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ROYAL OAK
CITY HISTORIC DISTRICT
COMMISSION

STAUCH HOUSE

4620 ELMHURST

Preliminary Report

January 21, 2010

By ordinance dated December 19, 1994 the Royal Oak City Commission established the Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee in accordance with Michigan's Local Historic District's Act, Public Act 169 (1970), as amended.

Boundaries

Property Description:

T1N, R11E, Sec 5 Nordwood Estates Sub N 8.50 ft. of Lot 118 & S 99 ft. of Lot 119

Tax Item No.:

72-25-05-203-007, 4620 Elmhurst Avenue

Percentage of Historic and Non-historic Resources

The percentage for historic resource is 58% to 42% for non-historic resources. There are no other historic or non-historic resources in this proposed historic district. There is one other outbuilding on this property to be included in this count.

Charge of the Study Committee

The Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee is charged with the mission of identifying, researching, and studying potential historic site and districts within the city of

Royal Oak. The research results are reported to the City and State in compliance with Michigan's Local Historic Districts Act PO 169 of 1970, as amended in 1992.

Members of the Study Committee

Ruth G. Cleaveland

Chair, Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee

Chair, Royal Oak Historic District Commission

Member, Roundtable of Royal Oak Historical Organizations

Tammis Donaldson

Registered Architect

Member, Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee

Robert R. Duchene

Vice-Chair, Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee

Teacher, United States History

Robert Guymer

Member, Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee

Dr. Jim Keillor

Psychologist

Member, Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee

Rob Moore

Secretary, Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee

Historical Significance

John Jacob Stauch was a cooper (or barrel maker) born in the village of Steinweiler, in the Old Pfalz area of Bavaria. He married Anna Maria Muller and had eight children.

After his wife died in 1828, their eldest son George Jacob sailed for New York in 1831 by way of LeHavre, France. He continued his journey westward from New York arriving

in Detroit in 1833. Later, in 1856, he purchased ninety-two acres north of Detroit which became Royal Oak's well-known Red Run Golf Course on 12 Mile Road.

In 1835, John Jacob decided to join his son, George Jacob, in the New World. He brought four sons with him, Peter, Jacob, George Michael, and Ludwig. They landed in Baltimore, stayed briefly in Pittsburgh, and arrived later the same year in Detroit.

One of the sons, Peter Stauch, who had emigrated with John Jacob, left Detroit in 1854 with his wife, Anna Maria Schnitker Stauch, to escape a cholera epidemic. Peter bought 82.37 acres ("the west half of NE Section 5") from David Chase and his wife on October 26, 1854 for \$2,500 near what was then called Clawson Road and is today known as 14 Mile Road. Originally the land had been purchased from the government by Jeremiah Chase in 1824. John Jacob Stauch died in 1861 on Peter's farm. The remains of the patriarch can be found in his son Peter's family plot in the Royal Oak Cemetery.

When Peter died in 1876, the land was deeded to his son Louis, who lived on the farm until his death in 1912. The land was then sold to a developer, Nordwood Estates by three members of Louis' family. Those members were Louis' son Loren, "a single man" who worked in real estate on Old Woodward in Birmingham, daughter Lillian, and his niece Elizabeth.

One of Peter's daughters, Catherine Mary, who had lived on the farm from three years of age, later married Jacob Erb on New Year's Eve of 1872. As a wedding present, the young marrieds were given the house at the corner of Main and First Streets in the Village of Royal Oak. The house was moved to 114 N. Washington where in 1899, Jacob Erb built another residence. In the latter home, Catherine and Jacob Erb raised a family of four. Their daughter Clara, Clara's husband, and their son Louis G. founded the Erb-Kidder Lumber Company. Clara also was a director of the Royal Oak Wholesale Company, the McCaul Lumber and Coal Company, the Redford Lumber Company, and the Farmington Lumber and Coal Company.

On January 29, 1919, Peter's land parcel was sold to Thomas Pratt and Margaret, his wife, who had lived on N. Washington. The lots were sold for "one dollar and other valuable considerations". In the spirit of 1919, a deed restriction stated there was to be "no sale of spirituous and malt liquors". The plat map shows a Mayfield Boulevard but sometime between 1916 and 1957 the street was widened and its name was changed to Elmhurst. Mrs. Pratt apparently did not approve of the transformation. When maples lining the old farm trail were slated to be cut down, Mrs. Pratt reportedly brandished a 12-gauge shotgun and insisted, "You'll cut these maples on my property down over my dead body, after I blow your heads off."

95-year old Mrs. Pratt sold the house in 1969 to Michaelea and Tom Deming. Michaelea and Lynn Roby live there today, appreciative of the history that characterizes their property.

Lot Description

The 1872 plat map of Royal Oak, Exhibit A, shows P. Stauch as the owner of 80 acres, the property faced what was then called Clawson Road and is now called 14 Mile Road. The house was set back off Clawson Road quite a bit. The area changed from rural to suburban and in 1927 Nordwood Estates subdivision was created. As part of Nordwood Estates the house and property now had two 150 foot lots between the original front and Clawson Road. At the western edge of the Stauch property a new side street was introduced, noted on the 1927 plat map as Mayfield Blvd., but now named Elmhurst Avenue. The house is currently entered off of Elmhurst Avenue.

Architectural Description

The form of the house is a gable-front-and-wing Folk Victorian house. The Folk Victorian house was popular from 1860 to 1900.

"The spread of Folk Victorian houses was made possible by the railroads. The growth of the railroad system made heavy woodworking machinery widely accessible at local trade centers, where they produced inexpensive Victorian detailing" according to McAlester.

The following dates were gained from microfiche archives at the Royal Oak Building Department:

- In 1934 and 1936 electricity was installed.
- The attached garage was built in 1981.
- The side porch was reconfigured into an enclosed breezeway in 1981.
- The front porch was removed and an unheated enclosed porch was built in 1981 in its place.
- In 1981 the 2nd floor west gable wing was remodeled as a master suite.
- In 1994 a south great room addition was built.
- See attached **Exhibit B** for square footage.

The house has never been moved. It is in its original location. It has always been used as a residential property.

North (Front) Elevation

The original entry faced north toward Clawson Road (14 Mile Road); currently the house is entered off of Elmhurst Avenue, which is the official address.

The gable-front-and-wing house has the gable upright end facing north. The wing portion of the house is perpendicular to the upright structure creating a "T". The wing originally included a covered porch facing north with decorative railings, turned spindle posts, and decorative brackets at the top of the post. The porch was removed for a new enclosed non-heated porch in 1981.

The gable front portion of the house is two stories with five windows; three on the first floor and two on the second floor, placed symmetrically. The first floor gable-front windows have one large center window and a smaller double hung window on each side. The center window is taller than the flanking windows. The second floor windows are double hung. The original front door is at the wing portion of the house and was entered through the decorative front porch. There are two first floor double hung windows at the wing. The original wood windows have been replaced with vinyl windows. The original siding was wood clapboard and it is now covered with vinyl siding. The roof is architectural asphalt shingles the color of cedar.

An attached garage was added in 1981; it faces north and is set back from the gable front portion of the house. (Photo 1)

West (Side) Elevation

The west side elevation is the new front. Originally the side was the gable end of the wing with a first floor wrap-around porch including the side of the covered front porch. The wrap-around roof was removed during a remodel. The original wing gable end had two double hung windows at the first floor and none on the second floor. Two double hung windows were added to the second floor. In 1981 the story and a half at the wing portion of the house was converted into a master suite. Two dormers facing north were added at that time. In 1994 a great-room addition was built off the back of the gable end wing (to the south). It contains the new front entry off of Elmhurst Avenue. (Photos 2A & 2B)

South (Rear) Elevation

The rear of the gable-front end has a first floor square bump-out bay window with two double hung windows mulled together. The second floor has two double hung windows. The wing portion of the house originally had a covered back porch which was incorporated into the great-room addition in 1994. The rear elevation has the added attached garage built in 1981. (Photo 3)

East (Side) Elevation

On the original house the east side elevation included the eave side of the gable-front end. There was a covered porch that had a back door to the living room and a door to the basement. The covered porch was converted to a breezeway to the newly attached garage in 1981. There is a first floor double hung window and a square glass second floor window that gives natural light to the hallway. (Photos 4A & 4B)

Structure

The original foundation is built from stone. The foundation has log floor joists with bark. There is also exposed timber frame construction. The original west wing has a crawl space. The original east wing is a basement. The east wing basement was dug out for the furnace. The only observable structure is in the basement. (Photos 5A & 5B)

Interior Layout

The first floor wing contains the kitchen with a casual eating area, the floor is original wood. The gable-front first floor section of the house has the living room, an office, dining room and stair to the second floor. The second floor gable-front portion of the house has three bedrooms and a bathroom. The wing portion of the house is a master suite. None of the additions include a second floor.

Additions and Remodels

Additions and remodels have taken place over the years including a non-heated porch off the kitchen, dormers in the master suite, an attached two-car garage, a great-room addition, and vinyl siding. The windows are vinyl replacements. All additions and siding are removable. (Photos 6A, 6B & 6C)

Secondary Buildings

Shed

Architectural Description

The shed has a simple rectangular plan and a gable roof facing the west and the east. The lower walls are three courses of concrete block, above is wood lap siding and the roof has asphalt shingles. Buried beneath the floor is a 500 gallon holding tank for water. (Photo 7)

The shed is a contributing resource.

Percentage of Historic and Non-Historic Resources

The percentage for historic resource is 58% to 42% including the original gable end and wing house. The percentage of non-historic resources is 42%, including the attached two-car garage, non-heated enclosed porch, reconfigured breezeway, and the great room addition. The second floor master suite portion of the house has been renovated, including the dormers, but the overall form is original. The above calculation includes the master suite as part of the historical resource.

Summary (Statement of Significance)

The main significance of the Stauch house, built prior to 1860 is that it represents a typical Folk Victorian gable-front-and-wing house located near the northern boundary of the City of Royal Oak. At a point in time, the house was a country house. The physical integrity of the original house is intact. The Stauch House retains historic integrity and meets National Register criterion C, because the building (house) embodies the distinctive characteristics of type, period and method of construction. It is one of the earliest remaining houses in Royal Oak. In addition, the house meets criterion B, as it is

connected with the Erb family, who are associated with the lives of several persons of significance to the City of Royal Oak's historical past.

But the legacy of the Stauch family is more than an old house and memories. Joseph Stauch was Treasurer of the School Board, Mary B. Stauch was the 9th grade teacher at the old Royal Oak Union School, Louis's son-in-law, George Erb, was Royal Oak's postmaster and of course, the Erb Lumber business is still prominent in Oakland County and the Erb Family Foundation has given over \$200 million to various charities. The spirit of enterprise and daring that led George Jacob to leave his comfortable Bavarian surroundings back in 1831 continues to enrich the community to which he devoted his life.

Bibliography

Crossman, Constance Kingan, Royal Oak: Our Living Legend, School District of the City of Royal Oak, Royal Oak, 1973.

Perkins, Owen, Royal Oak, Michigan – The Early Years, 1971.

Penney, David G. & Lance, Lois A., Royal Oak Twigs and Acorns, 1996.

McAlester, Virginia & Lee, A Field Guide to American Houses, 1984.

Howard, Hugh, How Old Is This House?, 1989.

Plat maps: 1872, 1896, 1908, 1927 through the Royal Oak Public Library.

Significant Dates

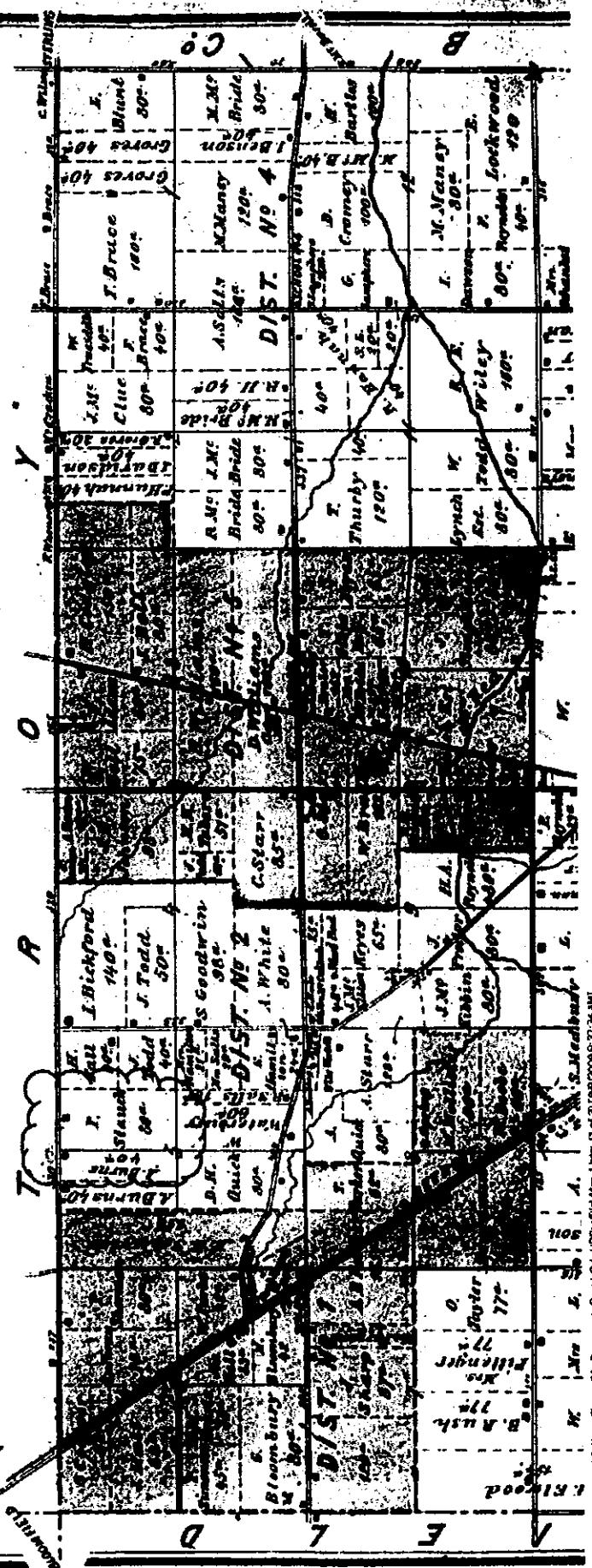
- 1824 82.7 acres south of 14 Mile Road were sold by the government to Jeremiah Chase, and inherited by his son, David.
- 1854 David Chase sold the property to Peter Stauch, son of John J. Stauch.
- 1856 George J, oldest son of John J. Stauch, purchased 92 acres (Red Run Golf Course – 12 Mile Road).
- 1876 Louis Stauch, Peter Stauch's son, inherited the property south of 14 Mile Road.
- 1912 Louis Stauch's son Loren, daughter Lillian and niece Elizabeth inherit the property
- 1919 They sell a large portion of this acreage to a land developer and a smaller area to the Pratts.
- 1969 Mrs. Pratt sells her section and house to the Demings. In 1979 Michaelea Demings married Lynn Roby.

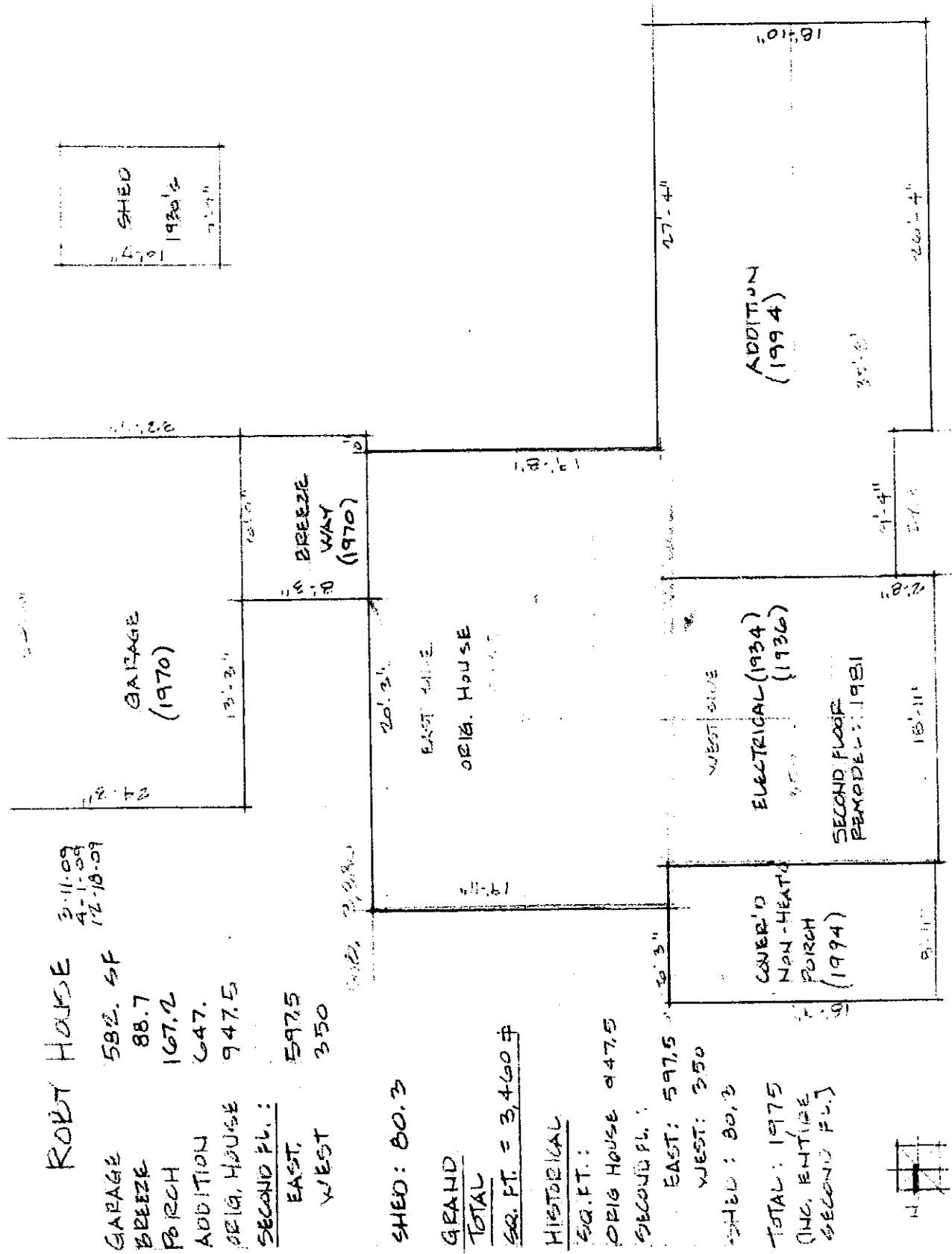
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1872

ROYAL OAKS Orange East Township I North

Scale $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches to the mile





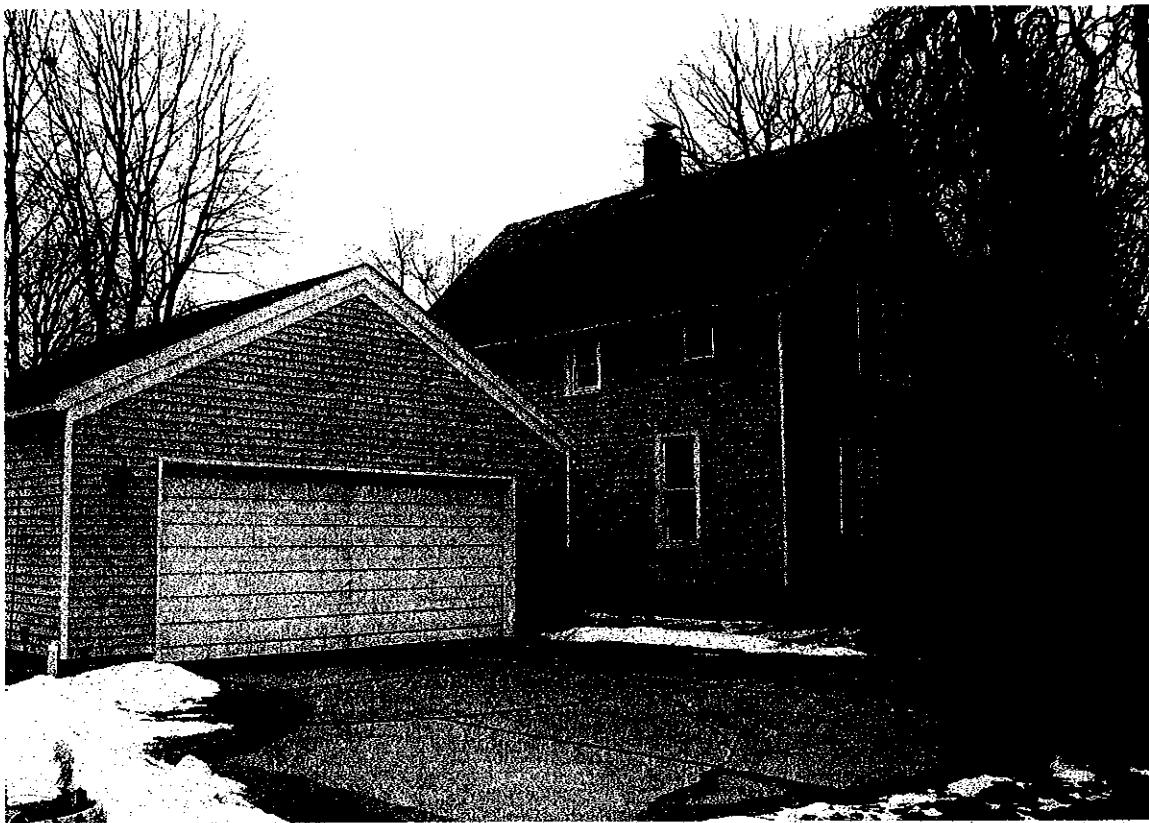


Photo 1. North Elevation

Photo 2A. West Elevation, with the new front entry off of Elmhurst



Photo 2B. West Elevation, during remodel

Photo 3. West Elevation, Mrs. Pratt and daughter



Photos 4A & 4B. East Elevation





Photos 5A & 5B. Original Timber Frame Construction in the East Wing Basement





Photos 6A & 6B Additions and remodels



Photos 6C. Additions and remodels



Photo 7. The Shed is rectangular with a gable roof facing the west and the east.



