

United States Department of 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 an 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 Monfils, Joseph, Farmstead  
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1463 Dump Road N/A not for publication  
city or town Town of Brussels N/A vicinity  
state Wisconsin code WI county Door code 029 zip code 54204

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets \_ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_ nationally statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title *[Signature]* 51400 Date 3/23/04

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 official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Monfils, Joseph, Farmstead

Door County

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

**4. National Park Service Certification**

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register.
- See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
- See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

*Edson H. Beall*

5/6/04

*per*  
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- structure
- site
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

	contributing	noncontributing
	4	buildings
	1	sites
		structures
		objects
5		0- total

**Name of related multiple property listing:**  
(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources is previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/ animal facility

AGRICULTURE/ storage

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/ storage

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation STONE

walls CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT

other BRICK

**Narrative Description**

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

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Monfils, Joseph, Farmstead  
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

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**Description**

The Joseph Monfils Farmstead is located at 1463 Dump Road in Brussels Township, Door County. The farmstead's five resources – a concrete house, gambrel- and gabled-roof barns, a shed, and a silo – are in good condition and contribute to the significance of the property. Orchards are grouped north of the house and west of the barn and shed, while surrounding the entire property are agricultural fields. A few large trees are scattered throughout the property.

*Joseph Monfils House c. 1921*

*Contributing*

The Monfils Farmstead House, built c. 1921, is a front-gabled house with poured-concrete walls built on a stone foundation.<sup>1</sup> The roof is sheathed in asphalt shingles and a brick chimney rises through the center of the ridge. A large addition of modern materials and construction is attached to the rear facade. The main facade of the original block faces east and has a three-bay fenestration pattern containing six symmetrically placed original openings on two stories. The three, first-story openings include a centered aluminum replacement door and flanking arched, one-over-one, double-hung windows. The three windows of the second story are also arched one-over-one, double-hung windows. All of the windows are wood-sash replacements.

The north facade, which is partially overlapped by the large rear addition, contains two arched, one-over-one, double-hung windows of different sizes.

A large concrete addition with a stucco finish covers the first story of the original rear (west) facade. This addition has a low-pitched, side-gabled roof. The sills of the two, one-over-one, double-hung windows on the second story meet the addition's roof line. The north facade of the addition has one single-paned window on the west end. On the addition's west facade are a modern two-paned metal door on the north end, and a set of modern sliding-glass doors to the south. A large brick chimney dominates the west end of the south facade on the addition. Two vertical, single-paned windows flank the chimney. A modern metal door with a pane of etched-glass pierces the eastern side of the south facade of the addition.

The south facade is also partially overlapped by the rear addition, but two original arched-window openings were left intact. One-over-one, double-hung windows are placed symmetrically on the first story.

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<sup>1</sup> The use of a stone foundation for a large concrete structure suggests the possible reuse of the foundation of an earlier structure at this location.

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Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

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The interior of the Monfils House has been altered. The first level contains a large open living room on the south end of the rear addition, with a mud room occupying the north end. The addition enclosed the original basement entrance at the southwest corner of the house. A kitchen and a library are located on the west half of the original first level, and a dining room, bathroom, and stairwell occupy the east half. The second level on the Monfils House includes a large dressing area in the northeast corner, a bathroom in the northwest corner, and two bedrooms – one in each of the other corners. The interior of the house features plaster walls and ceilings and simple painted woodwork around doors and windows. Floors throughout the house have been covered with linoleum or carpeting. Despite alterations, the Monfils House is in good condition and retains its original form.

*Gabled Barn* c. 1902, 1915

*Contributing*

The farmstead's gabled-roof dairy barn was once half its present length. The south half of the barn was constructed c. 1902 and displays timber-frame construction, vertical wood siding, and large sliding wood doors on the east and west facades. The north half was constructed c. 1915. The first-story elevation of the east facade displays weatherboard siding, four multi-paned fixed-sash windows, and a small entrance. The second-story elevation of the east facade displays board-and-batten siding and no openings. The gabled roof is sheathed in asphalt shingles. A one-story shed-roof addition (c. 1961) is attached to the north half of the west facade and displays plywood siding, three multi-paned fixed-sash windows, and a small entrance. A small shed-roof addition with a modern door is attached to the north end of the barn. The barn is in good condition and contributes to the significance of the farmstead.

The interior of the gabled barn is also divided into halves. The original section contains a large circular cedar-wood silo extending from below the ground to the roof rafters. The first level of the north half contains dairy farming equipment installed in aisles on a concrete floor. Above the dairy level is a hay storage loft.

*Gambrel Barn* c. 1920

*Contributing*

The c. 1920 threshing barn has vertical wood siding and a low-pitched, asphalt-shingled gambrel roof. The threshing barn is located north of the gabled barn and slightly west, but is connected to it by a passageway extending from the east facade of the gabled barn. This passageway also connects the barns to a silo, and displays weatherboard siding, a multi-paned fixed-sash window, and a small entrance. A deteriorating roof has recently been removed from the structure.

The east facade of the threshing barn is composed of a small entrance on the south end, and three sliding-bay doors to the north. Three fixed-sash, four-paned windows, two in the gambrel and one on the first level, are located on the south facade. The north and west facades contain no openings. The gambrel roofed barn is a contributing resource due to its good condition.

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*Silo c. 1915*

*Contributing*

A circular concrete silo with a concrete top and vent, c. 1915, is located at the junction of the gabled barn's north facade and the gambrel barn's southwest corner. The silo is in an unaltered condition and is therefore a contributing structure.

*Shed c. 1900*

*Contributing*

The shed, c. 1900, located north of the barns, has a gabled asphalt-shingled roof, rectangular massing, and weatherboard siding. The south facade includes an off-center screen door with one, nine-paned fixed window to its west. Two other openings on the south facade have been filled with wood siding. The east facade contains an opening near the gable that is closed with a door of vertical wood. One opening in the east facade has been filled with wood siding. The north facade contains no openings, while the west facade has only two small void openings at ground level used as animal exits. The shed is considered a contributing building because of its early construction date and fair condition.

Monfils, Joseph, Farmstead  
Name of Property

Door County  
County and State

Wisconsin

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- 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 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.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or 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)

ARCHITECTURE

### Period of Significance

C. 1921

### Significant Dates

C. 1921

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Cumber, Joseph

### Narrative Statement of Significance

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

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Monfils, Joseph, House  
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

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**Statement of Significance**

The Joseph Monfils Farmstead is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under *Criterion C: Architecture* as a distinctive example of a poured-concrete house constructed by local builder, Joseph Cumber. Built c. 1921, the house has a one-and-one-half-story, front-gabled form, and was constructed of a non-traditional material. The house is in good condition, with a large rear addition and replacement windows being the only alterations. In the early twentieth century concrete was highly promoted, precipitating its wide acceptance for many types of buildings and structures. However, poured concrete never gained great favor as a material for residential construction. The Monfils House is thus an unusual example of a poured-concrete residence in Wisconsin, and one of seven known examples in this region of Door County. Four additional contributing resources are located on the farmstead. They remain in good condition and include a gable-roof barn, a gambrel-roof barn, a shed, and a silo. The extant agricultural buildings contribute to our understanding of the types of agricultural buildings that were constructed as part of a typical farmstead. The period of significance for the Monfils Farmstead is c. 1921, the approximate year the house was constructed and the current farmstead complex was completed.

**Historic Context**

*History of Belgian Settlement<sup>2</sup>*

The difficult economic situation in Belgium that followed the country's independence in 1830, combined with promotional activities by immigrant recruiting agents, resulted in an exodus of rural Walloon peasants seeking a better life in America. Wisconsin was advocated as a place to settle by recruiters who worked for Antwerp ship

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<sup>2</sup> Belgian settlement in northeast Wisconsin has been well studied, most recently by Professors William Laatsch of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, and William H. Tishler of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This section was compiled from a number of secondary sources, including William G. Laatsch and Charles F. Calkins, "Belgians in Wisconsin," in *To Build in a New Land: Ethnic Landscapes in North America*, ed. by Allen G. Noble (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); William H. Tishler, "Namur Belgian-American District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 6 November 1989; Allen G. Noble, *Wood, Brick, and Stone: The North American Settlement Landscape*, Vol. 2, *Barns and Farm Structures* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984); Barbara Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*, 3 Vols. (Madison, Wisc.: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986); Deborah B. Martin, *History of Brown County, Wisconsin: Past and Present*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1913); Xavier Martin, *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, Vol. 13, *The Belgians of Northeast Wisconsin*, ed. by Reuben Gold Thwaites (Madison, Wisc.: Democrat Printing Co., 1895); William H. Tishler and Erik Brynildson, "The Architecture and Landscape Characteristics of Rural Belgian Settlement in Northeastern Wisconsin" (Madison, Wisc., July 1986); and Virginia C. Dell, "Bay Settlement: A Hamlet in Northeastern Wisconsin," 1974, Belgian-American Research Collection, Special Collections, Cofrin Library, the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Green Bay, Wisc.

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owners and were equipped with promotional guidebooks. The Belgians who emigrated to Wisconsin's Door Peninsula between 1853 and 1857 came primarily from the south-central provinces of Brabant, Hanaut, and Namur. Belgians from these southern provinces were Catholics and spoke Walloon, a French-Patois dialect. In 1857, however, emigration slowed due to restrictions by the Belgian government and discouraging letters from previous emigrants.

Most of the Belgian settlements in the Door Peninsula were concentrated in the towns of Gardner, Union, and Brussels in Door County; the communities of Red River and Lincoln in northern Kewaunee County; and the towns of Humboldt, Scott, and Green Bay in Brown County. The majority of the settlers were farmers, but a few were skilled laborers or factory workers who left these professions in their native country to farm their own land in America. The number of Belgians in the peninsula by 1860 was estimated to be 4,647.

Dense forests and scattered swamps physically isolated the Belgian enclave from other nearby settlements. Language and cultural misunderstandings also kept the Belgians apart from their German, Irish, and Scandinavian neighbors who lived in communities 10 to 15 miles away. This isolation, coupled with economic troubles, denied these Belgian settlers benefits that were enjoyed by other tax-supported populations in the area, including expanded county roads and schools. However, in 1858 the Belgians, as a group, finally decided to exercise their right to vote and run for office. The result was a Belgian coup of local government through which they assumed the upper hand in the affairs of Bay Settlement – the nearest large community. The community of Belgians was thereafter recognized as an important faction in the county. Newly elected Belgians were instrumental in establishing school districts, obtaining teachers, and improving roads in their settlement. Upon application to the federal government, post offices were soon established at Bay Settlement and Robinsonville, also located in Brown County. By the 1860s large tracts of previously forested land were under cultivation and larger, more commodious houses and barns were being built.

*History of Door County*

Menominee, Winnebago, and Fox Indian tribes inhabited the shores of Green Bay when Jean Nicolet landed there in 1634. In the 1650s and 1660s, French traders began fur trading and missionary activities and soon established Wisconsin's first community of European settlers. In 1835 Increase Chafin, a trapper and trader, settled at Little Sturgeon in Door County. Besides trapping and trading, other early settlers to the area fished the waters of Green Bay. The timber industry, namely the harvest of pine and cedar, began around 1850 with mills being built in Sturgeon Bay and other communities. The population of Door County reached 2,948 in 1860, rising to 4,919 by 1870.<sup>3</sup>

Beginning in the 1850s, a large number of Belgian immigrants settled in southern Door County, forming ethnic enclaves in Brussels and Union Townships. The town of Brussels was first settled in 1856 by Belgian

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<sup>3</sup> Holand, 1:83.



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Ferdinand Debraux and his family and three other Belgian immigrant men. Within two years, 55 families had settled in Brussels, and by 1861 the first business – a tavern – was opened by Francois Pierre. The first Brussels post office was established in 1862. In 1870, 216 of the 406 residents were Belgian natives.<sup>4</sup> The County Board established a new township from a portion of Brussels Township in November of 1865. A town meeting was held shortly thereafter at the home of X. Braus, where the name “Union” was decided upon because its townspeople were thought to be unified in areas of public interest.<sup>5</sup>

Early settlement of townships typically involved the development of villages at major road intersections or near mills and general stores, as these areas were better able to support commercial activities. Rosiere and Brussels in Brussels Township, and Namur in Union Township, are communities that developed in the early history of southern Door County. Typically, these communities included a commercial center with a general store, mill, and other services, and houses surrounded them.

In the 1890s the village of Rosiere had the largest population in Brussels Township with 300 residents and supported three general stores. The Charles Rubens General Store in Rosiere was also a hotel and cheese factory, and it commanded a prominent location in the village on the main thoroughfare. Rosiere also sustained three blacksmiths, a carpenter, a mason, a shoemaker, and a notary public. At the same time, the village of Namur in Union Township supported three general stores, including Frank Everard’s General Store. With a population of 100, Namur also boasted two physicians and a blacksmith. In contrast, by 1895 the smaller village of Brussels had only one business – the Pierre Virlee & Company General Store.<sup>6</sup>

By 1903 business in Rosiere and Namur had decreased. The population in Rosiere had dropped from 300 to 50. Rosiere possessed the Charles Rubens General Store, three blacksmiths, a carpenter, a shoemaker, a creamery, a cooper, a mason, a hay presser, and a sculptor; while just one general store continued to operate in Namur. At the same time, Brussels’ population grew to 160 as the village gained many new businesses, including two saloons, two masons, a hotel, a tailor, a shoemaker, a carpenter, and a blacksmith. According to the *Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory*, the Pierre Virlee & Company General Store added a flourmill on-site.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Tishler and Brynildson, 25.

<sup>5</sup> Chas. I. Martin, *History of Door County, Wisconsin* (Sturgeon Bay, Wisc.: Expositor Job Print, 1881), 90.

<sup>6</sup> *Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Chicago, Ill.: R.L. Polk & Co., 1895-96). The Pierre Virlee & Company General Store is still extant and was determined to be eligible for the National Register in a report by Mead & Hunt, Inc., “State Trunk Highway 57 Reconstruction, Door County, Reconnaissance Survey of Potentially Significant Historic Properties,” Madison, Wisc., April 1995.

<sup>7</sup> *Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Chicago, Ill.: R.L. Polk & Co., 1903-04).

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Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

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Brussels continued to grow through 1912 to a population of 200, while the population of Rosiere and Namur remained static. Namur still supported one general store, as did Rosiere, with only a few other surrounding businesses. Brussels, on the other hand, added three new stores, including the Gabe Pierre General Store and Agricultural Implements.<sup>8</sup>

By 1918 Brussels had doubled in population to 400, and besides having six general stores, added businesses such as the Rex Theater, a restaurant, newspaper, pharmacist, cement contractor, and two horse breeders. The Pierre Virlee & Company had disbanded, but Gabe Pierre and Jules Pierre, who may have been proprietors of this enterprise, operated separate businesses in Brussels.

*Architecture*

*Building Materials*

Belgian immigrants in the Door Peninsula built their first domestic structures, including homes and agricultural outbuildings, of log. Wood was the most logical construction material to these early settlers, in that it was both abundant and inexpensive. Other early wooden buildings and structures not entirely built of logs utilized timber and balloon-frame construction. Balloon framing became very popular in Wisconsin in the late nineteenth century because it was inexpensive and expedient. However, as with all wood construction, buildings with balloon frames were vulnerable to catching fire.<sup>9</sup> On October 8, 1871, the great Peshtigo fire took a number of lives and destroyed many of the buildings and structures made of log and wood in the Door Peninsula. Shortly after the Peshtigo fire, Belgians in the Door Peninsula began to expand their farms onto former timberland cleared by the fire and to rebuild their farmsteads with fireproof materials, such as stone, brick, and metal.<sup>10</sup> In the early twentieth century, several area houses, including the Joseph Monfils House, were constructed of poured concrete.

Concrete is considered to be the oldest synthetic building material.<sup>11</sup> It is produced by combining aggregate (a mixture of sand, gravel, and stone) with cement and water. Cement is composed primarily of lime and clay. The aggregate, cement, and water create a chemical bond in a process called "curing" that causes these

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<sup>8</sup> *Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Chicago, Ill.: R.L. Polk & Co., 1911-12).

<sup>9</sup> Wyatt, ed., "Architecture," 2:4.4 - 4.5.

<sup>10</sup> Noble, 2:139-140.

<sup>11</sup> Wyatt, ed., "Architecture," 2:4.8.

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materials to harden and form a unified mass.<sup>12</sup> Due to the fact that the components, proportions; and production of cements have historically differed, so too has the quality of concrete. It was not until the invention of portland cement by Joseph Aspdin of Leeds, England, that concrete exhibited the uniformity, consistency, and strength necessary to gain favor over other building materials. Portland cement is created by calcining, or burning lime matter with other earthen materials until they are fused together, and then grinding the resulting “clinker” into a fine powder. Although portland cement was patented in 1824, its production grew slowly, first in Europe and then in the U.S. By the turn of the twentieth century concrete was being widely used in construction projects, and the U.S. produced the majority of its own portland cement.<sup>13</sup>

Prior to portland cement, the use of concrete in the United States was largely an experimental process. The quality of cement was often unpredictable, and sufficient lime deposits were not common in some regions of the country. Although concrete was slow to catch on in the U.S., it was still being utilized by builders on a small scale. An early example of concrete construction can be seen in the Milton House, built in 1844 by Joseph Goodrich and located in Milton, Wisconsin. Goodrich experimented with a form of concrete, called grout, in which he mixed together lime, gravel, sand, and water. He then poured it into wooden forms until it hardened. This method was relatively successful, and was adopted by others in the surrounding area. The use of grout gained greater attention in Orson Fowler’s 1854 book, *A Home For All*, in which he praised its qualities and functionality for use in house construction. In the U.S., however, the process of manufacturing high-quality cement was still in its infancy.<sup>14</sup>

Portland cement was introduced in the United States in 1865. In 1871 David Saylor received the first U.S. patent for portland cement and began manufacturing it in Coplay, Pennsylvania. The United States’ annual production did not reach the million-barrel mark until 1896. For many years, portland cement manufactured in Europe exhibited a higher degree of quality than that of the U.S. product. In the late 1800s the U.S. began producing a comparable product to that of the Europeans. Prior to that time, the majority of portland cement used in the U.S. was shipped here from overseas. However, with improved domestic cement production and with advents such as steel reinforcement, the use of concrete grew rapidly in the U.S. during the first 20 years of the twentieth century.<sup>15</sup> Prior to its use in the construction of buildings, concrete and reinforced concrete

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<sup>12</sup> Paul Lambert, “Cement and Concrete – History and Development,” abstracted from *Corrosion Protection Association*, Monograph 1, n.d. <<http://www.azom.com/details.asp?articleID=1317>> (12 March 2002).

<sup>13</sup> William A. Radford, ed., *Cement and How to Use It* (Chicago, Ill: The Radford Architectural Company, 1910), 12-15.

<sup>14</sup> Wyatt, ed., “Architecture,” 2:4.8.

<sup>15</sup> Radford, 12-15.

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were used extensively in the construction of bridges. The first concrete bridge in the United States was built in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, in 1871.<sup>16</sup>

In the early 1900s portland cement manufacturers and builders alike were marketing concrete as a superior construction material. Several journals, books, and how-to guides promoted its plasticity, functionality, and economical aspects. Because it is virtually impervious to the elements, as well as energy efficient, concrete was touted for its wide variety of farm-related applications such as the construction of silos, barn and pen floors, water troughs, and culverts. In addition to these advantages, construction with concrete was often less expensive and more timely than using frame, brick, or stone.

Poured-concrete structures were, for the most part, erected using wooden forms. The concrete was mixed on-site and then poured into the forms until it hardened. Upon setting, the forms were removed and placed on top of the previous course, where a new batch of concrete would be poured. This process was repeated until the entire height of the wall was completed. Although the pouring was done in separate sections and courses, the resulting structure was monolithic. Early examples of poured-concrete structures were often crude, but with improved form work, mixing, and pouring methods, they gained greater complexity, uniformity, and refinement. Oftentimes plaster or stucco was applied to the exterior walls in order to achieve a smooth surface. If the exterior surface was left untreated, the joints between the separate courses and sections were visible.<sup>17</sup>

Though it exhibited many desirable qualities as a building material, poured concrete was unusual for house construction. In 1909 Thomas Edison developed a technique of concrete construction in which an entire house could be set up in forms and completed in one pour, but this method proved too complicated and costly for broad acceptance. Only 11 of these houses were built, 10 of which exist today, in Union Township, New Jersey.<sup>18</sup> By 1920 corporations such as Minnesota Steel in Duluth; Carnegie Steel at Youngstown, Ohio; and the General Chemical Company at Claymont, Delaware; recognized the advantages of concrete and its efficiency, and thus funded the construction of worker housing using this material. In such cases, many houses were erected in a short period of time using the same forms.<sup>19</sup> For the typical homeowner, concrete

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<sup>16</sup> Jeffrey A. Hess and Robert M. Frame III, *Historic Highway Bridges in Wisconsin*, Vol. 1, *Stone and Concrete Arch Bridges* (Madison, Wisc.: Wisconsin Department of Transportation, 1986), 205.

<sup>17</sup> The Atlas Portland Cement Company, *Concrete Construction About the Home and On the Farm* (New York, 1905), 40-41.

<sup>18</sup> "Building Homes of Enduring Beauty," *Michigan Concrete Association Homepage*, 24 August 2002, <<http://www.miconcrete.org/page.cfm/124/>> (2001).

<sup>19</sup> Harvey Whipple, *Concrete Houses: How They Were Built* (Detroit, Mich.: Concrete Cement Age Publishing Company, 1920), 9-10.

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construction was made most readily available through catalogs, in which companies marketed various designs and models to prospective buyers. Most house construction, however, made use of pre-cast concrete blocks, due to the fact that they were modular and cheaper than monolithic construction, and could be produced on-site by builders. Concrete blocks became popular after 1900 and remained so until the 1930s.<sup>20</sup>

Houses constructed of poured concrete are quite rare in Wisconsin, but some examples exist. Several poured-concrete houses were built in Door County around 1920. A 1995 field survey of this area of this Door Peninsula by Mead & Hunt revealed seven extant poured-concrete houses. All seven of the houses lie within a four-mile radius of each other within Brussels Township, and southern Gardner and Union Townships. Four of these were constructed in the front-gabled form, and one is a gabled-ell house. The two other concrete buildings include a Dutch Colonial Revival style house and a duplex. While these houses are not identical in form, they display similar methods of construction as seen in the separate course lines and wood form imprints on the exteriors of the houses.

Local residents in the Door Peninsula attribute the construction of the concrete houses in Door County to Joseph Cumber.<sup>21</sup> Although Cumber is listed in the 1920 census as a farmer, the 1917-18, 1920-21, and 1924-25 *Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory* lists Cumber as a cement contractor in Brussels Township.<sup>22</sup> Cumber is also known as the contractor for many of the concrete bridges in the area.<sup>23</sup> The *Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors of Door County* of 1917 through 1935 show that Door County paid Cumber for bridge construction work completed in Brussels, Union, and Gardner Townships.<sup>24</sup> The dates that Cumber worked as a cement contractor and concrete-bridge designer coincide with the construction of the

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<sup>20</sup> Wyatt, ed., "Architecture," 2:4.8-4.9.

<sup>21</sup> Ed Rass, interview by Mead & Hunt, Inc., 5 August 1995; and *Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Chicago, Ill.: R.L. Polk & Co., 1917-18, 1921-22, 1924-25).

<sup>22</sup> "Door County, Wisconsin, 1920 Federal Census," n.d., <[ftp://ftp.us-census.org/pub/usgenweb/census/wi/door/1920/ed54\\_pg008a.txt](ftp://ftp.us-census.org/pub/usgenweb/census/wi/door/1920/ed54_pg008a.txt)> (16 August 2002).

<sup>23</sup> Ed Rass, interview by Mead & Hunt, Inc., 5 August 1995; Lawrence LeRoy, interview by William H. Tishler and Erik Brynildson, in "The Architecture and Landscape Characteristics of Rural Belgian Settlement in Northeastern Wisconsin" (Madison, Wisc., July 1986), 78; and *Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Chicago, Ill.: R.L. Polk & Co., 1917-18, 1921-22, 1924-25).

<sup>24</sup> *Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors of Door County* (Sturgeon Bay, Wisc.: Door County News Print, 1917-35). Joseph Cumber was paid for work on the following bridges during the following years: DeKeyser and Dubois Bridge, 1917; Union State Bridge, 1918-20, 1923-27, 1929, 1931-32, 1935; Brussels Bridge, 1923-28, 1930; Gardner Bridge, 1923-29.

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Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

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poured-concrete houses in Door County. The 1920 census listed Cumber to be 43 years of age, and a native of Wisconsin.<sup>25</sup>

*Front Gable Houses*

The Monfils House is an example of the front-gable, or upright, form. According to the *Cultural Resource Management (CRM) in Wisconsin*, front-gabled houses were generally built in Wisconsin from c. 1840 to 1925. Front-gabled houses are characterized by a rectangular plan, gabled roof, and the placement of the major facade in the gable end of the building. The c. 1921 house is Belgian-influenced in its one-and-one-half-story, front-gabled form, floor plan, and arrangement of openings.

*History of the Property*<sup>26</sup>

The 1899, 1914, and c. 1930 atlases of Door County indicate J. Monfils as the owner of this property at the SE ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 9, Township 26 North, Range 24 East in Brussels Township where the present buildings are located. Brussels Township tax rolls from 1900 through 1925 support this by indicating Joseph Monfils as the owner of the same parcel. The current house was built c. 1921 while Monfils was the owner of the property. Joseph Monfils, his wife, their six sons, and four daughters were all natives of Wisconsin. Joseph's occupation was farming. Dale and Tammy Hendrickson currently own the property.

The construction of the Monfils House has been attributed to Joseph Cumber, a local cement contractor in Brussels Township.<sup>27</sup> The dates that Cumber worked as a cement contractor and concrete-bridge designer coincide with the construction of the poured-concrete houses in Door County. The *Wisconsin State Gazetteer* of 1917-18 included Cumber for the first time as a cement contractor in Brussels, Door County. Tax roll records are inconclusive as to the date of construction. While the value of the Monfils property increased significantly in 1915 and 1921, property values in the area generally increased during those years. However, a slight increase in improvement value is also indicated for the Monfils' property in 1921. Plat maps of 1914 and c. 1930 show buildings on the property.

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<sup>25</sup> "Door County, Wisconsin, 1920 Federal Census," n.d.,  
<[ftp://ftp.us-census.org/pub/usgenweb/census/wi/door/1920/ed54\\_pg008a.txt](ftp://ftp.us-census.org/pub/usgenweb/census/wi/door/1920/ed54_pg008a.txt)> (16 August 2002).

<sup>26</sup> Information regarding property owners, assessment, and familial history was compiled from town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin, *Assessment and Tax Rolls, 1900-49*, Door County Courthouse, Sturgeon Bay, Wisc., and Special Collections, Coffin Library, the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Green Bay, Wisc.; *Illustrated Atlas of Door County, Wisconsin* (Oshkosh, Wisc.: Randall & Williams, 1899); *Atlas of Door County, Wisconsin* (Sturgeon Bay, Wisc.: Otto Nelson, 1914); *Plat Book of Door County, Wisconsin* (Rockford, Ill.: W.W. Hixson & Co., c.1930); *Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Chicago, Ill.: R.L. Polk & Co., 1917-18); and *Wisconsin State Census, 1905* (Madison, Wisc.: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Archives Division, 1952).

<sup>27</sup> Local residents attribute the construction of the Monfils House and other concrete houses in the area to Joseph Cumber.

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Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

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***Conclusion***

The Joseph Monfils Farmstead, consists of a c. 1921 poured-concrete house, three contributing agricultural outbuildings, and one contributing structure. The house is believed to have been constructed by local builder Joseph Cumber, and exhibits Belgian influences in its one-and-one-half-story, front-gabled form, floor plan, and arrangement of openings. However, the Monfils House was constructed of a non-traditional material and is one of seven known poured-concrete houses in this region of Door County. The house has few alterations and is in good condition. The remaining outbuildings contribute to our understanding of the types of agricultural buildings associated with early twentieth farmsteads in this region. As a whole, the Monfils farmstead is a representative example of the historic farmsteads still found in the Belgian areas of Door County.

The Joseph Monfils House is locally significant under criterion C as an unusual example of monolithic poured concrete construction. The Monfils house illustrates the relatively short-lived use of concrete in home construction as popularized by concrete manufacturers and their associated trade organizations and periodicals. Adoption of monolithic concrete was largely a consequence of its heavy promotion in scores of journals, builder's handbooks, how to guides, plan books and popular publications. Seen as a low-cost and highly durable material, concrete enjoyed increasing popularity in the nineteen teens and twenties. The simplicity of monolithic construction was viewed as an alternative to more mainstream masonry construction such as brick and stone, or even concrete block. Monolithic concrete appealed primarily to do-it-yourself builders, but was soon supplanted by the increasing popularity of the concrete masonry unit, or concrete block in the nineteen thirties. The hollow-core concrete block's lighter weight and economy of material eclipsed the vogue for monolithic construction, and buildings like the Monfils house remain today as uncommon survivors of an experimental period in concrete construction.

The Monfils House is also an early twentieth century continuation of a local masonry construction tradition that was an outcome of the devastation wrought by the Pestigo Fire. Following the fire, many surviving houses were wrapped in masonry veneer to provide additional fire protection and new houses were often constructed of masonry. In this context, the poured concrete construction of the Monfils House may be seen as a continuation of a strong cultural preference brought on by a tragic natural disaster.

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

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

**Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):**

- 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:**

- X State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 1.8 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	454040	4954160		3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing			Zone	Easting	Northing
2					4			
	Zone	Easting	Northing			Zone	Easting	Northing

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**

<b>name/title</b>	Erin Pogany, Matt Becker and Jeremy Happel	<b>date</b>	April 2003
<b>organization</b>	Mead & Hunt, Inc.	<b>telephone</b>	(608) 273-6380
<b>street &amp; number</b>	6501 Watts Road	<b>zip code</b>	53719-2700
<b>city or town</b>	Madison	<b>state</b>	WI



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Monfils, Joseph, Farmstead  
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

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**Maps**

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*Plat Book of Door County, Wisconsin.* Rockford, Ill.: W.W. Hixson & Co., c. 1930.

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Monfils, Joseph, Farmstead  
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The historic boundary is described as follows: Beginning at a point on the west edge of Dump Road approximately 98 feet from the northeast corner of the house proceed south for 300 feet, turn west for 260 feet, turn north for 300 feet, and turn east for 260 feet to the beginning point. The east boundary line is concurrent with the western edge of Dump Road. The map is to scale.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary encompasses the extant buildings that were historically associated with the Joseph Monfils Farmstead and excludes acreage not associated with the significance of the property.

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Monfils, Joseph, Farmstead  
Name of Property

Door County  
County and State

Wisconsin

### 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 SHPO or FPO.)

<b>name/title</b>	Dale and Tammy Hendrickson	<b>date</b>	1/2004
<b>organization</b>		<b>telephone</b>	920 825-77233
<b>street&amp;number</b>	1463 Dump Road	<b>zip code</b>	54204
<b>city or town</b>	Brussels	<b>state</b>	WI

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**The following information pertains to all photographs:**

*Monfils, Joseph, Farmstead  
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin  
Date: July and November 2002  
Photographer: Matt Becker and Jeremy Happel, Mead & Hunt, Inc.  
Negatives located at the Wisconsin Historical Society*

*Photograph 1 of 13  
General view of farmstead  
View looking southeast*

*Photograph 2 of 13  
General view of farmstead  
View looking northwest*

*Photograph 3 of 13  
House, east facade  
View looking west*

*Photograph 4 of 13  
House, east and north facades  
View looking southwest*

*Photograph 5 of 13  
House, north and west facades  
View looking southeast*

*Photograph 6 of 13  
House, west facade  
View looking east*

*Photograph 7 of 13  
House, east and south facades  
View looking northwest*

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*Photograph 8 of 13*

**Gabled- and gambrel-roof barns, south and east facades  
View looking northwest**

*Photograph 9 of 13*

**Gabled-roof barn, north and west facades  
View looking southeast**

*Photograph 10 of 13*

**Gabled- and gambrel-roof barn, north and west facades  
View looking southeast**

*Photograph 11 of 13*

**Gambrel-roof barn, north and west facades  
View looking southeast**

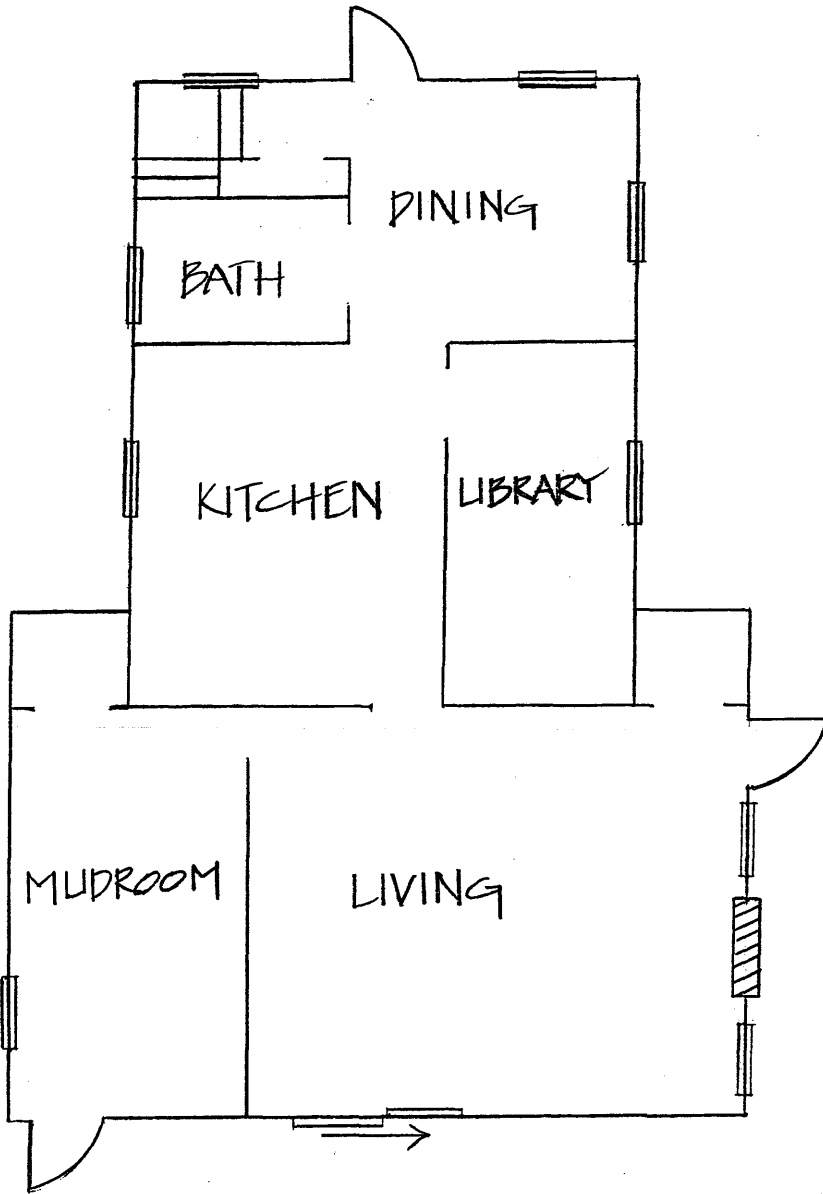
*Photograph 12 of 13*

**Silo  
View looking southeast**

*Photograph 13 of 13*

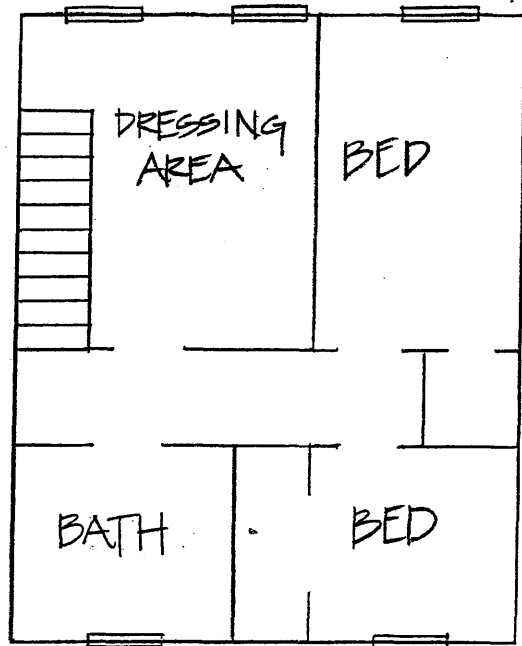
**Shed, east and south facades  
View looking northwest**

# FIRST LEVEL FLOOR PLAN



← N →  
NOT TO SCALE

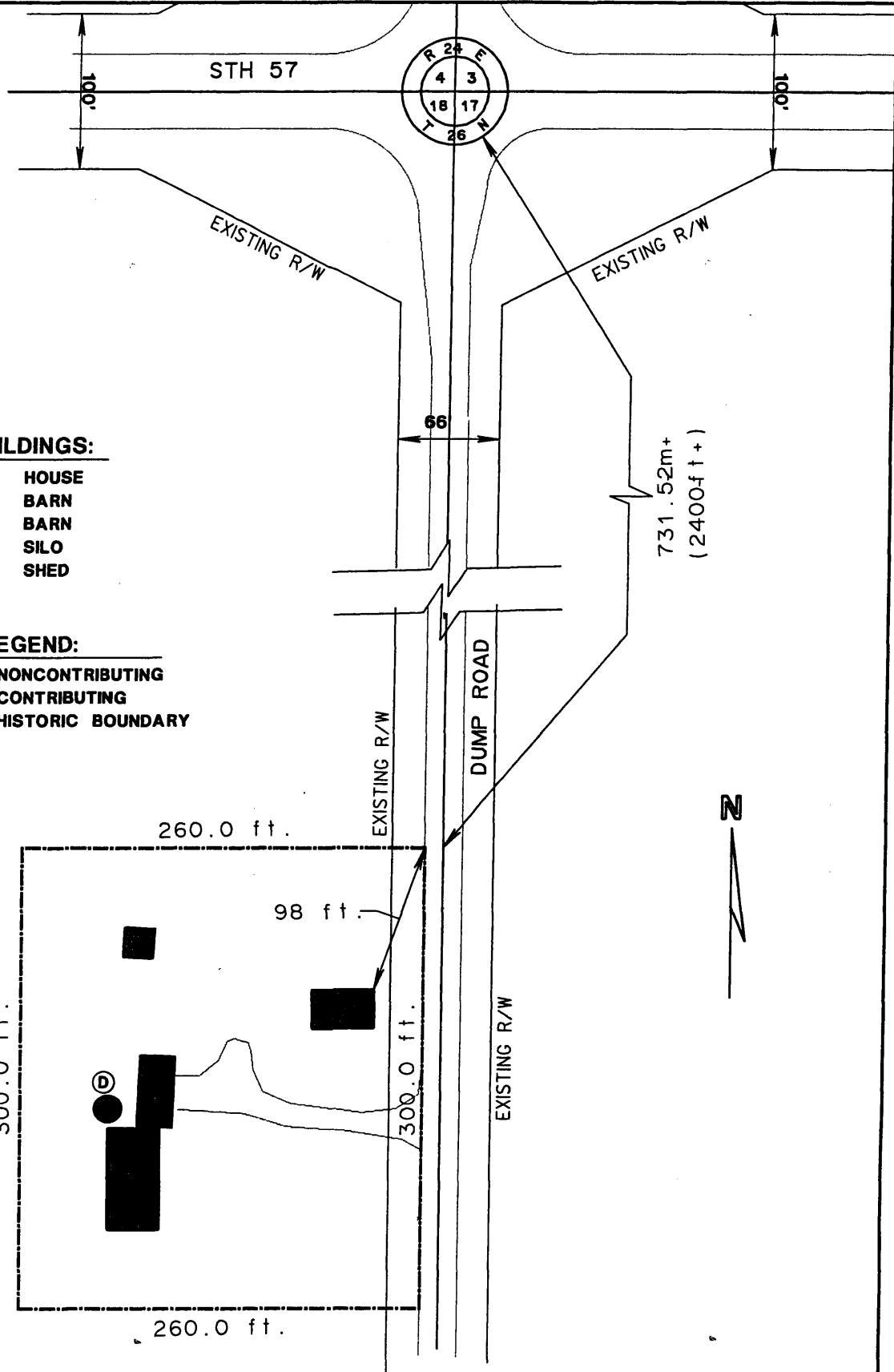
# SECOND LEVEL FLOOR PLAN



## FLOOR PLAN

MONFILS FARMSTEAD  
1463 PUMP ROAD  
TOWN OF BRUSSELS  
DOOR COUNTY, WISCONSIN





**BUILDINGS:**

- (A) HOUSE
- (B) BARN
- (C) BARN
- (D) SILO
- (E) SHED

**LEGEND:**

-  NONCONTRIBUTING
-  CONTRIBUTING
-  HISTORIC BOUNDARY

**JOSEPH MONFILS FARMSTEAD**

**1463 DUMP ROAD  
TOWN OF BRUSSELS  
DOOR COUNTY, WISCONSIN**

