NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 94001165 Date Listed: 9/27/94

Mukai Cold Process Fruit Barrelling Plant — Property Name
King — County
WA — State

N/A — Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action: 9/27/94

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Amended Items in Nomination:

Location:

The boxes for "Not for Publication" and "Vicinity" were inadvertently checked. The information concerning location is not restricted.

This information was confirmed with Lauren McCroskey of the WA SHPO.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

1165

NPS Form 10-900
OMB No. 1024-0018
(Rev. 10/90)

RECEIVED
AUG 25 1994
NATIONAL REGISTER

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Mukai Cold Process Fruit Barrelling Plant; Mukai and Son

other names/site number Vashon Island Packing Company (VIPCO)

2. Location

street & number Plant: 18005 107th Avenue S.W.; House: 18017 107th S.W. ~~X not for publication~~

city or town Vashon ~~X vicinity~~

state Washington code WA county King code 033 zip code 98070

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination __request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets ___does not meet the National Register criteria.
I recommend that this property be considered significant _nationally X statewide _locally. (__ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mary Th. Thompson 6/21/94
Signature of certifying official Date

Mary Thompson, State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___meets ___does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

X entered in the National Register.
___ See continuation sheet

___ determined eligible for the National Register. ___ See continuation sheet

___ determined not eligible for the National Register.

___ removed from the National Register.

___ other, (explain:) _____

Paul R. Lusignan 9/27/94
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
X private	X building(s)	3	2 buildings
___ public-local	___ district	___	___ sites
___ public-State	___ site	___	___ structures
___ public-Federal	___ structure	___	___ objects
	___ object	3	2 Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: ___

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

Cat:	Sub:
DOMESTIC	dwelling
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE	processing
COMMERCE	business

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

Cat:	Sub:
DOMESTIC	dwelling
COMMERCE	business

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

other: Colonial Revival (house)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation CONCRETE
walls WOOD/shingles (HOUSE)
WOOD/weatherboard (drop siding; plant)
roof ASPHALT
other BRICK (office walls)

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

_A_ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

___ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

_C_ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

___ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

___ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

___ B removed from its original location.

___ C a birthplace or a grave.

___ D a cemetery.

___ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

___ F a commemorative property.

___ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
AGRICULTURE	1926-1942	1926
COMMERCE		1936
ETHNIC HERITAGE		1942
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE		
	Cultural Affiliation	
	Japanese-American	

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

Denichiro Mukai

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

___ previously listed in the National Register

___ previously determined eligible by the National Register

___ designated a National Historic Landmark

___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

___ State Historic Preservation Office

___ Other State agency

___ Federal agency

___ Local government

___ University

___ Other

Specify repository:

_____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 4.8 acres

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	1/0	5/3/9/8/8/0	5/2/5/4/3/5/0	3	/	/ / / / /	/ / / / / /
2	/	/ / / / /	/ / / / / /	4	/	/ / / / /	/ / / / / /

___ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary J. Matthews, Cultural Resource Specialist, and Kent Sundberg, Preservation Planner

organization King County Landmarks and Heritage Commission date 11-15-93

street & number 506 Second Avenue telephone (206) 296-8689

city or town Seattle state WA zip code 98104

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

The Mukai Agricultural Complex is centrally located on Vashon Island, northwest of Vashon Center. The complex is sited at the end of 107th Avenue S.W. and faces east, overlooking what were once strawberry fields. It is bordered on the north by a tree farm and on the south by a 30-acre parcel which contains a private residence and open space which was once devoted to strawberry cultivation.

The nominated area consists of approximately 4.8 acres and includes a number of buildings and landscape features. Contributing elements of the complex include the Mukai Cold Process Fruit Barrelling Plant, designed by Masahiro Mukai and built by local contractor Deb Harrington; the small brick office building, designed by Masahiro and built by a local contractor; the residence, designed by B.D. Mukai and constructed by a local contractor named Severson; a garden surrounding the house, designed by Kuni Mukai and built by Masahiro and B.D.; and surrounding open space which was historically part of the overall service area and in cultivation. Non-contributing elements of the complex include a bunkhouse and an open machine shed, originally two bunkhouses, which have been altered and/or moved, and a number of landscape elements which are discussed below.

The plant is an excellent vernacular example of agricultural industrial architecture. It is in good condition, retaining integrity of design, materials, location, and setting. The house is a well-preserved example of eclectic vernacular architecture with Arts and Crafts and Neoclassical elements of a type built throughout the Pacific Northwest in the late 1920s. It too is in good condition and retains integrity of design, materials, location, and setting. The formal garden extends in an ell-shape around the south and east elevations of the house. Garden elements such as large rocks and regularly-spaced conifers line 107th Avenue S.W. in front of the plant. The garden is interesting as a vernacular expression of the adaptation and blending of traditional Japanese garden elements and plant materials with American suburban residential landscaping. It retains most of its original design and many of its original plantings.

The farmyard elements and overall organization of the site respond to the practical demands of topography and soil content, land use, and access. The close proximity of the residence to the packing plant and machine shed, their shared access, and the common working yard resemble similar arrangement in farmsteads elsewhere in the region.

The nominated area is divided into two separate ownerships. The plant, office, and site of historic outbuildings (2.05 acres) and are in one ownership (Parcel A on attached map). The house, formal garden, kitchen garden and service landscape are in another ownership (Parcel B on attached map), on a 2.75 acre parcel south of the plant, with frontage to the east on 107th Avenue S.W. The overall property was originally bordered on the east, and partially on the south, north and west property lines by regularly spaced conifers, many of which survive today. Entrance was originally gained to both the house and the plant by a diagonal road extending northeast to southwest; widening to a farmyard area in front of the barn and straw boss's cabin; and then curving around the southwest corner of the barn into an area behind the plant and in front of the bunkhouses.

Present entry to the plant is gained by this same historic service road but it is terminated on the south property line by a board fence. A new drive leading to the house from 107th Avenue S.W. was built immediately south of the office building by Masa Mukai sometime after 1949. This drive extends west into the historic farmyard. An open machine shed is located on the historic site of the barn. This machine shed was built from two of the plant's original bunkhouses which were moved and altered in approximately 1950 when the barn burned.

The Fruit Barrelling Plant is a one-story wood frame building. The post and pier foundation is raised approximately 4', and is open, historically to provide access to the conveyor belts and other machinery. The building was originally constructed in a simple 40' x 100' rectangular plan, with a 16' platform dock attached on the east. The building runs on a north-south axis parallel to 107th Avenue. A hip roof, originally wood shingle, is sheathed in composition 3-tab on the east slope; the west slope is new "torch-down" fabric. The west (rear) elevation and the facade originally featured exposed rafter tails which were recently covered by a faschia. An approximately 4' tall wooden signboard is attached to the roof ridge, extending the length of the original facade, and is sheathed in drop siding. The sign, recently restored by the current owner, reads "Mukai Cold Process Fruit Barrelling Plant".

An approximately 25' x 15' addition was built on the east section of the north elevation in 1941, with another 25' x 10' addition made to the west section of the north elevation in 1958. This last addition

was constructed of wood obtained from an old saw mill on the island. The first addition was used for the storage of sugar.

Exterior walls are sheathed in drop siding with the addition sheathed in bevelled board siding. Originally painted light gray with white trim, the plant has recently been painted "Williamsburg blue" with white trim. Six-over-six double-hung sash are featured on the facade and in two instances on the minor elevations; the majority of the windows on the minor elevations are six-light fixed pane sash. Window trim is plain board.

The recessed dock platform on the facade is supported by simple square posts. Pedestrian access to the dock was originally gained by open stairs on the south elevation, facing the house and farmyard area. Since the division of the property and the erection of the board fence the stair has been moved to the south section of the facade.

A small room on the south portion of the building was originally used as a telegraph office and coat room. Entry is gained through a five-panel door. The facade is

dominated by four sliding doors of vertical boarding with diagonal braces. The north addition features three sliding doors. A large window and door have been cut into the wall at the south end of the facade. A secondary entrance is located in the center of the west elevation, with entry gained by a wooden stairway. This stairway originally ran west to east; a recent rehabilitation provided a new stairway running north-south.

The interior of the plant features wooden floor boards, ceilings open to the rafters, interior walls open to the studs, and mill-type post and pier interior framing.

Residence

The Mukai house is set back from 107th Ave. S.W. approximately 75' and is surrounded by a formal garden on the east and south; a kitchen garden on the west, and the old farmyard area on the north.

The house is oriented to the north, opening onto the drive. It appears that the east elevation, with its single entry and concrete sidewalk and steps down to 107th Avenue, was a token elevation designed to present a formal front to the public road. This entry is not used today and there is no evidence that it was used extensively historically.

The Mukai residence is a two-story wood frame building. The foundation is concrete; a full basement features a two-car garage on the north. The house was constructed in a modified ell-plan and has multiple gable roofs sheathed in wood shingles. A gabled pavilion with a pedimented portico projects from the building's facade. The roof eaves feature crown molding and open guttering. A brick chimney is located on the roof ridge where the pavilion meets the east-west axis.

The exterior walls are sheathed in wood shingles painted gray which were originally painted light green; trim is painted white and turquoise and was originally cream. Windows are predominantly eight-over-one double-hung sash with some smaller fixed pane. Window trim is plain board. The north end of the east elevation features a large "picture" window flanked by two six-over-one double-hung sash.

The primary entrance is located in the gable end of the porticoed pavilion. This entry is gained by a set of concrete steps with scrolled sidewalls topped by a cast-iron railing. Similar steps occur on the west side of the pavilion providing access to a secondary entry. The steps were laid one at a time by a German mason named Dannewick. The main entry features a set of French doors flanked by multi-paned sidelights.

The portico features square posts with small block capitals and a plain 2" x 2" balustrade. A lunette is set in the gable end. On the basement level of the facade are two sets of double garage doors, each with board and batten siding with six-light sash above. There are two more entries on the facade, one at the basement level and one on the

west side of the portico, both with paneled and glazed doors. Another minor entrance with a small wooden porch and steps occurs centrally on the south elevation. The east elevation features a six-panel door with concrete steps with scrolled sidewalls, again by Mr. Dannewick. A small bracketed pergola is situated over this entry.

A significant interior detail is the fireplace, constructed by Mr. Dannewick, in which chipped rectangular brick is used for decorative effect. Other original features include hardwood floors and original kitchen cabinets.

Office Building

The Office Building was constructed in 1938 just east of the Fruit Barrelling Plant. It replaced the original plant office which was located in the residence. A simple rectangular building constructed of brick in a running bond pattern, the office building has a hip roof sheathed in composition roll roofing. The roof was originally sheathed in wood shingles. The roof extends over the west wall approximately 4' to 5' to create an overhang. Two large single pane "picture" windows flank the centrally located entry. The original paneled and glazed door has been replaced by a flush door with applied "baroque" moldings. Other windows are one-over-one double-hung sash. A wide fascia runs below the eaves on all elevations. A full width poured concrete slab, serving as an entry porch, is located on the facade.

Landscape

The significant designed landscape of the Mukai complex lies roughly within a rectangle approximately 200' by 350' formed by the packing plant, the house and 107th Avenue. The land is relatively flat and contains Alderwood gravelly sandy loam, which is moderately well drained but has a seasonal high water table. Within the rectangular space are four distinct landscape elements: a functional 'farmyard' forming a triangle between the packing plant, office and house; an ornamental residential landscape surrounding the house and office which incorporates a Japanese garden; and a kitchen garden area to the west and south of the house. The residential landscape is surrounded by formal rows of flowering and coniferous trees. The packing plant and office are now divided from the house and Japanese garden by a fence and driveway. A gravel road was built just south of the house

between the perimeter row of trees and a rock retaining wall that supports a raised lawn area surrounding the house.

Landscape design and construction was begun soon after the house was built and was completed by 1927 or 1928. A second pond and rockery to the south and east of the house were added about 1929. The northern section of the garden was modified in 1937 to accommodate the new office building and a small parking area in front. The original plan for the Japanese garden section was designed informally by the family, primarily by Kuni Mukai. The ponds were excavated in low, swampy areas on the site and the lawn was elevated to provide drainage and to use material excavated during construction of the house. The garden was constructed primarily by Masa Mukai, no doubt with the assistance of agricultural laborers. Rocks for the retaining walls and rockeries were cleared by tractor from the property and from neighbors' fields. Plant materials were purchased primarily from Malmo's, a local Vashon nursery. Only the large hemlock tree at the northwest corner of the house was originally growing on the site.

Landscape Elements

The "farmyard" is roughly triangular, measuring approximately 100' east to west by 200' north to south with its diagonal side running northeast to southwest from the northeast corner of the packing plant property. It is covered with mixed gravel and grass and it is now divided into two parts by a fence approximately 10' south of the office building which runs westward from 107th Avenue. Access to the southern half of the farmyard (including house and garden) is provided by a driveway running west and south from 107th Avenue along the south side of the fence.

The residential landscape is roughly triangular in plan, measuring approximately 200' east to west by 350' north to south and sharing its diagonal side with the farmyard. It is structured formally to reflect and enhance the form of the house and office. In addition to the perimeter rows of pink flowering Kanzan cherries and mixed Port Orford and Sawara cedars, there are specimen trees (Blue Atlas cedar, white fir. Sawara cedar, Japanese maple and others), a large wisteria covering dead pine trees, and large rocks located around the office. Immediately surrounding all but the north side of the house is a lawn raised 4' above the surrounding grade, with narrow beds for foundation plantings of shrubs, perennials and annuals on the east side of the

house. On the east side of the house the lawn extends 50' towards 107th Avenue and is bounded by rock retaining walls which are planted with alternating junipers and cotoneasters. The east-west retaining wall angles north approximately 15' at its eastern end. The rock wall is marked by a threadleaf Sawara cypress at the head of the stairs on the west and a dissected red leaf Japanese maple on the east above the southern end of a pond. A 5'-wide concrete walkway runs between the planting bed and lawn along the east side of the house; 6' precast concrete lamp posts are located in the lawn at each end. A 3-1/2' walkway runs directly east from the east entry of the house to undressed stone steps leading to the street and a gateway planting of cedars. The lawn extends approximately 15' to the south of the house and is again bounded by a rock retaining wall. Only a raised portion of the retaining wall, a large coniferous tree and an aralia remain as evidence of the former pond and rockery area south and east of the house. Blackberries and other invasive plants are growing among the juniper and cotoneaster.

The Japanese garden is located immediately northeast of the house. It includes a semicircular lawn area at grade level, measuring approximately 40' by 75', narrow curving ponds, and a raised rockery. The lawn is bounded on the north by the driveway and is separated from the entry yard by an irregular row of large rocks and a planting bed containing Kanzan flowering cherries, a large rhododendron, spirea, and other low ornamentals. A small painted wooden bench, and a 4' x 4' area of brick paving and rose bushes near the foot of the entry stairs are recent additions. Two concrete-lined ponds approximately 2' deep curve around the raised rockery and are edged with irregularly shaped stones and planted with iris in the northwest and southeast corners. The eastern pond extends just past the apex of the rock retaining wall to create an irregular pool overhung by the dissected red leaf Japanese maple.

The mounded rockery is roughly oval, measuring approximately 45' by 25', and is elevated approximately 6' above grade. The rockery contains the largest and most distinctively shaped stones; stones have been chosen and placed to heighten a sense of verticality, irregularity and individuality. Plantings on the mound include junipers and cotoneasters, heartleaf bergenia, and several other trees including Mugo pines and Irish yew along the crest of the mound, and a large vine maple overhanging the pool on the west side. The trees are now 30-40' high, greatly overgrown due to years of neglect. Some have

been badly pruned. The pine at the crest of the mound still shows evidence of extensive training to create a twisted windblown form, however. The informal path leading over the crest of the rockery from south to north is now obscured by growth. Blackberry, creek dogwood and other invasive plants are growing on the mound and around the eastern pond.

The kitchen garden is located west and south of the house at the edge of the fields and now measures approximately 30' by 50'. It was originally more than double the current size, and was tilled by tractor. Trees to the north of this garden are planted in an irregular east-west row and include large native western hemlock, two Port Orford cedars and two fruiting cherries. Surrounding the hemlock is a low growing variety of running bamboo. Blackberries and other underbrush surround the cedars and cherries. A small woodshed is located between the cedars.

Landscape Alterations

Alterations to the garden and landscaping are due largely to lack of maintenance as opposed to specific contemplated changes:

-Freeze damage has eliminated or severely affected many of the flowering cherries
- Sensitive shrubs visible in early photographs have perished
- Rockery plantings which were carefully pruned and shaped have become overgrown and misshapen
- Perennials and annuals planted around the house have not been replaced
- Draining and/or damage to the pond eliminated the water lilies and fish (koi - large orange Japanese carp) which it once contained

Other changes have occurred during and subsequent to the period of the Mukai's occupation:

c. 1938 - construction of office building in northern 'triangle' area; removal of several shrubs and flowering cherries to provide room for the building and to provide access from the west

1949 - subdivision and sale of parts of the property, dividing the plant and office from the residence and dedicating a roadway immediately south of the house; separate access to the house was provided by the driveway between the Japanese garden area and the

office building; M. Mukai removes one of specimen Japanese maples
Post 1949 - pond and rockery to the southeast of the house filled and leveled
1992/1993 - construction of an access road for acreage west of the packing plant damages the toe of the rock wall and plantings south of the house
Date unknown (recent): bench, brick paving and rose added at foot of stairs (NE corner of house)

Significant landscape features include:

- The open graveled yard shared by the house, packing plant, office and machine shop
- The rock retaining walls and all large solitary or grouped rocks
- The mound and ponds
- All original plant materials, including the peripheral plantings of flowering cherries and conifers
- The lawn and original concrete stairs, walkways and stone steps and landing on 107th Avenue
- The kitchen garden

Non-contributing landscape features include:

- The current driveway for the house
- The bench and brick paving northeast of the house
- Invasive naturalized plants (creek dogwood, elderberry, blackberries)
- Wire mesh and wooden fencing surrounding the plant property
- The graveled road immediately south of the house

List of Major Plants

The following list covers the major and significant ornamental and native plants which are part of the designed landscape. Missing plants have been identified from black and white photographs. This list will require further verification.

Formal perimeter rows:
Chamaecyparis lawsoniana varieties (Port Orford Cedar)
Chamaecyparis pisifera varieties (squarrosa, "Plumosa") (Sawara False Cypress).
Prunus serrulata "Kanzan" (Kanzan Flowering Cherry)

Pinus species (Pine)

Rock wall plantings:
Aralia japonica (south of house only)
Azalea species (no longer present)
Perennials (no longer present)
Cotoneaster horizontalis (Cotoneaster)
Juniperus horizontalis (Juniper)

Specimen plantings outside of Japanese garden
Abies concolor (White Fir)
Acer palmatum varieties - red leaf, dissected red leaf (Japanese Maple)
Cedrus atlantica glauca (Blue Atlas Cedar)
Chamaecyparis pisifera varieties (filiformis, others) (Sawara False Cypress)
Tsuga heterophylla (native, not planted) (Western Hemlock)

Japanese garden plantings:
Acer circinatum (Vine Maple)
Aralia japonica
Azalea species (no longer present)
Bergenia cordifolia (Heartleaf Bergenia)
Chamaecyparis species (no longer present) (Sawara or Hinoki False Cypress)
Iris species
Juniperus horizontalis (Juniper)
Pinus mugo and other species (Mugo Pine)
Taxus baccata fastigiata (Irish Yew)
Water lilies (no longer present)

Residential foundation plantings:
Cotoneaster horizontalis (Cotoneaster)
Perennials and annuals (no longer present)
Taxus bacatta fastigiata variety (Irish Yew)

Other
Bamboo species (Bamboo)
Hedera helix "Baltica" or similar (Variegated Ivy)
Wisteria species

The Mukai Agricultural Complex is significant under Criterion A as a rare, intact example of a property associated with the history of Japanese American settlement in Washington state, and the growth and development of the strawberry industry in the Puget Sound Region, especially on Vashon Island, in the period from 1926 to 1942. The property's landscape is also an important expression of Japanese formal garden design, and therefore merits nomination under Criterion C.

The nominated area consists of the Mukai Cold Process Fruit Barrelling Plant, constructed in 1926, a small brick office building constructed in 1936, the Mukai residence and its formal garden, and approximately 11.18 acres of surrounding open space which are historically associated with the site. A bunkhouse and an open machine shed, originally a bunkhouse, have been either moved and/or altered and are considered non-contributing elements within the complex.

The Mukai Complex was built by Denichiro Mukai, who immigrated to the United States in approximately 1885, and his son Masahiro, who was born on Vashon Island in 1911. Denichiro Mukai was a very early immigrant. Prior to 1890 Japanese immigration to the Seattle area was insubstantial; in 1880 there were only 148 Japanese immigrants in the entire United States, with the State of Washington reporting only one. Early Japanese immigrants were predominantly men who had been recruited by contractors to work as laborers on the railroads, for logging crews, and as domestics. Many of these men were searching for financial security and planned to return to Japan after making their fortunes.

Before the turn of the century there was a relatively small market for agricultural products in King County due to the small and scattered population. Between 1890 and 1907 however the population increased from 114,929 to 355,000,[1] creating a greater demand for fruits, vegetables, and dairy products. In addition to the population boom, Seattle's position as the main port for trade with Alaska and the establishment of the condensed milk industry in Kent and Auburn combined to create an advantageous environment for Japanese participation in agriculture.

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[1] Reports of the Immigrant Commission, Immigrants in Industry: Part 25, Japanese and other Immigrant Races in the Pacific Coast and Rocky Mountain States (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911), 495.

The first Japanese farms in Washington were established in 1892 in the Yakima Valley and in 1893 near Kent in the White River Valley.[2] The new immigrant arrivals tended to congregate around already-established settlements, and in 1909 when the U.S. Department of Agriculture agents visited immigrant farmsteads, they wrote that "the Japanese farmers have increased in number rapidly until now they are the most numerous of all races about the several small villages and electric railroad stations between Tacoma and Seattle."[3] Agents visited 53 Japanese, 11 Italian, and 33 Scandinavian and German farmsteads. The Japanese were producing strawberries and blackberries, potatoes, and vegetables, and some had ventured into dairying. In time, agricultural production became more specialized among the immigrants, with the Scandinavians and Germans growing the bush fruits of blackberries, loganberries, and gooseberries; the Italians going into the "green truck" or vegetable trade; and the Japanese growing primarily small fruits.

Many immigrant Japanese farmers prospered despite the restrictions which existed in the new country. For instance, the Japanese could not buy land, a restriction that reduced first-generation immigrants to tenant status virtually in perpetuity. The Washington State Constitution restricted ownership of land to those immigrants who declared the intention to become United States citizens; the Constitution of the United States in turn granted restricted citizenship only to those individuals who qualified as "a free white person."[4] After the Civil War persons of African descent were made eligible, but in 1882 the Chinese Exclusion Act continued the denial of citizenship to Asians. In 1906, the courts were ordered to stop granting citizenship rights to the Japanese, and this judgement was reaffirmed in a 1922 United States

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[2] John Adrian Rademaker, "The Ecological Position of the Japanese Farmers in The State of Washington" (Ph. D. diss., University of Washington, 1939), 166.

[3] (Reports of the Immigration Commission, 500.)

[4] Gail Dubrow and others, Asian/Pacific Americans in Washington State: Historic Context Document (State of Washington Dept. of Community Development, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, 1992), 19.

Supreme Court decision. It was not until 1952 with the passage of the McCarran-Walter Act that Japanese immigrants were allowed naturalization.[5]

Among the factors which contributed to many Japanese farmers' success was the considerable knowledge of agricultural practices which they brought with them from their homeland. They were accustomed to intensive work on the land. Draining and clearing fields for crop production, knowledge of soil types and capacities, and various techniques of cultivation and weeding were well understood by many Japanese immigrants.

Additionally, their tenant status, often combined with physical hardiness and ambition, accounted for Japanese farmers reclaiming and clearing land that was of little interest to white settlers. Much of King County in 1900 was either wetlands or covered with undergrowth or tree stumps, and demanded drainage and extensive work before cultivation.[6] A typical experience was recounted in 1911: "two white men were offered a 30-acre tract at $10.00 per acre on the condition that they could remove a few stumps from one part of it. They declined the offer, and a Japanese took the tract, paying $400 per acre and agreeing to clear it also."[7]

Another factor which contributed to the success of many early immigrants was their respect for the occupation of farming and its relationship to family life. Farming encouraged the growth of large extended families to provide additional manpower for operating the farm. The Japanese Exclusion Act of 1907-08 prohibited further Japanese immigration but continued to allow wives, children, and parents to come to the

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5 Ibid, 36.

6 (Reports of the Immigration Commission, 503.)

7 Ibid, 508.

United States, fostering a "picture bride" industry,[8] and in this way the community continued to grow. One of the first expenditures made by a Japanese laborer was the purchase of a wife (costing from $300-$400 in 1911). Wives of Japanese farmers were accustomed to working in the fields, and a married man could profit greatly by the addition of a partner in his labors, with children eventually becoming extra support. In a 1911 survey of 30 Japanese wives, 24 worked in the fields.[9] With the help of their wives, the Japanese farmers' "competitive prowess exceeded that of the native American considerably."[10]

Many Japanese immigrants were financially ambitious and willing to accept austere living conditions, long hours of physically demanding work, and low wages to build a better life. According to one account, "fatalistic acceptance of drudgery and hard work was a part of the Japanese cultural heritage...acceptance of one's social and economic status was an attitude enforced upon everyone."[11] Pioneer Japanese farmers usually started their agricultural endeavors with little or no financial capital. A 1911 survey of 75 farmers indicated that only five had more than $100 upon their arrival.[12] Most farmers worked for low wages, borrowed money for rent, and purchased supplies on credit. Surplus money was sent to Japan to support relatives.[13]

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[8] Masa Mukai, interview by Author, 6 November 1993, at residence in Seattle, Wa.

[9] (Reports of the Immigration Commission, 506.)

[10] (Rademaker 1939, 123.)

[11] Ibid, 130.

[12] (Reports of the Immigration Commission, 504.)

[13] Ibid, 506.

Whenever possible, the family was brought to the United States from Japan to help perform farm work. If family was not available, many farmers relied on the social custom of "kenjin"-- asking help of the people from the same prefecture. This "mutual helpfulness and mutual responsibility"[14] was important in finding adequate housing. Tenant land was often a part of an older homestead which did not include housing. Most of the early immigrants lived in the crudest of lodgings: bare walls, no conveniences, a lack of furniture, and the necessity of housing laborers with tenant families all made for the poorest of living conditions.[15] Tenant housing was often built with the help of the kenjin, using whatever lumber was furnished by the landlord. The Mukai's early lodgings and the laborer housing they provided on their farms in later years, including the Mukai Barrelling Plant bunkhouses, were good illustrations of this frugality.

There was little time for kitchen gardens or tending of farm animals, and many early Japanese laborers grew crops exclusively for the market. Traditionally the Japanese avoided red meat, resulting in a tendency to not keep livestock.[16] In the early days of the industry, Japanese farmers employed "their own countrymen exclusively" for the clearing, draining, and cultivation of the land. They also employed Japanese pickers during season. Regular employees were given board and lodging and received $1.35 per day, in 1911: "wages have changed most materially since the Japanese first appeared...At present, though their rate is less, there is very little underbidding, for they (with immigration restricted and the prejudice against them becoming less) can usually find plenty of work without cutting to so great an extant."[17]

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14 (Rademaker 1939, 123.)

15 (Reports of the Immigration Commission, 513.)

16 Ibid, 504.

17 Ibid, 510.

Japanese immigrants were not readily assimilated into American culture for several reasons. Alien property laws contributed to a standard of living below that of other immigrant groups which in many instances resulted in clustering of Japanese people in substandard housing. Isolated from main stream American life, they did not immediately learn to speak, read, or write English. Additionally, many were Buddhists and did not attend the churches of their adopted communities; and the Japanese were ineligible for membership in many of this country's social organizations such as the Masons, Odd Fellows, and Eagles, which led to the formation of their own social organizations.

The Mukai family history, while in many ways representative of the Japanese experience in the Pacific Northwest, also deviates from that experience in several ways. Masahiro's father, B.D. Mukai (Americans were unable to pronounce Denichiro, which was shortened to Ben, to become B.D.) was a talented, aggressive, and financially ambitious individual. He emigrated to San Francisco when he was fifteen from a farming community near Osaka. The reason for his immigration was "to make money."[18] His first position was that of a domestic with a wealthy sheep farmer. The farmer was an alcoholic and the family became dependent upon B.D., rewarding his services by sending him to school, where he learned English. This fluency in English was a tremendous asset, one which probably gave him the opportunity to obtain his goals sooner than the average immigrant.

After leaving his first employers, Mukai worked in a variety of positions in San Francisco, including acting as a Police interpreter.[19] Recognizing the need for Japanese immigrants to be employed, at the age of 21 Mukai began an employment agency, and was rumored to be one of the youngest licensees in San Francisco.[20] He married soon after, a young Japanese named Sato Nakanishi, possibly a "picture bride." After the

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18 (Mukai 1993)

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

San Francisco earthquake and fires of 1906, he came to Seattle and opened a restaurant on Fourth Avenue.

The years immediately following the San Francisco disaster were boom years for Seattle. Food prices rose, and Puget Sound lumber was in great demand. After giving up the restaurant due to Sato's becoming ill, he went to work for Walter Bowen and Company, a Western Avenue commission house on "wholesale row". It was here that he was introduced to Vashon Island strawberries.

In 1910, B.D. and Sato moved to Vashon Island and started growing strawberries on a small parcel of land near the center of the island south of the Vashon Grade School. At the time of their arrival on Vashon Island, strawberries were already a major Puget Sound crop; in that same year Japanese farmers outnumbered whites four to one on the wet row of the Pike Place Market.[21] Vashon Island soil is of glacial origin and, while not particularly suited for high yield, was excellent for early yield. In the early days of the industry when the market was only for fresh strawberries the early berries commanded the best price on wholesale row and the Pike Place Market and gave Vashon the edge over other larger producing areas such as Bellevue and the White and Green River Valleys.

Early island growers such as J.D. McCormick, J.T. Thompson, and Charlie Deppman had established the industry on the Magoon variety, a soft and sour strawberry that was later supplanted by the Marshall. It was the Marshall strawberry that built Mukai's reputation and made the growers "famous."[22] By 1901 over 15,000 crates of strawberries were shipped annually from the Island.[23] This was also the first year of the Vashon

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[21] Alice Shorett and Murray Morgan, The Pike Place Market: People, Politics, and Produce (Seattle, Wa: Pacific Search Press, 1982), 104.

[22] (Mukai 1993).

[23] Carey, Roland. Van Olinda's History of Vashon-Maury Island (Seattle, Wa.: Alderbrook Publishing Co., 1985), 46.

Island Strawberry Festival, which has become a long-standing tradition on the Island which continues to this day.

The Japanese were well established on Vashon Island by the time Mukai moved there. The first recorded Japanese to come to Vashon were the Sakai and Hoshi families, who worked in the greenhouse trade.[24] In the early years of immigration, Japanese were in great demand by EuroAmerican settlers to clear the land due to their willingness to cultivate sites which required extensive improvement and physical labor.[25]

Early Japanese newcomers to Vashon had almost no capital, and rented or leased land for a part of the future crop, or "sharecropping." The life of a strawberry plant is five years. No crop is produced in the first year; the second, third, and fourth are the best producing years. New fields often had to be planted in the fifth year. For these reasons leases normally ran from one to eight years and extended over one or two crops. Five to ten acres was the common size for a leasehold. Tenants sometimes provided their own horse and implements, but they often were provided by the owner in advance, with promise of payment when the crops came in. The Rodda Grocery Store at Center often sold to the Japanese on credit.[26]

April through June were the busiest months of the year in the strawberry industry, with harvest occurring in late May and early June. The remaining months were spent clearing and draining land and in other miscellaneous activities. During the picking season six to ten pickers per acre would work dawn to dusk, due to the perishability of the fruit. The role of the picker, however, was a transient job and the Japanese soon climbed the organizational ladder and became laborers and

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[24] Kazuo Ito, Issei: A History of Japanese Immigrants in North America, trans. Shinichiro Nakamura and Jean S. Gerard (Seattle, Wa.: Executive Committee for the Publication of Issei, 1973), 454.

[25] (Mukai 1993)

[26] Ibid.

supervisors rather than pickers. By 1918, only a few Japanese women were available for harvesting, and Native Americans were employed.[27]

When Mukai began his first strawberry farming on the island, he started in the position of a tenant farmer, hiring other Japanese as laborers and pickers. Several Japanese families were brought to the Island by Mukai as laborers.[28] Both Masahiro and his father took pride in the fact that they personally never labored in the fields, but were independent farmers. The capital that Mukai had saved from his earlier business ventures allowed this independence, and although he was not the only Japanese farmer to supervise Japanese laborers, he was in the minority. The majority of Japanese-American farmers began their careers in agriculture as laborers.

After a year at their first farm, they moved to the west side of the island, to a small farm on Cove Road. Masahiro (shortened to "Masa") was born on this farm on April 10, 1911. Masa recalls that the house was dilapidated, a "shack" with no insulation. During the winter the wind blew through cracks in the walls and made the carpet "float". Mukai hauled berries from his fields to the Cove Dock where they were transported by the small steamboats of the Mosquito Fleet to the Western Avenue commission houses.

In 1917, the Mukais moved once more, to a site near the present K-2 ski manufacturing plant, and in 1922 they leased a 60-acre farm owned by the Taylor brothers. This site was located directly east of the present Mukai complex, across 107th Avenue S.W., and its operation and development was a model plant for the Mukai Historic Complex. When the Mukais began cultivation of the 60-acre site, the strawberry industry was booming. The value of the strawberry crop exceeded that of any other small fruit in the Puget Sound area, with 39 per cent of fruit farm receipts coming from strawberries.[29] Japanese strawberry farms on

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] (Rademaker 1939, 11)

Vashon Island were to reach their peak in the prosperous years of the mid-1920s.[30]

The 60-acre farm required extensive drainage which was accomplished by hand labor and horse power.[31] The lease was for ten years, allowing for two plantings. When Mukai leased the farm, there was a garage and old house on the property. Historic photographs from 1927 show the "famous Mukai strawberry farm" as a cluster of buildings including a machine shed, garage, bunkhouses, and a two-story hipped roof house, surrounded on all sides by fields of strawberries. For laborer housing Mukai built one and two-room crude dwellings and bath houses, a common addition to Japanese farms at the time: "Even the poorest Japanese farm could boast of its own bathhouse, modelled in many cases directly upon those which stood on the farmers' ancestral home in Japan."[32]

The Mukais always had a kitchen garden at their various locations, but they never branched into animal husbandry. B.D. claimed that animals tied him down. Horses were, however, used in the cultivation of the fields for many years; B.D. believed that the continuous use of tractors ruined the crops. Horses were kept on the farm until 1950 when the barn burned down. Geese were kept for a short time in the late 40s as an experiment in weeding, but they were found to damage more plants in their bedding habits than they weeded.[33]

Cultivating 60 acres of strawberries soon enabled the Mukais to produce a much larger volume of fruit. The Mukais had always had too high a volume to sell at the Pike Place Market, and it was during his tenure on the 60-acre farm that Mukai came to terms with consistent

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30 Roland Carey, Isle of the Sea Breezers (Seattle, Wa.: Alderbrook Publishing Co., 1976), 35.

31 (Mukai 1993)

32 (Rademaker 1939, 129.)

33 (Mukai 1993)

overproduction. The Western Avenue commission houses greatly limited the amount of strawberries that could be sold, and they were notorious for their dishonest dealings. Farmers were virtually powerless once the crop became ripe, because it had to be moved. "Commission firms were alleged to dump into the bay produce consigned by farmers who demanded high percentages, thus raising the price they received for produce sold to the commission houses by more timorous farmers who accepted lower percentages as their share. Some were accused of selling all a farmer's produce, then showing him a pile of spoiled vegetables which they claimed were part of his delivery. Many were slow to pay the pittance the grower was to receive."[34]

Mukai's first efforts to improve his market concentrated on transportation--getting the berries to Western Avenue earlier than his competitors. In the early days of the berry industry, Vashon Island growers found it difficult to compete with their mainland counterparts because of their dependence upon the Mosquito Fleet. Restaurant and other wholesale buyers were on Western Avenue by 6 a.m., but island berries did not arrive until later in the morning, and were consequently the last to be sold. Mukai devised a new alternative to the Mosquito Fleet, leasing a barge to haul the strawberries to Coleman Dock. Leaving Vashon Island at midnight, the barge arrived at 3 a.m. and Mukai's strawberries were out on the market between 4 and 5 a.m., before Bellevue, Ollala, and other areas. Although the barge solved the problem of getting Mukai's berries to Western Avenue early, it still did not solve the problem of volume. The increase in production resulting from 60 acres of strawberries continued to be a problem, one that both B.D. and Masa worked together to solve.

From Masa's earliest years, his father had insisted upon involving him in all stages of the farming operation. Masa describes his father as a "Bolshevik". He did not think Japanese ways were proper in this country, and encouraged Masa to grow up as an American. Unlike other Japanese children (a 1911 survey found that out of 77 children of tenant farmers, 24, or almost 1/3, were being educated in Japan)[35] , B.D. did

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34 (Shorett and Morgan 1982, 16)

35 (Reports of theImmigration Commission 514.)

not send Masa to the Japanese language schools which had been established in other immigrant settlement areas. These schools were an effort by the Issei (first generation) to insure that the Nisei (second generation) retained some vestige of their native culture in the face of pressures to assimilate. While B.D. was a Buddhist and occasionally attended services at the Seattle Buddhist Church and those performed by a travelling priest in private homes on the island, he did not encourage Masa to embrace Buddhism. Masa recalls that one of his father's favorite stories was of a friend, a Buddhist priest, who came to visit B.D. on the island where they would often talk for hours on matters of life and spiritual enlightenment; the friend ultimately resigned from the priesthood to sell Fords.

When Masa reached high school age his father encouraged him to experiment in various farming techniques to improve the berry crop. One of Masa's major projects was the freezing and preserving of strawberries, which would eventually provide a solution to the farm's overproduction. The reputation of the Mukai farm's Marshall strawberries drew a visit to the farm by distributors from Chicago who were interested in buying Mukai's berries direct if they could be preserved. B.D. sent Masa to work at a station set up by the United States Department of Agriculture at the Spokane Street Cold Storage in Seattle. It was there that Masa experimented with slow, fast, and semi-solid freezing for the wholesale market.[36]

The Mukais set up their first barrelling plant in 1924, the first preserving and shipping of strawberries for the wholesale market to be done on the island. In the beginning the yield of 200 tons of strawberries processed without washing. Buyers said "Sand settles, don't bother to wash." By 1925 a law was enacted requiring them to wash the berries, and Masa traveled to Salem, Oregon to buy a sorting belt and a washing machine belt. The berries were picked, dumped, and packed in wooden barrels made by Masa from Douglas Fir staves shipped in from Port Angeles. Three hundred pounds of strawberries were mixed with 150 pounds of sugar to the barrel and marked "2 + 1 Frozen Marshall Strawberries." When packed, the barrels weighed 450 pounds net, and were rolled onto horse-drawn drays (and later trucks) to be taken to Vashon Landing. They were delivered no later than the next morning to

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[36] (Mukai 1993)

the Spokane Street Cold Storage, frozen, and shipped from there all over the world.

The successful development of the canning industry soon allowed B.D. to quit sending strawberries to the Western Avenue market altogether, revolutionizing the industry. The new Mukai barrelling operation began to compete heavily in buying berries with the Puyallup and Sumner Berry Grower's Association, which included Vashon Island, and soon many island growers began selling their berries to the Mukais. Marshall strawberries were in great demand at this time by large distributing companies such as John Sexton and Company, who bought strawberries for preserves and ice cream toppings from the Mukais for many years. In a case of preserves, quality was determined by how many jars of strawberry preserves were in the assortment. In 1927 Vashon Island produced more berries, including strawberries, loganberries, raspberries, and blackberries, than any other comparable area of King County. They were "sold in confectionaries all over the world" and yielded more than $400 per acre as an average return.[37]

In 1926, the Mukais again decided to move their operation, this time to a permanent 40-acre site to the west, the site of the present Mukai Agricultural Complex. The 60-acre site did not have a sufficient water supply for the operation, and in addition to this deficiency, the strawberry maggot and the strawberry root weevil had infected the crop. Eventually the Mukais stopped using the Marshall strawberry because of its susceptibility to these diseases and other problems.

In 1926, Masa was 15 years old. From his earliest years B.D. had insisted that he have his own bank account and that he be his father's partner in the business. Since Masa was born on the Island, he was a United States citizen, and he purchased the 40-acre site in his name. When Masa was eight his mother Sato died,and upon her death B.D. had married her sister Kuni. When Masa purchased the 40 acres, B.D. and Kuni financed the construction of the Mukai Cold Process Fruit Barrelling Plant, its service buildings, and a new residence and garden, all on an approximately five-acre parcel within the larger 40 acres. The 35 acres to the south and west remained in strawberry production after being drained and cleared, again by hand labor and horse power.

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37 Vashon Island News Record (Vashon, Wa.), 17 June 1915.

Masa designed the new Mukai Cold Process Fruit Barrelling Plant and hired local contractor Deb Harrington to build the 10,000 square foot 100' x 40' wood frame building. A 16 foot platform ran the length of the building's facade, windows were six-over-six light, and exterior walls were clapboard. Construction of the plant started in 1926 and it began operation in 1927. The old plant across the road was abandoned, and today no buildings remain to distinguish the site. Outbuildings for the new plant included a water tower located at the building's southwest corner, a large barn west of the house, a 10' x 14' cabin east of the barn used by the labor crew's straw boss; three 14' x 100' bunkhouses, and several miscellaneous storage sheds.

On a given day of plant production, the strawberries would come into the dock and samples would be taken for the laboratory. The berries would then be graded, and farmers would be docked if a high percentage of the fruit was not usable. Berries were next loaded onto conveyor belts and run through a large washing machine where they were dunked and then pressure sprayed. Next the water was drained and the berries run onto a sorting belt, where up to 35 women sorted the berries, distinguishing between sizes of 5/8" to 1 1/2". From 1927 to 1935 the berries were packed in wooden barrels, and from 1935 to the plant's closing in 1968 they were shipped in 30 pound tins.

The residence was begun by the family the same year as the plant. B.D. designed its general layout on a piece of grocery paper and handed it to a Norwegian contractor named Severson who was well known for his houses in Cove, Colvos, and Cedarhurst on the Island's west side. The house was 19 hundred square feet and cost slightly over $4,000 to build. It was quite an improvement from the Mukai's earlier leased farmhouses; the classically inspired residence features exterior walls sheathed in green Royal shingles, with cream trim, red cedar roof shingles, multi-paned sash, and a columned portico over a first story garage. B.D. hired a German mason named Dannewick to build the sidewalk and steps, which were laid in concrete one step at a time, with scalloped edges. Dannewick also built the interior fireplace which features decorative chipped rectangular brick. A small pergola over the east entrance was designed by B.D. and Masa, with Masa lining it with sheet iron to make it waterproof.

While the house style is clearly the product of late 1920s America, its surrounding formal garden clearly is not. The extensive garden, designed by Kuni and built by B.D. and Masa, is significant as a

vernacular expression of the adaptation and blending of traditional Japanese garden elements and plant materials with American suburban residential landscaping. The juxtaposition of these diverse, even opposing cultural landscape elements, is a tangible expression of a continuing Japanese cultural tradition.

The Mukai garden is regular and symmetrical in overall form but includes nearly 250 lineal feet of rock retaining walls covered with a mixture of both Japanese and native plants. The boundaries of the residential landscaping are planted with regularly spaced rows of Japanese flowering cherries and a mixture of coniferous trees, primarily native to Japan. The placement of precast concrete lamp posts and carefully finished concrete walks and steps east of the house follows this formal organization. Solitary and small groups of large stones near the plant and office, along the road, and at the edge of the lower lawn are both practical and Japanese in character. The stones mark the edges of circulation spaces but also have an aesthetic, sculptural quality that ties them to explicitly Japanese elements of the landscape.

The heart of this landscape, however, is the uniquely Japanese rock garden. The pond and mound northwest of the house include common elements and follow principles of traditional Japanese garden design. The Japanese garden provides an indelible link to the Mukai' s country of origin otherwise not visible in any other aspect of the Historic Complex.

Documented formal Japanese gardens in the central Puget Sound area fall into two general types, high-style and horticultural. High-style gardens include public and private gardens created by professional garden designers brought from Japan, exemplified by the Japanese Garden at the University of Washington's Arboretum in Seattle (1960) and the Japanese gardens at the Bloedel Reserve on Bainbridge Island (1960). Horticultural gardens appeared earlier and were created by first or second-generation Japanese nursery operators to showcase specimen plants and landscape design services and to provide space for plant cultivation. While incorporating some features and ideas from classical Japanese garden forms, these horticultural gardens served many functions and incorporated European and American plant materials. Examples are the Kubota Gardens in Seattle (begun in 1929) and smaller, less formal nursery-associated gardens in the Auburn area and on Bainbridge Island. It is likely that small residential gardens were also created by Japanese residents in the Bellevue area, the Green River Valley, and

elsewhere. None are documented and most, if not all, are likely to have vanished due to neglect during their creators' internment in the 1940s and resettlement elsewhere. The Mukai garden is thus a rare example of an early non-horticultural garden, constructed in the bloom of the Issei's success in their new homeland.

Classical Japanese garden design attempted to idealize and miniaturize elements of the natural landscape in forms which are emphatically asymmetrical and irregular in plan. The earliest Japanese gardens, known only through literary accounts, were based on Chinese models and included lakes with islands and bridges. Large, extravagant residential gardens developed by the nobility in eighth century Kyoto formalized garden forms. Always sited to the south of the house, they contained hills and a pond with an island reached by two bridges. Later evolution of garden forms included incorporation of religious and philosophical symbolism and brought extreme sophistication and refinement. Long diagonal views, distant scenery "borrowed" from the surrounding landscape, and carefully designed sequences of approach and circulation characterize these gardens. The juxtaposition of water and hill or stone are symbolic of the hard and the yielding philosophical opposites (in-yo in Japanese), also depicted in Chinese and Japanese poetry and ink paintings of mountain scenes. By the 16th century, the influence of Zen Buddhism permeated garden design, producing meditative gardens and specialized settings for conducting ritualized tea ceremonies. Through the 19th century, numerous styles were developed and codified within two broad types, the artificial hill garden and the level garden. Small residential gardens based on the principles and styles of larger gardens flourished during periods of prosperity.

The northeast section of the Mukai garden is a simplified, small-scale vernacular version of the artificial hill type with water garden elements. The extensive and careful use of irregular large stones to represent cliffs and mountains and their placement at the pond margins and at focal points in the garden are typical, as is the placement of Japanese maples spreading over rocks and water. A specimen pine (now overgrown) was placed on the crest of the mound and shaped to resemble a wind-blown mountain tree. Other conifers were located nearby and trained to complement this image. The narrow isthmus between the ponds at the south end of the mound served as a bridge and carried a small path leading over the mound (now obscured). The ponds contained both water lilies and koi (Japanese ornamental carp) for two decades from their completion until M. Mukai sold the property in 1949.

Early twentieth century vernacular residential landscapes are characterized by expanses of lawn, foundation plantings to obscure the meeting of buildings with the ground plane, and beds of shrubs, perennials, and annuals arranged in regular or curving irregular forms. Vernacular residential landscapes reflect a varied mixture of sources. Romantic European landscape concepts, popularized by Andrew Jackson Downing and others in the mid-19th century, emphasize irregular, sweeping forms, expanses of turf and foundation planting. English cottage garden sources, popularized by Gertrude Jekyll and others at the turn of the century (and associated with the craftsman movement), emphasize a painterly profusion of colored blossoms and vegetation arranged in simple rectilinear forms for viewing close at hand. The late Victorian period produced an explosion of exotic plant materials and favored eclectic plant choices and exotic specimens. Suburbanization and land division within cities produced vast expanses of small rectangular lots which favor more tidy and formalized rectilinear landscape arrangements of foundation and peripheral plantings. The Mukai residential landscape embodies several elements of this flexible residential vernacular.

In its prime, the Mukai garden attracted visitors from on and off the island and was photographed in snapshots and for postcards. Ironically, it also served a notable social function when Kuni Mukai hosted tea parties to view the cherry blossoms in the spring. The garden remains unique on Vashon Island and is one of very few remaining early Japanese-American gardens in the region.

The Mukais were to finish the construction of their new plant, home, and garden just before the onset of the Great Depression. During the Depression years, the Mukai Barrelling Plant established a financial reputation that belied economic conditions in the rest of the country.[38] The plant provided work for 400 to 500 people seasonally, including pickers. By the mid-1920s Japanese pickers had been replaced by Native Americans from Vancouver Island,transported by canoe. Native Americans from local reservations were the mainstay of the harvest for many years and were considered the "best pickers." Beginning in the 1930s, Filipinos were also recruited. In the late spring and summer, the Filipinos worked in the Alaskan salmon factories, then wintered on

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38 (Carey 1976, 58)

Vashon in readiness for the spring strawberry crop. Masa met them in Seattle on the boats and brought them over. In 1937 they received 15 cents per hour for picking.

In the early 1930s, the company name was changed to Mukai and Son, and in 1934 B.D. left his home and business to travel and eventually remarried, settling for a while in California. He always kept in contact with Masa, often sending him wire recordings in lieu of letters. In 1968 he went back to Japan for a visit, and after several months Masa received orders to sell his father's property, close his bank accounts, and send him the proceeds. The immigrant who had so vehemently embraced America had gone back to Osaka and had purchased and restored the family's ancestral home; this was where he died, in 1973.

After B.D.'s departure, Masa ran the fruit barrelling plant and cared for Kuni and the house and garden. Labor for the garden was divided between Masa and the laborers and pickers when the berries were not in season. He gradually gave up farming and concentrated on the canning and freezing business, depending upon local berry production. In 1937 he married Chiyeko Wakasugi, whose family farmed strawberries on Bainbridge Island. In 1938 the business office was moved from the house to the present brick building, which was designed by Masa and built by a local contractor southeast of the packing plant. Masa changed the name of the plant to the Vashon Island Packing Company, or VIPCO, upon the advice of his distributors.

World War II was devastating for the Japanese-American berry farmers, both on Vashon and elsewhere. Executive Order 9066, issued on February 19, 1942, affected all Japanese-Americans living west of the Columbia River. Every Japanese family on Vashon Island, excepting the Mukais, were given two weeks notice that they would be interned. Most of the island families were moved to the Puyallup Fairgrounds and then dispersed to northern and central California, Wyoming, Idaho, and other locations.[39] Over two-thirds of those interned were Nisei and American citizens.[40]

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[39] (Mukai 1993)

[40] (Dubrow and others 1992, 33.)

In the days after Pearl Harbor, Masa kept in close contact with the Lieutenant Commander of the Western Defense Command, a personal acquaintance. He was notified two weeks before the evacuation order and was able to leave voluntarily. He was the only voluntary evacuee on the Island. After leaving the business in the hands of his hauler Morris Dunsford and providing funds for its operation, the family packed their belongings and moved to the Snake River Valley in Idaho to Dead Ox Flats, across the river from Weiser, where Chiyeko's brother lived. During his stay in Idaho, Masa tried growing strawberries but failed due to the climate. He became a respected member of the community, with various civic organizations asking him to speak. The town's Mayor asked him to help develop a new soft fruit and freezing industry and offered to build a cold storage plant. On a trip to Boise he encountered an old acquaintance working for the J.K. Gill Seed Company who gave him a contract to raise seed for lettuce, turnips, carrots, and potatoes. Mukai designed and built a lettuce thresher, brought tractors from Vashon, and found tires in junkyards. He worked in the seed business until 1945, and can recall only one incident of prejudice during his time in Idaho.

World War II left an indelible impact on the Japanese agricultural community. Those who were leasing at the time of the internment lost virtually everything. More than one-third of the evacuated Japanese never returned to Seattle. The Valley farms never recovered, and "old timers say the (Pike Place) Market has never been the same."[41] While many produce dealers opposed the return of the Japanese, fearing the renewed competition, a successful non-violent return was possible in part because "finally the most important element in the preservation of civic peace was the demeanor of the Japanese themselves: their acceptance of evacuation, their suppression of bitterness, and their quiet determination to rebuild their lives."[42]

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[41] (Shorett and Morgan 1982, 109.)

[42] Thomas G. Edwards and Carlos A. Schwantes, eds., Experiences in a Promised Land: Essays in Pacific Northwest History (Seattle, Wa.: University of Washington Press, 1976), Seattle Race Relations during the Second World War, by Harold A. Droker, 367.

When the Mukai family returned to their farm after the War, they found the farm and the fruit packing industry greatly altered. Their house was rented, and the garden had been neglected. Masa moved the family to a house in the Northgate area of North Seattle and commuted to the island for over a year. The first of the Japanese to return to the Island, he advised younger generations of Japanese not to return to Vashon but to seek more fertile farmland in Snohomish or Whatcom counties. The immigrant generation was, however, nearing retirement, and Vashon was their home; several families returned. In the years following the War, interest steadily declined in the strawberry industry, even though in 1955 King County was still among America's 100 leading strawberry producing counties. Many farmers diversified their crops, growing currants, loganberries, and raspberries. In this same year Vashon was noted as one of the state's most specialized currant growing areas,[43] and in 1956 a County Agricultural Series noted that "currants and strawberries on Vashon Island are nearly all packed by a plant located on the island."[44]

Upon his return in 1946, Masa started growing strawberries again, planting a 60-acre plot north of the town of Vashon, but he found that it was no longer profitable due to the ferry cost and the difficulty in securing laborers and pickers. Masa took advantage of his engineering degree from Washington State University and in 1957 took out a King County Engineering license. In addition to the packing business, he began to design sewer systems, water-distribution mains, and went into pipeline construction and home building.

In 1950 the barn burned and Masa replaced it with a machine shed made from two bunkhouses. In 1949 he sold the residence and 2.75 acres to Everett Clark and the 30-acres to the south was sold to several Boeing employees. While keeping the island plant operating, he opened two new plants at Linden, Washington and Forest Grove, Oregon. By 1967 he could no longer get enough tonnage on the island to keep the plant in operation and in 1969 he sold the plant and an additional five acres to

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[43] Washington State Dept. of Agriculture, King County Agricultural Data Series (Washington State Dept. of Agriculture, 1956), 36.

[44] Ibid, 55.

a bean sprout manufacturing company. The properties have had several owners since that time, and were for some years abandoned. The current owner of the house and garden, Linda Brush, purchased the property in January 1990; the barrelling plant was purchased by Randy Wood in July of 1989. The barrelling plant owner is rehabilitating the property as artist's studios and commercial space.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

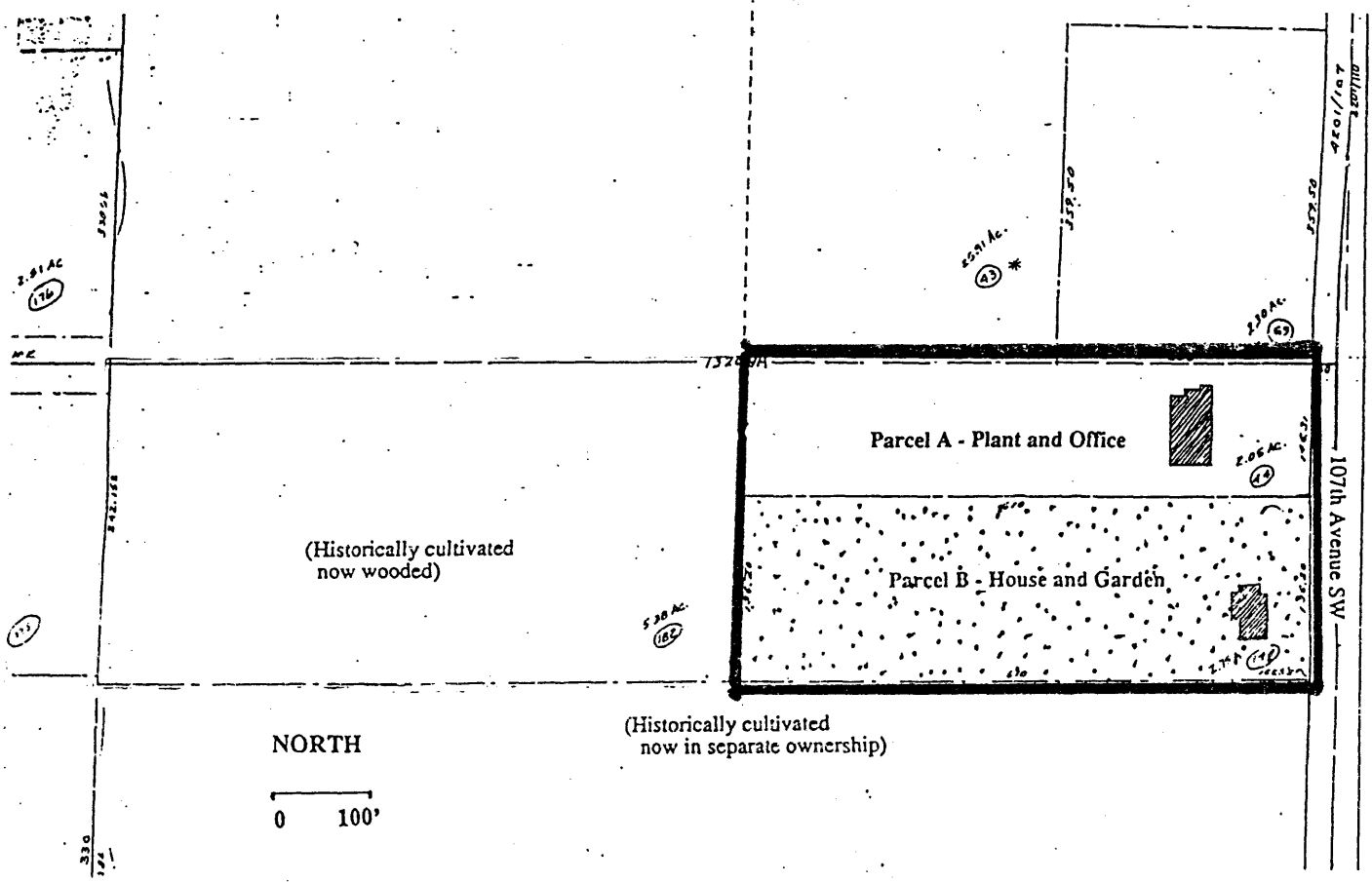
Section number 10 Page 1
Name of Property Mukai Cold Process Plant
County and State King Co., WA

Verbal Boundary Description

The Mukai Cold Process Plant and Residence are bound by the following rural, legal description: Township 23, Range 3, West half of Section 31. Plant and Office, Parcel #44. House and garden, Parcel #148.

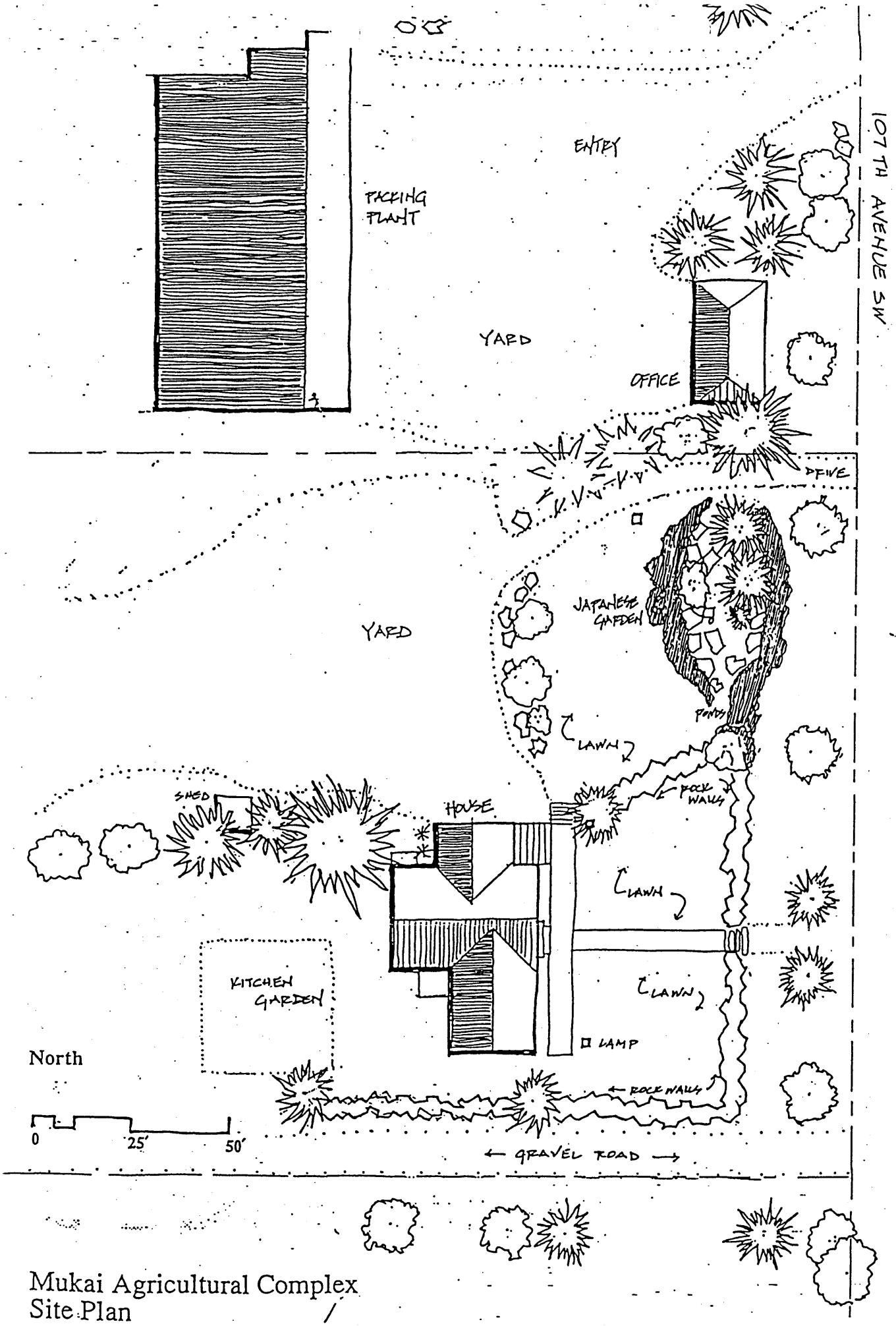
Boundary Justification

The boundary still encompasses the original plant, office, residence, formal garden, farmyard and service landscape which were historically a part of the Mukai Cold Process Fruit Barrelling Plant Complex. The former plant and residence, however, have separate ownerships today.



Mukai Agricultural Complex
Overall Site Plan

Amended 3/22/94



Mukai Agricultural Complex
Site Plan