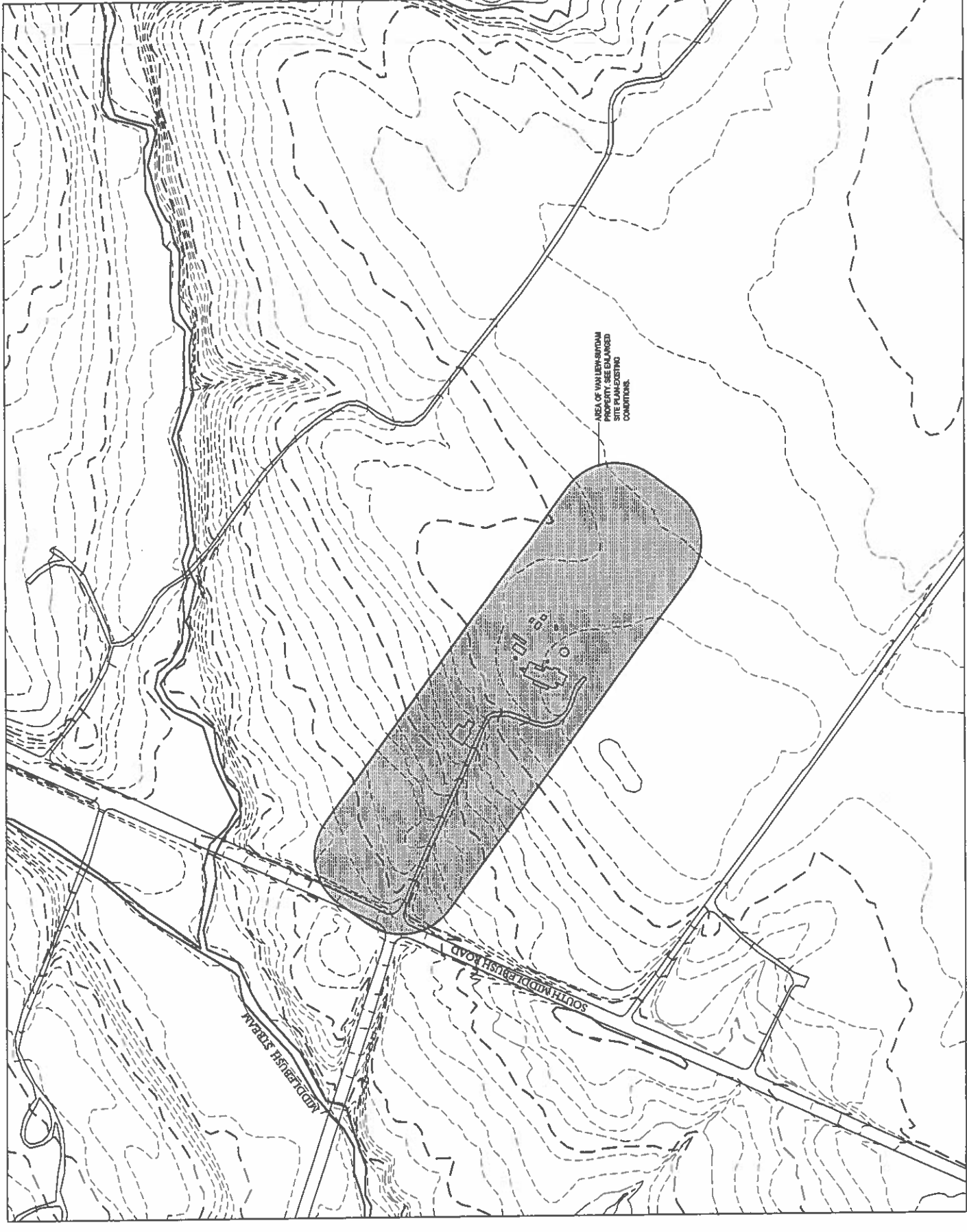
#### 4.4.3 Maps

“Map of Somerset County,” by Otley, Van Derveer and Kelly, 1850.

*Beer's Atlas of Somerset County*, 1873.

#### 4.4.4 Drawings: Existing Conditions

- E-1. Site Plan
- E-2. Plot Plan
- E-3. Cellar Floor Plan
- E-4. First Floor Plan
- E-5. Second Floor Plan
- E-6. North Elevation
- E-7. West Elevation
- E-8. South Elevation
- E-9. East Elevation
- E-10. Transverse Building Section
- E-11. Transverse Building Section



SITE PLAN - EXISTING CONDITIONS

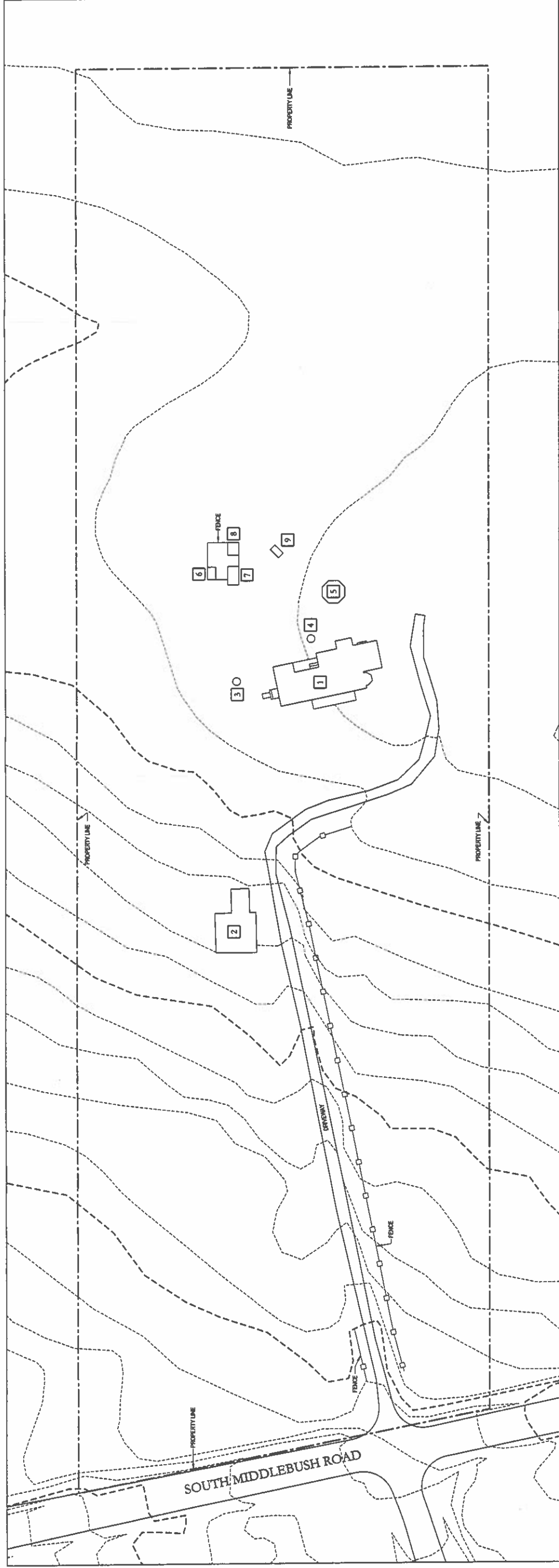


DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - EXISTING CONDITIONS  
**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**  
 SOUTH MIDDLEBUSH ROAD, SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

MARK ALAN HEWITT, AIA  
*Architect*

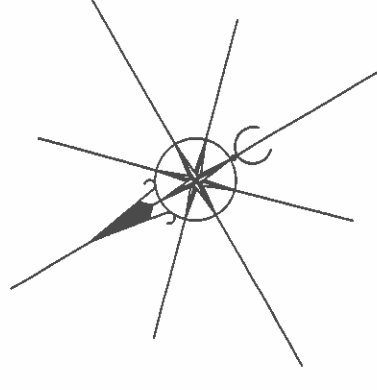
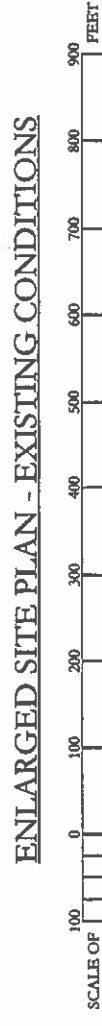
1 JUNE 2002

E-1



**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM PROPERTY KEY**

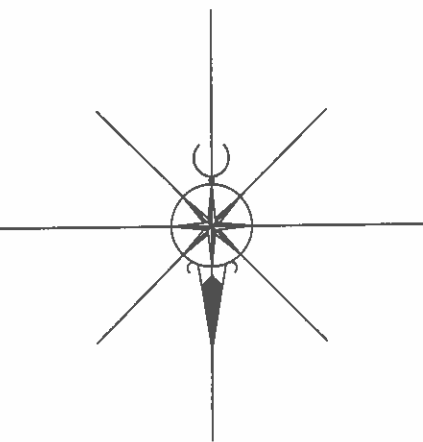
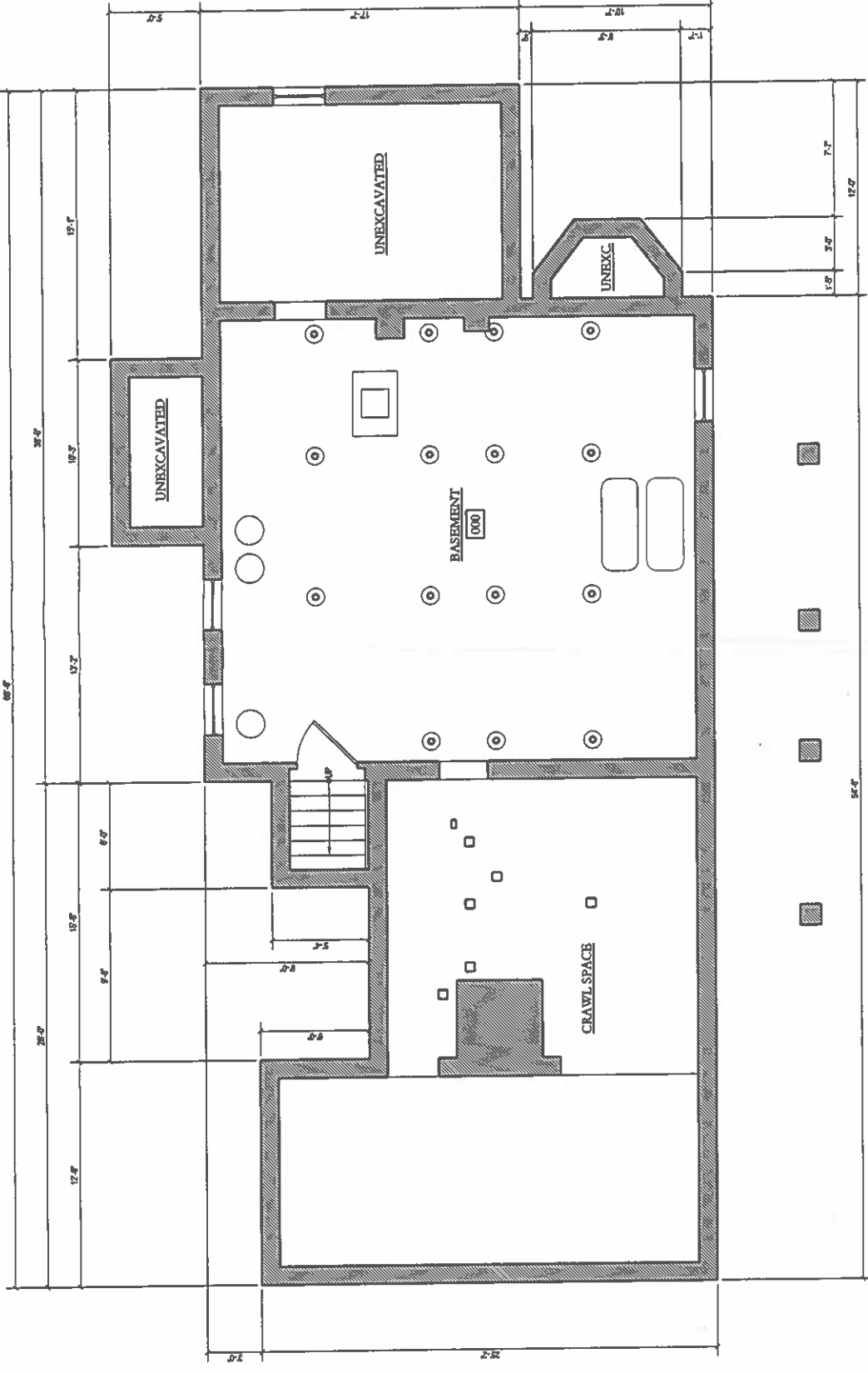
1	VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE	7	SHED
2	BARN	8	SHED
3	ORILLED WELL	9	SHED
4	HAND DUG WELL		
5	GAZERO		
6	SHED		



DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - EXISTING CONDITIONS  
**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**  
 SOUTH MIDDLEBUSH ROAD, SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

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BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN - EXISTING CONDITIONS



DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - EXISTING CONDITIONS

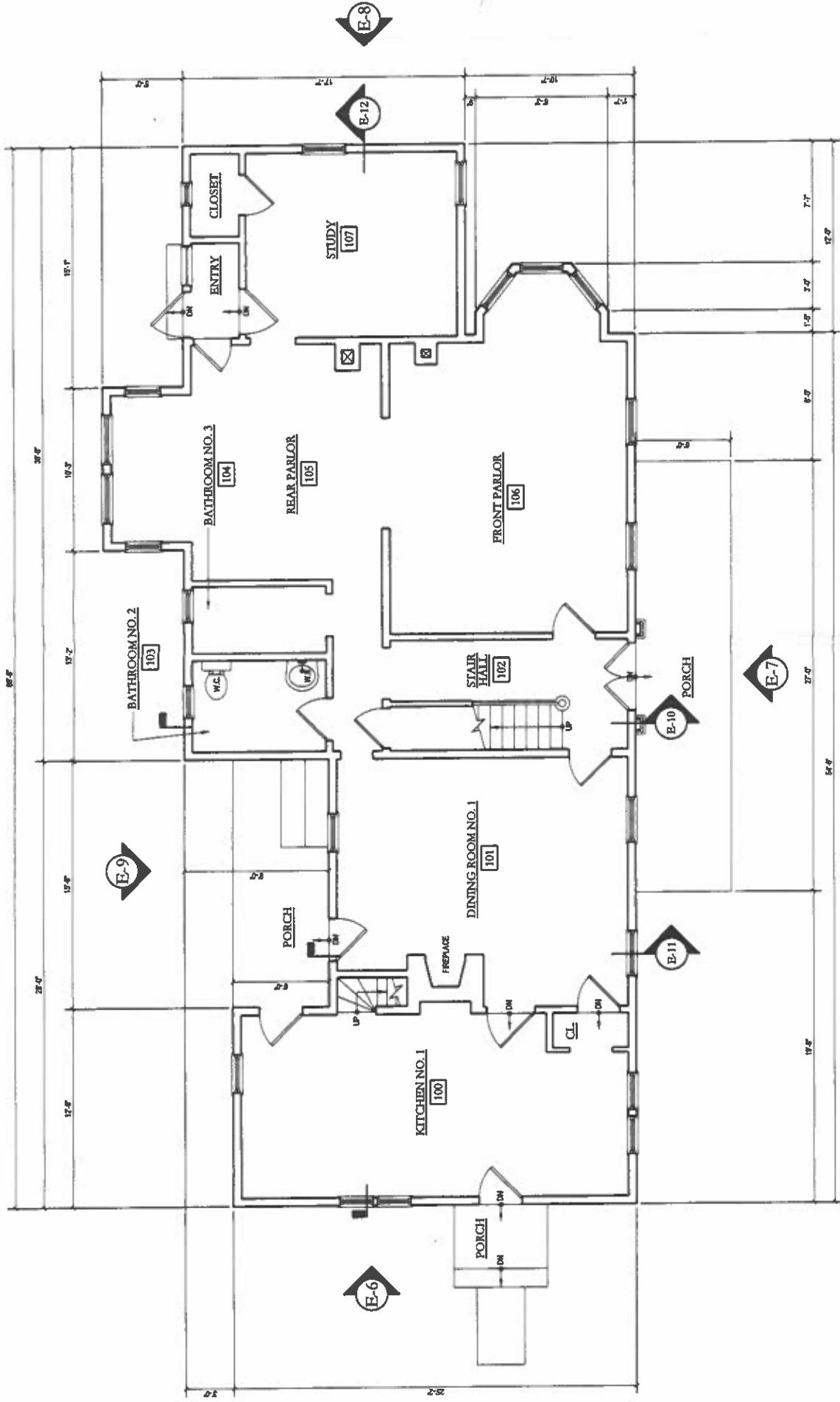
**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**

SOUTH MIDDLEBUSH ROAD, SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

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1 JUNE 2002



FIRST FLOOR PLAN - EXISTING CONDITIONS



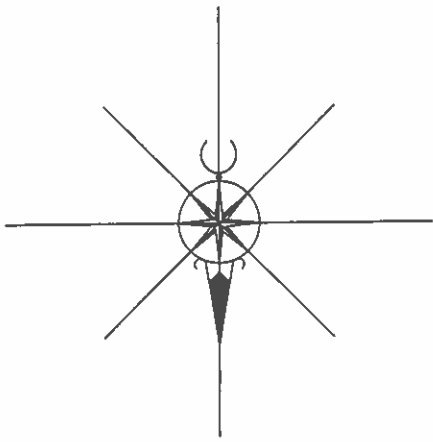
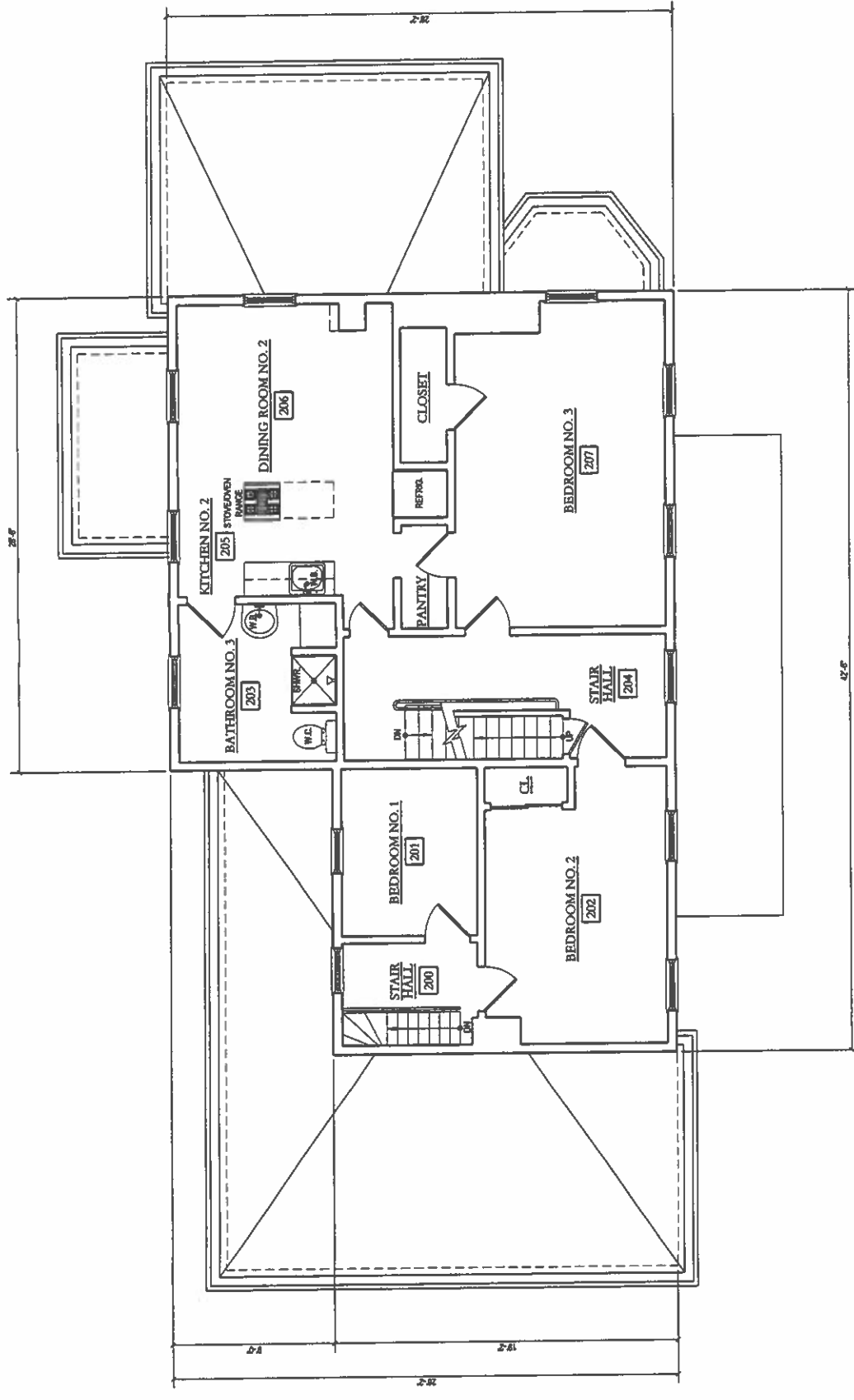
23

DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - EXISTING CONDITIONS  
**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**  
 SOUTH MIDDLEBUSH ROAD, SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

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SECOND FLOOR PLAN - EXISTING CONDITIONS



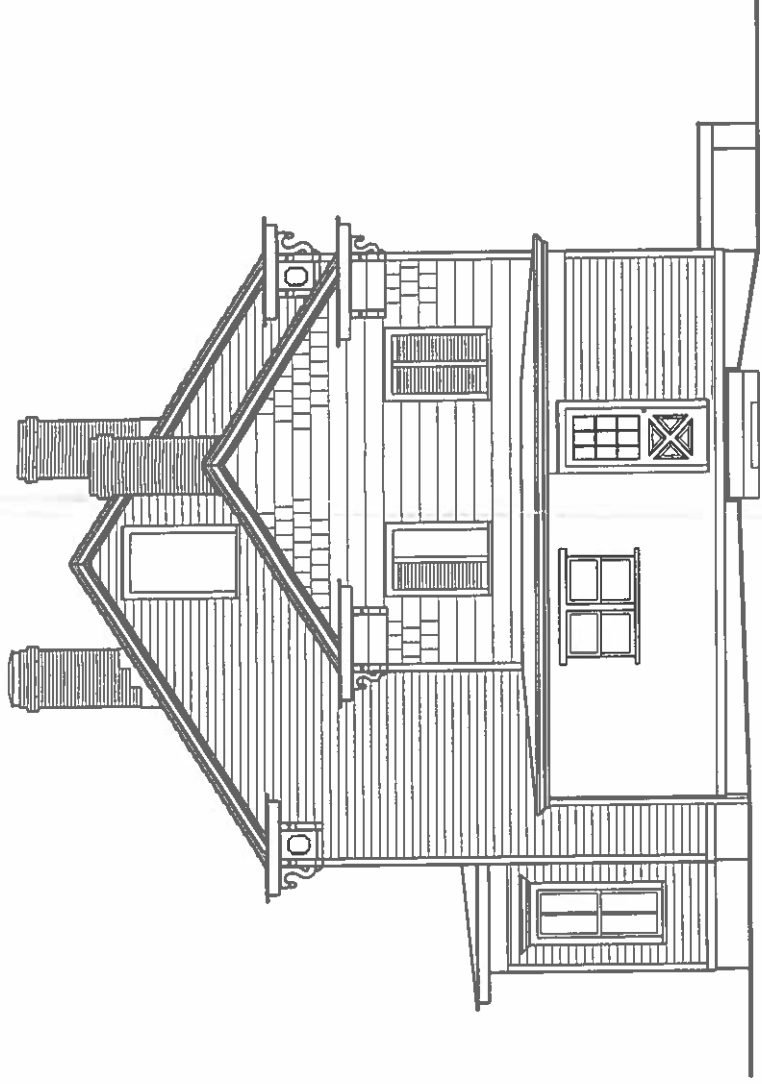
12

DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - EXISTING CONDITIONS  
**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**  
 SOUTH MIDDLEBUSH ROAD, SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

E-5

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NORTH ELEVATION - EXISTING CONDITIONS



DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - EXISTING CONDITIONS  
**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**  
SOUTH MIDDLEBUSH ROAD, SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

E-6

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1 JUNE 2002



WEST ELEVATION - EXISTING CONDITIONS



DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - EXISTING CONDITIONS

## VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE

SOUTH MIDDLEBUSH ROAD, SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

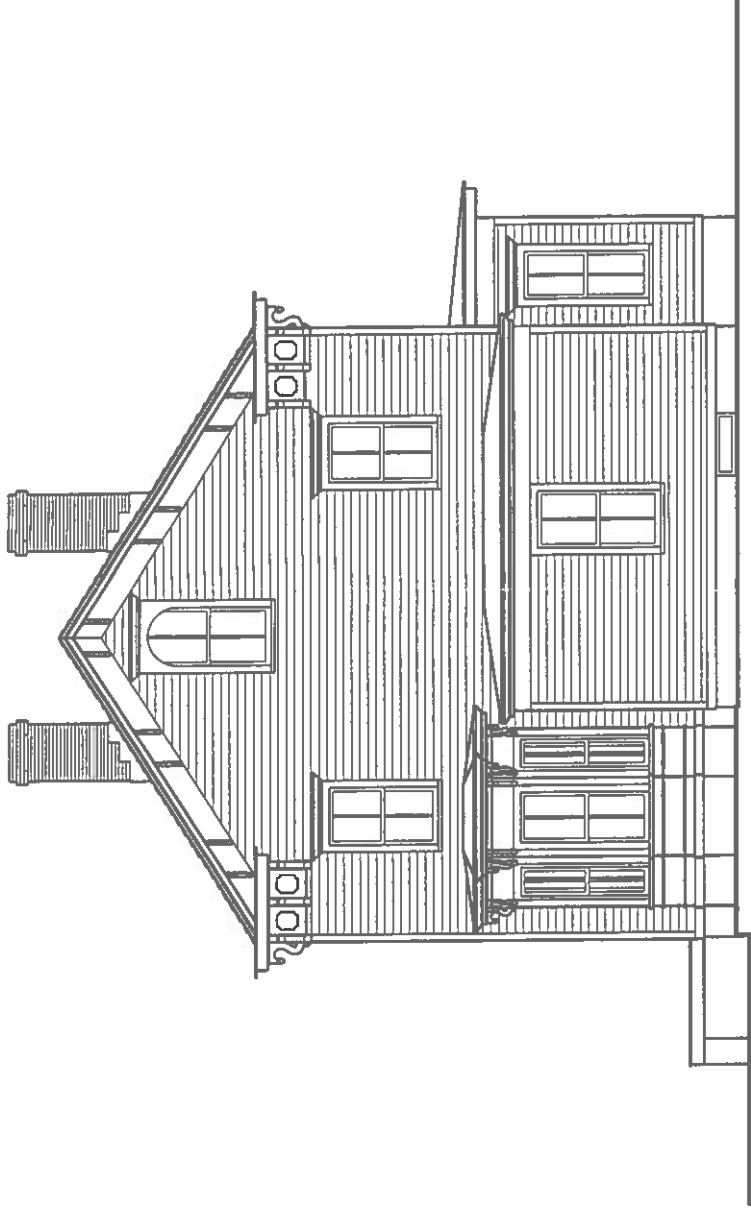
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# E-7





SOUTH ELEVATION - EXISTING CONDITIONS



DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - EXISTING CONDITIONS

**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**

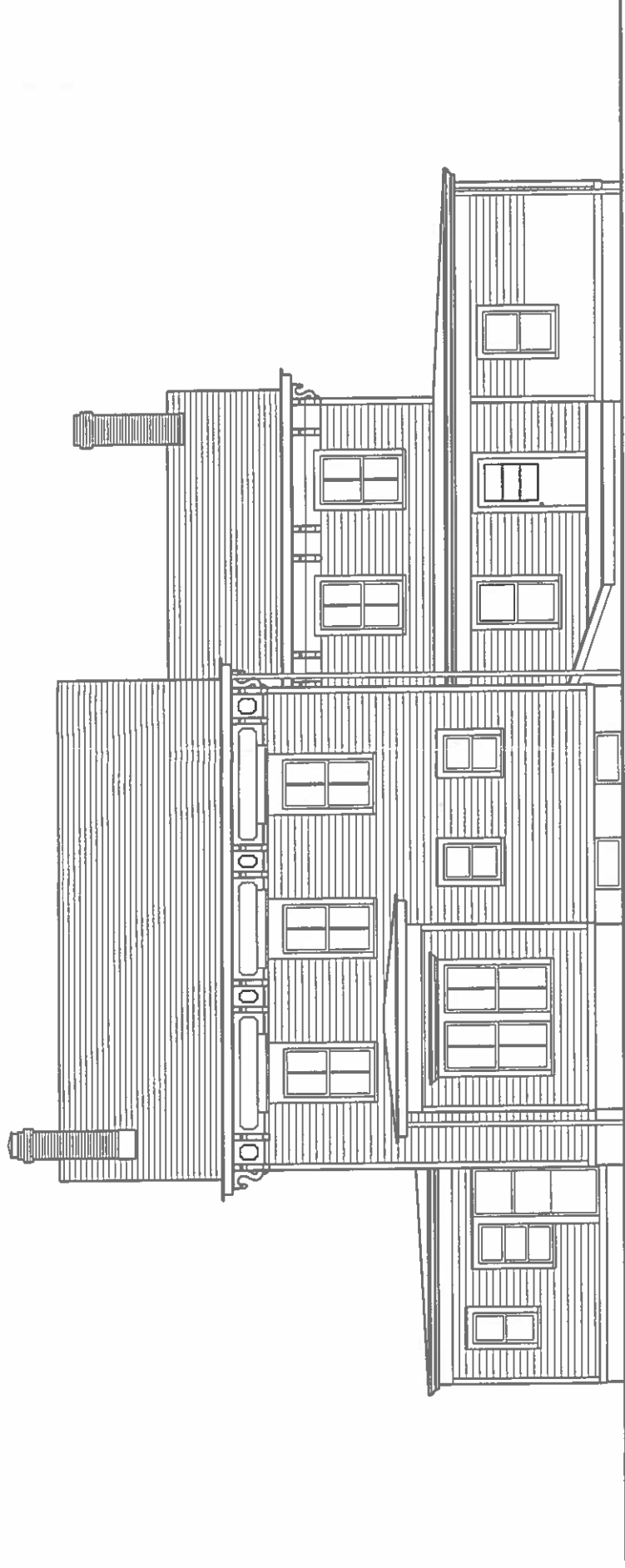
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E-8



EAST ELEVATIONS - EXISTING CONDITIONS



DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - EXISTING CONDITIONS

**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**

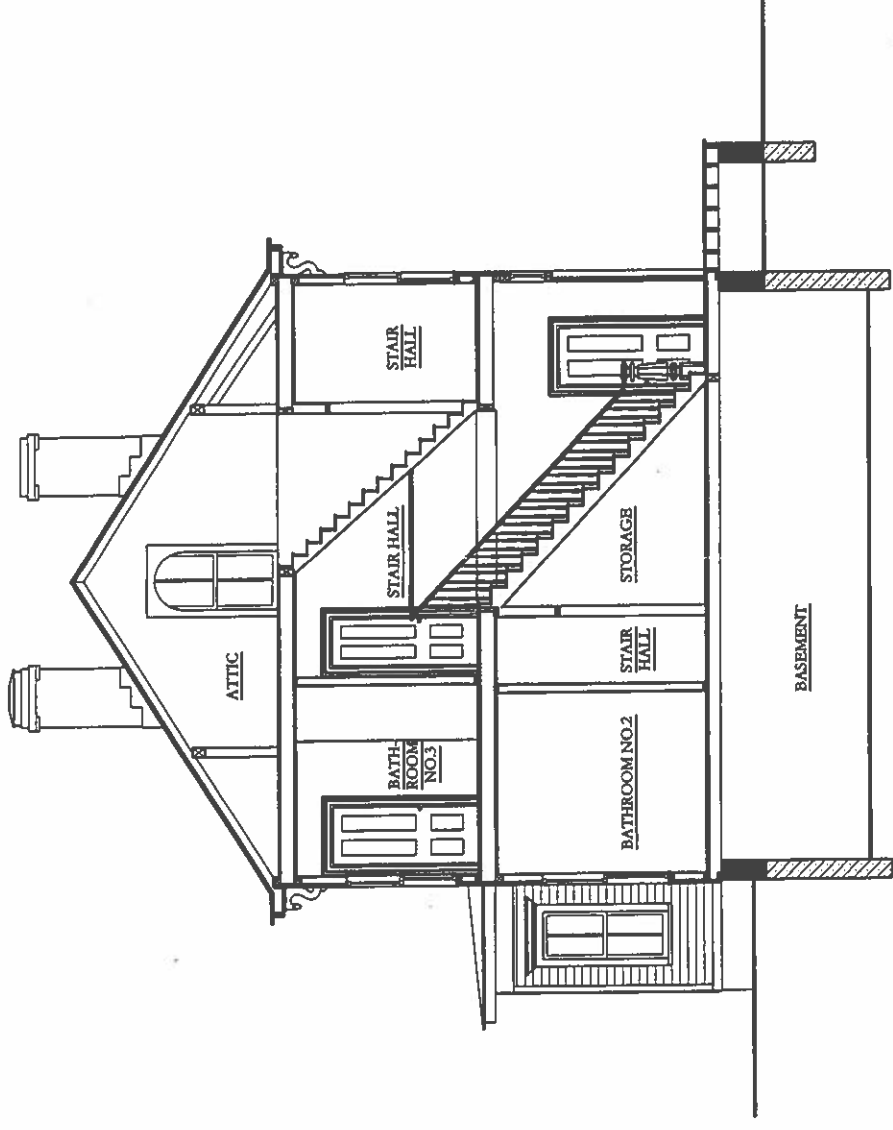
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1 JUNE 2002

E-9



TRANSVERSE BUILDING SECTION - NORTH VIEW THRU LARGE WING - EXISTING CONDITIONS

SCALE OF FEET

DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - EXISTING CONDITIONS

**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**

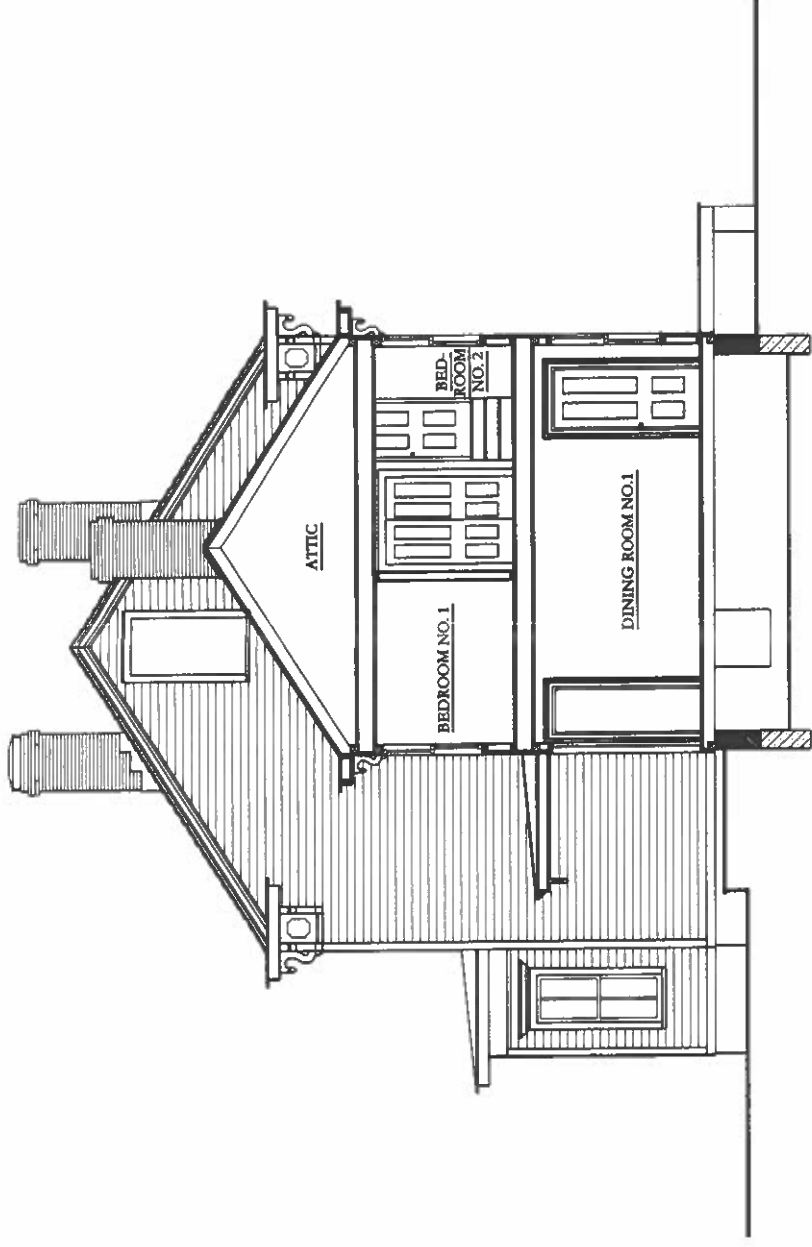
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1 JUNE 2002

**E-10**



TRANSVERSE BUILDING SECTION - NORTH VIEW THRU SMALL WING - EXISTING CONDITIONS.



DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - EXISTING CONDITIONS

## VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE

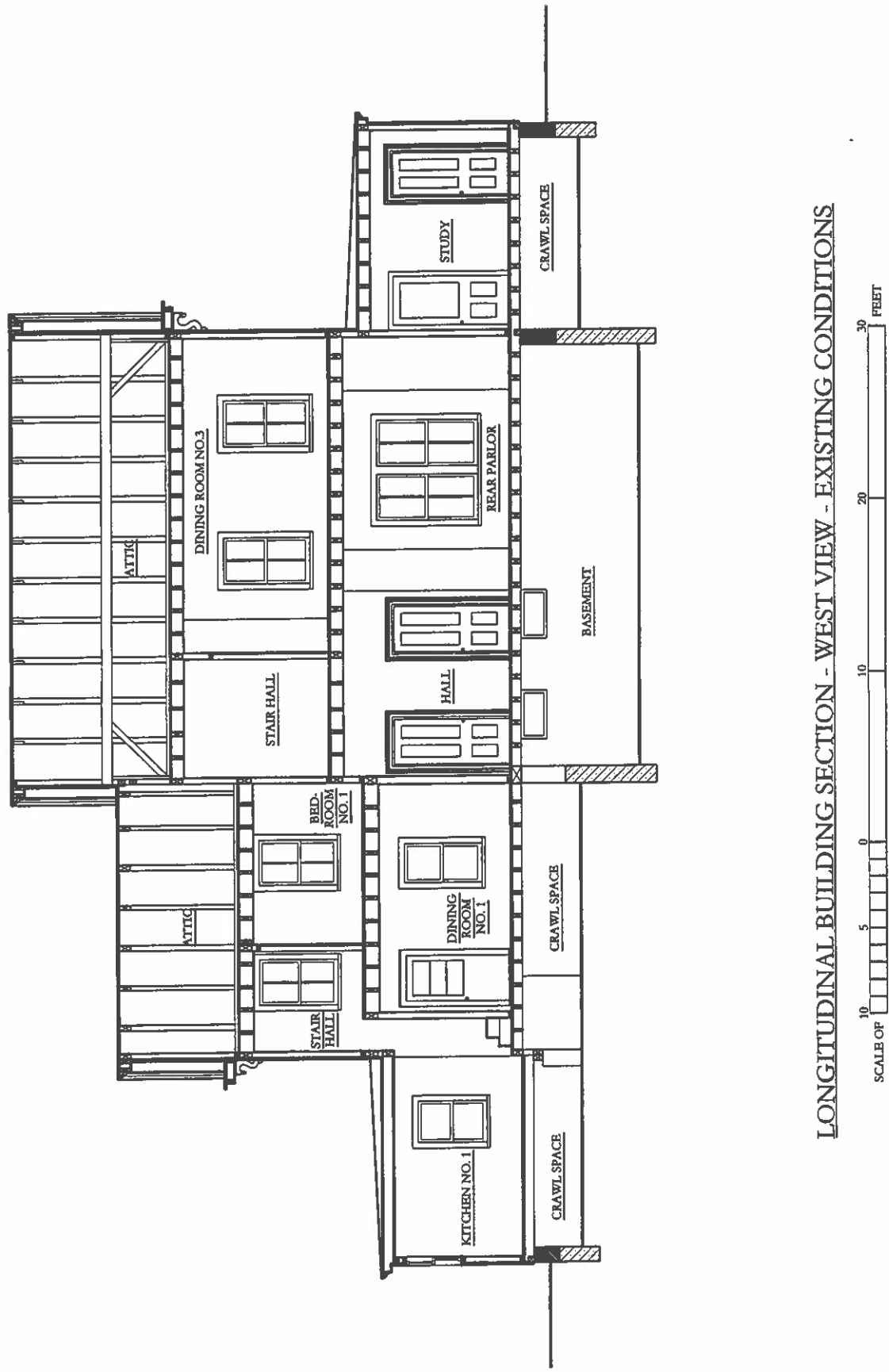
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*Architect*

1 JUNE 2002

# E-11



LONGITUDINAL BUILDING SECTION - WEST VIEW - EXISTING CONDITIONS

DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - EXISTING CONDITIONS  
**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**  
 SOUTH MIDDLEBUSH ROAD, SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY  
 MARK ALAN HEWITT, AIA  
*Architect*  
 1 JUNE 2002



## 5. Conditions Assessment

## 5. Conditions Assessment and Analysis

### 5.1 Exterior Description and Conditions

#### 5.1.1 Form

The Peter Suydam house does not betray a characteristically Dutch dwelling house typology, as do many other houses in the Six Mile Run area. Its plan form and massing are more typical of 19<sup>th</sup> century Anglo-American farmhouses common throughout the East and Midwest. The main block of the house is a two-story side hall plan with the gable roof running east-west. It is joined to a smaller story and a half wing that was likely a separate dwelling, judging by both its braced frame construction and its lower floor-to-floor heights. Its lower roof is oriented east-west, as in the taller south block. Two lean-to kitchen additions, both one story, are attached at the north and south, to serve the separate halves of the house when it accommodated two families.

Not only the plan type but the roof forms suggest a common farmhouse. The roof pitches are 8 on 12, and the vertical proportions of the main block are typical of the Victorian era farmhouses of New Jersey, rather than the steeper pitches and low floor-to-floor heights common during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Because the smaller north block is so thoroughly integrated into the massing of the building (with an altered roofline matching the pitch of the larger block), one would not suspect that a smaller dwelling once existed on the site. However, the pattern of adding Victorian wings to small 18<sup>th</sup> century farm dwellings is almost normative in New Jersey, so the Suydam family were simply following the thrifty practices of their Anglo-Dutch neighbors when they built in 1875.

#### 5.1.2 Foundation

The first clues to the chronology of construction are found in the foundations. Under the present dining room is a fieldstone foundation measuring approximately sixteen feet square, supporting hand-hewn floor joists ranging from 24" to 36" on center, spanning east-west. There is no full cellar in this area. The larger block to the south is a brick foundation, with some stone pieced in, indicating a later construction period. While no mortar analysis was done for this study, a visual screen suggests that both builds used a common sand-lime mortar that has deteriorated on most of the interior walls. Re-pointing will be necessary in the near future to protect the integrity of the masonry. The foundations supporting the larger kitchen lean-to on the north are also stone. The conditions of these foundation walls are discussed in greater detail in the structural evaluation below.

While it is not possible to definitively date the first build on the site, the disparity in the foundation walls provides significant evidence that a braced frame building large enough to provide dwelling space for a family pre-dated the 1875 farmhouse. This building had brick infill in at least some of the walls, as demonstrated in a portion of revealed interior construction in the dining room. The stud spacing indicates a traditional, braced frame

module similar to that of other colonial period houses in the area. Was the building constructed by the Skillman family, the Van Liew family, or the Suydam family? No documentary evidence provides clues to answer this question. The physical evidence would suggest a date in the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> or first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but not enough of the early fabric exists to make anything but a guess at the age of this small dwelling.

### 5.1.3 Cladding

On three sides of the building there is a clapboard layer that appears to be original to the 1875 building erected by the Suydam family. The clapboards are nailed onto the stud walls without a backing or substrate. No wrought or cut nails were discovered. Field measurements of the exposure averaged 4 1/2 inches to the weather, commensurate with later 19<sup>th</sup> century practice. On the north side of the building we found a variety of cladding materials, ranging from modern wood siding to building paper. On the north gable end are cedar shingles deliberate contrasting materials to the remainder of the house. Since it is clear that the gable end of this earlier building was raised and rebuilt in 1875, these shingles cannot be older than that date.

### 5.1.4 Entries

Because the house served from 1924 until 1950 as a two-family dwelling, it has entrances on several sides. The elaborate doorway on the west elevation was intended to be a formal entrance to the farmhouse during Peter Suydam's tenure. This is consistent with the image of a gentleman farmer, as porches and entrances were commonly the most heavily decorated parts of a farmhouse. The double doors are paneled in the heavy moldings typical of the period and are flanked by pilasters matching the porch columns. Above the doors is a transom window without its original glass. It is likely that the glazing was once colored or cut glass. This may be restored when the interior renovation proceeds. The doors and moldings are in fair condition and may be conserved and repainted in the original colors when paint analysis is completed in subsequent phases.

At the rear or east side of the house are two porches, one leading to the south kitchen, the other to the dining room. The dining room door (a new unit) may be restored with a new door to match others in the room. The door to the south kitchen (Rm. 107) is a 20<sup>th</sup> century unit, and should be replaced with one more in keeping with the style of the 4-panel doors in the south wing.

### 5.1.5 Windows

The majority of the windows, dating from the 1875 build, are large double-hung sashes in a 2 over 2 light pattern common in Victorian houses. Inner sashes measure 32" x 69" with a 4" outer casing. Italianate cornices (6" depth/projection) crown the tops of the monumental windows. Most are in very good condition for their age, and many have original glazing. We recommend careful conservation and retention of all wood windows from the 1875 build.



The two large bay windows in the double parlors are also double-hung ensembles. These are also in good condition and may be conserved with epoxy patches, repainting and some new glazing or putty repair. The windows in the two lean-to additions are either modern replacements or deteriorated older sashes with aluminum storm/screens. These should be restored with double-hung wood sashes to replicate the style and types in the rest of the house. Upper floor windows, especially in the caretaker apartment, will require new storm/screens on the exterior. We recommend the use of wooden sashes on the outside of the double hung windows for this purpose so as not to compromise the integrity of the historic sashes. The attic window on the south side should be replaced with one similar to the north unit.

#### 5.1.6 Roof

The roof of the main block is a gable sloping east-west at approximately 8 on 12 pitch, allowing a full attic over two generous stories. Because of the relatively square dimension and long spans, the roof is framed with main rafters supported at both the lateral walls as well as by two knee trusses. Evidence of lath on the rafters suggests that the building originally had a wood shingle roof, as was common in Dutch building practice. This was covered by asphalt shingles during the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the mid-1990s the cedar shingles were replaced by the Meadows Foundation, and the roof is in good condition. While the earlier cedar shingles were 24" long, with a 7.5" exposure, the current shingles are 18" long, with a 5.5" exposure. In addition, the box gutters were repaired or rebuilt, and relined to make them functional again, and many of the roof brackets were replaced with replicas of the original scroll design. The roof should be maintained with linseed oil, and will likely last for 20 to 30 years.

The earlier north block is also a gable, raised in 1875 from its original story and a half configuration. It has also been roofed with new No. 1 Perfection cedar shingles, nailed on lath as in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The flat or low pitched roofs of the two lean-to additions and bay windows are of built up bituminous materials. They are in fair to poor condition and should be replaced with EPDM single-ply roofs, as shown on our drawings and specifications.

#### 5.1.7 Chimneys

Early photographs of the Suydam house show three prominent brick chimneys that were likely constructed during the 1875 build. All three of these masonry chimneys were deteriorated at the time of the Meadows acquisition. During the course of multiple interventions, each was rebuilt using modern brick that closely resembled the historic masonry. Since the brickwork and pointing are now in satisfactory condition, we recommend retention and maintenance of the three chimneys.

#### 5.1.8 Elevations- Exterior Conditions

**North:** The brick foundation, newer than rest of house, is pointed with hard Portland cement mortar on left side. There is a major crack in concrete stoop, which will be removed when the ramp is built. Remainder of the brick should be repointed, as the mortar is loose.

Siding on right is in fair condition; there is some rot near the door. No siding is on the left portion. Repair fascia board at left. Replace aluminum cap over the original cyma molding. Replace screen doors and lantern with new.

**East:** Portions of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century porch are in poor condition. Gutter and downspouts are in poor repair. Window hoods are deteriorated around the bay window. Entire east front brackets should be replaced. Replace the cornice moulding. There is water damage to siding under the large bay window. Upper windows show deterioration—hoods must be replaced. Cornice and brackets need replacement, with replications. Kitchen bathroom windows are new units, but are not painted. Back porch has damage in TG boarding. Repair required. Older wing—flashing detail must be replaced. Upper windows are in satisfactory condition.

**South:** The large bay window is deteriorated; repair with epoxy or dutchman repairs. On the painted brick foundation, re-point all loose joints. There is severe deterioration in the upper cornice of this elevation. Replace rotted wood. The original brackets are in place and should be repaired. The right side of raking cornice is rotten and must be replaced. Wood trim is generally in fair condition. Most of the paint is off of this façade. The flat roof has poor roof details and should be torn off and re-roofed with EPDM system. Planting around the house should be moved away from the building (also ivy on rear façade). Single window in gable must be repaired. The siding is in fair condition.

**West:** Most of the paint is either gone, flaked and loose. Many of the clapboards are rotted and should be replaced. Only the area where the old porch stood has weathered well. The porch construction rises 3' above grade. Four new brick piers were installed by Meadows volunteers, using wolmanized 2x6 framing on top of new brick. The left side has aluminum screen windows. The clapboards are in good to fair condition but need repainting. Service wing has missing pieces of cornice molding and cap. Repair. Brackets and fascia have been replaced on earlier north portion during last campaign. Window frames on older north portion appear to be original. Three of four windows have original sash. Smaller muntin bar appear in the top two windows, where paint is severely flaked. The doors are in satisfactory condition, as well as transom. The porch is to be rebuilt. There are two missing brackets on cornice of main block--which has three bay front with two over two windows. All windows have aluminum storm screen units, but these should be removed. Replace with wood units. There is evidence of reglazing of window above front door. No cracks in window glass seen. Frieze boards must be re-nailed. Fascia was replaced during roofing campaign. Electrical service is on the right side of building. Brickwork needs to be repaired and re-pointed. Paint on outside of this brick, to be removed. Service stub outs are located under porch.

## 5.2 Interior – First Floor

### Room 100-Kitchen

The lean-to kitchen on the north side of the house was originally an appendage to the earlier dwelling that now forms the dining room. It may well have served as a kitchen from the earliest occupation of the dwelling, judging by the winder stair from the second floor and the configuration of the hearth in the cellar. However, the wing was completely rebuilt during

the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (during French or O'Connell ownership), as evinced by the exposed platform stud-wall construction and roof framing now visible. The rectangular space has two exterior doors, one leading to the rear porch, and a door to the dining room. The ceiling is low, at 7'-7" AFF. On the south side is the masonry surround of the early cooking fireplace that served the earliest dwelling. When the dining room hearth and chimney were rebuilt, the firebox was destroyed.

Walls: stud wall framing at 16" on center, exposed, with batt insulation. There is an old wainscot on the north and west walls, probably from the earliest construction. The wainscot should be conserved and retained. We recommend the installation of new gypsum board walls as soon as possible, as there is no evidence of earlier plaster.

Ceiling: There is no finished ceiling, merely 2x8's at 16" on center as framing for plasterboard. The framing is in satisfactory condition and we recommend installation of 5/8" gypsum board once the roof has been replaced.

Floor: A 2 1/4" pine strip floor has served as substrate for numerous finish floors over the years and is in very poor condition. We suggest that the finish floor be replaced with new pine to replicate the existing material.

Doors and windows: The two windows are recent double hung replacement units, installed as part of the Meadows Foundation renovation. These should be replaced with windows more in keeping with the style of other windows in the house. The main access doors are 20<sup>th</sup> century wood panel doors with screens, and should be replaced. The door to the dining room is discussed below.

### Room 101 – Dining Room

One of the few rooms in the house to retain its 19<sup>th</sup> century character, the dining room was renovated in the earliest years of Meadows occupation. The entire north wall was dismantled and rebuilt to repair the fireplace at the center. During the renovation, gypsum board was installed to replace the plaster ceiling and portions of the east and west walls. However, the mantelpiece was re-installed in front of a rebuilt hearth and chimney, and the doors and windows were conserved. Little needs to be done save repainting to allow this room to function in its new use, as a classroom or meeting room. The low ceiling is a remnant of the earlier dwelling that was renovated in 1875 to form the current house.

Walls: The north wall and parts of the east and west walls are finished in gypsum wallboard. The south wall appears to be full plaster. All are in good condition and may be repainted.

Ceiling: Gypsum wallboard, in good condition.

Floor: Southern yellow pine strip flooring, nailed on earlier subfloor, in good condition.

Doors and windows: Three of the doors are Victorian four-panel types, with ogee moldings surrounding the panels. The closet door is an older, six panel type with moldings similar to

earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century types found in other houses (i.e. Wyckoff Garretson) nearby. All except the door to the kitchen in good condition and may be conserved and repainted. The windows retain their circa 1875 4 1/2" casings, which may be stripped and repainted. There are three: two double and one single.

### Room 102 – Stair Hall

The stair hall retains its original configuration as the central circulation space in the 1875 farmhouse. Its generous proportions and fine staircase are typical of the better farm dwellings in Victorian New Jersey, but the moldings and décor are not distinguished in comparison to houses in New Brunswick or Princeton.

Walls: Plaster, poor condition. We recommend selective repair and some re-plastering.

Ceiling: Plaster, fair condition (on second floor).

Floor: 7" to 8" random width pine planks, 1" thick, from the original 1875 build. This flooring should be retained and refinished, even if structural repairs below are required.

Doors: The monumental double doors are in fair condition and should be stripped, conserved and repainted to match 1875 colors. The transom windows are missing and should be replaced.

Decorative woodwork: The staircase is composed of a robust turned newel post, with an octagonal section typical of the Italianate style. Along with the turned balusters, the staircase components were probably ordered from a millwork shop or catalog. The open side of the stair carries an oval-sectioned handrail of a dark walnut. The wall side of the stair incorporates a high baseboard as stringer, with a deeply profiled cap. Except for the handrail, the staircase is now painted white; its original appearance would have been as dark wood, either stained or faux-finished in paint. We recommend taking paint samples, then stripping and refinishing in original colors or finishes.

### Room 103 & 104 - Lavatories

Both lavatories are recent additions, constructed by the Meadows Foundation volunteers out of an existing room at the rear of the house. The room probably served as a bedroom or workroom in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. No finishes remain from the original room.

Walls: Original lath plaster removed; sheetrock covers walls on the interior of the rooms.

Floor: Wooden sub-floor is retained. A new ceramic tile floor will be installed when the interior is rehabilitated.

Doors and windows: The doors to the left lavatory appears to be an original four-panel door from the house. The second will be hung with a similar unit.

### Room 105 – Rear Parlor

The roughly square room is part of the original Victorian-era farmhouse, and was probably the part of the parlor used more by the family, while the front parlor would have been reserved for guests and special occasions. The room is extended with the addition of a bay window off the rear (west) elevation, giving it pleasant afternoon light and a view into the rear yard. The rear parlor has little wall space; but is surrounded by doors to the wing (See Room 107), the opening for sliding doors to the front parlor (See Room 108), the hallway to the rear of the stair hall, a chimney, and the bay window. Most original materials have been stripped from the room in the process of building investigation and repair during the Meadows Foundation ownership.

Walls: Circular saw cut wood lath on wooden framing. Original plaster remains on some walls. Alcove walls (west wall of bay window) retains mid-20<sup>th</sup> century wallpaper. The removal of plaster on the south wall has exposed the large-sized, hand-made bricks used as nogging in the wall.

Chimney: The chimney has been rebuilt with brick and concrete block laid up with cement mortar and finished with stucco. The original form of the chimney wall and fireplace is gone.

Ceiling: Circular saw cut wood lath on wooden framing. No original plaster remains. The ceiling is 9'- 6" feet above finish floor, as in both the front parlor and stair hall.

Floor: Strip oak flooring is laid over original tongue and groove planks. The oak runs front-to-back within the room, opposite the underlying planking. The oak flooring does demarcate the doorway between the front and rear parlors. We suggest that the flooring be retained and refinished, as there will be no required structural repairs to the floor framing below.

Doors: One new door leads from the south side of the parlor into a now-enclosed porch attached to the second kitchen wing to the house. The wooden frames have a molding profile similar, but not identical to, that found on other doorways internal to the original Victorian house. Decorative hinges and hardware on the doors are made of brass-plated metal with the flat, geometric, Eastlake-inspired motifs popular in the 1880s through about 1900. The doorway leading directly into Room 107 appears to have been a window location in the original construction of the house, based upon views of the clearly visible framing, and it was modified as a doorway at the time the addition was made.

Windows: Tall 2/2 sash windows form the squared bay extension on the west side. These windows are similar to those found throughout the house, and appear to be part of the

original construction. The wooden window frames and sills are consistent with other woodwork in this part of the house.

Decorative trim: Hot water baseboard heaters are installed over or in place of the original wooden baseboard. No ceiling cornices, or picture railings survive. The door and window casings are consistent with those in the stair hall, and are almost certainly from the 1875 building.

### Room 106 – Front Parlor

The most formal room of the Victorian-era Suydam farmhouse, the front parlor included several elements which were highly fashionable for the 1870s, when it was built. The room had sliding pocket doors, which could open it up to the rear parlor for large gatherings, or create privacy in both rooms when required. The original doors are no longer extant, but a pair of appropriately sized paneled doors were brought from a house in Franklin by the Meadows Foundation for use in the restoration of the Van Liew-Suydam house. The opening for the pocket doors is centered on the rear parlor, not on the mathematical center of the front parlor.

A decorative mantle, of painted slate with a round-arched Italianate style opening for the firebox, has been removed from the wall, but remains within the room as salvage. Underneath the current layer of white paint, the original black painted surface with white and gold marbling is visible. The cast iron stove insert is intact and remains with the mantle. Marbleized slate was a popular “middle-market” substitute for more costly marble mantles in the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The bay window on the south side of the room, with its paneled window skirts and tall windows, was a very popular feature for domestic architecture in the Romantic Revival styles. The location of this window on the south wall is also typical of New Jersey farmhouses of the period.

Walls: The original plaster walls remain on the west and north side of the. The plaster has been stripped off on the south and east walls, exposing the sawn lath and stud construction of the house. The west (front) wall has been extensively patched and replastered, as has the alcove of the bay window.

Chimney: Plaster is removed from the chimney wall, exposing the large, soft bricks used in the exterior wall as nogging. The chimney itself has been rebuilt in concrete block with cement mortar. It services a cast iron stove on legs, installed by the house’s curator in the 1980s.

Ceiling: No original plaster remains; stains on some joists indicate where lath had been located. The ceiling is 10 feet above the finish floor, as with the rear parlor and stair hall. A center beam, visible without the plaster and lath in place, is a “recycled” piece of heavy

timber, full of mortise holes for connections which are not needed in this role as a support across the middle of a large room.

The Meadows Foundation used cement plaster to fill in between the exposed joists on the east wall, as if the house were a traditional Dutch framed house where the joists were meant to be seen. However, the framing and the style of the building mean that the joists would not have been exposed to view, particularly in the high-style Victorian parlor.

Floor: Strip oak flooring is laid over original tongue and groove planks. The oak runs front-to-back within the room, opposite the underlying planking. The oak flooring does demarcate the doorway between the front and rear parlors.

Doors: A four-paneled door leads from the stair hall to the front parlor. The wooden frame has a molding profile identical to that found on other doorways internal to the original Victorian house. The door is pine, but was grained, or painted in *faux bois* to approximate a dark wood, probably mahogany. The original graining is largely covered with layers of modern white paints.

Windows: Tall 2/2 sash windows form the three-part bay extension on the south side. These windows are similar to those found throughout the house, and appear to be part of the original construction. The wooden window frames and sills are consistent with other woodwork in this part of the house. Windows in the front of the house, also 2/2 sash, have paneled skirts beneath them.

Decorative trim: Hot water baseboard heaters are installed over or in place of the original wooden baseboard. No ceiling cornices, or picture railings survive. In both parlors, a cornice would have been the minimum decorative treatment required in the home of a well-to-do farmer.

### Room 107 – Study

This room appears to have been added to the Suydam house about 1900, based upon materials used. There is no photographic or written documentation to corroborate this date.

Walls: The walls are pine tongue and groove, with layers of paint now peeling and decayed.

Ceiling: The ceiling was apparently also painted tongue and groove boards, like the walls, but it has been removed and not replaced for the installation of insulation.

Floor: In poor condition, the floor is made up of planks, about 4" wide, nailed to a substrate. Water infiltration has damaged the flooring, such that it will require replacement with similar materials.

Doors and windows: A door from the study to the rear parlor is a four-panel wooden door similar to those found elsewhere in the house. An exterior door and window are mid-20<sup>th</sup> century aluminum-framed pieces, which appear to fill in what had once been a small open

porch to the rear of the study. Original windows are 2/2 sash. They are placed at different heights in the wall. Their trim is a simple piece of painted pine, without molding profile or beaded edge.

### 5.3 Interior – Second Floor

#### Room 200 – Back Stair Hall

A small circulation space, with the simplest of finishes and almost crude woodwork, relative to the rest of the house. The back stair is a steep, winder stair, enclosed with plastered walls and a high wooden baseboard/stringer. The wooden elements suggest a construction period prior to 1875. It is possible that this small staircase was retained from the earliest house on the site. Late 18<sup>th</sup> century farm dwellings throughout New Jersey use winder stairs attached to fireplace areas.

Walls: Plaster walls in poor condition, but largely original, remain on wooden lath. The horsehair composition of the plaster is visible. Layers of paint have been applied to the walls.

Ceiling: Original plaster ceiling remains, with painted surface.

Floor: Floorboards, approximately 7-8 inches wide, form the finish floor. They appear to be original.

Doors and windows: A 2/2 sash window lights the stair from the west wall. A doorway to each of two bedrooms in this space is finished with a simple bead-edged profile molding. The doors from the back hall to each bedroom do not match the other four-panel doors found generally throughout the house, but are six-panel wooden replacements.

#### Room 201 – Bedroom No. 1

The larger of the two bedrooms in the north wing, this room connects the main hall (See Room 204) with the back stair hall. It originally must have had plaster walls, but they have been covered with plywood paneling. This suggests that the plaster was in deteriorating condition; the paneling is also in poor condition now and curling from the walls. The simple bead-edged door and window casings, and wide, rough floorboards, are typical of the construction in the second floor of the north wing of the house.

#### Room 202 – Bedroom No. 2

The smaller of the two bedrooms in the north wing, this room connects to the rear stair hall. It has plaster walls and ceiling, a simple bead-edged profile to window and door casings, and



the rough-cut wide floorboards typical of this wing on the floor. Its finishes are in fair to poor condition.

### Room 203 – Caretaker’s Bathroom

The bathroom was completely renovated during the 1990s for use as part of the caretaker’s apartment. All walls are gypsum board, as is the ceiling. The window sash and flooring appear to be original to the 1875 build.

### Room 204 – Stair Hall

This central hall is marked by the turned balusters of the first floor staircase extending down the hall to meet with the enclosed wall of the attic stairs. The 2/2 sash window at the end of the hall is the only window discovered in the house to retain original 19<sup>th</sup> century hardware, although four other second floor windows retain some of their hardware. The decorative lock and latch set off-center on the center parting strip are cast iron, with a simple decorative finial on the locking arm.

Walls and ceiling: The ceiling is new gypsum wallboard. The walls are plaster, deteriorated and in need of repair.

Floor: Fir floorboards approximately 7 inches wide.

Doors: The doors into the rooms off the hall are all standard four-panel doors, typical of the Victorian era. Casings have the same molded profile as most openings on the first floor.

### Room 205-206 Caretaker’s Kitchen and Living Area

This room was extensively renovated when the Meadows Foundation occupied the house in the early 1990s. It contains a small kitchen with modern cabinets, an eating/living area, and a wood stove for additional heating. The stove is connected to the chimney on the south wall.

Walls and ceiling: Gypsum board, recently installed, in good condition is on the interior walls. The two exterior walls are original plaster, in good condition.

Floor: 8” pine strip flooring and slate in area around wood stove, in good condition.

Doors and windows: The doors to the room are all standard four-panel doors, typical of the Victorian era. The window sashes are 2/2 from the 1875 building. The casings need paint are some repair.

### Room 207 Caretaker’s Bedroom

This room was also extensively renovated in the early 1990s for occupancy by Mr. Brook. The 19<sup>th</sup> century mantelpiece is in the fireplace.

Walls and ceiling: Walls are plaster, in good condition. Ceiling is gypsum wallboard, also in good condition.

Floor: Original southern yellow pine strip flooring, good condition.

Doors and windows: The doors to the room are all standard four-panel doors, typical of the Victorian era. The window sashes are 2/2 from the 1875 building.

## 5.5 Structural and Building Systems Evaluation

### 5.5.1 Structural System

#### A. Foundations

The foundations of the VanLiew / Suydam House are constructed of brick and fieldstone. There is a full basement only beneath the main portion of the house. All other areas have crawl spaces. With the exception of the rectangular bay area on the east side, all of the crawl spaces are accessible. Those portions of the foundations that are above-grade and visible from the exterior are 12" (3 wythe) brick walls. The below-grade portions of the basement walls and those areas that are not visible from the exterior are primarily constructed of fieldstone. The stone walls appear to be approximately 16" in thickness.

The condition of the masonry work ranges from good to fair. Most of the stone and brick work is in satisfactory condition. There are a number of areas where the joints need to be raked out and repointed, especially in the brickwork exposed to weather. Several other areas will require minor repairs.

Under the study, three modern CMU piers have been added in an effort to provide mid-span support for the relatively long floor joists. In the basement, fifteen new 12" diameter sonatube type concrete footings have recently been installed as part of an effort to restructure the support for the floors and interior walls in the main portion of the house. (See section B. Framing, below.)

The foundations were examined from both inside and outside in an effort to locate clues as to the sequence of construction. Based on the continuity of materials and joints, it appears that at least the main portion of the house and the two bays (south and east sides) were constructed at the same time. The study (Room 107) on the south end may have been added later, though some of the evidence is contradictory. The north wing and kitchen

contain many pieces of confusing and contradictory evidence with regard to sequence. From the inside, it is clear only that a number of alterations and repairs have been made over the years. The fact that the north wall of the basement is constructed of stone all the way to the sill plate suggests that the foundation of the north wing may have preceded or may have been contemporaneous with that of the main house. It appears unlikely that the north wing was an addition to an existing structure.

## **B. Framing**

The framing of the Van Liew / Suydam House contains a variety of materials with respect to species, methods of shaping, and origin.

The visible wall studs and posts are primarily fir and appear to have been sawn from virgin material. There are, however, a few members that appear to have been salvaged from previous construction. The walls are constructed using braced framing techniques, with continuous diagonals and broken studs. The stud cavities are filled with soft brick.

The first floor framing in the main portion of the house paints a somewhat confusing picture. What appears to be the original summer beam is an 8-1/2" x 8-1/2" oak member oriented north-south, and located a few feet west of center. Both the east joists (the longer of the two groups) and the west joists consist of two alternating sets of joists. The larger joists measure approximately 3" x 8", are spaced at 32" O.C., and are attached to the summer beam with mortise & tenon joinery. Between each adjacent pair of these larger joists is a smaller member, measuring approximately 2" x 8", spaced at 32" O.C., and bearing on a ledger strip nailed to the summer beam. It is not clear whether the 2" x 8" members were installed in this building at the same time as the 3" x 8" members, or whether the smaller members were added later to stiffen the flooring. If the two different types of joists were installed in this building simultaneously, then it would appear that the larger members, along with the summer beam, represent a floor framing assembly salvaged from another structure. It is also possible that the foundation and the larger members of the first floor framing represent the only intact surviving fabric from an older building on the same site. A potentially related curiosity is the presence of the 5-1/2" x 9" diagonal beam running from the summer beam southeastward to the south wall of the basement. Its existence and location suggest that the framing was designed to accommodate a large corner fireplace. There is, however, no visible evidence of such a fireplace at either the first or second floor levels.

The existing finished flooring at the first level of the main house is 2-1/4" T/G oak, most likely installed after the middle of the twentieth century. The underlying boards, now serving as subflooring, are 1" x 8" T/G fir, and are nailed to both sets of joists noted above. It appears likely that these fir boards constituted the original floor of this building.

The summer beam must have been supported by one or more posts along its length. Any evidence of such posts is now obscured by modern 2x<sub>6</sub> plates beneath the summer beam. Three built-up modern dimensional lumber beams, each consisting of (3) 2x10's, have recently been installed to strengthen and stiffen the parlor floors. These beams, which significantly decrease the joist spans, are supported on rows 4" diameter lally columns that are, in turn, supported by the previously noted sonatube type concrete footings. Calculations indicate that the parlor floors are more than capable of safely carrying the required 50 PSF live load for "office" or "house museum" occupancies.

The first floor framing in the north wing and kitchen are very irregular with respect to material, dimensions, spacing, and condition. The finished floor differs from that in the main portion of the house in that the material is southern yellow pine rather than oak. A number of wooden support posts have been installed in the crawl space, presumably to strengthen and/or stiffen particularly weak or "soft" spots in the floors. It is recommended that these areas be thoroughly inspected and analyzed during the design and construction documents phases of the project. Depending on the planned use of the spaces, it may or may not be necessary to increase the safe live load capacity of the floors. In any case, however, it is recommended that any wood supports resting on earth be replaced with CCA treated wood or masonry in order to decrease the chances of infestation by termites.

The floor framing in the study consists of a single set of uniform sawn joists, oriented east-west. The joists measure approximately 1-3/4" x 8", are spaced at 16" O.C., and span approximately 14ft. A newer central beam, oriented north-south, has been added to shorten the span of the joists. This 3" x 4" member rests on the three CMU piers noted above (See Foundations).

The second floor framing in the main portion of the house is laid out in a similar fashion to that of the first floor. The summer beam for the second floor is located directly above the first floor summer beam. Some of the joists at this level are hand hewn, while others are sawn. Sizes range from 1-3/4" to 3-1/4" in width. All members are approximately 6-1/2" deep. It is clear that some members were salvaged from older structures.

The second floor summer beam has recently been reinforced with two C8x11.5 steel channels. The channels, together with wood packers, are bolted through the oak summer beam. The ends of the joists have been cut back a few inches and now rest in hangers nailed to the faces of the packers. There are two pieces of evidence suggesting that there may have once been a bearing wall beneath this summer beam: 1) There is a row of pockets, possibly for studs, in the bottom of the summer beam; and 2) calculations indicate that the beam would be grossly undersized were it to be required to carry the imposed load without a wall or other reinforcement. This evidence suggests that either the wall between the two parlors was moved, or (as suggested previously) that the existing framing was adapted from an earlier structure. Like the first floor below, the second floor of the main portion of the house has a finished floor of 2-1/4" T/G oak.

The second floor framing in the north wing is not accessible without destroying finishes. These members have not been investigated. The finished floor in this wing is 2-1/4" T/G SYP, the same material used on the first floor below.

In the attic of the main section of the house, the floor joist layout corresponds to the first and second floors below. The joists are relatively uniform, measure approximately 1-7/8" x 7-3/4", and are spaced at 16" O.C. It is recommended that the attic not be used for storage. The rafters above consist of two different sets of members. There are a set of tapered oak rafters, measuring approximately 4" x 5" at the butts, and spaced at approximately 30" O.C. Between each adjacent pair of these hewn rafters is a sawn fir member, measuring approximately 1-7/8" x 5-3/4", spaced at 32" O.C. As for the mixed first floor framing discussed above, it is uncertain whether or not the two sets of rafters were installed in this building at the same time. Calculations indicate that the rafters have adequate strength to safely carry the required snow load. The high aspect ratio of the rafters, however, makes them relatively flexible, and will result in measurable deflection at design loads.

In the attic of the north wing, the floor joists are sawn fir, measure approximately 2" x 5-1/2", are spaced approximately 17" O.C., and run the full width of the building. The rafters above are an irregular mixture of 3-1/2" x 4-1/2" hewn oak and 2" x 5-3/4" sawn fir members. The spacing is approximately 27" O.C. The apparently random placement of the two types of rafters suggests either 1) that all were installed at the same time, or 2) some of the oak members were damaged (rot, fire?) and later replaced with the sawn fir members. Additional investigation of the structure, other elements of the building, or other sources may help illuminate this puzzle.

The roof of the kitchen is framed with modern dimensional 2x6 lumber and is decked with plywood, with a torched down membrane roof. David Brook believes that the work was done in 1989-90. The roof framing of the east porch of the north wing is not accessible.

### 5.5.2 Mechanical Systems

#### **A. Plumbing – DWV System**

All visible components of the DWV piping are PVC. David Brook reported that the entire system has been replaced since 1988. The existing piping appears to be properly installed and in good condition.

A new 1000-gallon, pre-cast concrete septic tank and a new leach field were reportedly installed in 1961. The tank is located 25.5 ft. west of the southwest corner of the main house. The size, shape, and construction of the leach field are not known. The leach field is believed to be north of the tank, but no vents, cleanouts, or surface disturbances were evident to help confirm this. No drawings of this installation have been located.

It is recommended that the existing septic system be documented. This may involve careful probing and some minor hand excavation. It is also recommended that the soils be evaluated. The approximate capacity of the system can be determined from this information. As an alternative, the necessary capacity for the new use can be determined, and the system tested by dosing the field with that quantity of water over a 24 hour period. This relatively simple test can help establish the capacity of the system.

## **B. Plumbing – Domestic Water System**

Domestic water is currently supplied from a drilled well with a submersible pump. The well is located approximately 30 ft. north of the northeast corner of the north wing of the house. Mr. Brook reports that this well is 290 ft. deep, and that it was installed in 1961. Other details of the well construction are not known.

A (presumably older) hand dug well is located approximately 25 ft. east of the east porch, and is only 40 feet deep. A pump located in the basement near the east wall appears to be connected to this well. This second well and pump are not connected to the domestic water system, but have been used for irrigation by Mr. Brook.

An unused masonry cistern is located against the east foundation wall of the north wing. The details of this cistern's construction and use are not known.

The domestic water distribution piping is all hard copper with soldered fittings, is relatively new, and appears to be in good condition. Mr. Brook reports that all of the domestic water piping has been installed since 1988.

It is recommended that the water from the drilled well be tested for potability and hardness. Should pH correction or softening be needed, it is recommended that a suitable treatment system be installed. Acidic or hard water can significantly reduce the life of copper piping, valves and fixtures, and water heating equipment. An alternate course would be to approach Franklin Township about a connection to the city water line at the base of the driveway on Middlebush Road.

## **C. HVAC Systems**

Space heating is provided primarily by an oil-fired boiler located in the basement of the main house. The Weil McLain cast iron boiler is capable of firing between 1.15 and 1.50 gallons per hour (GPH) of #2 fuel oil. The exact size of the installed nozzle is not known. The boiler is approximately 10 years old, and appears to be in good condition.

Fuel oil is stored in two relatively new steel tanks, each with a capacity of 330 gallons. These tanks are located in the basement adjacent to the west wall. The two sets of fill and vent pipes are visible beneath the front porch. Mr. Brook reports that an older 550 gallon underground tank has been removed.

Heat delivery to the conditioned spaces is by copper tubing and baseboard-type fin tube convectors. The distribution system has a single circulator and is divided into four zones, each with a zone valve, as follows:

1. Second floor apartment
2. Main house, first floor
3. North wing, second floor
4. North wing, first floor, including kitchen.

The boiler exhausts into a single wythe brick chimney with an 8" clay tile liner. The chimney appears to be in good condition. It was not possible to determine clearances from combustible materials in all areas.

There is evidence that an older boiler once served the existing baseboard convectors, though the zoning may have differed. There is also some evidence to suggest that there was once a floor furnace in the main house.

In addition to the boiler, there are two wood-burning heating stoves, one in the front parlor and another in the kitchen of the apartment. The stove in the parlor exhausts into a relatively new masonry chimney. The visible interior portions of this chimney (at the basement and first floor levels) are constructed using standard 16" square concrete chimney blocks with an 8" clay tile flue liner. The woodstove in the apartment exhausts into a reconstructed brick chimney containing two clay tile flues, one for the woodstove and the other the continuation of the boiler flue. Again, it was not possible to determine clearances from combustible materials in all areas.

The Meadows Foundation has indicated that the entire building is eventually to be air-conditioned. In order to minimize damage to the building fabric, and to minimize the visual impact of the equipment and ductwork, it is recommended that at least two, and possible three, separate systems be employed. One system would serve only the second floor apartment, while one or two additional systems would serve the remainder of the building. This approach would also accommodate the anticipated use patterns and will permit more efficient operation than would a single-zone system. Even if air conditioning is not to be installed for some time, it is recommended that the design be completed and that the refrigerant piping, power wiring, and control wiring be installed prior to installation of interior finishes.

### 5.5.3 Electrical Systems

From Middlebush Road, the primary (7600 volt) service conductors run underground along the driveway to a pad-mounted transformer. The transformer is located near the bend in the driveway. From the transformer, the 120/240V single-phase secondary service conductors run underground to the house. There are (3) 2/0 copper conductors in 2-1/2" PVC conduit

at the meter enclosure located on the west wall of the main house near the southwest corner. David Brook has indicated that the conductors were directly buried (not in conduit) from the transformer to the service entrance riser. By NEC standards, the service to the house is rated at 200A. A separate 200A service runs from the transformer to the barn.

There are two meter enclosures mounted on the house. At this time there is only one meter installed. In the basement, there are two separate 100A service panels, each fed separately from the meter enclosure. Eventually the two services will be separated, with one serving the second floor apartment, and the other serving the remainder of the building. Each panel contains a 100A main circuit breaker and has 20 useable branch circuit spaces. All of the service equipment appears relatively new. The inspection sticker is dated 5/91.

The branch circuit wiring is a mixture of BX and NM cable. Most of the BX cable appears to contain older cloth insulated conductors. Both cloth and thermoplastic insulated types of NM cable are present.

With an eye toward the rehabilitation and future use of the building, we offer the following observations and recommendations:

1. The service capacity is adequate for existing and anticipated loads, including the educational functions in the new center for cultural diversity.
2. It is recommended that any new heating loads (space heat, kitchen range, etc.) be designed to use fuels other than electricity.
3. Though some of the existing branch circuits are relatively new, many of the older ones have one or more deficiencies, including poor insulation, lack of proper grounding, and various installation problems. It is, therefore, recommended that the branch circuiting be redesigned, and that the older wiring be replaced. During the design phase, careful consideration should be given to locating the necessary electrical fixtures and devices, and to routing the wiring, in order to minimize the damage to historic building fabric and to minimize the visibility of these components.

## 5.6 Code and Accessibility Review

The following section provides an overview of the existing property as well as the proposed re-use scheme and applicable codes. This code analysis informed the recommendations and was used in developing cost estimates. The following local and national codes were consulted:

New Jersey Uniform Construction Code (UCC)

New Jersey Uniform Construction Code Rehabilitation Subcode (1998) NJ Administrative Code, Title 5, Chapter 23, Subchapter 6



New Jersey Uniform Fire Code (UFC)

Building Officials and Code Administrators' National Building Code (BOCA) 1993 and 1995 Editions

ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities: US Dept. of Justice, Federal Register, vol. 56, no. 144, July 1991.

American National Standard. Accessible and Usable Building and Facilities. CABO/ANSI A117.1 – 1992.

### 5.6.1 Building Data

Existing Use Type:	R-1, single-family dwelling on farm property
Proposed Use Type:	I, Institutional or B, business/museum
Construction Type:	5-B
Number of stories:	2, plus attic and basement
Lot area:	0.88 acres
Building footprint:	1700 square feet

#### Floor areas:

First Floor:	1650 square feet
Second Floor:	1053 square feet

#### Existing plumbing fixtures:

Room 103: 1 water closet, 1 sink

Room 203: 1 water closet, 1 sink, 1 shower

Room 205: 1 sink

### 5.6.2 Code Analysis

The following analysis is based upon the assumption that the first floor of the Van Liew Suydam house will be rehabilitated as an educational center, and that the second floor will serve as a caretaker's apartment and offices. Our interpretation suggests that the building may retain the existing staircase if no more than 50 persons are to occupy the second floor, as in a business use.

According to the 1998 UCC Rehabilitation Subcode, Section 6.33, Van Liew Suydam house qualifies as a "historic building" by virtue of its listing as "a contributing building to a historic district" listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places. Because of this,

the new code allows significant deviations from previous BOCA, CABO or UCC requirements.

6.33 (a), Section 4: “When a historic building is used as a historic museum, the building shall be classified as Use Group B provided the following conditions are met: I) A limit on occupancy, not to exceed 50, is set by the construction official based on egress capacity and travel distances using the following parameters: (1) for buildings with a single means of egress, occupancy shall be limited to the first and second floors, and the travel distance shall not exceed 75 feet; (2) two means of egress shall be required from all floors above the second floor where occupancy is permitted. II) There is supervision by a guide or other employee or volunteer knowledgeable in the emergency exiting procedures during all times that the building is occupied by visitors.”

6.33 (b), 1. “Exception: components of building systems hidden from public view, including but not limited to electrical equipment and wiring, plumbing equipment and piping and heating equipment, shall comply with Section 6.8 (Materials and Methods).”

6.33 (b), 4. “Roof covering – Historic buildings shall meet the intent of Section 1505.0 of the building subcode, but shall not be required to meet Section 1507.0. the existing type of roof covering may be continued or replaced with the same materials or the pre-existing materials may be replaced or restored if the materials are documented to be historic.”

6.33 (b) 6, 7, 8. Existing front or main exit doors may swing inward when serving fewer than 50 people, and existing door hardware may be retained if it is historic. Interior finishes, where demonstrated to be historic, may be replaced or repaired with the same materials.

6.33 (b) 9. Stairway enclosures may be omitted between the first and second floors only. In buildings less than three stories, exit enclosures shall limit the spread of smoke by using tight fitting doors and solid elements, but without a specified fire resistance rating. “When existing stairs are replaced or repaired, the existing or original riser height and tread width shall be permitted to remain.”

6.33 (b) 11. Alternative exit signs may be used when strict compliance with fire codes would damage the historic character of the building.

6.33 (b) 12. “Ceiling height – existing ceiling heights shall be permitted to remain.”

6/33 (c) 1. “The floor area for historic buildings undergoing a change of use to a higher hazard category as per Table E of Section 6.30 may exceed the allowable areas specified in the building subcode for the proposed use group by fifty percent.”

#### Section 6.5 – Renovations

(g) 1. “Windows may be replaced with windows like those existing without meeting the size requirements of the building subcode.”

#### Section 6.6 – Alterations

(j) "In a building required by the barrier free subcode to be accessible, where the space altered is a primary function space, an accessible path of travel to the altered space shall be provided up to the point at which the cost of providing accessibility is disproportionate to the cost of the overall alteration project; a cost is disproportionate if it exceeds 20% of the cost of the alteration work."

1993 BOCA Code, Chapter 11, "Accessibility"

Provide 1 accessible parking space for a parking area of less than 25 cars, 2 if less than 45 cars. (Table 1105.1)

Provide 2 wheelchair spaces for an assembly room seating less than 50 persons. (Table 1107.2.3)

Provide an accessible route from the main parking lot to the primary function space (i.e. assembly room).

1110.2.2.1 In an alteration or historic building, provide at least one accessible unisex toilet/bathroom located on the same floor with existing toilets, and proximate to the primary function space.

1110.2.2.5 "Platform (wheelchair) lifts, installed in accordance with Part XX of ASME A17.1 listed in Chapter 35, are permitted to be used as part of an accessible route."

ADAAG Standards for Toilet Rooms, Parking, Stairways are provided in the Appendices.

#### Conclusions:

The Van Liew Suydam house may be renovated for its proposed use as a cultural center with rather minimal upgrades to structure, mechanical and electrical systems. Its classification under the new UCC Rehabilitation Subcode will allow limited occupancy, of under 50 persons, without code upgrades on the stairs to the second floor. The floor loading under a "B" use is only 50 PSF, whereas "I" use will require 100 PSF floor loads. Our calculations indicate that the first floor will meet the 50 PSF loading without any additional structural retrofit. We therefore recommend a limitation on occupancy to meet the B use restrictions. This may require a special use classification for educational groups, subject to the approval of Franklin Township's building department. We do not recommend any reference to "teaching" in the title of the center, as this may trigger more stringent educational use upgrades. The Rehab Subcode will also allow retention of historic window sash, doors, flooring, and other key elements of the 19<sup>th</sup> century building fabric.

From the standpoint of ADA compliance, the building will obviously require the installation of a ramp on the south side and handicapped accessible parking spaces nearby. In addition, one of the bathrooms will need to meet standards for accessibility under ADAAG regulations. Our designs for the re-use of the building incorporate these changes. We anticipate that there will be cooperation between the State Historic Preservation Office and

the Department of Community Affairs with regard to reconciling ADA and Secretary of the Interior's standards when the building receives its approvals from both agencies of state government.



## 6. Rehabilitation Plan

## 6. Re-use and Rehabilitation Plan

### 6.1 Treatment Approach and Philosophy

Our approach to the rehabilitation of the Van Liew Suydam House is guided by the latest edition of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. When contemplating a restoration, the guidelines (*SIS*) suggest that a definitive restoration period be chosen that will reflect the years when the property was at its peak significance culturally, historically or architecturally. We have determined to use 1875 as our “restoration period” according to the guidelines. The Meadows Foundation has decided that it wishes to adaptively reuse the Van Liew house, and we thus outline below a plan for bringing the house back to its exterior state c. 1875. Accordingly, the *SIS* recommends that steps be taken to:

- Identify, Retain and Preserve Materials and Features from the Restoration Period;
- Protect and Maintain Materials and Features from the Restoration Period;
- Repair (Stabilize, Consolidate, Conserve) Materials and Features from the Restoration Period;
- Replace Only Extensively Deteriorated Features from the Restoration Period;
- Remove Existing Features from Other Historic Periods;
- Re-Create Documented but Missing Features from the Restoration Period; and
- Retrofit the House to Address Safety, Energy and Accessibility Considerations appropriate to its use.

The HSR documents the features that remain from the 1875 Victorian house as well as the earlier north wing, and records areas where evidence is less certain about the dates of building components. It is suggested that the following guidelines be strictly observed as the design and construction proceeds to its next phases:

- No historic evidence may be destroyed, falsified, or removed.
- Any intervention must be the minimum necessary to meet the goals and objectives of the cultural center.
- All designs must be governed by a respect for the aesthetic, historical, and physical integrity of the building and site, in all periods.
- The proposed design should avoid any false, extraneous or inauthentic elements, and instead should employ documented precedents.
- Interior spaces interpreted as 18th and 19th century rooms should be clearly designed and marked as such, while 21st century technology should equally clearly distinguish itself.
- All decisions, design phases, policies and goals should be articulated and recorded in writing for the benefit of future generations. To the extent possible, the new work should be marked to guide future restorers.

## 6.2 Re-Use and Rehabilitation Plan

The Franklin Township Board of Education has teamed with the Meadows Foundation in planning for the re-use of the Van Liew-Suydam house as a new Center for Cultural Diversity. When rehabilitated and converted to educational use, the house will serve as a teaching center for elementary age children, middle school and high school students, and adults on the value of cultural diversity in our society. The Center “will provide a variety of programming options specifically intended to focus on the different religious, racial, ethnic and national histories and backgrounds of area people” according to the latest planning document. It is hoped that the center will advance the causes of human rights, religious and ethnic tolerance, and promote discussion on issues of diversity and inclusiveness in contemporary society. A draft plan from 1997 is included in the appendices of this document.

In order to realize the goals of the Center, the 19<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse will require an interior rehabilitation that will make it safe and commodious for small groups of children and adults attending classes and workshops. The Meadows Foundation committee on the project has decided that no additional spaces should be added to the house to make it more functional as an educational facility, but that the functions and audience projected for the new center be limited to what the existing fabric will tolerate. Thus, the program for the center includes:

1. A small parking area for cars and buses adjacent to the house that will not disturb the existing farmland surrounding the property.
2. A new handicapped accessible entrance on the south side of the house.
3. A main entrance through the restored porch on the west side of the house.
4. A main floor teaching area that features a large meeting room, a large classroom, and a smaller classroom/reading room for literature on tolerance and diversity.
5. A main floor kitchen for catering and meal preparation to support workshops and classes.
6. Two rest rooms for the public on the ground floor, one of which is ADA accessible.
7. A multi-purpose entrance room on the south end of the house.
8. On the second floor, a caretaker's apartment that maintains the floor plan and amenities in the existing facility (a kitchen/living area, bedroom and bathroom).
9. An office and storage room in the low-ceilinged areas of the second floor on the south end of the building. These spaces are not intended to be accessible to the public, and signs will be posted to limit access during business hours.
10. Basement and attic areas shall remain unimproved and be utilized only for safe, non-hazardous storage.
11. Areas of the grounds around the house shall be improved via a landscape plan, and non-historic structures removed.
12. A visitor access, site lighting and signage program should be developed to make the site as “user friendly” as possible.

13. Connection to the city water system in order to gain access to potable water for public use.

It is anticipated that no more than 50 persons will be attending events in the house at any one time. This will allow the building to maintain its 19<sup>th</sup> century construction without a costly and intrusive fire-code retrofit, under the new UCC Rehabilitation Subcode. Moreover, parking for a single standard school bus, holding 45 students, will be possible in the area adjacent to the new main entrance on the north side.

During both evening and daylight hours, the center will operate with a staff housed in the three offices provided on both first and second floor. Students attending classes or workshops will come to the site for limited periods. The average class size should be no more than 25 in order to find seating in the larger meeting room. The smaller classroom will be outfitted for 15 students. In addition, the reading room will be furnished with comfortable chairs and tables for research and writing. There will be bookshelves in the non-window walls. In addition, we have suggested that a large kitchen be installed in the space formerly used for that purpose on the south side of the house. This space will also be accessible from an ADA standard ramp leading to the parking area. Two lavatories were outfitted with plumbing in an earlier Meadows renovation, and will simply be painted and equipped with new fixtures for institutional use. One of these will comply with ADA standards for accessibility and use by the handicapped.





## 7. Recommendations

## 7. Recommendations

The following recommendations are intended to accomplish the goals outlined in the foregoing report. The main goal of the long-range plan will be to establish a center for multi-cultural education at the Van Liew site. We anticipate that completion of the full program of restoration and re-use will take five to ten years. This report provides only the armature for this long-range program. It is assumed that other reports, including a master plan and maintenance plan, will be accomplished during the planned period.

### 7.1 Overall Recommendations:

1. The exterior of the house, which retains the greatest degree of integrity from the 1875 period, should be restored as fastidiously as possible to its configuration at that time, including the rebuilding of the Victorian porch on the west side. The only addition required on the exterior will be an ADA standard ramp for handicapped accessibility, on the south side.
2. The interior of the first floor, which retains much of its 19<sup>th</sup> century character, if not fabric, should be rehabilitated for use as an educational facility. In order to take advantage of UCC Rehab Code considerations for a historic building, occupancy should be limited to 50 persons and no "assembly" occupancies should be contemplated. Where finishes, woodwork, doors, mouldings and other elements exist, these should be conserved in situ or rebuilt. However, flooring, plasterwork, ceilings and other historic finishes now partially destroyed or deteriorated, should not be restored. New finish materials will serve better for the intended use.
3. The interior of the second floor, now approximately 50% renovated, should be completed renovated for use as offices and a caretaker's apartment. New gypsum board and wood finishes and room configurations should maintain the character of the historic spaces. Fabric in the north side of the house is too far deteriorated for restoration, and the spaces are not functional in their current configuration. With the new finishes, a more complete fire detection system may be installed and greater protection afforded for the historic wooden framing.
4. Since the foundation, roof, and structural system of the building are now in satisfactory condition for the intended use, only minor repairs are contemplated for these components. All repairs should conserve and protect historic materials and features to the greatest extent possible.
5. The existing heating system, using an oil fired boiler and hydronic piping, should be maintained and will serve adequately for many years. A new air conditioning system, either small duct/high velocity, or standard ducted, should be installed to service both the first and second floor. We do not anticipate any intrusive impact on the interior spaces when this system is in operation.
6. The existing electrical system should be rehabilitated to meet current codes by replacing all substandard wiring, boxes, switches and receptacles. This work should be done by a licensed electrician. In addition, the service should be upgraded when the air conditioning system is installed to handle this extra load.

7. The site around the house should be conserved to save its agricultural character and existing flora. Any parking areas or pathways should be designed to afford safe auto and pedestrian circulation, but should not intrude on the character of the farmstead as it presently exists. A new program of signs and site lighting should be installed to allow visitors to enter the site and park safely.
8. Should the Center for Cultural Diversity be successful and require expansion of programs and facilities, the Meadows Foundation and Franklin Township may wish to consider alternate locations for additional space. As currently contemplated and planned, the building and site will not support expansion.
9. The property should be individually listed on the New Jersey and National Register of Historic Places to insure its continued protection under federal law.

## **7.2 Priorities for Repair, Renovation, Restoration**

The following list of prioritized work is offered as a suggested program of improvements that will allow the property to function for its intended use over an extended period. Since this is a planning document, priorities may be re-evaluated or changed as funding and program needs are met in future years.

### 7.2.1 Phase I – Exterior Restoration and Rehabilitation

Timetable: years 1 and 2.

- Repoint all deteriorated joints in the house foundation.
- Reconstruct/restore the decorative Victorian porch (including doorway components and glazing) on the west side of the house, using salvaged components where possible, and in-kind replicas of wood components where there are missing pieces.
- Replace all flat or low-sloped roofs with EPDM systems.
- Repair the porch and porch roof on the east side of the house, adjacent to the old dining room wing.
- Repair all damaged eaves, gutters, brackets or trim at the roof levels of the house. Inspect the roof for wear or damage and repair where necessary.
- Repair the gutter and leader system and install replacement components were required.
- Remove all existing storm/screen units and install new units in the first floor windows. These should replicate historical window sash and be made of wood.
- Repair all deteriorated window, door and decorative trim using identical wood, Dutchman patches, or epoxy resin systems. Replace all damaged window flashing with new copper.
- Repair all cracked or broken window panes, as well as sash and stops.
- Install new windows in north kitchen and south entry.
- Retain paint conservator. Sample all exterior paint and get lab analysis of colors.
- Strip paint from all clapboard and trim surfaces. Repaint the house using data from paint analysis to replicate 1875 color scheme.

- Install new security system linked to police headquarters.
- Upgrade hard-wired fire alarm system.
- Initiate pest control program; test framing and foundations for infestation.
- Connect to city water system for future public use.

### 7.2.2 Phase II—Interior Renovation for Center for Cultural Diversity

Timetable: years 3 and 4

- Design and build a new ADA standard access ramp on the south side of the house, entering the old south kitchen area. Install new wide door at this entrance.
- Create new kitchen in Room 100 to serve the public functions of the new Center for Cultural Diversity. New wallboard, ceiling, window trim, lighting, etc.
- Restore Room 101, Dining Room, with new paint finishes to match early color scheme. Furnish the room for classroom use and install new lighting. Replace new doors with four panel to match c. 1875 doors.
- Stair halls: 102 and 204: strip, repair and refinish stair and balustrade. Strip and repaint all existing mouldings and walls. Repair plaster. Install new lighting fixture in ceiling (replica of c. 1875 gasolier) and upstairs sconces. Restore stained or cut glass in transom window.
- Finish installation of plumbing fixtures and finishes in Bath 104. Tile floor, new lighting, door, paint finishes.
- Install ADA compliant fixtures in bath 103, including grab bars, door hardware, etc.
- Room 105: install new wallboard, lighting, mouldings to match Victorian décor in other 1875 rooms. Create new classroom/reading room in this space. Re-hang sliding doors salvaged from nearby house. New paint finishes.
- Room 106: as above, create new classroom space around restored décor and finishes.
- Room 107: create new entry and office/Xerox space with new wallboard, ceiling, trim, doors, and paint finishes.
- Sand, repair and refinish all finish flooring in first floor. Install new wood flooring in Room 107 and new tile flooring in Rooms 100, 103 and 104.
- Rehabilitate Rooms 200, 201, 202 for office uses, retaining plaster walls and ceilings where possible and installing new wallboard where necessary. Repaint walls and ceilings; refinish wood floors. Install new lighting.
- Repair, rehab and refinish Caretaker's Apartment (Rooms 203-207).
- Install new air conditioning system using basement and attic areas for ductwork.
- New sign system for house and site, marking it for use as the Center for Cultural Diversity.
- Upgrade the existing electrical service to handle A/C loads and new lighting.
- Perform all necessary upgrades and repairs to electrical system throughout the house.

### 7.2.3 Phase III—Site Improvements

Timetable: year 5.

- Construct new parking lots at north and south areas near house. At least two handicapped parking spaces should be provided nearest the ramp at the south side.
- Rehabilitate the old barn/granary for possible interpretive uses associated with the farm and fields surrounding the building.
- Undertake an archaeological investigation at areas surrounding the house, barn and other known outbuildings to determine the potential for excavation of significant artifacts from history or pre-history on this site.
- Repair and rehabilitate the existing approach road and install new signs at South Middlebush Road.
- Install new site lighting to increase safety and visibility on the site and approach road.
- Rehabilitate gazebo, well and other outbuildings near the house for possible interpretive use.
- Develop a comprehensive landscape and planting plan for the site, using the services of professional landscape architects.
- Develop a long-range maintenance plan for the site and buildings that will help to manage the work in the future.

### **7.3 Cost Estimates**

See attached spreadsheets.

# Van Liew-Suydam House Historic Structures Report

## Cost Estimates - Phase I

Item	Unit	Quantity	Price	Subtotal	Multiplier	Grand Total
Repair/replace clapbds.	SF					
Repair windows, door trim	SF					
Gutters and leaders	LF					
Repair or replace brakets	SF					
Strip & preparation	SF					
Painting	SF					
Pest control	EA					
Repair porches	EA					
Rebuild porch	EA					
New copper porch roof	SF					
EPDM roofs	SQ					
New siding & windows	SF					
Repainting foundation	SF					
Repair of rotted sills	LF					
Electrical wiring repairs	EA					
Paint conservator	EA					
Paint samples, lab	EA					
Front door restoration	EA					
Pest control program	EA					
Upgrade fire system	EA					
New security system	EA					
<b>TOTAL FOR PHASE I</b>						<b>\$ 75,000.00</b>

(SEE COST ESTIMATES BY KANE BROTHERS)

Contingency at 15%

**\$ 10,000.00**

**GRAND TOTAL**

**\$ 85,000.00**

# Van Liew-Suydam House Historic Structures Report

## Cost Estimates - Phase II

Item	Unit	Quantity	Price	Subtotal	Multiplier	Grand Total
ADA Ramp at south	EA	1	\$20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	1.21	\$ 24,200.00
Rehab Room 100	SF	290	\$75.00	\$ 21,750.00	1.21	\$ 26,317.50
Restore Room 101	SF	288	\$25.00	\$ 7,200.00	1.21	\$ 8,712.00
Restore Room 102	SF	133	\$75.00	\$ 9,975.00	1.21	\$ 12,069.75
Bath 104	SF	32	\$50.00	\$ 1,600.00	1.21	\$ 1,936.00
Rehab Room 105	SF	272	\$100.00	\$ 27,200.00	1.21	\$ 32,912.00
Rehab Room 106	SF	270	\$100.00	\$ 27,000.00	1.21	\$ 32,670.00
Rebuild Room 107	SF	192	\$125.00	\$ 24,000.00	1.21	\$ 29,040.00
Rehab Rms. 200, 201, 202	SF	288	\$75.00	\$ 21,600.00	1.21	\$ 26,136.00
Restore Room 204	SF	150	\$50.00	\$ 7,500.00	1.21	\$ 9,075.00
Repair Rms. 203-207	SF	728	\$15.00	\$ 10,920.00	1.21	\$ 13,213.20
New storm/screen units	EA	35	\$200.00	\$ 7,000.00	1.21	\$ 8,470.00
New shutters	PR	25	\$1,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	1.21	\$ 30,250.00
Kitchen cabinets	LF	24	\$750.00	\$ 18,000.00	1.21	\$ 21,780.00
Kitchen appliances	EA	4	\$800.00	\$ 3,200.00	1.21	\$ 3,872.00
A/C system	EA	1	\$15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	1.21	\$ 18,150.00
Sign system	EA	1	\$2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	1.21	\$ 3,025.00
Kitchen plumbing	EA	1	\$7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	1.21	\$ 9,075.00
New lighting, both floors	EA	50	\$150.00	\$ 7,500.00	1.21	\$ 9,075.00
New electric service	EA	1	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	1.21	\$ 3,630.00
Wiring repairs, upgrade	EA	1	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	1.21	\$ 6,050.00
TOTAL, PHASE II						\$ 329,658.45

Contingency at 15%

\$ 48,000.00

**GRAND TOTAL**

**\$ 377,658.45**

# Van Liew-Suydam House Historic Structures Report

Cost Estimates: Phase III

Item	Unit	Quantity	Price	Subtotal	Multiplier	Grand Total
Construct new parking	SY	1500	\$8.73	\$ 13,095.00	1	\$ 13,095.00
New paved drive	SY	5000	\$8.73	\$ 43,650.00	1	\$ 43,650.00
Site lighting	EA	25	\$500.00	\$ 12,500.00	1	\$ 12,500.00
Site signage	EA	1	\$15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	1	\$ 15,000.00
Rehab Barn/Granary	SF	850	\$50.00	\$ 42,500.00	1	\$ 42,500.00
Rehab Gazebo, Well	EA	2	\$1,500.00	\$ 3,000.00	1	\$ 3,000.00
TOTAL						\$ 129,745.00

Contingency at 15%

\$ 19,461.75

**GRAND TOTAL**

**\$ 149,206.75**



# Van Liew-Suydam House Historic Structures Report

SUMMARY PAGE

PHASE I	\$ 85,000.00	EXTERIOR REHABILITATION
PHASE II	\$ 377,658.00	INTERIOR REHABILITATION
PHASE III	\$ <u>150,000.00</u>	SITE IMPROVEMENTS
SOFT COSTS	25% \$ 612,658.00	PROF. FEES, PERMITS, ETC.
	\$ <u>153,164.50</u>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 765,822.50</b>	<b>ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS</b>



## 8. Illustrations

## 8. Illustrations

### 8.1 Plates

Note: all photos listed below, with the exception of those in Plates 13 and 14, were taken during the year 2000 by the staff of Mark Alan Hewitt, Architect.

1. Black and white photo of the Van Liew-Suydam House from the southwest.
2. Color photo of the house from the northwest.
3. West façade view, showing area covered by former porch.
4. View of the house from the northwest, showing earliest wing and kitchen lean-to.
5. View of the south façade.
6. Southern portion of east façade showing later kitchen wing.
7. Southeast view of house and grounds.
8. Close up view of covered well.
9. Middle side of east façade.
10. Victorian gazebo on property.
11. Two window details showing Victorian cornices.
12. Two windows on west façade.
13. Photos showing the removal of the porch on the west side of the building.
14. Details of the porch during removal.
15. New substructure for porch.
16. Arch paneled Victorian doorway from the 1875 build.
17. Details of eaves and south gable.
18. Hatch leading to the cellar.
19. Salvaged components from the 1875 porch now stored in the house.
20. Details of the oriel window on the south side of the parlor.
21. Dining Room, Room 101, from the southwest.
22. Dining Room looking northeast.
23. Close up views of dining room details.
24. Two details of the main stair hall, Room 102.
25. View of front parlor, Room 105, looking north.
26. Four views of the front and rear parlors.
27. Two views of the front and rear halls.
28. Caretaker's apartment, Room 205-206.
29. Caretaker's bedroom, Room 207.
30. Front parlor, Room 105, from Room 106.
31. Bathroom, Room 203, Bedroom, Room 202, and attic.

### 8.2 Figures

Figure 1. Aerial photogrammetric map of site, from the 1970s.

Figure 2. Map of Somerset County, New Jersey, by Otley, VanDerveer and Kelly, 1850.

Figure 3. Portion of 1873 Beer's Atlas of Somerset County, showing P. J. Suydam house.

Figure 4. “The old Suydam house at South Middlebush Road, now owned by John French,” from Stryker, *A History of Old Middlebush*.

Figure 5. Plan and elevation of a farmhouse, from *American Agriculturalist*, October 1875.

Figure 6. USGS location map showing Middlebush and Franklin Township. Arrow indicates location of Van Liew-Suydam house.

Figure 7. Detail of previous USGS map, pinpointing the location of the house.

### 8.3 Drawings

- C-1 Site Plan – Circa 1900
- C-2 Enlarged Site Plan – Circa 1900
- C-3 First Floor Plan – Circa 1900
- C-4 Second Floor Plan – Circa 1900
  
- R-1 First Floor Plan – Restored Conditions
- R-2 Second Floor Plan – Restored Conditions
- R-3 North Elevation – Restored Conditions
- R-4 West Elevation – Restored Conditions
- R-5 South Elevation – Restored Conditions
- R-6 East Elevation – Restored Conditions

## 9. Appendices

1. The Van Liew Suydam House Restoration Committee. Rehabilitation Work Plan, dated June 12, 1990. Typescript, 5 pages.
2. Betty K. Scott. "The Van Liew Suydam French House: farm life through the years," typescript, 15 pages.
3. Draft Plan, Franklin Township Center for Cultural Diversity. September 15, 1997. Typescript, 5 pages.



Black and white photo of the Van Liew-Suydam house from the northwest.

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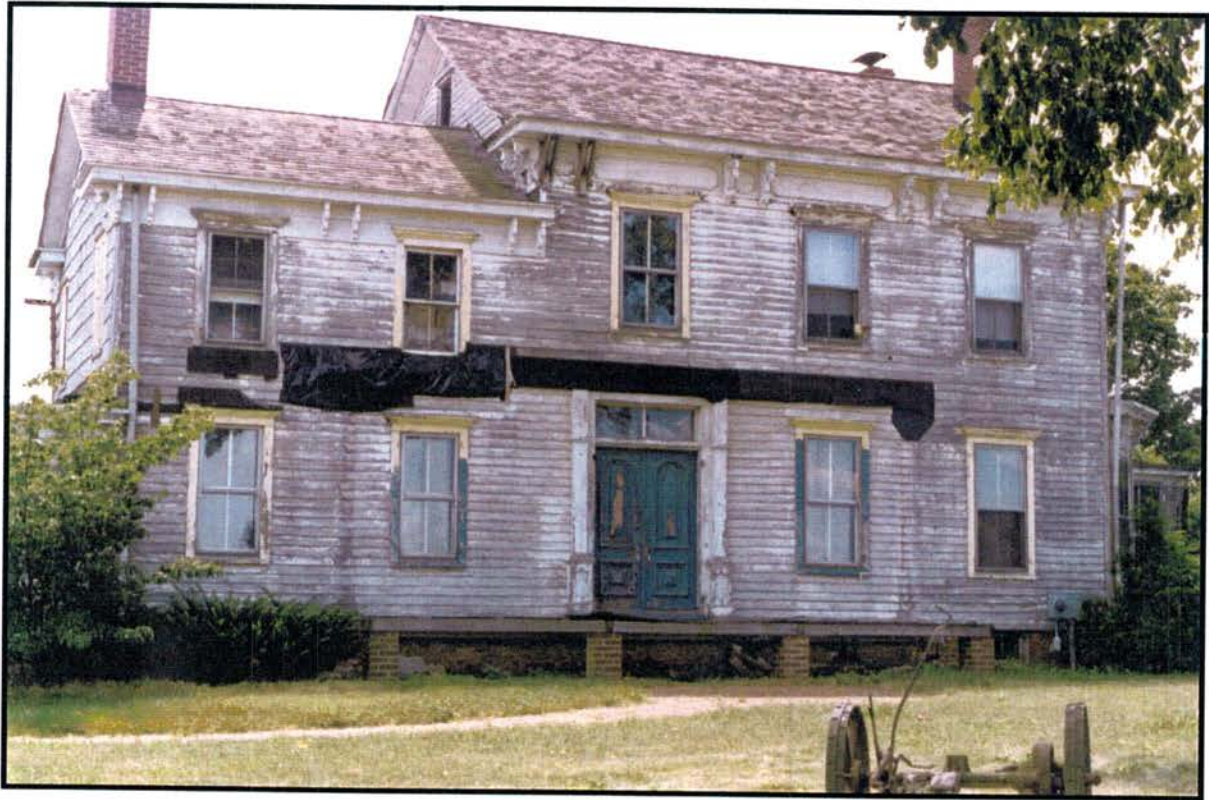
*Historic Structures Report*

## VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE

Franklin Township, New Jersey

*Mark Alan Hewitt, Architect*

September 2001



Color photo of the Van Liew-Suydam house from the northwest.

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**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**

Franklin Township, New Jersey

*Mark Alan Hewitt, Architect*

September 2001



West facade view, showing area covered by former porch.

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## VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE

Franklin Township, New Jersey

*Mark Alan Hewitt, Architect*

September 2001





View of house from the northwest, showing earliest wing and kitchen lean-to from the 20th century.

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## VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE

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*Mark Alan Hewitt, Architect*

September 2001



View of south facade showing early 20th century "kitchen" for second family use.

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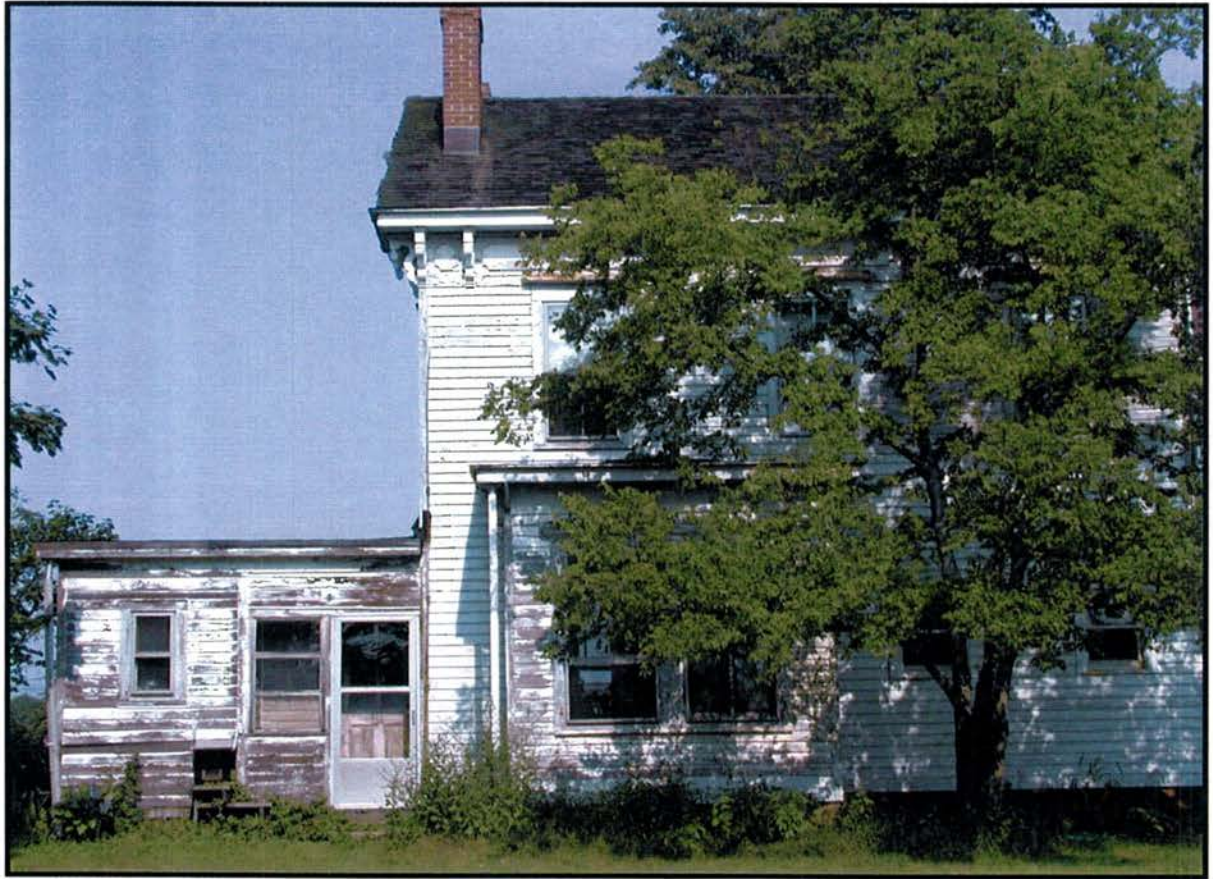
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*Mark Alan Hewitt, Architect*

September 2001



Southern portion of east facade showing later kitchen wing.

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## VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE

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September 2001



Southeast view of house and grounds, showing location of covered well.

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Close-up view of covered well.

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## VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE

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Middle side of east facade. The vertical proportions of the 1875 block contrast greatly with the older kitchen wing.

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The Victorian gazebo on the property was salvaged by David Brook from a nearby house under demolition and moved to the site.

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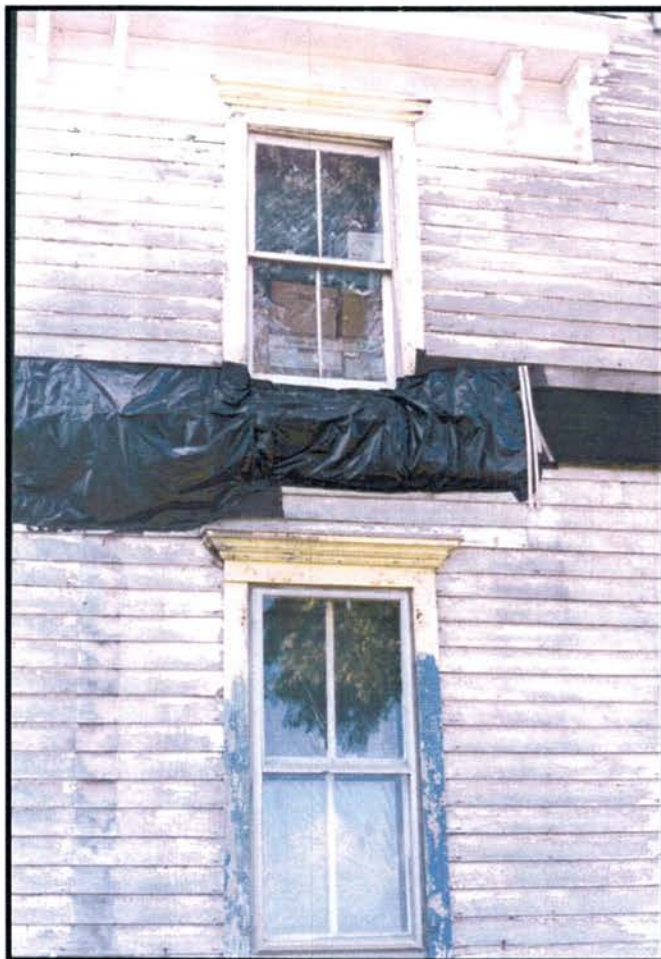


Two window details showing typical Victorian cornices above double hung units. Cornices are typically capped by a metal flashing. Most of these should be replaced with copper flashings.

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Two windows on west façade, behind the porch that was removed. The upper unit has rotted sills due to exposure to water from the porch roof. We recommend truncating the window to prevent further deterioration when the porch is restored.

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Two photos showing the process of removing the Victorian porch on the west side of the building. The roof, left, was constructed of planks covered with metal sheeting. Wooden components, right, were disassembled, catalogued and saved for the reconstruction.

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Above left: the collapsed roof of the porch and framing members. Note the metal at the right.



Below left: a detail of the cornice and architrave of the porch. Scroll brackets were placed at regular intervals in the architrave, with one between each post and one marking the post locations.

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Above left: new plates and ledgers attached to the brick foundation wall to support the porch reconstruction. These members should be evaluated before re-use.



Below left: temporary plywood sheets on porch framing created by Meadows Foundation volunteers following the porch removal.

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Arch paneled Victorian doors from the 1875 build. The doors are integral to the character of the façade and porch elements (note the pilasters flanking the frame). They are in good condition and should be conserved and repainted.

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Peak of south gable shows brackets and arched attic window. Meadows Foundation volunteers made repairs to rotted cornice during the roofing campaign.

Detail of leader from projecting eave on the southeast corner of the main block. All leaders need repair or replacement, and should run to a new drainage system.



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Hatch leading to cellar is on the southeast side of the house, adjacent to the smaller dining room wing. Both the doors and the plank flooring are severely deteriorated and should be restored with like materials. This is the only access to the cellar areas for service and should have a secure lock.

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Salvaged components from the porch are stored both in the main parlor and outside the house, unprotected from the weather. When the porch is restored each piece will have to be evaluated to assess its condition and potential for re-use.

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Details, above, of the oriel or bay window on the south side of the parlor show deterioration in the wood details, but fundamental soundness of the components.

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Dining Room, Room 101. This room is part of the older, north wing of the house. Its mantel was replaced following a rebuilding of the fireplace during the 1990s.

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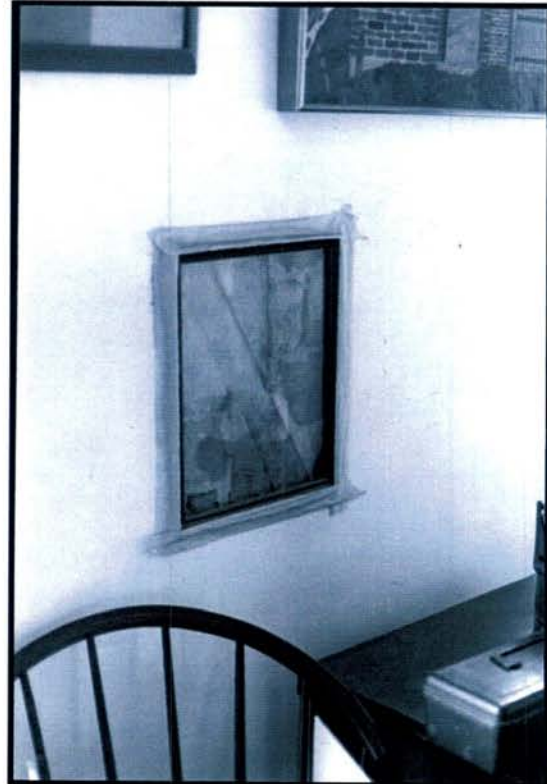
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Dining room looking northeast toward door to back porch. The wooden mantelpiece may be from the early 19th century, but the fireplace has been enlarged and its position moved forward.

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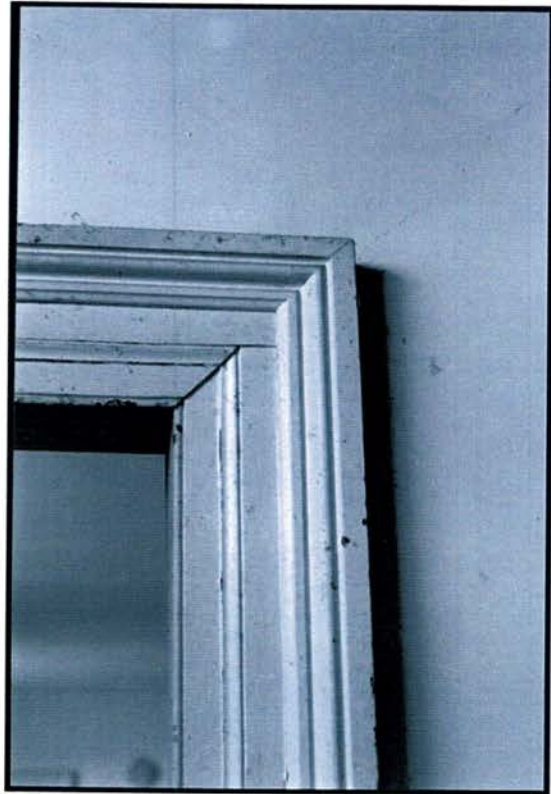
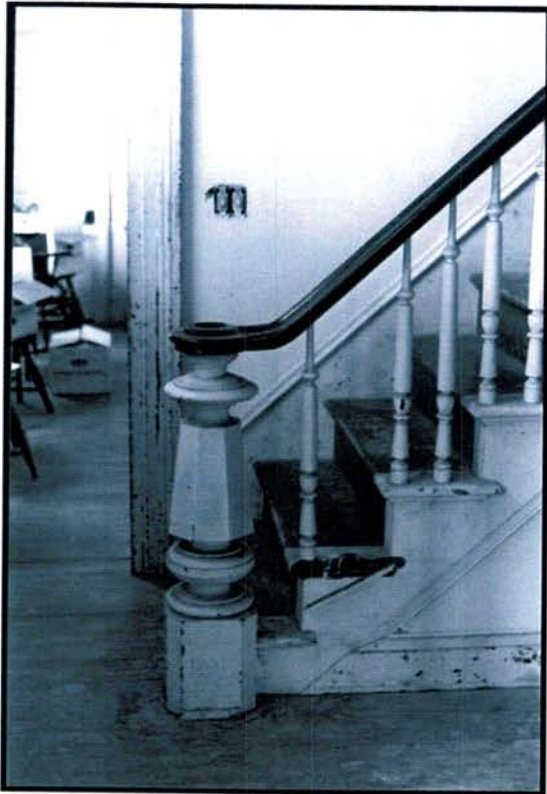
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Left: close up of dining room fireplace. Right: a portion of the braced timber framing and brick nogging has been left exposed under the gypsum board walls.

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Two details of stair hall, Room 102. The newel and balustrade are typical of Victorian staircases in the New York area. Door casings also mark the building as a later 19th century product.

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View of the large front parlor, looking north toward the stair hall. The two wooden doors at right were salvaged from a building of similar vintage for re-use here. The mantelpiece on the floor is from the 1875 build and will be restored to its location on the south wall of this room.

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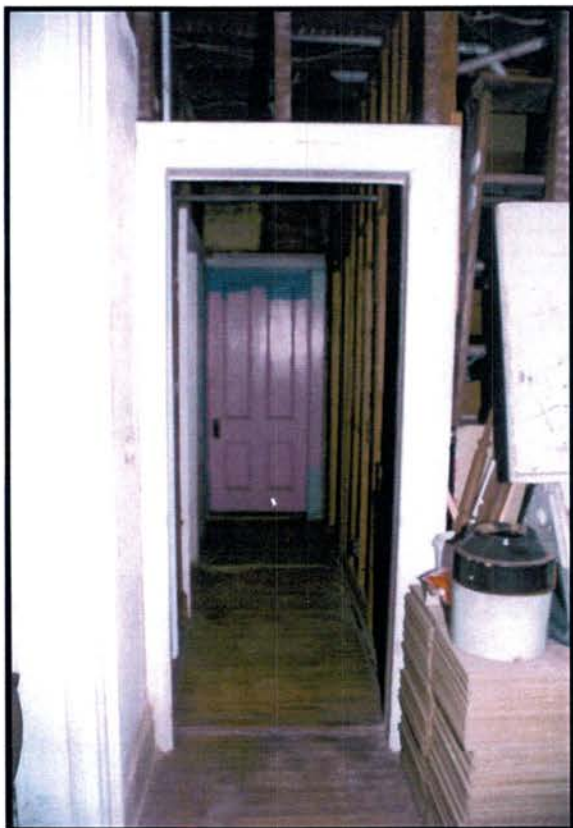
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Four views of the front and rear parlors, showing the partially-stripped plaster walls and the process of renovation undertaken during the 1990s.

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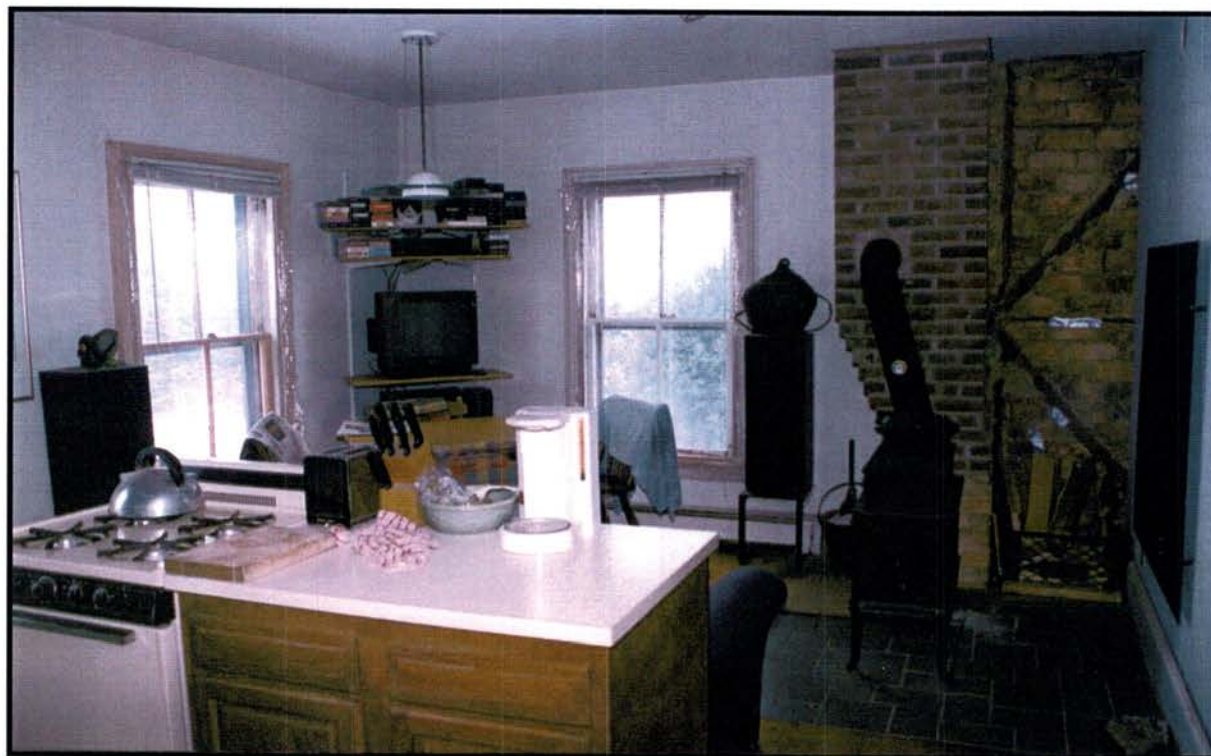
Left: a view of the rear hall leading from Room 105 to the lavatories, Rooms 103 and 104, toward the dining room.

Right: a view from Room 106, the front parlor, into Room 102, the stair hall.

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*Mark Alan Hewitt, Architect*  
January 2002





Caretaker's apartment, Room 205, looking south from kitchen to stove and rebuilt chimney at right. The walls and ceiling are finished in gypsum board. The 19th century window sashes have been retained in the modernized room.

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*Historic Structures Report*  
**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**  
Franklin Township, New Jersey  
*Mark Alan Hewitt, Architect*  
January 2002



Caretaker's bedroom, Room 207, looking southwest. The early mantelpiece on the left opens to a non-functioning chimney stack. Like the apartment next door, the room has been renovated to serve its current purpose and needs little in the way of upgrades.

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*Historic Structures Report*  
**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**  
Franklin Township, New Jersey  
*Mark Alan Hewitt, Architect*  
January 2002



View of front parlor, 105, from rear parlor, 106, showing the open ceiling and partially stripped plaster walls.

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*Historic Structures Report*  
**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**  
Franklin Township, New Jersey  
*Mark Alan Hewitt, Architect*  
January 2002



Above left: bathroom, Room 203.

Above right: Bedroom No. 2,  
Room 202.

Right: Attic framing of south wing.  
Note the knee truss supporting the  
rafters at approximately mid span.



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*Historic Structures Report*  
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Franklin Township, New Jersey  
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Left: ceiling framing in the front parlor, showing structural repairs made to existing floor joists and marks from old lath strips.



Left: ceiling in rear parlor, showing bridging and new electrical wiring as well as repairs to chimney and wall framing.

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*Historic Structures Report*  
**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**  
Franklin Township, New Jersey  
*Mark Alan Hewitt, Architect*  
January 2002



Attic of south (older) wing, showing sistered framing and re-used hand-hewn rafters. The chimney at the far end of the space was recently rebuilt.

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*Historic Structures Report*  
**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**  
Franklin Township, New Jersey  
*Mark Alan Hewitt, Architect*  
January 2002



Above left: framing members in crawl space under older south wing. There is evidence here of hand-hewn construction and early framing techniques common to the 18th century.



Below left: sandstone and brick foundation wall in crawl space. The wall shows evidence of at least two building campaigns. The earlier build employed only stone, laid with a soft lime mortar.

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*Historic Structures Report*  
**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**  
Franklin Township, New Jersey  
*Mark Alan Hewitt, Architect*  
January 2002



South wing attic, looking north toward roof join between the two builds. No evidence was found of a lower roofline at this juncture, but the current roof framing is exposed.

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*Historic Structures Report*  
**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**  
Franklin Township, New Jersey  
*Mark Alan Hewitt, Architect*  
January 2002



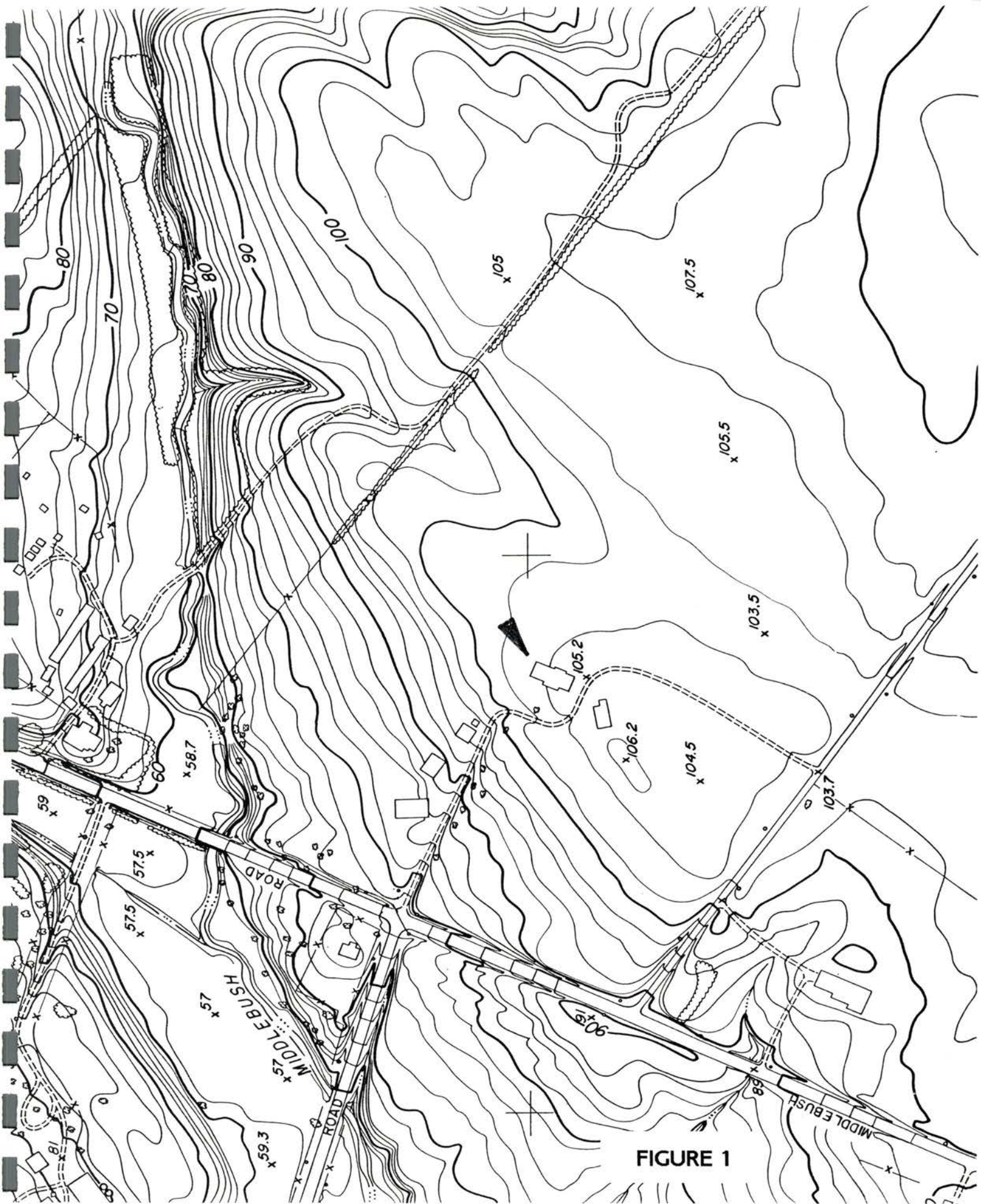
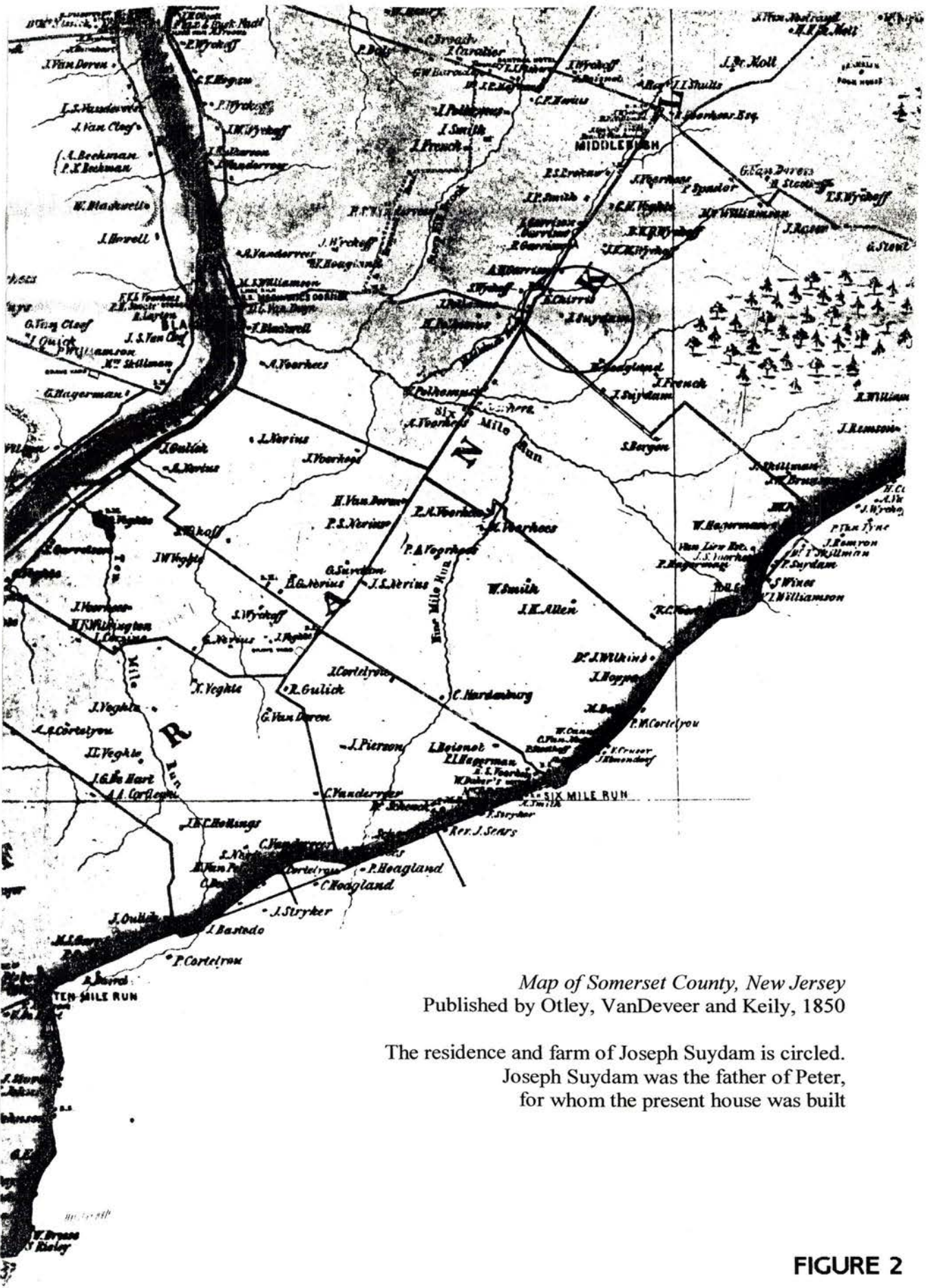


FIGURE 1



Map of Somerset County, New Jersey  
 Published by Otley, VanDeveer and Keily, 1850

The residence and farm of Joseph Suydam is circled.  
 Joseph Suydam was the father of Peter,  
 for whom the present house was built

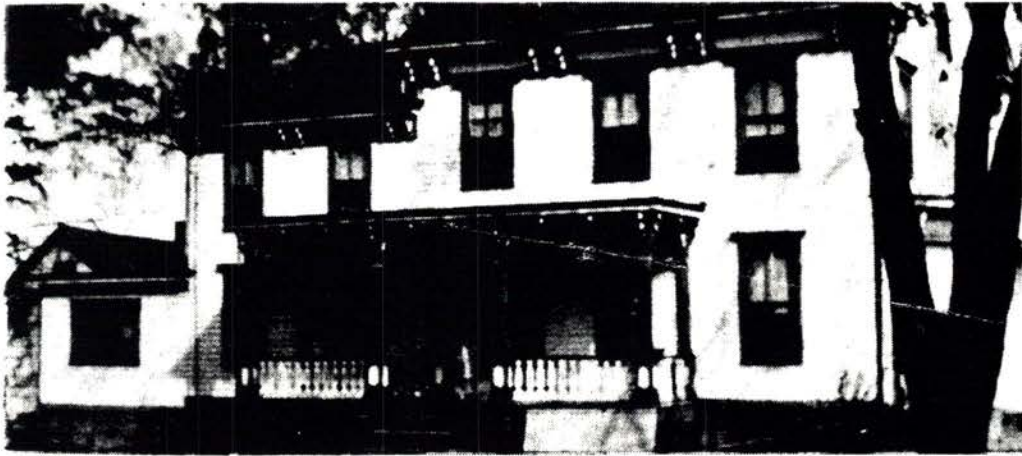
FIGURE 2



Scale 200 Rods to the inch

A portion of the 1873 Beer's Atlas of Somerset County, with the location of the Van Liew-Suydam House circled. The house and an adjoining property (right of the circle) were owned by Peter Suydam. He is believed to be the builder of the present house, in 1874.

FIGURE 3



The old Suydam house at South Middlebush, now owned by John French.

From: *Where the Trees Grow Tall, A History of Old Middlebush, Part I, 1701-1935.*  
By Elise Beatrice Stryker. Published by the Franklin Township Historical Society, 1963, for the  
New Jersey Tercentenary Celebration, 1964.

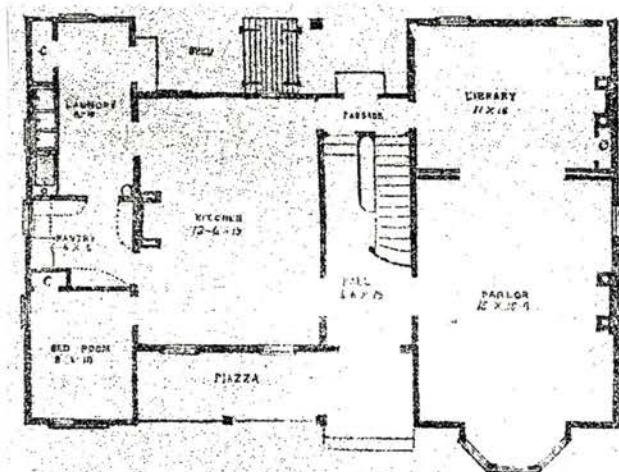
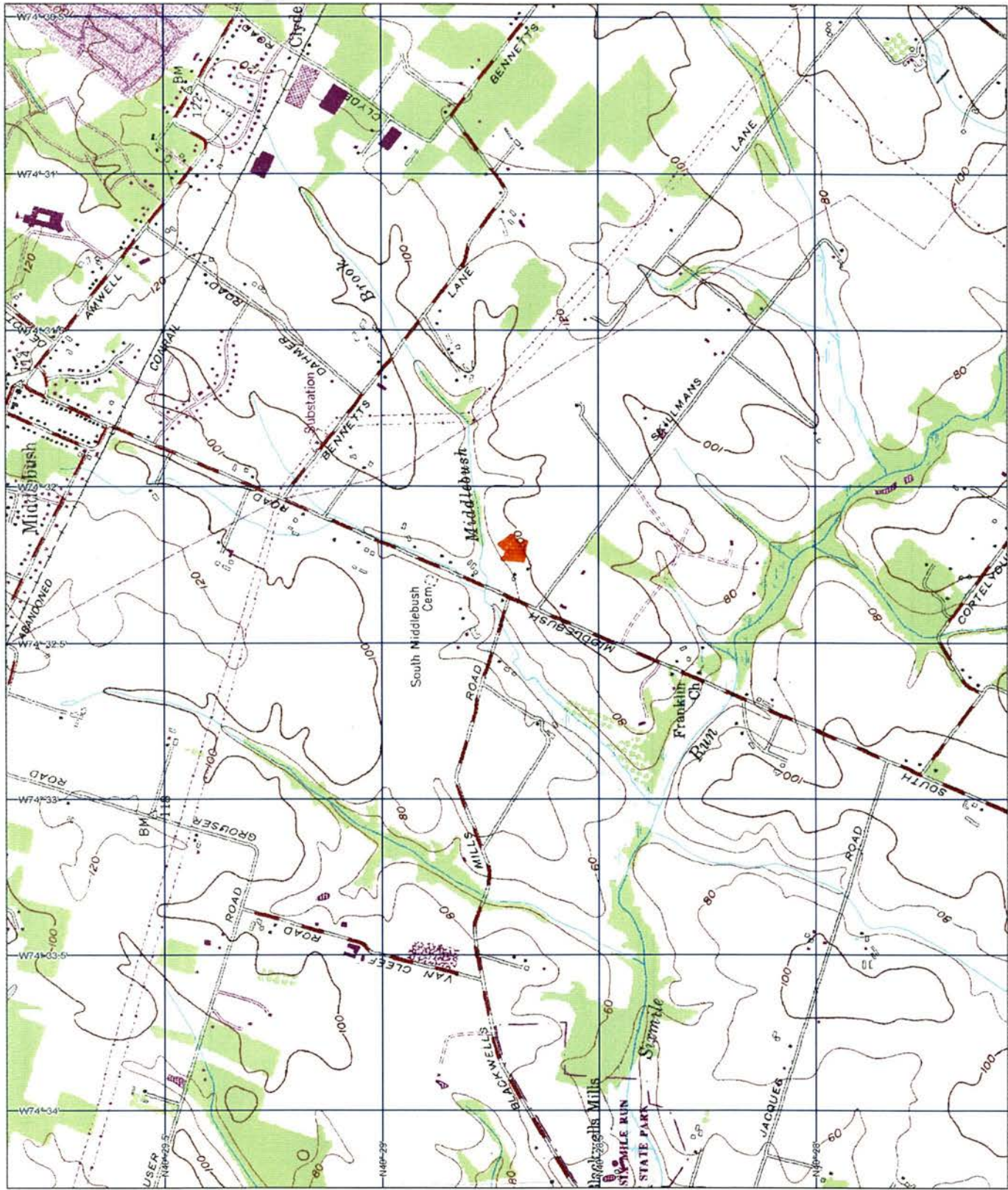
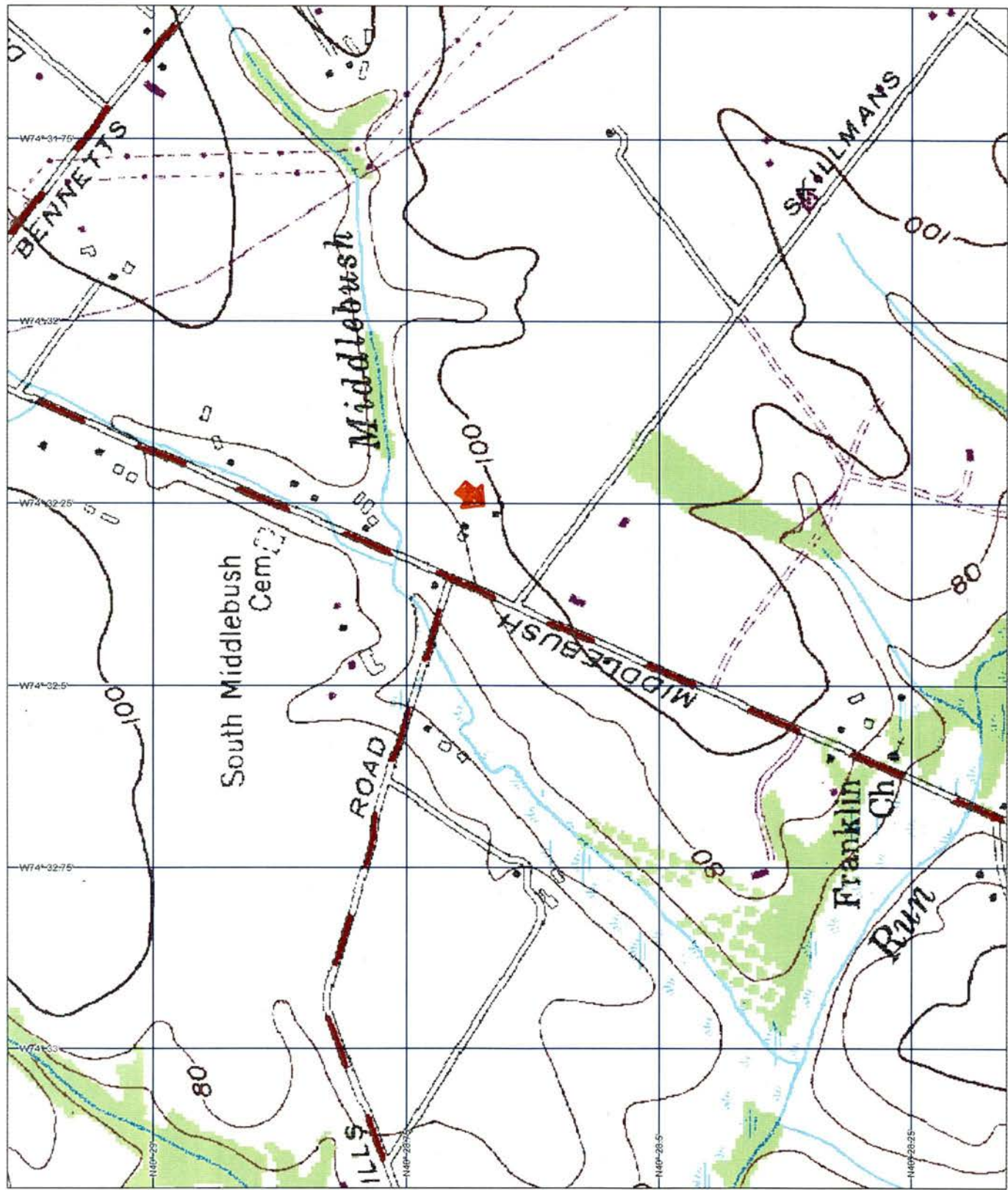


Fig. 3.—PLAN OF FIRST STORY.



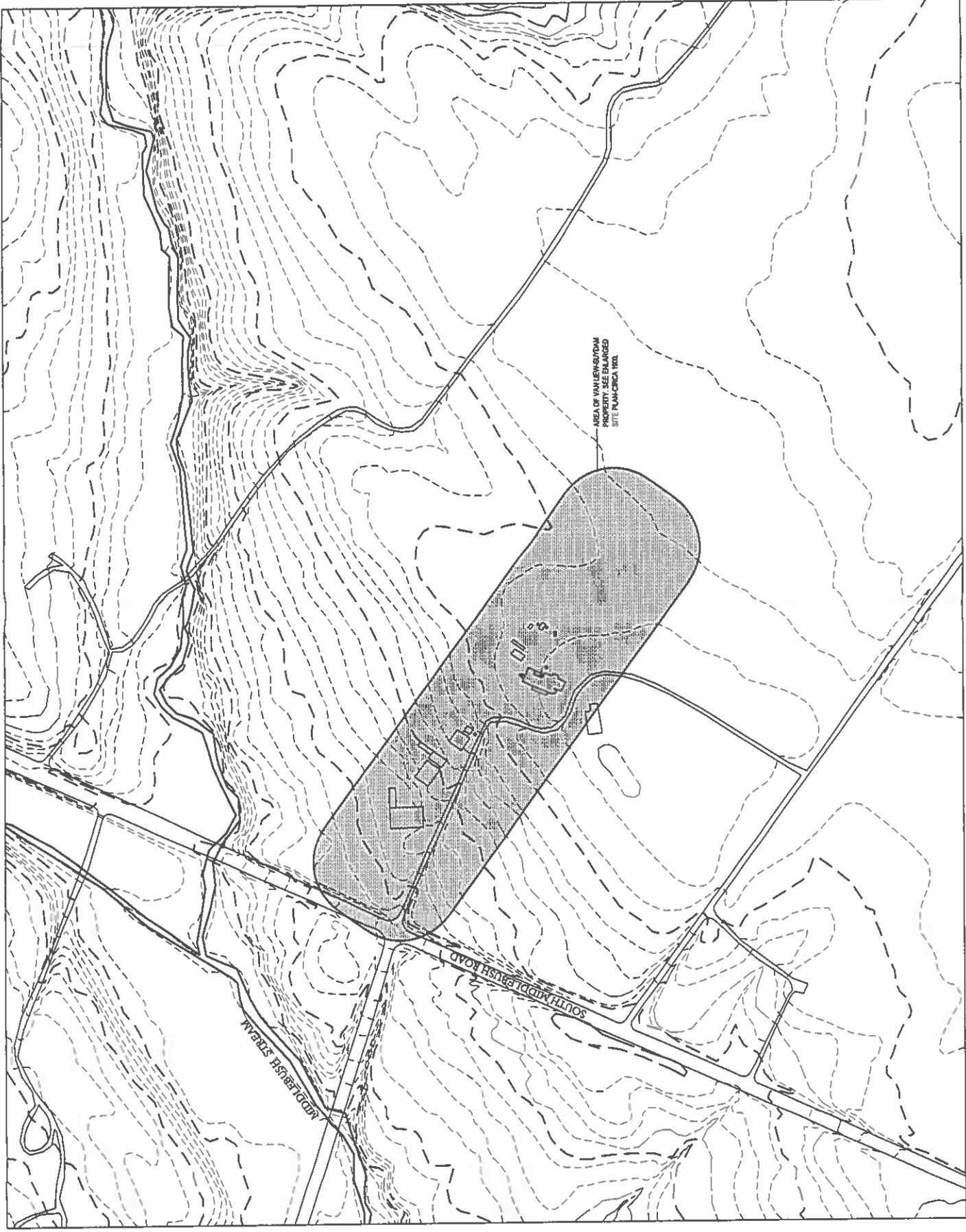
3-D TopoQuads Copyright © 1999 DeLorme Yarmouth, ME 04096 Source Data: USGS 900 ft Scale: 1:22,400 Detail: 13:2 Datum: WGS84

FIGURE 6

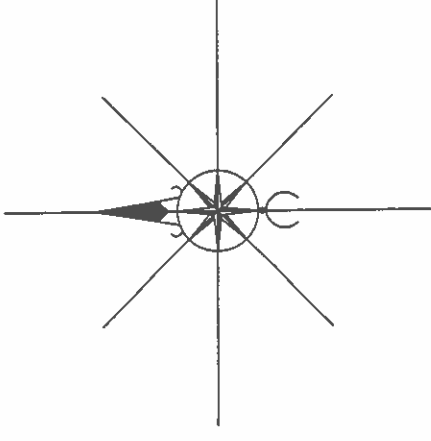


3-D TopoQuads Copyright © 1999 DeLorme Yarmouth, ME 04096 Source Data: USGS Datum: WGS84  
150 ft Scale: 1:9,600 Detail: 1:4 Datum: WGS84

FIGURE 7



SITE PLAN - CIRCA 1900



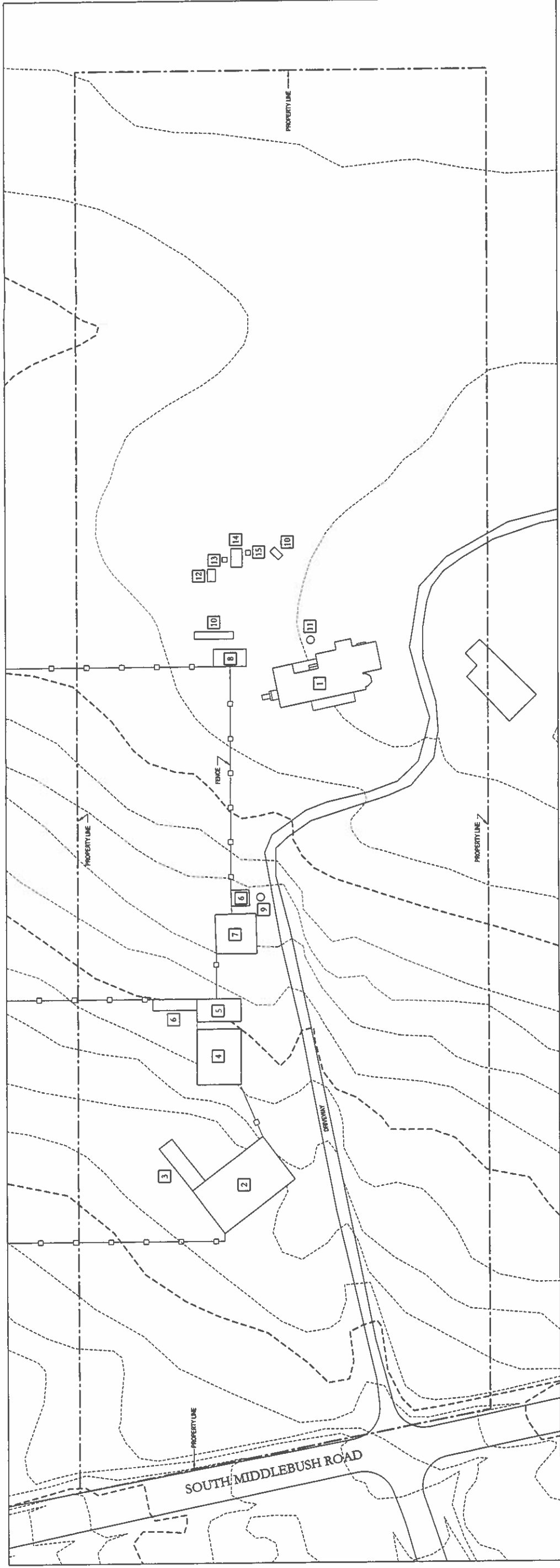
DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - CIRCA 1900  
**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**  
 SOUTH MIDDLEBUSH ROAD, SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

C-1

MARK ALAN HEWITT, AIA  
*Architect*

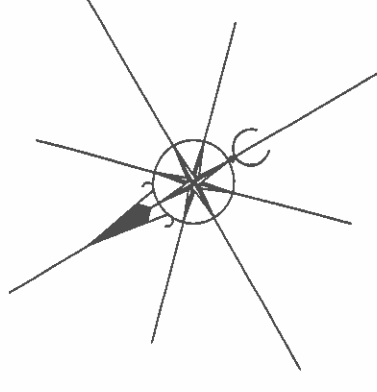
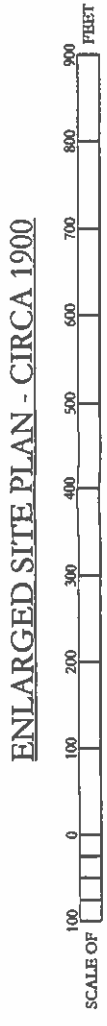
1 JUNE 2002



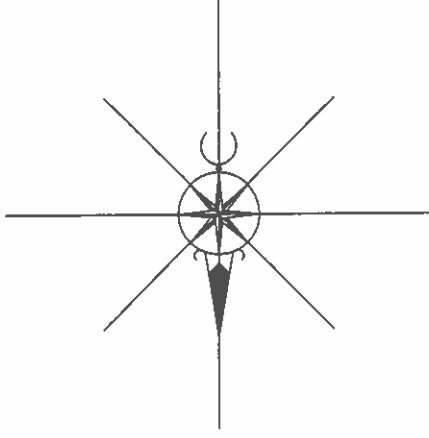
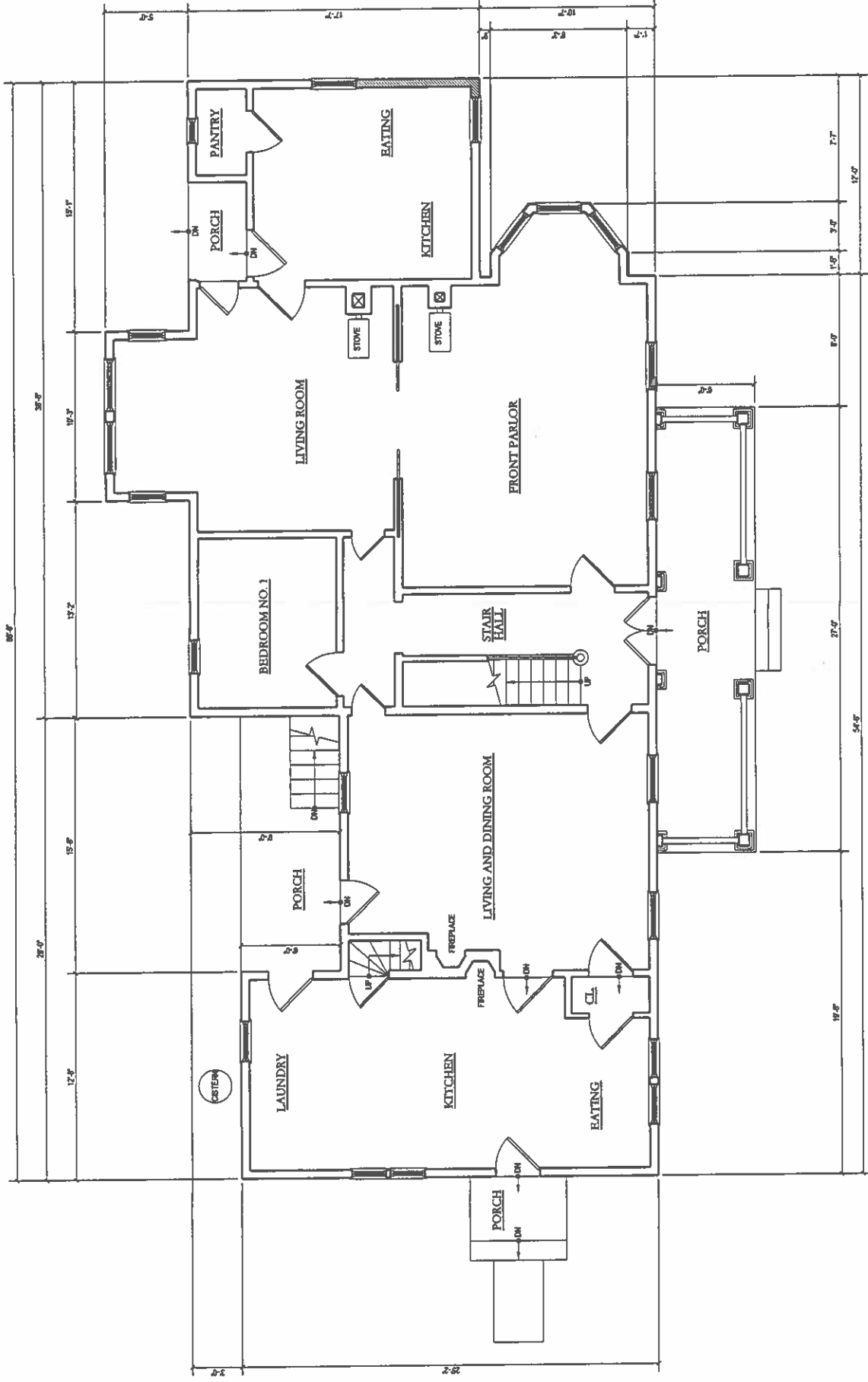


**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM PROPERTY KEY**

1	VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE	9	DRILLED WELL
2	COW STALLS, HAY STORAGE, & MACHINERY STORAGE	10	CHICKEN COOP
3	HOVEL	11	HAND DUG WELL
4	HORSE STALLS & HAY STORAGE	12	CORN CRIB
5	MACHINERY STORAGE	13	SMOKE HOUSE
6	PIG PEN	14	TRACTOR HOUSE
7	GRANARY & GARAGE	15	OUTHOUSE
8	GENERAL TOOL STORAGE & WORKSHOP		



DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - CIRCA 1900  
**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**  
 SOUTH MIDDLEBUSH ROAD, SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY  
 MARK ALAN HEWITT, AIA  
*Architect*  
 1 JUNE 2002

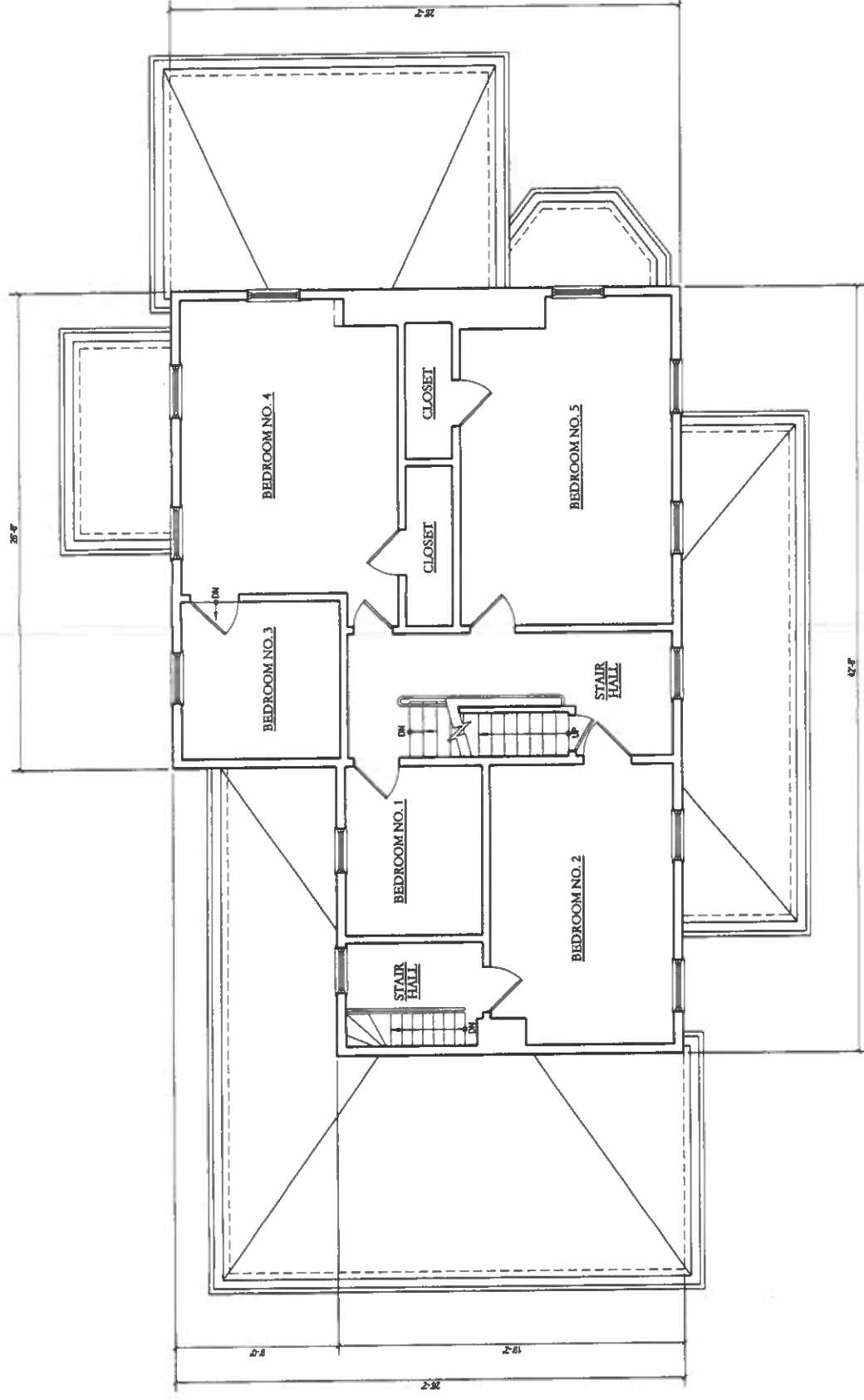


FIRST FLOOR PLAN - CIRCA 1900

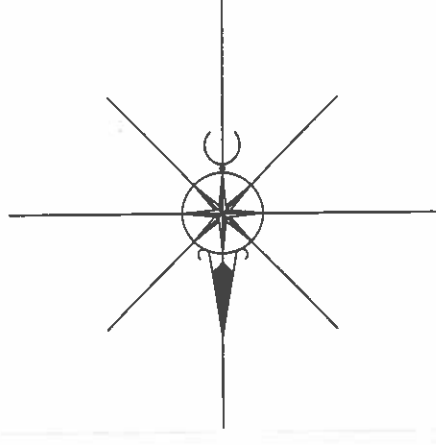


DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - CIRCA 1900  
**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**  
 SOUTH MIDDLEBUSH ROAD, SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY  
 MARK ALAN HEWITT, AIA  
*Architect*  
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C-3

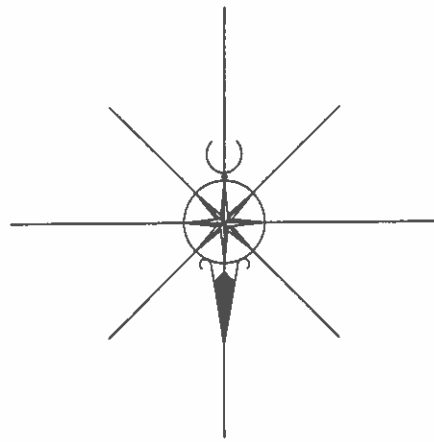
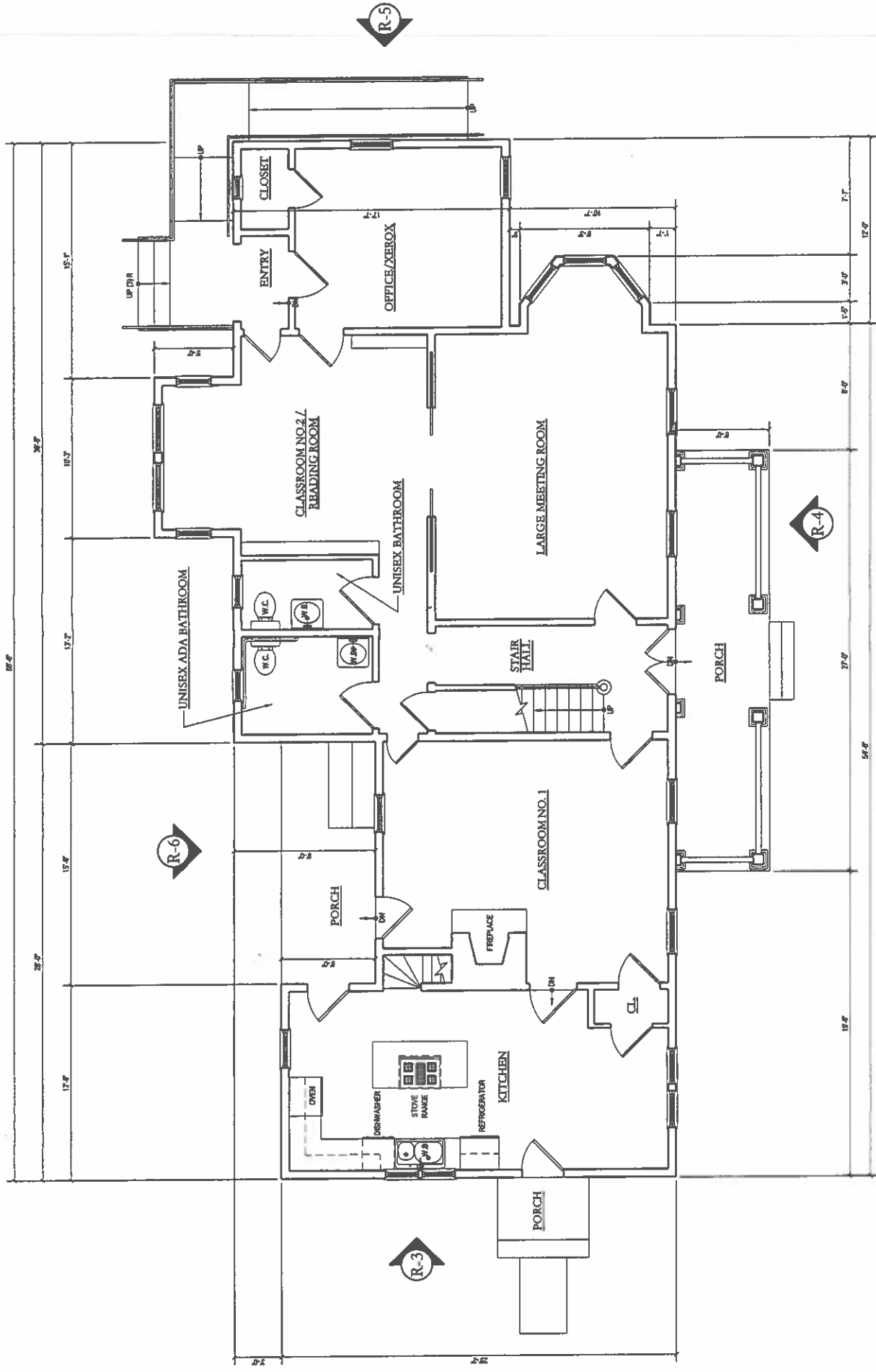


SECOND FLOOR PLAN - CIRCA 1900



DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - CIRCA 1900  
**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**  
 SOUTH MIDDLEBUSH ROAD, SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY  
 MARK ALAN HEWITT, AIA  
*Architect*  
 1 JUNE 2002

C-4



FIRST FLOOR PLAN - RESTORED CONDITIONS



DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP CENTER FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY

# VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE

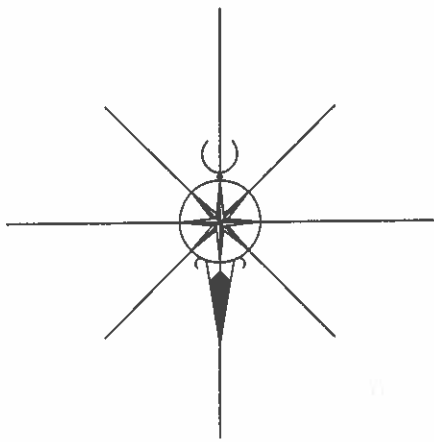
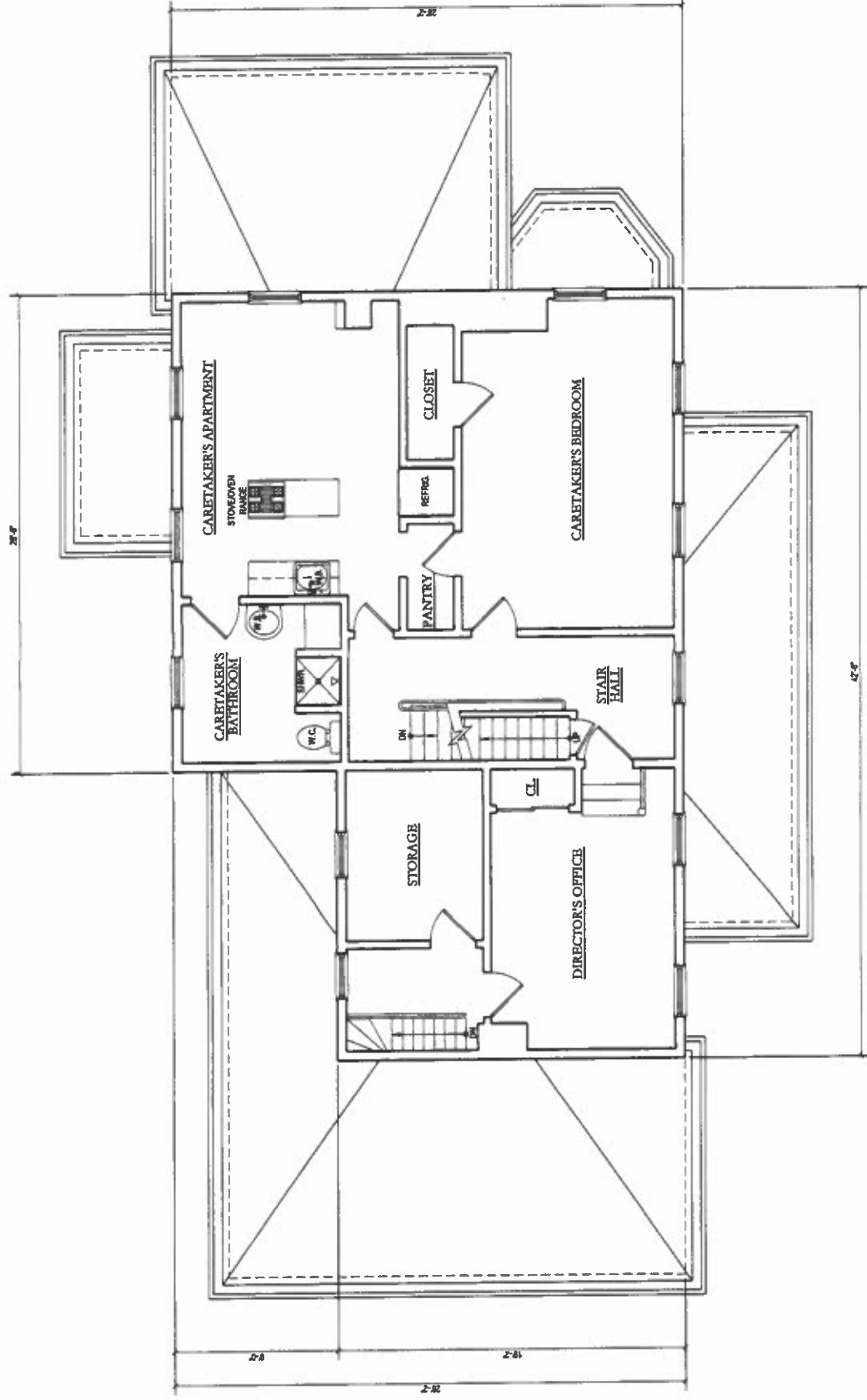
SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

MARK ALAN HEWITT, AIA

*Architect*

1 JUNE 2002

# R-1



SECOND FLOOR PLAN - RESTORED CONDITIONS



DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP CENTER FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY

**VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE**

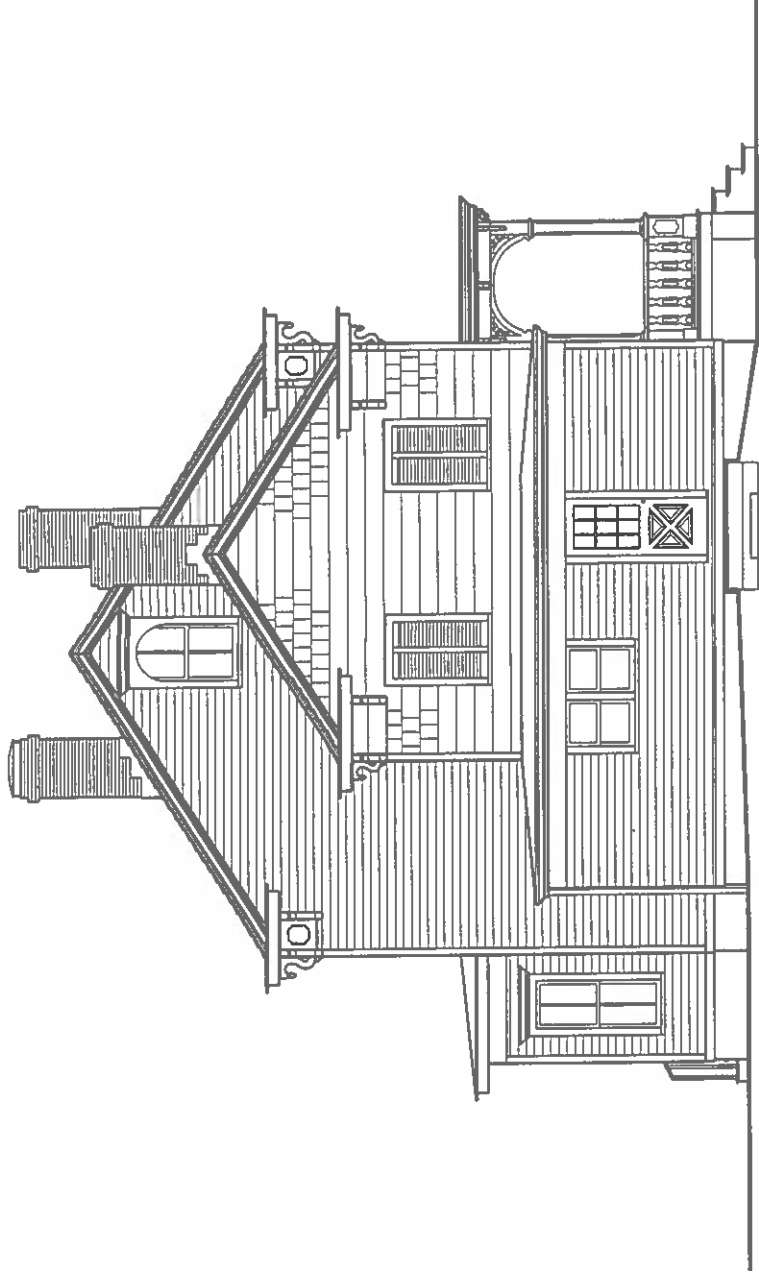
SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

MARK ALAN HEWITT, AIA

*Architect*

1 JUNE 2002

R-2



NORTH ELEVATION - RESTORED CONDITIONS



DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP CENTER FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY

## VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE

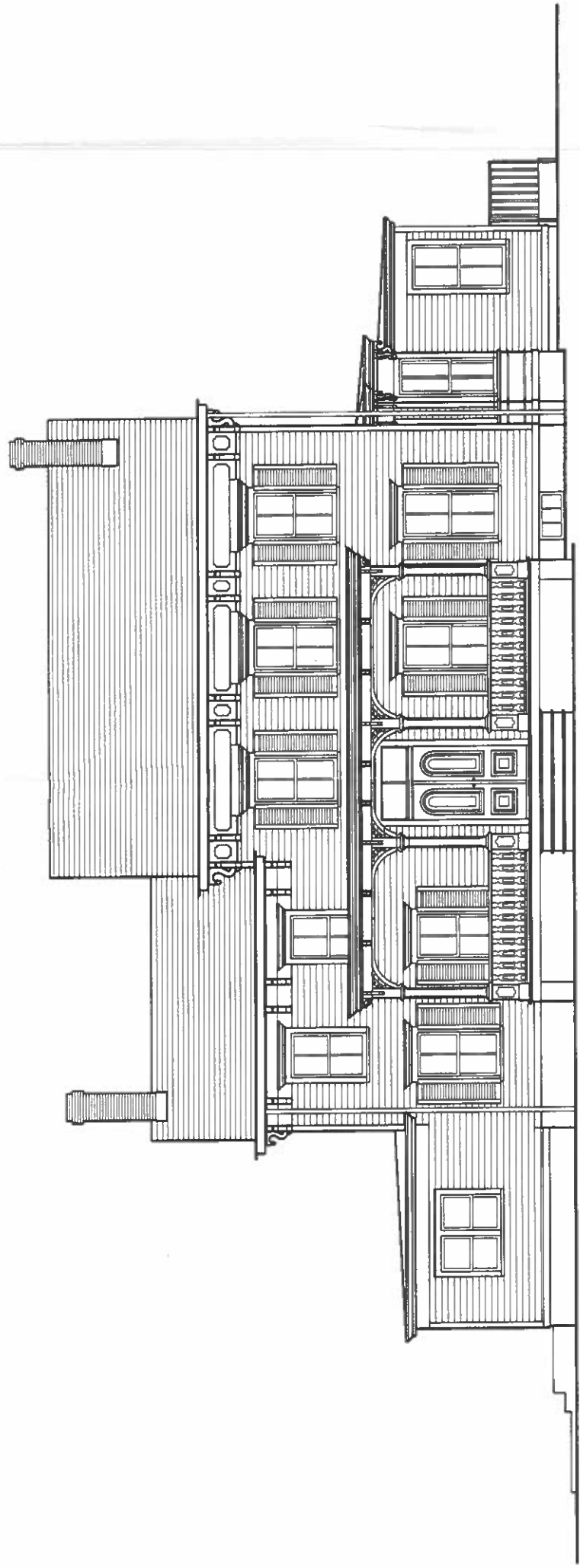
SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

MARK ALAN HEWITT, AIA

*Architect*

1 JUNE 2002

# R-3



WEST ELEVATION - RESTORED CONDITIONS



DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP CENTER FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY

# VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE

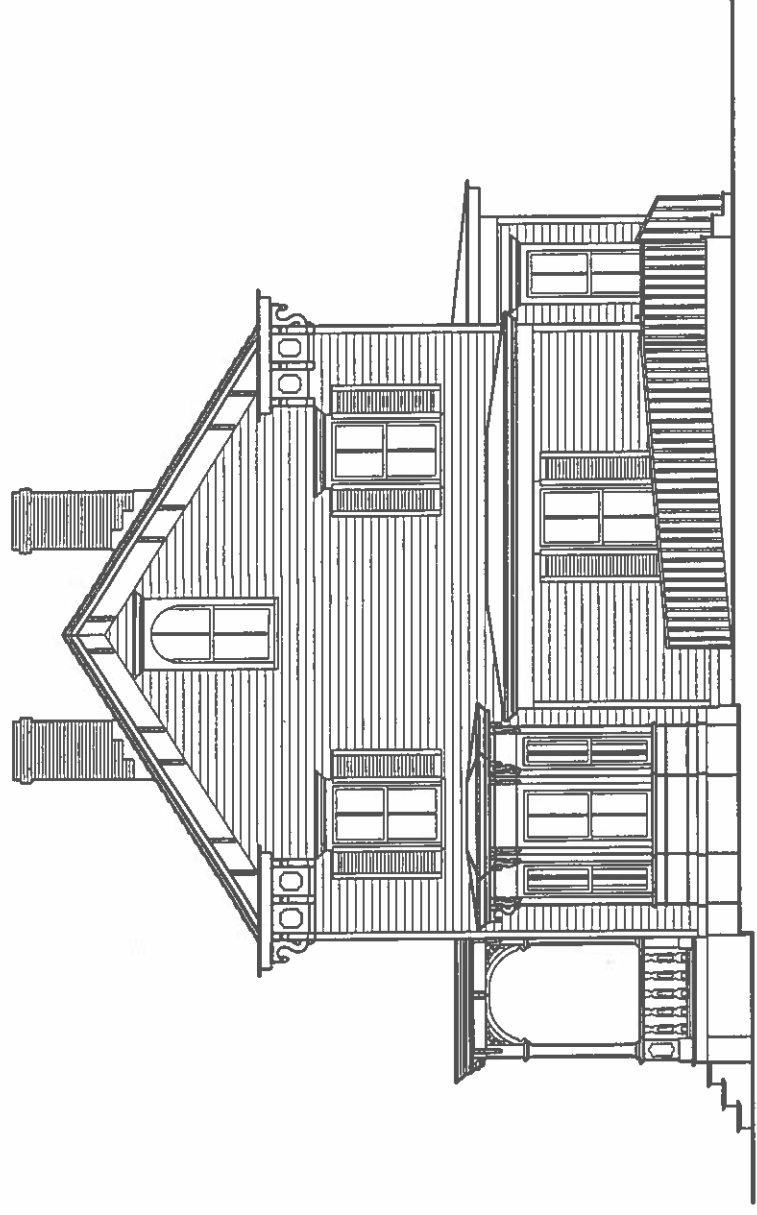
SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

MARK ALAN HEWITT, AIA

*Architect*

1 JUNE 2002

# R-4



SOUTH ELEVATION - RESTORED CONDITIONS



DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP CENTER FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY

## VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE

SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

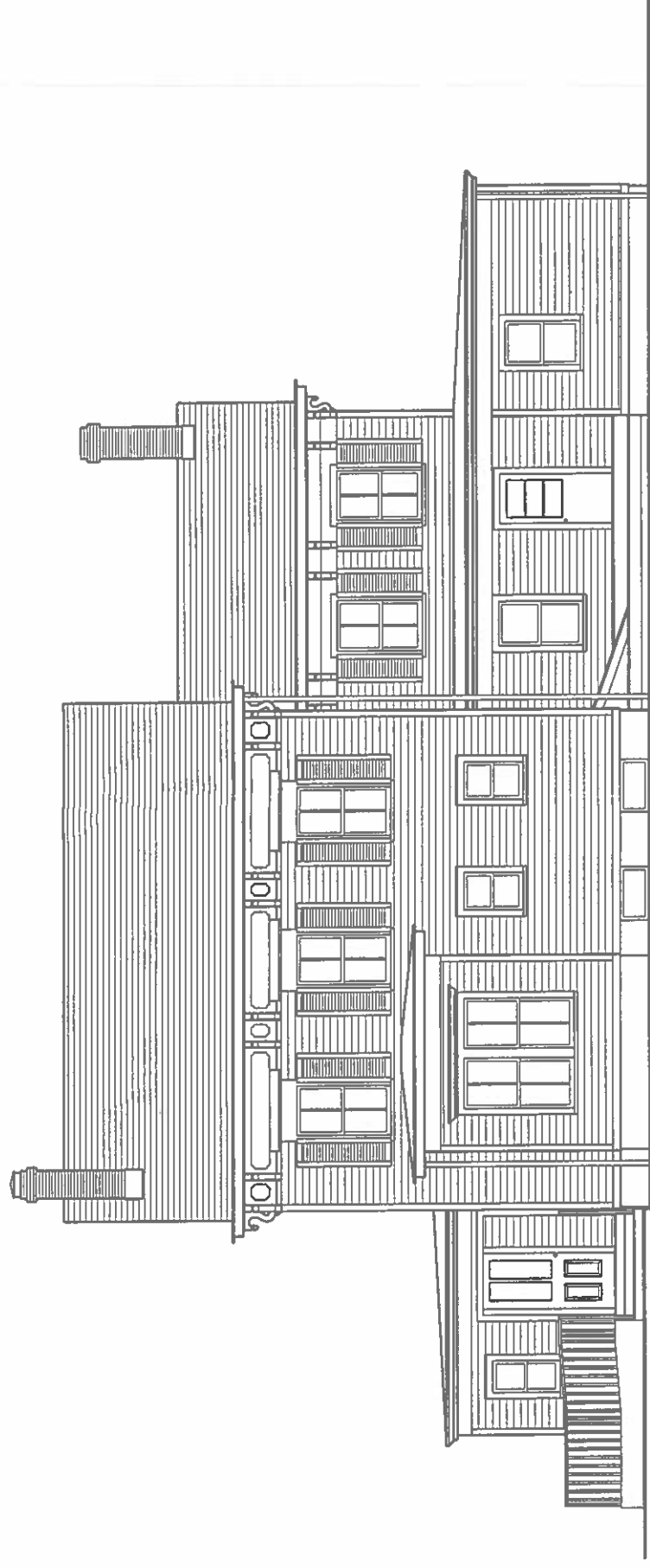
MARK ALAN HEWITT, AIA

*Architect*

1 JUNE 2002

# R-5





EAST ELEVATIONS - RESTORED CONDITIONS



DOCUMENTATION DRAWINGS - FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP CENTER FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY

# VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE

SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

MARK ALAN HEWITT, AIA

*Architect*

1 JUNE 2002

# R-6



## 9. Appendices

# THE VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE RESTORATION COMMITTEE

President: David Brook

Executive Vice President: Jane Snukis

REHABILITATION WORK PLAN:  
THE VAN LIEW-SUYDAM HOUSE



The Van Liew-Suydam House Restoration Committee after careful research has prepared the following plan for the orderly rehabilitation of the house and grounds. This plan supplements the information already submitted to the State of New Jersey in a letter dated September 19, 1989 (copy enclosed) in which the House Restoration Committee explained the details of the work to be performed on the House.

The Van Liew-Suydam House is being restored with the specific stated purpose of utilizing the building and grounds for the use, benefit, education and recreation of the people of the Township of Franklin. With this purpose in mind and the fact that NO public entity is presently willing to provide one cent of money for this work the House Restoration Committee has embarked on a very successful campaign to obtain funds and donated materials to complete the work on the house and grounds. The work on the house is being done to maximize the number and types of people using the house and all work being done is in accordance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation.

## HOUSE PLANS:

**BASIC SYSTEMS:** Thanks to years of neglect by the State of New Jersey all of the basic systems within the house had failed by the time the Meadows Foundation assumed responsibility for the house.

## **STRUCTURE:**

Since the State of New Jersey allowed the house to be vacated with literally tons of garbage strewn all over the property including all floors of the house it took considerable time to remove the materials to actually examine the structure of the house. The house was literally falling in on itself in the basement since the steel lolly columns and wood supports had been allowed to twist and bend. All old supports were removed. New footings were placed in the basement and the house was supported on new wood and steel columns.

Two major beams supporting the second floor of the house were warped and cracked. Both beams are not visible since they are part of the ceiling. The one over the back bay window was removed and replaced with a structurally adequate beam. The larger beam in the main front room was reinforced with steel so as to not cause the ceiling to have to be lowered.

An additional support was added in between the front and back rooms and will not be visible when the wall is reinclosed.

The floor in the two bathrooms was rotten and was replaced as was the sill beam in both rooms.

**R.D. 2 Box 332-A, Somerset, N.J. 08873**

CEILINGS:

All ceilings on the first floor had long since had their plaster lathe removed or damaged so badly as to need complete replacement. The ceilings were removed and will be replaced with sheetrock. The upstairs hallway and one room upstairs will also need to be replaced with sheetrock.

CHIMNEYS:

All three chimneys are rotten in the attics and below. One chimney has been relined and the rotten part replaced. The other two will be repaired and or replaced as time and money allows.

ELECTRIC SERVICE AND TELEPHONE SERVICE:

The existing service to the house was determined to be substandard and was replaced with new meters and panel boxes in the basement. The new service was installed in the same location as the old.

The current electric and telephone service runs on three utility poles then transects the front facade of the house. The wires drastically diminish the ornate appearance of the house. Public Service Electric and Gas has recently made a commitment to bury all of the service to the house. The Restoration Committee strongly supports this effort and will request the State of New Jersey to support this action with a right of way.

HEAT:

Thanks to the careful stewardship of the State of New Jersey the house was allowed to sit vacant and unheated for two winters. The house has hot water baseboard heat. Freezing water expands. The boiler and almost every single pipe in the house froze and burst during those two winters. The House Committee had a new boiler donated and set to work restoring each of the four zones of hot water heat to the house. The existing baseboard heat was repaired and replaced (if necessary) in the same location as it was found.

KITCHEN:

The house once had two kitchens within it, a north and south kitchen. The south kitchen is being eliminated since this one was added rather recently and since this room suffered major rot damage by years of rain damage caused by neglect on the part of the State.

The north kitchen will be reconstructed as a kitchen to be used in conjunction with events in the house. The entire north wall of this kitchen was dissolved by years of rain leaking through the roof. This damage was again caused by the state allowing the roof to disintegrate. The wall has been reconstructed. The House Restoration Committee is currently working to design a new kitchen.

PLUMBING:

Since the state allowed the house to sit vacant for two winters all plumbing had frozen and exploded and was broken. All plumbing has currently been replaced from the well to the septic

system. Materials were donated by Aaron Plumbing in New Brunswick and installed by the donated labor of Grant Plumbing and Angelo Rossi Plumbing. All plumbing was installed to code and inspected.

#### FRONT PORCH:

The careful stewardship by the NJDEP allowed the front porch to suffer major rain damage. As a consequence of this neglect the porch is currently being examined to determine if the roof of it is still structurally adequate to be repaired. If it can be repaired it will be. If it is too rotted the entire roof will be removed and replaced with an identical roof.

The remainder of the porch is too rotten to be fixed. The rest of the porch including the footings will be removed and replaced with an identical looking porch.

#### SIDING, MOLDINGS AND OTHER DETAILS:

Since the NJDEP never had the house painted since it acquired it in 1972 virtually all of the cedar has been damaged by the elements. Some of the siding which is common 1/2 by 6 inch can be scraped and painted but much of it has suffered from either rain damage or dry cracking. All siding will either be replaced or painted as time allows.

Thanks to the leaking roofs many of the fancy cornices and moldings have rotted away. These will be replaced and reconstructed.

The entire exterior of the house will be reconstructed so that it will look as it appeared at the time that the state acquired it. Know anyone who has shutters to donate?

#### ROOFS:

The years of neglect by the Department of Environmental Protection was most apparent on all of the roof surfaces of the house. Every roof on the entire house must be replaced.

All of the flat roofs were leaking at the time the Meadows Foundation assumed responsibility for the house. The leaking roof on the south kitchen caused damage to the walls and floors of that room. The flat roof over the south kitchen, the north kitchen and the back bay window have now been replaced with an MB torch applied roof. The flat roofs had been previously covered with asphalt over a sheet metal roof. The metal had long since rusted and was removed. The roof line and internal gutters were entirely restored to the previous appearance. The roof over the front bay window and the front porch both are still in need of new roof coverings.

Both of the pitched roofs are seriously decayed and will not last another season. These roofs are currently asphalt over cedar. The plan at present is to replace the roofs with cedar shakes as was on previously. If cedar is not available then a cedar or slate timberline roof will be applied.

#### WIRING:

Much of the wiring in the house had rusted due to the fact that the State allowed leaks to develop in many of the roofs. Unsafe wiring has been replaced and new service was installed to the new bathrooms and other areas where the walls had to be

removed. A smoke and fire detection system is being installed in the house in each room of the house.

CARETAKERS APARTMENT:

The Meadows Foundation establishes a caretaker in each of its houses. The upstairs of the Van Liew-Suydam House will be used for this purpose. A bathroom and a kitchen are being added to allow this apartment to function independent of the other activities in the house.

THE BARN/GRANARY:

Yes you guessed it, thanks to the vigilance of the state this pre-1850 structure was filled with over two to three feet of rotting manure. The decomposing manure caused rot damage to the barn. All of the manure was removed and the barn has been gradually repaired. The sill beams have been replaced and new siding is being installed. Pictures of the barn from 1959 are being used to reconstruct it as it looked then. The cedar shakes are being replaced with barn siding wood. The side overhanging roof had rotted away and is being replaced with a new overhanging roof.

THE GROUNDS:

The grounds around the house were filled with bags of household garbage and other debris left by the previous tenant. The entire yard has been cleaned up of almost all of the debris and removed from the premises. Old farm equipment discovered in the back yard has been displayed in different parts of the yard.

The House Restoration Committee in conjunction with Cook College Landscape Architecture Department has prepared a master plan for the restoring the grounds and providing for circulation. The plan reestablishes the driveway which passed in front of the house and provides for a two space handicap parking lot on the south side of the house. The Meadows Foundation in addition to the Township of Franklin will not discriminate against certain handicapped individuals by precluding their access to the house. The Meadows and the Township encourage full use of the house by all interested individuals. The handicap parking lot was added on the south side of the house and a ramp will be built to the back door of the house. Placing both of these features will allow access without altering the important front facade of the house. While the increased access to the house may detract slightly from the side perspective of the house from Skillmans Lane the ability for handicapped individuals to appreciate the house and grounds will be greatly enhanced.

The landscape design which is gradually being implemented calls for a wind break and screening of the house from portions of the south side of the house. The front perspective of the house from the intersection of Skillmans Lane to Blackwells Mills Road on South Middlebush Road will remain completely open to view. An analysis was performed of traffic flows and it was determined that 90 to 95% of all traffic which sees the house sees it from

South Middlebush Road.

The screening plantings on the south side of the house will provide a wind brak and will also screen off the persepective of the modern houses along Skillmans Lane. This will allow those visiting the house to have a view of the Six Mile Run valley as it looked 100 years ago.

The design also calls for the reestablishment of Sugar Maple trees along the driveway to the house. Research indicates that the driveway used to have Sugar Maples lining the drive to the house. A large donation of Sugar Maples has allowed the planting to occur this past early spring.

The landscape design calls for a small herb garden on the north side of the house and a new walk to the front porch. A walk will also be constructed to the rear of the house.

The plan also incorporates the eight sided gazebo which is located in the back of the house as well as the hand dug well in the back of the house.

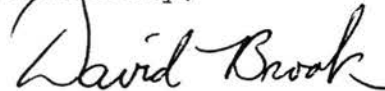
#### IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE:

Since there is no reliable source of funding for the house except donations at this time there is no implementation schedule. Work gets done when time and materials are available. Plans currently call for the entire front facade to be repaired, painted and roofed by late summer. The rest of the work will hapeen when time, materials and people are available to complete the work.

Should anyone have any questions or comments please send them to R.D. 2 Box 332A, Somerset, New Jersey 08873. I may be reached at (201) 873-3417. Unless there are any comments expressed on this plan work will proceed as detailed above.

Dated: June 12, 1990

Sincerely,



David Brook, President  
The Van Liew-Suydam House  
Restoration Committee

**THE VAN LIEW SUYDAM FRENCH HOUSE**  
farm life through the years

by  
Betty K. Scott  
October 1998





## THE VAN LIEW - SUYDAM - FRENCH HOUSE

### Farm Life Through the Years

The first of the three names that identify this house is that of the original settler on the property, Frederick Van Liew. He was the son of Johannes Van Liew, and the grandson of the progenitor of the Van Liew family in New Jersey, Frederick Van Liew. (Because one male in each generation was named Frederick, in order to differentiate between them this honorable gentleman was referred to as "The Immigrant" in a Van Liew Genealogy.) The early history of the Van Liews is documented in the last chapter of this monograph. Therefor the story of the Van Liew- Suydam- French house will begin with the history of the Suydams, the family of its builder, Joseph Suydam.

The ancestors of both the Van Liew and Suydam families were among the many Dutch immigrants from Holland and the Republic of the Netherlands who made a lasting impact on America's language and culture. Because until the end of the nineteenth century Holland was the richest and most dominant province of the seven that formed the Republic of the Netherlands, the whole of the Netherlands came to be called Holland. "Dutch" refers to the people of the Netherlands, who, early in their history were governed by the German monarchy. The word was probably derived from Deutsh, which is the word for German. Both words are pronounced the same but refer to different places. The people called "Pennsylvania Dutch" originally emigrated from Germany.

Many Holland Dutch words became part of our language. Among them are boss, from the Dutch boas, meaning master; yacht from jacht, skipper from schipper, cookie from koekje, scow from skow, meaning river boat, Kill, (as in the waterway called Arthur Kill) meaning creek or steam, and spook, which is the Dutch word for ghost. Other words reflect the hostility that existed between the English and Dutch in the seventeenth century due to the English take-over of the Dutch settlements. For instance, we refer to the residents of the northern and New England sections of our country as "Yankees." In the seventeenth century the Dutch word Yankee meant Little Johannes, and expressed contempt. The English had their own uncomplimentary expressions, such as Dutch courage, Dutch treat, Dutch uncle and to be "in Dutch," meaning in trouble.

Some of the genealogists and historians who recorded Dutch family histories used the affectionate endings when listing ancestral names, such as Tryntje for Catrina, Anetje for Ann, Fermitje for Phoebe or Ryken for Ryke. This has been noted in the course of the study of several genealogies, and can cause confusion when records written by different people refer to the same person by different names, one the affectionate, the other, formal.

The seventeenth century Netherlands Dutch emigrants were attracted to the tip of Manhattan and Long Island. This is where the progenitors of most of our local families of Dutch ancestry put down roots. The branches of their family trees spread rapidly to New Jersey and beyond.

Hendrick Ryken, the progenitor of the Suydam family, arrived in New Amsterdam in 1663. He was preceded by other members of the Ryken family. While some of the Rykens who immigrated to Flatbush retained the name, which became Ryker, Hendrick Ryken's sons and their descendants adopted the name Suydam. The Rykers and the Suydams share the same

ancestry.

Fourteen years after his arrival in New Amsterdam, Hendrick Ryken, Blacksmith, bought property in Flatbush on Long Island that contained a house and grounds, pasture land and an orchard. It is claimed that the first blood of the Revolution was shed on this land that he once owned on Long Island, rather than at Lexington in Massachusetts as our history books tell us. Reverend J. Howard Suydam, in his monograph titled *1663- Hendrick Ryken, the Progenitor of the Suydam Family in America* sites two sources that describe a confrontation that occurred on Golden Hill, formerly owned by Hendrick Ryken, between the Sons of Liberty and the British Regulars 16<sup>th</sup> Foot on January 18, 1770. One of his sources is Stone's *History of New York*, from which Reverend Suydam transcribed the following quote:

“It has usually been asserted by historians that the first blood in the war of the American Revolution was shed at Lexington; but such is not the fact. The battle of Golden Hill on the eighteenth of January 1777, was the beginning of that contest, so fearful in commencement, so doubtful in its progress, and so splendid in its results.”

The Golden Hill battle was in protest of the Quartering Act, which was the extremely unpopular English law that required the colonists to billet soldiers in their homes. The Liberty Boys seized three British soldiers who were posting notices that the “boys” thought were insulting. An all-out fight erupted that grew to include the general population. The fracas went on for two days. Unfortunately for the citizenry, the British were the ones with the fixed bayonets, and the battle casualties were mostly slashed civilians. In 1898 the Daughters of the American Revolution placed a plaque on the site of the battle. It reads:

“Golden Hill - Here January 18, 1770 the fight took place between the Sons of Liberty and the British Regulars 16<sup>th</sup> Foot First blood shed in the War of the Revolution.”

In 1681, four years after he purchased the property Hendrick sold it to Derick Van der Cliffe. A John Inian was one of the three witnesses to the Deed of Sales. He may have been the same John Inian who established the ferry in New Brunswick in 1686.

Hendrick Riken was a prominent citizen of Flatbush. He held the office of Town Supervisor at different times, and during his lifetime acquired considerable wealth. Although there is no written record, it is believed that upon his death in 1701 he was interred beneath the second church building that was erected in Flatbush in 1698.

Hendrick's will contained several revealing provisos and some interesting comments. His oldest son Jacob received only twelve shillings “in lieu of his double portion in consideration of several benefits he has already received out of my estate.” His daughter, Geertruda, however, received a double portion “in consideration yt [sic] she is defective and simple in mind.” The rest of his estate, “goods, houses, land, slaves and all other ‘movables’ was left to his wife to do with as she pleased.” [Apparently he had faith in his wife's business acumen and common sense, and trusted her not to deplete his assets.] When the children came of age or were married she was to give them what ever she was capable of “wherewith ye children are to be contented satisfied [sic] all with this proviso.” Hendrick also specified in his will that his children were to be taught an art or trade by which they could make a living. Although it was

the custom at the time to give the eldest son a double portion of the estate, Jacob, who was twenty three when the will was written, had already taken over his father's business as well as an allotment of land. Thus, his inheritance of only twelve shillings.

Among the sixty-two heads of families in Flatbush in 1628 there was another man whose father was named Hendrick, therefor he was called Hendrickson. Since the sons of Hendrick Ryken would customarily have been known as Hendrickson as well, to differentiate between the two families, by about 1710 all of his sons had become known as the sons of Hendrick from Sudam, which translates to "south of te dam." This, as genealogist Rev. J. Howard Suydam wrote, "may have been many places in Holland."

The Suydam name first appears on a document made out in 1695 indenturing a Jonathan Mills Jr. to Jacob Hendrickson of Zuytdam for three years. During this time the boy was to serve his master "dutifully and faithfully." In return he was to be taught the art of blacksmithing. The indenture was signed by Jacob Hendrickse van Suytdam. Over the years, Hendrick's sons Jacob, Henry and Ryke dropped Hendrickson in favor of Suydam as their family's surname. The fourth son, Cornelius, at times used the name Ryker. He left Flatbush before the others adopted the name Suydam. He apparently was somewhat of a "black sheep" since he is not mentioned in his fathers will, and, according to the Suydam genealogist Richard H. Lloyd, no one knows what happened to him. However, a few pages later in Mr. Lloyd's account of the Suydam family history he says that the first Raritan Landing Suydam on record was Cornelius Suydam, but it has not been clearly established whether he was Hendrick Ryken's son or grandson. He also writes that this man and some of his descendants used both the name of Suydam and Ryker. Mr. Lloyd cited the records of the Raritan First Dutch Reformed Church in Somerville as one illustration of this duplication. They list the baptism of the daughter of Cornelius Suydam and Ann Rappelya in 1784, and another daughter of Cornelius Ryker and Ann Rappelya in 1787. Another example of this mans identity crisis are military records that show a Cornelius R. Suydam also listed as Cornelius Ryker. When Cornelius' widow applied for his pension, she said her husband used both the name Suydam and Ryker.

Ryke Suydam, one of the twelve children fathered by Hendrick's son Jacob, was the first Suydam to move to the Somerset section of New Jersey. He arrived about 1728 and settled in the Pleasant Planes area. He built the Suydam Homestead, located down the road from the Van Liew - Suydam - French House. Although his profession was listed as cordwinder, or shoemaker, he supported his family by farming. His knowledge of the shoemakers trade was in keeping with the Dutch custom that required males to learn a trade by which they were identified, even though they might make their living by other means. Marrying twice, Ryke fathered eight children.

Nothing is mentioned in any of the Suydam histories that were consulted for this monograph concerning the political leanings of the Suydams. While there were many men bearing the Suydam name listed in William Strykers *Official Register of the Officers and Men of New Jersey in the Revolutionary War*, neither the tragedy of lost family members nor the difficulties faced by other area residents on the home front as a result of the conflict seem to have affected Ryke Suydam's family. There is no record of damage done to the property or claims for reparations filed by the Suydams after the war. In fact, it seems they fared rather well. A pass that was given to the seventy-five-year-old farmer, dated January 18, 1776 and

signed by Lt. Col. G. Mawhod of His Majesty's Army permitted he and his family to pass through British lines "without molestation." Where they were going, or why, is unknown, nor is there any indication whether the pass was permanent or for a single trip. It is interesting to note that it is dated a week before the Battle of Trenton, which was won handily by the rebel forces. That historic document is now in the hands of the descendants of John W. Suydam.

Ryke Suydam survived the war, farmed his land, raised his family and lived to the ripe old age of ninety-five.

Ryke Suydam was one generation away from the Suydam we are most interested in. This man is Joseph Suydam, the son of Ryke's third son, Abraham. Ryke's grandson Joseph was the eldest of Abraham's four children and the builder of the oldest section of the house that is here today.

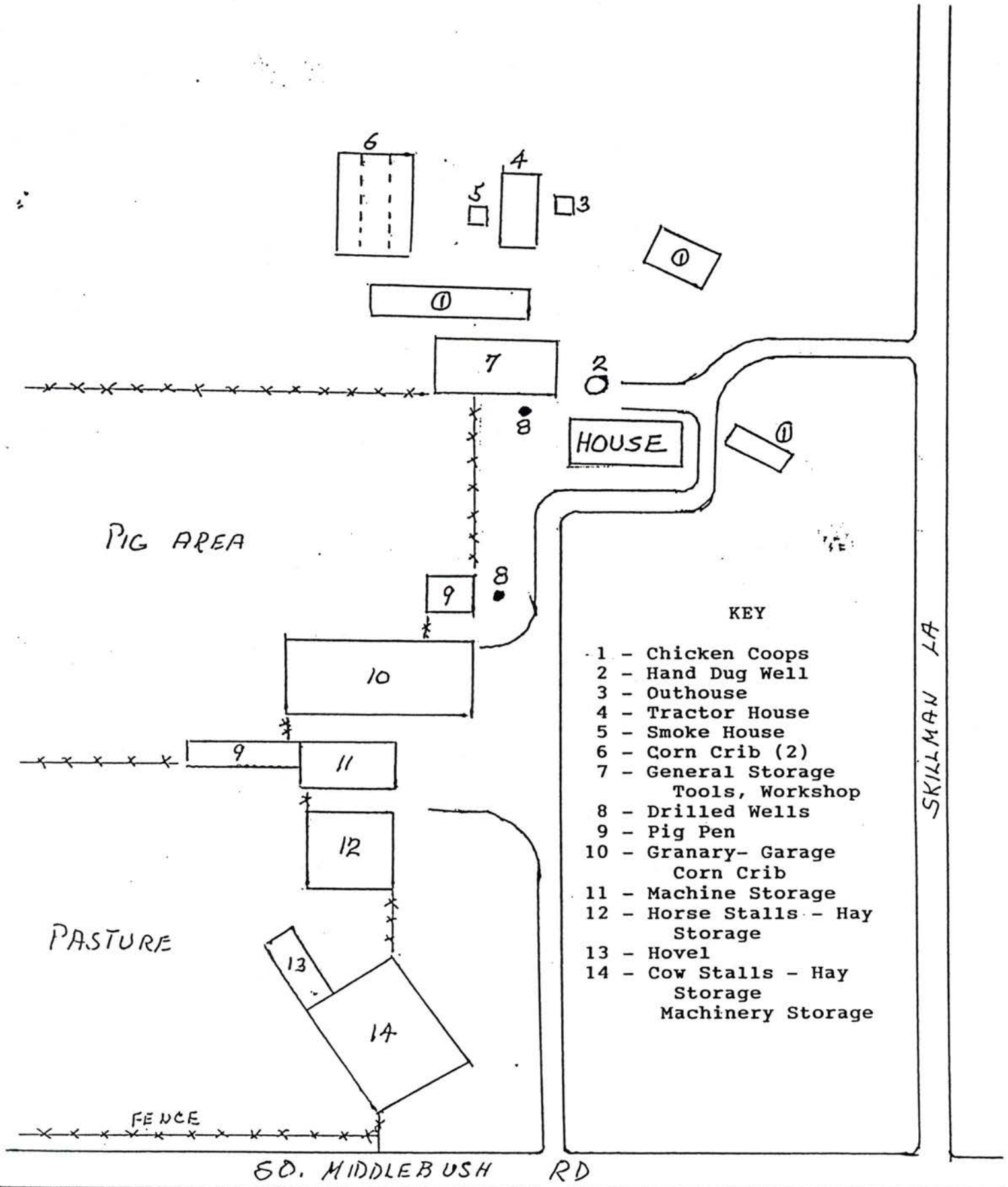
Joseph Suydam was born on December 14, 1772. In 1797 he married Mary Brown. The couple had eight children, only three of whom survived their parents. One of the genealogies consulted for information on the Suydam family utilizes records "copied from a book in the possession of Mr. A. Russell Totten." The inscriptions from the headstones of four of Joseph's children, Matthew, Jane, John and Isaac that are in the Voorhees-Nevius burial ground are included in these records, along with the name of a child, Andrew, born on August 9, 1806, who is also deceased.

The lack of further information about Joseph Suydam leads us to assume that he lived a quiet, uneventful life, farming his land and providing for his loved ones. No stories of shocking or tragic events are connected to his immediate family. The same cannot be said for his Uncle Peter, however, who lived on a farm at Six Mile Run. Peter suffered tragedies quite unlike Joseph's loss of five of his eight children, heartrending though that loss was. Peter's second son, Joseph's cousin Laurence P. Suydam, was killed by lightning as he stood in his doorway watching a thunderstorm. Lawrence left ten children. Lawrence's son Abraham, Peter's grandson, chose banking as a career, a choice that ultimately cost him his life.

Abraham became president of the Farmers and Merchants Bank in New Brunswick. He was an astute businessman, who, with a partner, bought up most of the undeveloped land around the city. He sold a small lot to a Peter Robinson, and then loaned him money to build a house on the lot. The transaction resulted in a mortgage on the property held by Mr. Suydam in the amount of \$780.00. This amount, coupled with the rest of his debts began to overwhelm Mr. Robinson. He decided that by murdering and robbing Mr. Suydam he could rid himself of the mortgage that Mr. Suydam held on his home and pay off some of his other debts with the stolen money as well. This was a very poor decision, since Robinson's sudden show of wealth, along with his possession of a very expensive watch soon made him a suspect in the disappearance of the banker. An investigation unearthed Mr. Suydam's body that had been buried in Robinson's cellar. After a nine day trial that began on April 11, 1841, Robinson was found guilty of murder and was hanged for his crimes on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 1841. An account of the trial, which was a nineteenth century media sensation, along with "Robinson's confession in all its gory detail, is on file in Rutgers Alexander Library's Special Collections and Archives.

To lighten the mood a bit, perhaps a few words here about love and marriage among the Suydams would be appropriate. In 1822 Cornelius Suydam married Margaret Perrine. He was 61, she was 20. The marriage was apparently happy and definitely fruitful. Cornelius fathered





KEY

- 1 - Chicken Coops
- 2 - Hand Dug Well
- 3 - Outhouse
- 4 - Tractor House
- 5 - Smoke House
- 6 - Corn Crib (2)
- 7 - General Storage  
Tools, Workshop
- 8 - Drilled Wells
- 9 - Pig Pen
- 10 - Granary- Garage  
Corn Crib
- 11 - Machine Storage
- 12 - Horse Stalls - Hay  
Storage
- 13 - Hovel
- 14 - Cow Stalls - Hay  
Storage  
Machinery Storage

PIG AREA

PASTURE

FENCE

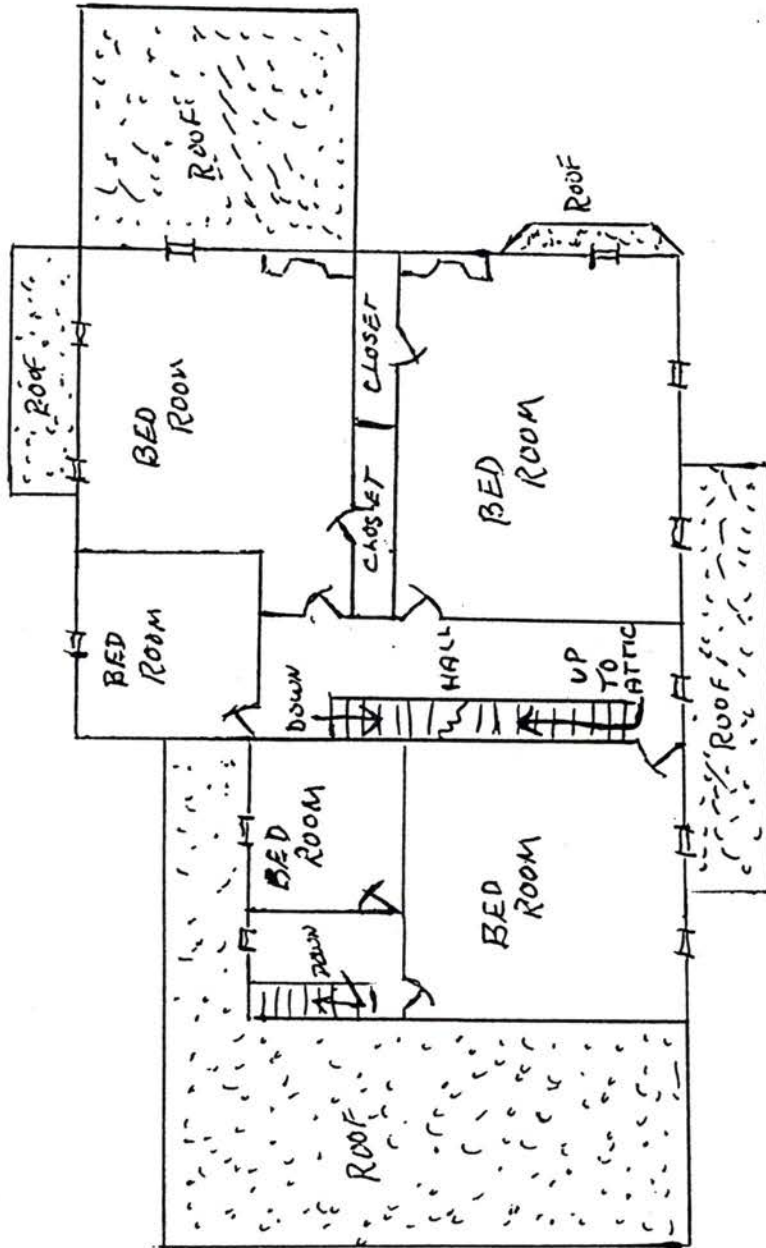
SO. MIDDLEBUSH RD

RD

SKILLMAN LA

BLACKWELLSMILL RD

Hand-drawn site plan



SECOND FLOOR

John Totten  
1998



seven children before he passed on at the age of ninety.

The intermarriages of several generations of Suydams with members of the Williams family which made everyone cousins gave the street in Franklin Park along which many of them lived its name, Cousins Lane.

But to return to our main subject --

Joseph's son Peter inherited the house built by his father on the land he had purchased in 1798. Peter is said to have had the building moved up the hill further away from the road in 1874. At that time the house was enlarged to the size it is today.

In 1922, Annie Suydam Campbell, (probably Peter's daughter) sold the property to John Boysfield French. An interview with Marie Vajo, the granddaughter of John Boysfield French who shared the house with her grandparents and other members of her family, provided a fascinating picture of life as it was lived there in the early nineteenth century.

We who obtain all the water we want by simply turning a faucet and who enjoy the convenience of indoor plumbing might doubt our ability to cope with the tasks of hand-pumping water from a cistern (a tank that collects the rain water run off from the roof) to be used for washing dishes or for bathing in a tin tub, or of carrying fresh water in a bucket from a well into the house for drinking; to say nothing of going outside in the heat of summer, dark of night and cold of winter to the "necessary" to perform the other functions that we do today in warmth and comfort. Yet in the not too distant past, that was what life was like for the residents of the Van Liew- Suydam- French house. And Mrs. Vajo looks back on her life there with the warmest of memories.

As she described the property, there were three wells, one that was dug and two that were drilled. All had pumps and were in convenient locations. The attractive structure that still surrounds the well in the back yard was built by Mrs. Vajo's Uncle. A bucket hangs on the well rope as though ready to be lowered into the cool depths of the water. In earlier times the water from this now abandoned well was pumped out and carried to the near by chicken houses. A second well, equipped with a windmill, was about 50 feet out on the right side of the door that is now used as the home's entrance, near the pig lot. The third well was located down the driveway close to the road. That well was convenient to the farm's two barns. Cows were kept in the larger of the two, along with hay and grain, while the other held the two work horses and a hay mow.

Mr. French maintained a working farm on his 110-acre property for over thirty years, from 1922 until the mid 1950's, when he was no longer physically able to perform the arduous labor necessary for the production of salable produce and livestock.

The farm contained several other outbuildings in addition to the barns, pig lot and chicken houses. There was a two-bay corn crib and a tractor house, used to shelter the tractor that Mr. French purchased to replace his work horses. They were allowed to live out their lives in relative ease. A photograph of John Boysfield French and his wife Magdaline depicts the two standing at the side of a small building. This was Mr. French's "shop," originally a summer kitchen. Here he stored hand tools and chicken feed. Its second floor held strawberry boxes and the pan where bunches of asparagus were kept in standing water to keep them fresh for marketing in Bound Brook and Middlebush.

In the house, the brick nogging in what are the inside walls of the two kitchens, one on

each side of the house indicate that they were "add-ons." Mrs. Vajo said they preceded Mr. French's purchase of the property. But the French family must have been glad for the convenience, since these additions afforded privacy in the downstairs area for both of the families who shared the home. Mr. and Mrs. French and their daughter Sarah, (Sadie) lived in the smaller section of the house on the left side. It consisted of the kitchen, where Marie's grandmother cooked on a coal stove, her grandparents parlor and bedroom. Their clothes closet was across the hall from their bedroom, which was where the two bathrooms are today. The other side of the house, the larger side, was occupied by Marie's mother and her husband, Marie, and her brother John, who is nine years her senior. It contained the double parlor separated by "pocket doors." The front parlor was closed off at all times when occupied by Marie's family. This was more to conserve heat than to maintain a "company parlor." The front door was never used, since the driveway extended across the rear of the house and all the vehicles were parked there. Both of the families entered the home via the kitchens, Marie's grandmother's on the left side, and her mother's in the rear. Her mother cooked on a relatively modern bottled gas stove, a method later adopted by her grandmother as well.

The upstairs bedrooms were "blended." They were occupied by Marie, whose room was at the top of the stairs, and the rest of the family, including her Aunt Sadie. There was also a room for the hired man that was separated from the family's bedrooms by a short flight of stairs.

Life on the farm was hard, but there were fun times too. Marie described how her grandfather made homemade ice cream. But this was in the winter, when the ice that was needed to freeze the delicious dessert was easily obtainable from the creek that ran across his property. The family would all sit around the kitchen stove eating ice cream in the dead of winter, their backs freezing and their faces toasty warm.

There was always plenty to eat. One thing Marie remembered well were the hams, bacon and sausage her grandfather made from the butchered pigs. After the hams and bacon were removed, the rest of the meat was used for sausage. It was taken to Somerville to be ground and seasoned. Then it was packed into two pound pans and sealed with paraffin, the same wax that was used to seal jars of homemade jelly. Stored in the cellar for the winter, it needed refrigeration only after the paraffin was removed.

Interesting too is the way the hams and bacon were preserved. Brine was prepared by putting a medium sized raw potato in a vat of water. Then salt was added until the potato rose to the top. This indicated that the brine was salty enough. The meat was packed in a barrel and the brine poured over it. After a time the meat was taken out and slowly smoked.

In 1950 a nor-easter hit her farm hard. The chicken house that contained 300 chickens was picked up by the wind and slammed against a tree. The barn roof gyrated until part of it blew off and the side of the barn blew in. The storm damage was extensive, and at the age of seventy-seven Mr. French had neither the energy or the resources to make the necessary repairs except to the barn. The other outbuildings gradually deteriorated and were removed. Yet it remained a working farm until the mid fifties.

Over the years portions of the rear property that extended along Skillman Lane had been sold. Eleven years after the storm that had marked the end of an era the Van Liew - Suydam - French farm, John Boysfield French, who had outlived his wife by eight years, passed on at the age of 88. None of his children were interested in maintaining the farm, so in 1962 it was

purchased by Robert and Dorothy O'Connell, thus passing out of the hands of the French family.

Although Marie didn't return to her old home until quite recently, her mother visited it after it had been modernized by its new owners. They had installed running water, electricity, and had, to quote Marie's mother, "fixed it up beautifully." Two more owners preceded the state's acquisition of the property, after which it was rented out, supposedly to tenants who agreed to maintain it. However, in this instance that was not the case. The house was allowed to deteriorate to a degree that rendered it nearly unsalvageable. Were it not for the determined effort of one man, who is the driving force behind the salvation and restoration of the house, one more beautiful piece of our past would have become a distant memory. But he recognized its value and fought long and hard for its preservation, convincing the township to buy the property and the Meadows Foundation to undertake its restoration.

After the state had acquired the 3,000 acre tract that was slated to become a reservoir, a body of water that would have flooded the area and left the house perched on the banks of a man-made lake, the plan was postponed for future consideration. The site had been chosen because of its proximity to the canal. The reservoir water was to have been pumped from the canal, then returned to it as the need arose. However, it was determined that because of the topography a large portion of the area would have to be excavated to provide depth, so the plan was given a low priority. This left the Van Liew - Suydam - French house, in both the literal and figurative sense, high and dry, awaiting its rescuer. He arrived in the person of David Brook.

Mr. Brook is no novice to historic preservation and renovation. A valued member of the Meadows Foundation, he previously resided in and was instrumental in the renovation of two other Meadows properties, the Van Wickle House and the Wyckoff house before adopting the Van Liew -Suydam - French house as his latest project in 1988. He has made it his home and continues to work toward making the house the showplace it was in bygone days. However, this has proved to be a more daunting task than had been anticipated. It seemed that when one problem was approached another was discovered that compounded it. As an example, the installation of new plumbing was a comparatively simple task, no? NO! The plumbing could not be installed without replacing the floor, which led to the discovery that the walls needed to be replaced as well. Such has been the pattern of this home's restoration.

A tour of the house in the summer of 1998 showed how far the renovation has progressed, in spite of the many unforeseen obstacles. It is a long, slow process, and must be done in sequence. Since the roof has now been repaired, the front porch that had been propped up by lengths of lumber has been removed and will be rebuilt and replaced.

The house, like most of those that date to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was enlarged as the needs of the family required and their finances allowed. The left side of the house, the smaller of the two sections, is probably the older of the two, although there is no clear indication of that fact. Efforts are being made to authenticate the supposition by dating the foundations. The larger side of the house has nine and a half foot ceilings. The pocket doors that separate the two rooms on this side of the house will be replaced by those taken from another house that dates to the 1850's or 60's.

The chimney that now serves the small iron stove in the front parlor had to be completely rebuilt. An interesting piece, the fireplace mantel, awaits replacement in its proper position

against the wall when that part of the room has been renovated. It looks like marble, but is actually some kind of flagstone with a faux finish. The design is painted on. It probably dated from around 1875 since that is when a lot of work was done on the house. Unfortunately, it will probably be impossible to remove the paint that now covers its original finish.

The bay windows are one of the more attractive features of the house. Those in the rear are probably add-on's, as indicated by the structure of the house and the foundations in that area.

There is a possibility that the front of the house as it sits today was once the rear, with the front entrance off of Skillman Lane. This was suggested by architects who noticed that the cracked major beam that has been repaired had a structural wall beneath it. That wall would have made the present rear parlor much larger, and the front parlor much smaller. Had the house been moved, as stated in the article by Colleen Zirnite published in the *Franklin News Record* dated May 11, 1972, and perhaps turned, this would account for the position of the outbuildings as well. They were in front of, rather than behind the house, which was contrary to the normal lay-out of a farm. A painted sign reading "Bilt [sic] 1874 that was found in the attic leads us to believe that something major was done to the house in that year. But because the land in front of the building is presently rented out by the state for farming there is no way to search for a foundation that might confirm the move. However, should it be determined that the entire foundation that now supports the structure was built at approximately the same time, this would lend credence to Ms. Zirnite's story.

The vertical sash windows in this house date to the late eighteen or early nineteen hundreds. Because older houses were built with multi pane windows such as those found on the Wyckoff House, multi pane windows were probably used in the older section of this house as well, but were replaced when the newer section was built for conformity.

We know the year that indoor plumbing was installed because in the 50's and 60's the iron bathtubs were dated. The ones here are dated 1963.

There is one rather strange feature of this house. The only access to the cellar is from the outside. How inconvenient that must have been when a pan of sausage or a ham that had been stored there needed to be brought up for supper on a dark, frigid, snowy winter evening!

We are fortunate to have photographs of the north kitchen taken during the time the French family lived here. They show the hand pump, the tin ceiling and the walk-in pantry, as well as barrels that might have been an early washing machine. This was apparently considered a model kitchen in 1928. Mr. Brook is in possession of a letter from The Cooperative Extension Service that reads:

Dear Mrs. French:

I'm sending you photographs showing three different groupings of your kitchen. Two of these I think are especially good as they show very clearly the changes you made. I was sorry that I could not be with Mrs. Bell the day the photos were taken but both of us appreciate very much the cooperation which you gave.

(signed) Charlotte Embelton

Ms. Embleton was apparently the home demonstration agent for the county.

The tin ceiling seems to be a rather unusual feature that Mr. Brook said they may try to duplicate if the room is restored back to that period.

The furniture in the home today has all been donated. The pump organ, which works very well, is circa 1862, and the roll-top desk is from the 1920's. In actuality, because of the long life span of the home, which begins in the eighteenth century, furniture from any period, properly placed, from the eighteenth through the twentieth century would be appropriate.

Chapters one and two of the interesting history of this lovely old home have come to an end, and chapter three is in progress. We hope the third chapter will tell of its restoration to its former beauty and of a new and useful life.

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Newspaper Articles:

"Gentlemen Farmers Area Faces Flood" *Franklin News Record*, May 11, 1972

"Raising Roof for Good Cause" *Courier News* Date not visible

"Old, New Friends Have Hand in Decorating Van Liew Suydam" *Franklin News Record*, February 1, 1990

"Work on Farmhouse Progresses" *The Home News*, January 29, 1990

"Restoration in Franklin Rekindles Old Memories" *ibid*

Miscellaneous:

Audio taped interview with Marie Vajo, July, 1998

Audio taped interview with David Brook, July, 1998

## FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP CENTER FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY

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This plan is a draft proposal intended for discussion and change. This draft format is intended for the purpose of providing the widest possible circulation within the community. Our hope is that this plan will provide a framework for the conceptual creation of the Center. In order to build consensus amongst diverse groups this plan will remain flexible and evolve as ideas are presented. At the time there is broad support for the plan, formal approval will be sought by all groups involved. All thoughts for change and improvement should be sent to: The Meadows Foundation, C/O David Brook, 280 South Middlebush Road, Somerset, New Jersey 08873.

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- Outline of Plan:
- A. Introduction
  - B. The Idea
  - C. Plan of Operation
  - D. Building Consensus
  - E. Proposed Budget

### A. Introduction:

"Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breath free."

These words inscribed on the Statute of Liberty have come to symbolize the melting pot that has made the United States the most caring country in the world. Unfortunately, this great melting pot theory has been clouded in recent years with increasing polarization of people from different ethnic and national origins, bias crimes, religious persecution and ignorance.

Franklin Township has seen a dramatic growth in its population over the last ten years. This growth has added new ethnic and religious diversity to an already varied population rich in cultural and religious backgrounds. Instead of this diversity being perceived as an opportunity to learn it often becomes a way to distance and alienate people of different origins.

Diversity is often thought of as a weakness, yet isn't this diversity a sign of our strength? People go to "their" place of worship to learn about their god and life. People live in their "own" community and do not interact with others. Children go to school and often never learn or interact with those from other backgrounds. All races and religions preach harmony and respect for others, yet all too often their is no organized way to demonstrate that caring.

DRAFT PLAN: FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY: THE FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP  
CENTER FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY

September 15, 1997

How do we as citizens prove that appreciating each other's diversity makes for a stronger community? How do we teach our children the value of diversity? How do we teach adults and parents the value of diversity? The answer right now, is that in Franklin Township there is no organized program and neutral location to do just that.

There is no place in Franklin where people of different races, religions, and ethnic backgrounds can spend time learning about each other. There is no neutral location where blacks, hispanics, caucasians, asians, indians, catholics, jews, muslims, and other groups can teach and learn about why diversity is valuable and why understanding diversity will make a stronger more productive community.

B. The Idea:

The Meadows Foundation, a not-for-profit organization has been dedicated to the preservation of Franklin Township's historic resources since its inception in 1977. The Meadows administers five historic properties specifically for the use and enjoyment of all area residents.

The Meadows proposes the establishment of the Franklin Township Center for Cultural Diversity (FTCCD) at the historic Van Liew-Suydam House on South Middlebush Road. The Center would operate as a central facility location where people could go to learn about other people. The goal of the center will be to promote unity through understanding the value of diversity.

The Van Liew-Suydam House is a beautiful example of a victorian farm house dating to around 1875. The house is located almost directly in the center of Franklin Township at the intersection of South Middlebush Road and Blackwells Mills Road. The House is owned by Franklin Township and leased to the Meadows Foundations with the specific requirement that it be restored for community use.

The operation of the center would be simple and straightforward. The first floor of the house and grounds will be made available for groups of children and adults to learn and participate in programs designed to expand their understanding of the human diversity around us. Lectures, art shows, music, dance, displays, food exhibits and other programs would be established on a rotating basis. A "sponsoring" group would lead the program and provide exposure to the uniqueness of that group and its contribution to the community and country.



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Daytime programs would be established in conjunction with the public and private schools to teach children. Children and teachers would be brought to the center and exposed to a variety of indoor or outdoor programs designed to expand their understanding of a specific diversity group. Parents and the School Board would determine the scheduling attendance of the different grade students. Nighttime programs would be established to provide the same opportunities to adults and parents.

C. Plan of Operation:

The operation of the center would be governed by a steering committee or board which will be responsible for scheduling and overseeing the diversity presentations. This board could have representatives from every interested identifiable diversity group in the Township. The committee would establish a yearly schedule for programs and confirm that scheduling and staffing of each presentation was coordinated. The committee would meet as needed to establish criteria for operation and program presentations.

Each specific program at the Center would be scheduled to last for a fixed period of time, possibly one month. During that time a group would schedule any number of events which would either be self-guided or have presenters for each program. The focus of each program would be towards educating people about the culture, history, social or religious contributions which that identifiable group has made to society. The goal of all programs will be to recognize the importance of diversity in making the world a better place to live. Weekday programs would be run for school age children and all evening programs would be open to the public.

The Van Liew-Suydam House would lend itself to a quiet intimate educational setting. The house three large graceful rooms to accommodate the many uses envisioned as well as bathroom facilities and a kitchen. The House sits on approximately two acres and overlooks the farmland and rolling hills of the State owned 3000 acre Six Mile Run property. The grounds are landscaped and include a victorian era gazebo for outdoor programs. The location of the House provides for a unique opportunity to share a part of the town's history with a contemporary educational use.

The Meadows also proposes the use of part of the house for the creation of a "tolerance reading room". This small museum and library of materials would focus on the issue of tolerance and intolerance. The reading room would allow for the quiet consideration of the current and past issues relating to diversity. The library would be a permanent collection for the house and would

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be maintained by the Franklin Public Library and/or the Center steering committee.

D. Building Community Consensus:

The creation of the Franklin Township Center for Cultural Diversity will be incumbent upon the interest and commitment of people of all area races, religions, and cultures to agree that this type of facility provides a valuable contribution to the community. In order to build a consensus of support for this facility the Meadows Foundation has drafted this conceptual plan to circulate as broadly as possible for everyone's comments and suggestions.

In the past "diversity" has been used to fragment and polarize people with different backgrounds. The first objective for the development of the center will be to identify all those groups interested in participating. This will be an open and flexible process. (The only restriction on involvement by a group is that it cannot preach hatred or racial or religious intolerance.) Once these groups are identified, all will be invited to attend organizational meetings to create the plan whereby the Center can be established.

Once this "master plan" for the creation and operation of the center is prepared the focus of the group will shift to garner needed support for formal community approval of the idea. Once there is conceptual approval for the Center, this plan will be rewritten and the steering committee and the Meadows Foundation will approach the Board of Education and the Township Council for formal support and approval.

E. Proposed Budget:

Completion of the restoration:

The Van Liew-Suydam House as part of the Meadows Foundation operates as a not-for-profit organization. This restoration and the rehabilitation project has been continuously progressing since the end of 1988 when the Township of Franklin took title to the house. Since 1988, a small, but determined house committee of volunteers has virtually rebuilt the entire house from the inside out. This committee has worked with over 60 area contractors and businesses who have been providing assistance in the form of financial grants, building materials and professional expertise. The Van Liew-Suydam House is listed within a historic district in the State and National Register of Historic Places.

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While much of the infrastructure improvements have been completed to the House, there is still a need to complete a few remaining projects to allow the house to be programmed for the Center.

In order to program the House for the Center it will be necessary to finish the exterior improvements and complete work on the interior of the house. The Meadows Foundation is currently seeking financial support to complete this remaining work. As part of this work the Meadows will also be seeking to provide both a fire and intrusion alarm system to the property. All additional contributions to this work will accelerate the date whereby the Center can begin to operate.

Center Budget:

Once the House restoration work is complete, the financial expenses incurred for the Center will be the costs of utilities and historic upkeep. The Center proposes to recoup these costs by charging a nominal fee for the evening adult events. Whatever other costs would be associated with mailings and other materials would either be distributed evenly between the Meadows and the steering committee of sponsoring groups or recouped from the fee from evening programs.

At present, there is no plan for staffing the center. All programs would be staffed and taught by representatives from each program sponsor.

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This plan is a draft proposal. We welcome all suggestions for creating a better plan. All thoughts for change and improvement should be sent to: The Meadows Foundation, C/O David Brook, 280 South Middlebush Road, Somerset, New Jersey 08873.

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