

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

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 Yoder, Menno, Polygonal Barn

other names/site number Prough Barn; Brown Swiss Dairy Barn

2. Location

street & number CR 250 North, 3/4 mile west of SR 5  not for publication

city or town Shipshewana  vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Lagrange code 087 zip code 46565

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.)

Patrick L. Roberts 2/3/93  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
State of 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 certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Patrick Andrews 4/2/93  
Date of Action

Yoder Polygonal Barn  
Name of Property

Lagrange County, IN  
County and State

**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
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

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

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

0

Round and Polygonal Barns of Indiana

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE: Animal facility

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE: Animal facility

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Twelve-sided barn

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls CONCRETE

WOOD: weatherboard

roof METAL

other \_\_\_\_\_

**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** 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)

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1908-1936

**Significant Dates**

1908, 1911, c.1920

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Yoder, Menno

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(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

Name of repository: Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana

Yoder Polygonal Barn  
Name of Property

Lagrange Co., IN  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** Less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	6
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6	1	6	8	3	0
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4	6	1	4	4	4	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3 

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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**

name/title Jerry McMahan

organization Historic Landmarks Foundation of IN date November 11, 1991

street & number 340 West Michigan Street telephone (317) 639-4534

city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46202

**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.)

name Malcolm Prough

street & number 2520 N 850 W telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Shipshewana state IN zip code 46565

**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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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 Yoder Polygonal Barn, Lagrange Co., IN

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Located in rural LaGrange County on the outskirts of Shipshewana, Indiana is one of the state's two remaining examples of a poured concrete polygonal barn. Built in 1908 with owner Menno Yoder providing some of the labor, this unusual twelve-sided barn with additions is now known as the Brown Swiss Dairy barn. A gravel drive extends to the barn, passing the 1911 concrete farmhouse. Other buildings on the farm (but not necessarily included in this nomination-see site map) are the garage behind the house, another barn southeast of the polygonal structure, and a shed. The polygonal barn itself consists of the original 1908 twelve-sided barn, a 1911 attached silo, a c.1920 rectangular barn addition, and a 1960s one story barn addition. Immediately adjacent to this complex is a free standing c.1950 milk house. The polygonal barn with all additions is counted as one contributing building, while the milk shed is a non-contributing building. The site is characterized as having mature trees. Cultivated fields lie to the south and west. Although modified by additions, the Menno Yoder Polygonal Barn retains enough integrity to meet the standards set forth in the registration requirements of the multiple property documentation form.

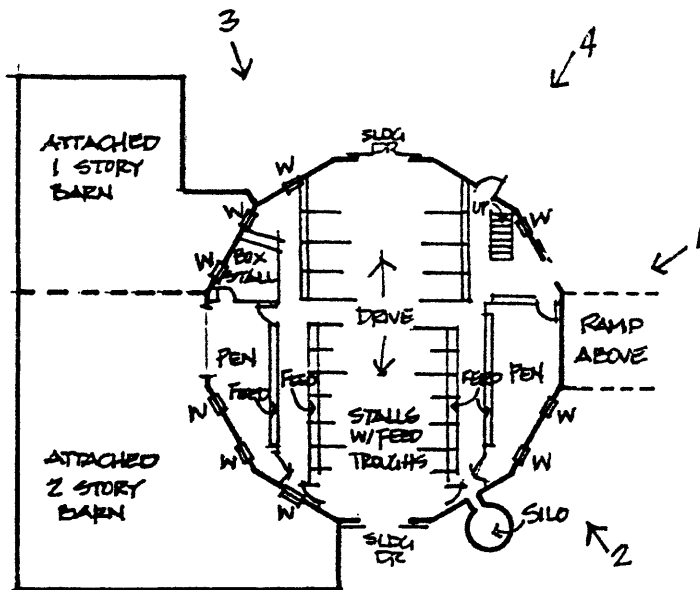
The twelve-sided, two-storied structure is capped by a two-pitch sectional gambrel with a metal aerator at the apex. The one story 1960s barn on the northwest side is covered by a gambrel roof that slopes down on the east side to cover the gap between the polygonal barn and the two story c.1920 barn behind. The two-story c.1920 barn on the southwest side is sheltered by a shallow pitch gable roof which slopes down to one story in height as it wraps around the twelve-sided barn, stopping short of the silo addition. A small rectangular addition on the south side of the two story barn was erected in c.1960. The rectangular c.1920 barn is two stories tall, yet is less than half the width of the twelve-sided barn.

All roof surfaces are sheathed in metal and feature slight overhanging eaves and exposed rafters. Walls of the polygonal barn are of poured concrete which were never painted or finished. The c.1920 barn has vertical wood sided walls, and the c.1960 barn has glazed block walls. All foundations are of concrete.

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### LOWER LEVEL

no scale

Note: W = window

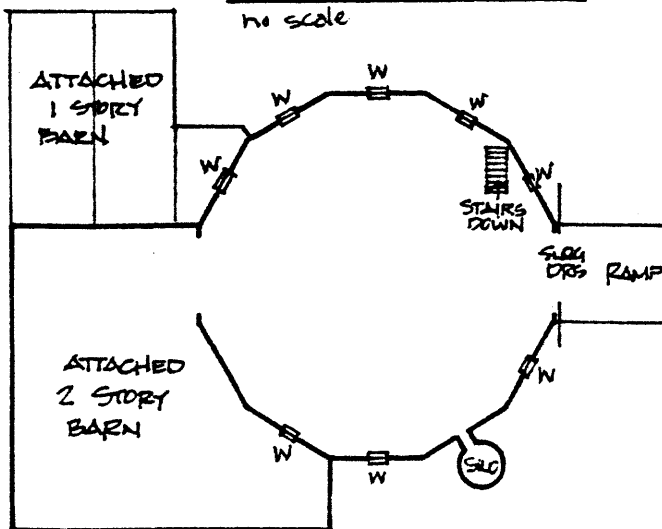
### YODER (PROUGH) BARN

1908 12-SIDED  
LAGRANGE COUNTY, IN  
NEWBURY TOWNSHIP

↑<sub>1</sub> = Photographic key

### UPPER LEVEL

no scale



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Looking to the main facade on the east (Photo 1), the large ramp up to the upper doors is apparent with metal fencing functioning as a railing along the sides. The doors are one and one-half stories in height and are composed of vertical planks that slide on overhead tracks. Further, centered on each door is a four light window. Continuing around the upper level in a clockwise manner, the next face contains a central four light window, followed by the silo on the next wall and a central four light window on the fourth and fifth walls (Photo 2). The sixth wall contains a four light window that was placed higher up, while there are no upper level windows on the sixth and seventh walls. The eighth wall (Photo 3) contains a central four light window as does the tenth and twelfth. The ninth and eleventh wall sections contain high four light windows that are centered on their faces (Photos 4). The attached barns on the west have a mixture of irregular windows types, some with divided lights and some with plate glass. The milk shed has a nine light window on the north and east walls and a human sized door on the west.

The lower level is characterized by the underneath side of the upper ramp on the east, followed by two equally spaced four light windows on the second face and the base of the silo on the third, next to a rectangular window unit. The fourth face contains a large sliding door mounted on overhead tracks and similar in design to those on the east. These doors are now hidden from view by the wing walls of the attached two story barn. Walls five through eight are likewise hidden by the attached barns but wall five contains a central four light window, six has a pair of four light windows, seven has another large sliding door, and eight has another pair of four light windows. The ninth face contains a four light window, followed by another sliding door on an overhead track on the tenth wall. The doors, similar to the others with four light windows in the centers of the doors is completed by the year 1908 inscribed in the concrete next to the opening. The eleventh wall contains a smaller width sliding door on an overhead track and the twelfth wall has a four light window next to another smaller width sliding door.

On the lower level's interior (see floor plan), the plan is very efficient and well-arranged. A central drive runs from north to south, connecting the two lower level doors. On either side are pens for horses and cows, with four horse stalls on either side at the north end and six cattle stalls on either side at the south end. There is a small walkway between the

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Section number 7 Page 4 Yoder Polygonal Barn, Lagrange Co., IN

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horse and cattle stalls and another walkway next to the outside walls at the south end of the barn. Behind the stalls on both the east and west sides are smaller open areas with feed alleys that served as low pens for sheep and calves. Additionally, there is a set of stairs to the upper level in the northeast corner of the barn and a bull stall in the northwest corner.

The upper level is comprised of a large hay mow for the storage of hay and straw and the roof's system is readily visible. Windows help to provide light to the upper level where laminated beams serve as the main means of support between the two different roof sections. Additionally, another laminated beam is placed near the roof's apex to offer support for the metal aerator that successfully ventilates the upper reaches of the barn. The only door on the upper level is the one on the east that is serviced by the ramp and the stairs to the lower level are located in the northeast quadrant.

The lower level interiors of the attached barns are composed of many pens located on either side of a main walkway running north to south. There is a shorter walkway that connects this main walk to the twelve sided barn, with the smaller walk running east-west. The upper level of both two story barns remains open for the storage of hay and straw. The northern barn, being one story, has only attic space above the lower level.

The Yoder (Prough) barn is an excellently maintained and unusual example of a polygonal barn. Although additions have been built through the years, they have all been changes that have helped the barn to survive the changing face of agriculture and the dairy business. Because of the flexibility of the structure, this barn remains as an icon to the evolution of agriculture in the state of Indiana.



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Section number 8 Page 5 Yoder Polygonal Barn, Lagrange Co., IN

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The Menno Yoder Polygonal Barn is significant under Criteria A and C for its association with the development of round and polygonal barns in Indiana. The Yoder Polygonal Barn is one of few masonry barns in the state, and is one of only two remaining polygonal concrete structures remaining in Indiana. The barn is an important and direct link to the agricultural development that occurred in the state from 1850 to 1936 (and beyond). The period of significance of the barn is 1908-1936. After 1936, round and polygonal barns were considered obsolete; the last round structure in the state was built in 1936 to replace a 1915 round barn that had burned (Grant County, Richland Township, extant).

The owner and builder of the barn was Menno S. Yoder, a local farmer who set out to build a large and durable barn with distinction, and then publicized his efforts in various farm journals. Yoder also intended to patent and market the design, and undertaking that proved to be unsuccessful. The construction and dedication of the barn were described in journals such as Huntington's The Farmer's Guide and the more widely circulated Hoard's Dairyman. In these issues, Yoder proclaimed the design as a great improvement. His barn had a large upper level hay mow and lower level with labor-saving accouterments as a central manure carrier and a merry-go-round hay carrier (Eventually, the carrier was replaced by a crane-like boom which carried loads in a pendulum fashion). Windows were screen-covered for protection, and the upper level bridge entrance ramp was sixteen feet wide, constructed of reinforced concrete. Specified foundation thickness was 3'6", tapering to one foot at grade. The lower one-third wall surface was one foot thick; the next third, ten inches; the top third was eight inches thick. The mixing of the concrete, reinforced throughout with metal fencing and scrap iron from bridges, was described as one part cement and six parts gravel for the

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foundation and one to five for the walls. Additionally, large stones were tamped into the foundation and as the forms were removed from the wall sections, the concrete surfaces were painted with a mix of pure cement and water.<sup>1</sup>

The all poured concrete construction yielded construction costs of less than \$1800, with the costs being lowered by Yoder's own work and materials. An eleven foot by fifty-one foot concrete silo was added in 1911 for \$511 or \$210 for materials and \$300 for labor.<sup>2</sup> Later still, a one story barn and a two story barn were attached to the west side to expand and modernize the dairy operation, changes that do not impair the historic significance of the barn (One story barn added in early 1960s and Two story barn in early 1920s). Finally, Yoder was so convinced of the possibilities of concrete in construction that he erected a concrete house in 1911.

Menno S. Yoder maintained ownership of the barn until his death in the 1940s, at which time his daughter and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Prough, assumed ownership. The barn then passed to the Prough's son, Malcolm, in 1985. Malcolm Prough continues to own and maintain the property, known locally as the Brown Swiss Dairy, a name that is proudly displayed on the barn's north side.<sup>3</sup>

There were eighteen twelve-sided barns built in Indiana, the third most popular style of Indiana's 219 round and polygonal barns (behind true circles [151] and octagons [33]). The barns were built in Allen County (Adams Township, razed), Clinton County (Michigan Township, extant), three in Huntington County (Huntington and Lancaster Townships, extant and Polk Township, razed), Kosciusko County (Washington Township, extant), the Yoder (Prough) barn, three in Marshall County (Greene Township, with two extant and one razed), Miami County (Washington Township, razed), two in Parke County (Raccoon and Greene Township, both razed), Ripley County (Jackson Township, extant), Shelby County (Noble Township, extant), Tippecanoe County (Randolph Township, extant), Wabash County (Lagro Township, razed) and White County (Princeton Township, razed). Of the eighteen that were constructed, only ten survive and of the eighteen twelve-sided examples, the Yoder (Prough) barn is the only one constructed of poured concrete. Finally, of the eighteen twelve-sided barns in Indiana, sixteen were built after the 1905 patent issue on round barn roofs. Therefore, the bulk of the twelve-sided barns were probably built in order to skirt the patent rights of McNamee, Duncan and Littleton.

The Yoder (Prough) barn is an unusual and unique example of a polygonal barn, being one of only three poured concrete barns constructed in the state and the only twelve-sided example. The other two poured concrete examples

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include a true circular barn in Greene County's Jefferson Township, extant and a true circular example in Sullivan County (Turman Township) that unfortunately was demolished. The barn has the essential physical features that it possessed at the time of its period of significance, from 1908 to the mid 1930s. Although the barn has aged, it has not been significantly altered since its erection and serves as a link to the development of agriculture in Indiana and as a reminder of the entrepreneurial spirit of a turn of the century farmer.

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**ENDNOTES**

1. A. L. Rolfe, "Two Barns of Unique Design", Country Life, Vol XX, October 1, 1911, p. 62 and 86. Menno Yoder, "Yoder's Cement Barn", Hoard's Dairyman, January 8, 1909, p. 1355. Menno Yoder, "A Concrete Barn", The Dakota Farmer, April 15, 1910, p. 14-15.
2. Menno Yoder, "Building a Concrete Silo", The Farmer's Guide, Vol. XXIII, number unknown, December 16, 1911, p. 4.
3. Malcolm Prough, owner of the Yoder Polygonal Barn, Shipshewana, Indiana. Interviewed by Jerry McMahan, October 25, 1991.

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Section number 9 Page 9 Yoder Polygonal Barn, Lagrange Co., IN

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

- "A Concrete Barn". The Indiana Farmer, Vol. LXV, No. 13, 8 May 1909, p. 2.
- Hanou, John. Research compiled on Indiana's round and polygonal barns from 1986 to present. Archived at Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, 340 West Michigan Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202.
- Intensive architectural survey of Indiana's round and polygonal barns, Conducted June to August 1991, conducted by Jerry McMahan, areawide survey of round and polygonal architectural and historical resources.
- Prough, Malcolm. Owner of the Yoder (Prough) barn, Shipshewana, Indiana. Interviewed by Jerry McMahan, 25 October 1991.
- Rolfe, A.L. "Two Barns of Unique Design". Country Life, Vol. XX, 1 October 1911, p. 62 and 86.
- Soike, Lowell J. Without Right Angles, The Round Barns of Iowa. Des Moines, IA: Iowa State Historical Department, Office of Historic Preservation, 1983.
- Yoder, Menno S. "A Concrete Barn". The Dakota Farmer, 15 April 1910, p14-15.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Building a Concrete Silo". The Farmer's Guide, Vol. XXIII, No. , 16 December 1911, p. 4.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Twelve-sided Cement Barn". The Farmer's Guide, Vol. XX, No. 25, 20 June 1908, p. 1. Vol. XX, No. , 21 August 1908, p. 7. Vol. XX, No. , 12 December 1908, p. 5.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Yoder's Cement Barn". Hoard's Dairyman, Vol. XL, No. 2, 8 January 1909, p. 1355. "Yoder's Stable Plans". Vol. XL, No. 11, 16 April 1909, p.1.

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Continuation Sheet**

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10. Geographical Data-continued

Verbal Boundary Description

The Yoder Polygonal Barn is located in the SW of Section 10, T 37 N, R 8 E in Newbury Township of LaGrange County, Indiana. Referring to the site plan, beginning at a point where the west edge of the private drive to the Yoder (now Prough) farm meets CR 250 N (Point A), then proceed west along the south edge of CR 250 N for 250 feet to point B, then south 200 feet to point C, then east 250 feet to point D, then north 200 feet to point A.

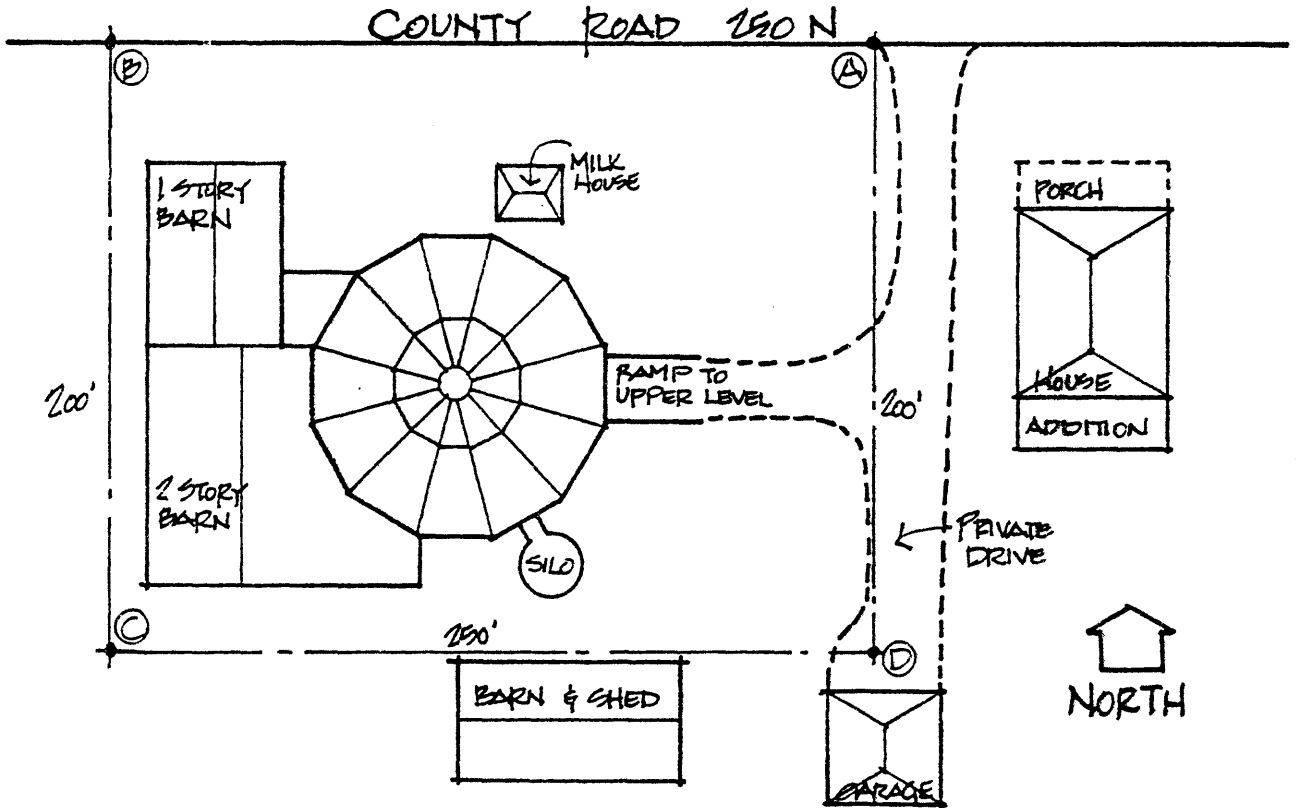
Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the Yoder Barn, all additions, and the historic ramp. Also included is a c.1950 milk house, which is too close to the barn to be excised. The milk house is functionally related to the dairy barn, but falls outside of the period of significance. In time, it may be deemed to contribute to the nominated area. This application includes only the barn and ancillaries; at a later date, the farm as a whole may be nominated separately.

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YODER (PROUGH) BARN

SITE PLAN  
NO SCALE

1908 1/2-SIDED  
LAGRANGE COUNTY, INDIANA  
NEWBURY TOWNSHIP