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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NOV 08 2013

NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

979

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Big Four Depot

Other names/site number: Middletown Train Station, Big Four Passenger Station

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. Location

Street and number: 25 Charles Street

City or town: Middletown State: OH County: Butler

Not For Publication:

Vicinity:

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Barbara Bowen DSHPO Inventory & Registration Oct. 29, 2013
 Signature of certifying official/Title: Date
Ohio Historic Preservation Office, Ohio Historical Society
 State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

 Signature of commenting official: Date

 Title : State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Patricia Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

12/24/2013
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

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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> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions

TRANSPORTATION/rail-related

Current Functions

COMMERCE/specialty store

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

Materials

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete, Brick, metal, clay tile

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Big Four Depot in Middletown was constructed in 1909 by the Big Four division of the New York Central Railroad. The one-story, brick station exhibits standard turn-of-the-last-century railroad depot features, most notably the low-pitch hipped roof with wide overhanging eaves. The building occupies a footprint measuring approximately 126 feet by 36 feet. The depot rests on a concrete foundation. The hipped roof is sheathed with red clay tiles and is pierced by an internal brick chimney on the west elevation. The building features an eyebrow-roof covered portico protecting the entrance on the west elevation, a large portico on the north elevation, and an enclosed eyebrow-roof projection for the station master's office towards the railroad tracks on the east elevation. The station is located near the northeast corner of Charles Street and Central Avenue. It is sited west of the dual railroad tracks currently utilized by the CSX Transportation Corporation, along the western side of present day North University Boulevard.

The depot maintains its integrity of location on its original site adjacent to the railroad tracks. The design of the depot features its original roof configuration and porticos, unmodified window openings, it has experienced no additions or modifications to its footprint, and the interior retains its original floor plan; therefore, it maintains its high level of design. The depot retains many original materials, including roofing, wood-frame windows, wood-panel doors, brickwork, and interior wood molding and paneling. Because the depot retains its integrity of design and materials, the integrity of its workmanship is also maintained. Although the depot is no longer used by railroad passengers and has since been converted into a gift shop, the building maintains the characteristics and feeling of a railroad depot.

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Narrative Description

The Big Four Depot is located at 25 Charles Street in Middletown, Ohio (Figure 1). The city of Middletown is located in northeastern Butler County with a small portion of the city extending into northwestern Warren County. The city occupies approximately 26 square miles and is located approximately half way between Cincinnati and Dayton. As of 2010, the population of the city was 48,694 (US Census Bureau 2013). The city is located along the eastern bank of the Great Miami River. The two primary streets in the city are Central Avenue (east-west) and Main Street (north-south) which intersect approximately a half mile east of the Great Miami River. The Big Four Depot is located approximately one mile east of this intersection, on the north side of Central Avenue at its intersection with Charles Street. Originally called Third Street, Central Avenue was renamed "Central" in 1923 because it had become the primary commercial corridor for the downtown area, in large part because of the depot.

The Big Four Depot is located on its original location in a grassy lot near the northeast corner of Charles Street and Central Avenue (Figures 2 and 3). The depot is sited on the west side of paired railroad tracks, now utilized by CSX as part of their active nationwide freight railroad network (Figure 4). East of the depot is University Boulevard which is generally residential in nature, although many commercial resources are located along Central Avenue in this area. Residential development has also occurred north of the depot. West of the depot is primarily commercial in nature today, but during the depot's period of significance, the area included several industrial resources. A large tobacco processing factory operated across Charles Street from the depot, a portion of which is visible in a ca. 1909 photograph postcard (Figure 5). This factory has since been demolished and replaced by parking lots and small modern commercial buildings. South-southwest of the depot is the Denny Lumber Company and the Middletown Cemetery. Both of these existed during the depot's period of significance. Despite the removal of some industrial and commercial buildings and the infill of modern commercial and residential construction, the area around the depot appears to be similar to the historical character of this area during the depot's period of significance.

The depot, constructed in 1909, is a one-story, brick railroad passenger station with standard features, including a low-pitch hipped roof with wide overhanging eaves. The hipped roof is sheathed with red clay tiles and is pierced by an internal brick chimney on the west elevation. The building features an eyebrow-roof covered portico protecting the entrance on the west elevation, an eyebrow-roof projecting bay on the east elevation, and a large portico on the north elevation. Both eyebrow-roof portions are covered by standing-seam metal. The building rests on a concrete and parged concrete foundation and is constructed of running bond tan brick with a concrete belt course running around the building at the top of the main window units. The red tile roof, standing-seam metal sheathing on the eyebrow-roof projections, parged concrete foundation, tan brick construction with belt course, and the existing chimney can be seen in early twentieth century photographs and postcard images (Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8).

The west elevation of the depot fronts Charles Street (Photos 1 and 4). The main entrance is protected by an eyebrow-roof portico supported by heavy brick piers. The main entrance is a wood-panel door with a single light and older hardware, including a brass door handle and mail

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slot. This door appears to be original. The door has an original Neo-classical surround on both the exterior and interior of the entrance. The entrance surround includes a large stained-glass transom and simple single-pane side lights. The exterior of the door has been painted red, but the interior of the door retains its original exposed wood with decorative wood molding (Photos 5 and 12).

South of the main entrance on the west elevation are eight original one-over-one wood-frame windows. The windows are arranged with one unit on the southwest corner of the west elevation, four units set together, and then three units set together with a larger center unit. Over each of these three units is a single-pane header which also appears original. North of the main entrance is another set of three original wood-frame windows identical to the set of three units south of the main entrance (Photo 6). North of these windows is a side entrance with an original wood-panel door similar to the main entrance door. The transom over this side door has been in-filled with a painted plywood panel.

On the northwest corner of the west elevation are a set of original wood panel cargo doors (Photo 7). The panels of the doors are comprised of vertical boards. Although this depot was constructed as a passenger station, it was not uncommon for express freight and baggage to come into a depot and need a safe and secure storage area (Grant and Bohi 1978:32). The roof on the west elevation is pierced by an original internal brick chimney near the northwest corner of the depot (Photo 4). A ca. 1920 photograph postcard shows that this elevation has experienced little alteration with the exception of a pull through area under the eyebrow porch which has been changed from a curving vehicle drive-through with curbs to a raised concrete floor accessed by two small concrete steps at the front of the eyebrow porch or a larger single step on either side (Figure 7; Photo 1). The Butler County Auditor's Office property record for the depot has a date of 1976 for "asphalt or blacktop paving" outbuilding or yard item associated with the building, so it is possible that this is when the drive-through was altered into the concrete steps and porch (Butler County Auditor's Office).

The east elevation of the depot fronts the paired railroad tracks which were formerly part of the Big Four division of the New York Central Railroad, and are now part of the active nationwide CSX freight railroad system (Photos 2 and 3). This elevation features a front hipped portion projecting from the center of the elevation with an enclosed eyebrow-roof bay in the center of this portion (Photo 8). The eyebrow-roof bay is the station master's office, and the standing-seam roof covering can be seen in older photographs and depictions of the depot (Figures 5, 8, and 10). The projecting center portion is symmetrical with curved corners, each with three original one-over-one wood-frame windows set into the curving corners (Photo 9). On either side of the enclosed eyebrow roof portion is an original wood-panel door, similar to the main entrance door on the west elevation, with a rectangular light and a single-pane transom. On each side of the projecting bay on this elevation is a single original one-over-one wood-frame window with a single-pane transom. On the front of the bay are three original one-over-one wood-frame windows. A stained-glass transom over these three windows features the word "Middletown" while "Gift Shop" is painted under the roofline of the bay (Photo 8). The ca. 1909 photograph postcard of the depot shows that the "Middletown" stained-glass is original (Figure 5).

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North of the hipped-roof projecting portion are a set of original wood panel cargo doors, similar to the doors on the west elevation (Photo 10). The panels of these doors also consist of vertical boards. The ca. 1909 photograph shows that at least one of these panels may have been a light before being in-filled with vertical boards (Figure 5). South of the projection is a set of five original one-over-one wood-frame window units within a concrete surround, with a center arch over the middle window unit (Photo 11). Historic photographs and depictions of the depot show that this elevation has experienced little alteration (Figures 5, 6, and 8).

The two side elevations of the depot are relatively plain. The north elevation of the depot has a large portico which was likely utilized as an outdoor waiting area (Photo 4). This area is protected by the building's hipped roof extending over the open area and supported by original heavy "L" brick pillars on concrete bases. Three small window openings above the belt course on this elevation have been in-filled by painted plywood. The south elevation has three original one-over-one wood-frame windows under the belt course, similar to the units on the southwest corner of the west elevation (Photo 1). Historic images show that these side elevations also have experienced little to no alteration (Figures 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9).

While the depot is now sited in a grassy lot (Photos 2 and 3), a historic postcard of the station shows that a small park area with a fountain was sited south of the depot but has since been removed (Figure 9). Standard practice during the early to mid-twentieth century was for communities to beautify the area around their depots because they wanted travelers to have a good first impression of the city (Grant and Bohi 1978:1). The Middletown Big Four Depot was no different, and the park and fountain were constructed by ca. 1930 as part of that beautification effort. As the importance of the railroad as a passenger transportation system declined, so did maintenance of the beautification efforts, ultimately resulting in the removal of the park area from beside the Middletown depot. By ca. 1950, the former park area was covered with overgrown grass and weeds (Figure 10). A small rectangular brick waiting room with false-fronts on each end was formerly located on the east side of the dual tracks, opposite the depot (Figure 10). This waiting room first appears on the 1931 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map and appears in a ca. 1950 photograph. This waiting room was likely demolished in the early 1960s, after passenger service ceased at the Big Four Depot.

The interior of the depot retains its original floor plan which divided the depot into three different portions which reflected specific functions. The northern third of the depot includes the portico likely utilized as an outdoor waiting area and a cargo area. Although the Big Four Depot was constructed as a passenger depot, the cargo area was likely used for the storage of express freight and baggage. This area is currently utilized as storage. The center third of the building was the waiting room with the ticket area located in the eastern projecting bay, which would have provided the station agent the ability to see up and down the tracks (Photo 13). Similar to other depots of the same size, it is likely that the telegraph operator was situated within the projecting bay as well, because this would have allowed the operator to easily communicate with interested parties through the multiple windows around the bay (Grant and Bohi 1978:23-24). The waiting room area has been converted into retail space, while the ticket area is utilized for the cash register and record keeping area for the gift store. The southern third of the depot is divided into a narrow room on the west side and a corridor on the east side. The narrow room on

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the west side was likely utilized as an office, while the corridor on the east side led to an office on the south end of the building. The office in the southern end of the building is used as a private office for the gift shop, while the narrow room and corridor are used as retail space (Photos 14 and 15).

The interior was renovated in 1981 when it was converted into a specialty gift shop. Although it appears that the original plaster from the walls and ceiling has been replaced or covered by new plaster and some modern lighting has been suspended from the ceiling, the exposed beam work and original wood paneling and molding remain (Photos 16 and 20). The original ticket area remains intact with its refinished wood countertop, shelving, and wood beams (Photo 13). Although no longer functioning, the original fireplace with a refinished wood mantel remains on the north side of the waiting area (Photo 17). In addition to being warmed by the fireplace, the waiting area was also heated by metal radiators of which two remain (Photo 18). The flooring in the depot consists of original concrete panels, currently painted gray. The interior of the doors and windows show that they retain much of the original hardware and materials, including the stained glass windows above the main entrance and in the projecting bay (Photos 12 and 19). Unfortunately, no historic photographs of the interior of the depot could be located, so the exact extent of alterations to the historic fabric is unknown.

Although the Big Four Depot in Middletown has been converted from a passenger railroad depot into a gift shop, the depot itself retains a high level of integrity. The depot maintains its integrity of location on its original site along the still-active railroad tracks. It has undergone little alteration and retains its important character-defining features, including the original roof configuration, porticos, unmodified window openings, and original floor plan. The depot has experienced no additions or modifications to its footprint. The depot also retains many original materials, including red clay roofing tiles, wood-panel doors, wood-frame windows, brickwork with belt course, and wood paneling and molding. Because the depot retains its integrity of design and materials, the integrity of its workmanship is also preserved. Despite the adaptive reuse of the depot, the building effectively conveys its historic identity as a distinctive property type; the early twentieth century railroad passenger station and retains the character-defining features typical of a late nineteenth/early twentieth century railroad depot.

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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.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance
TRANSPORTATION
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
1909–1961

Significant Dates
1909

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Big Four division of the New York Central Railroad

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Big Four Depot is eligible for listing on the National Register as a locally significant resource through its association with the development of the transportation network in Middletown which greatly affected the growth and prosperity of the city itself at the turn of the twentieth century (Criterion A). The construction of the railroad and the depot played a significant role in the development of Middletown because industrial and commercial concerns began expanding the city eastward to meet the railroad as revealed by the series of Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (Figures 11-16). The Big Four Depot is significant as a distinctive example of an early twentieth century passenger railroad depot property type characterized by its one-story, long low profile, overhanging eaves, and floor plan which reflect its original function as a passenger depot. The brick depot with a rectangular footprint and overhanging hipped roof represents a popular replacement depot design constructed by the New York Central Railroad during the early twentieth century (Grant and Bohi 1978:40). The depot also reflects late nineteenth and early twentieth century architectural stylistic influences of the Richardsonian Romanesque through its use of brick with contrasting concrete raised foundation, window surrounds and belt courses, tile roof, porticos supported by heavy pillars, and the distinctive stained glass art glass windows reflect the broader Arts and Crafts Movement; the railroad depot's architecture stands out in downtown Middletown (Criterion C).

While it is known that the Big Four division of the New York Central Railroad constructed the Big Four Depot in Middletown, the specific architect responsible for the design of the depot could not be identified through research. Passenger rail service at the Big Four Depot in

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Middletown came to an end in 1961 (Crout 2000). Therefore, the depot's period of significance extends from its construction date of 1909 until 1961. Although the Big Four Depot is no longer used by railroad passengers and has since been converted into a gift shop, the building retains both historical and architectural significance, as well as retaining a high level of integrity.

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Big Four Depot is significant under **Criterion A** for its association with the development of the local transportation network and development of Middletown itself. As the main passenger depot for downtown Middletown, the Big Four Depot was often the first and last Middletown building travelers to and from the city experienced. The current depot was constructed in 1909 by the Big Four (Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis) Railway as the third depot on the parcel to serve passengers traveling to and from Middletown. The original depot on this parcel was constructed in ca.1872 by the Cincinnati and Springfield (C&S) Railroad. The depot was constructed approximately one mile east of downtown Middletown. It was destroyed by fire in 1884 and was replaced by a wood-frame depot. By 1909, the fortunes of Middletown had grown and the C&S Railroad had been absorbed into the Big Four Railway. A more impressive depot was demanded and the second depot (now demolished) was moved a few blocks north of the lot to allow for the construction of the Big Four Depot (Crout 2000).

The growing importance of the passenger depot to Middletown can be seen by the use of more expensive and impressive materials in the construction of the new depot, including brick, ornate concrete work, and clay tile roofing (Grant and Bohi 1978:61). The depot's status as gateway to the city that the lot was improved during the early twentieth century to include a decorative fountain and the creation of a small park (Figure 9); both have since been removed. The significance of the railroad and depots to the development of Middletown can be observed by the industrial and commercial concerns that began expanding the city of Middletown eastward to meet the railroad, as revealed by the series of Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (Figures 11–16).

The Big Four Depot is also significant under **Criterion C** for its architecture. In 1909, the Big Four Railway was part of the New York Central Railroad. The New York Central consisted of multiple formerly independent railroads, each having their own depot design standards. While this provided a large diversity of station designs, a popular replacement design built by the New York Central was constructed of brick with a rectangular footprint and an overhanging hipped roof, similar in appearance to the Middletown depot (Grant and Bohi 1978:40). The depot is an excellent representative and intact example of this distinctive property type executed with the characteristics of late nineteenth and early twentieth century architecture styles, primarily the influence of Richardsonian Romanesque and the Arts and Crafts Movement. The depot retains many of its original character defining features, including its low-pitch hipped roof configuration sheathed by original red clay roofing tiles, its brick chimney, its open porticos, original standing-seam metal roofing on the main entrance portico and eyebrow-roof bay, unmodified window and door openings with original wood-frame windows and wood-panel doors, and an unaltered building footprint with no additions or modifications. The interior of the depot was renovated as part of its adaptive reuse, including plaster restoration, installation of modern lighting, and refinishing of wood detailing, but it retains its original floor plan including the ticket area,

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waiting room, office areas, cargo area, and porticos. The interior also retains the original fireplace, the cement panel flooring, radiators, original door and window hardware, and the original wood paneling and molding. The Big Four Depot in Middletown retains its integrity of location, design, many original materials, workmanship, and feel.

Historic Context

The city of Middletown was laid out in 1802 by Stephen Vail, a pioneer who had traveled to what would become the Middletown area from New Jersey. The original plat of the town contained 52 lots located east of the river (Simms 1906:6). The growth of Middletown during its early years was slow and during the early 1820s, the trading center of the region was located in Jacksonburg, north of Middletown. Jacksonburg had a population approximately twice as large as Middletown, but that would change with the construction of the Miami-Erie Canal. In 1825, the ground breaking ceremony was held for the canal in Middletown and by 1827 the canal was opened from Cincinnati to as far north as Middletown (Crout 1965:70).

In 1833, Middletown was incorporated and canal traffic continued to increase. By the mid-1830s, approximately 1,000 travelers a week passed through the city via the canal. In addition to passenger service, the canal provided inexpensive transportation for freight, including agricultural and natural resources (Crout 1965:70–71; Clendenin and Miller 2011:104). During the winter of 1835–1836, Gardner Phipps and Sumner Hudson, originally from Boston, established a pork packing business in Middletown. Because of the Miami-Erie Canal, the pork packing industry in Middletown benefitted from affordable and efficient transportation. By 1840, three pork houses were operating in Middletown. During the winters of the mid-nineteenth century, between 10,000 and 20,000 hogs were butchered and packed becoming Middletown's chief export. Distilleries and gristmills also operated in Middletown. The majority of these industries operated along the canal to make transportation as efficient as possible. The development of Middletown during this period shifted eastward from the Great Miami River and was centered along the Miami-Erie Canal because it offered the best transportation option (Crout 1960:61-63).

As industry continued to grow in Middletown, a source of power to operate the mills and factories was required. On April 3, 1852, local officials authorized the Hydraulic Company “to construct a canal or race from the Northern limits of said Corporation through said Water Street . . . as far South as the Southern side of Lebanon Street, for the conveyance of water for Hydraulic purposes” (Crout 1960:86–87). This engineering resource would be known simply as the Hydraulic. Local residents were allowed to withdraw water from the Hydraulic for domestic purposes and the city could pump water from it for fire protection, but the main purpose of the Hydraulic was to power industrial mills. The Hydraulic intersected the Miami-Erie Canal and a system of gates were constructed to allow canal boats access to the Hydraulic, greatly increasing the efficiency of transporting products to and from the industries sited along the Hydraulic (Crout 1960:86–89).

One industry that benefitted greatly from the Hydraulic was the paper industry. Several paper companies were established along the banks of the Hydraulic, and by the late nineteenth century,

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Middletown was known as the “Paper City” (Crout 1960:95). The paper produced in Middletown ranged from low-grade straw and manila paper used for wrapping to some of the finest writing paper available. Paper for newsprint and medium-grade writing paper seem to have made up the bulk of the paper produced. During the early years of the paper industry in Middletown, most of the transportation needs were met by the Miami-Erie Canal, but by the mid-nineteenth century, a new quicker and more efficient transportation method, the railroad, began to compete with the canal (Crout 1960:95–97).

The dominance of the Miami-Erie Canal in commercial transportation declined in the mid-nineteenth century as a result of the construction of the nationwide railroad network. The growing population and the developing industrial base of Middletown, primarily as a result of being a port along the Miami-Erie Canal, made it an attractive location to be connected to the developing railroad network. The first Federal census that recorded the population of Middletown (n=1,087) was the 1850 census, and by 1860, the population of Middletown had almost doubled to 2,070 and jumped to 3,046 by 1870 (Crout 1960:90, 98). The growing population, the established industrial base, and Middletown’s geographic location approximately halfway between Cincinnati and Dayton made it an economically attractive location to include for railroad construction companies in the region (Crout 1960:81–82).

In 1846, the Cincinnati, Hamilton, and Dayton Railroad (CH&D) Company was created. The route to connect Cincinnati, Hamilton, and Dayton was surveyed and passed along the west bank of the Great Miami River. During the next five years, the railroad was constructed and in 1851, the CH&D was completed west of Middletown, along the opposite side of the river, through the small community of Madison (now known as West Middletown). The CH&D provided residents of both Middletown and Madison a more economical and efficient transportation route than what was provided by the Miami-Erie Canal. Even residents opposed to the CH&D, mainly because of its decision to pass through West Middletown instead of Middletown itself, celebrated the completion of this line. The CH&D would eventually be acquired by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (B&O) (Crout 1960:81–85). The brick depot with a side-gable roof, constructed in early twentieth century to serve this line, remains standing.

Many Middletown residents were upset by the CH&D decision to locate along the western bank of the Great Miami River in Madison (now West Middletown) instead of crossing the river to pass through Middletown. In May 1851, survey of a new route linking Dayton to Cincinnati provided citizens of Middletown with hope that a railroad would be constructed along the eastern edge of the city itself. This railroad, twelve miles shorter than the CH&D, would be known as the Shortline Railroad. After two decades of difficulties ranging from contracting disputes to hesitant farmers denying right-of-ways, the Shortline Railroad was finally completed on the eastern edge of Middletown by the Cincinnati and Springfield Railroad (C&S) Company in 1871. In ca. 1872, a small wood-frame depot was constructed by the C&S Company on the northwestern corner of the railroad’s intersection with Third Street (now Central Avenue), on the same parcel but south of where the present Big Four Depot is sited (Crout 1960:84).

The CH&D depot and the C&S depot became so active in Middletown that in 1879, the Middletown and Madison Passenger Street Railway Company was established and granted

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permission to operate horse-drawn street cars along Third Street (now Central Avenue). Since both depots were sited on the outskirts of the city at that time and the roads were gravel with rough sidewalks, people wanted an easy way to get to and from downtown to the depots. The street railway company was established to link the two railroad depots with each other by passing through downtown. The horse-drawn street cars proved so popular in Middletown that they operated until 1914, long after every other horse-drawn line, except for one in New York City, had shut down (Crout 1960:99).

The original plan for the Shortline Railroad constructed by the C&S Company would have placed it two miles east of downtown Middletown. The residents of Middletown were not happy about this plan and demanded that the railroad be constructed closer to the city center, which at this time was primarily located between the Miami-Erie Canal and the Great Miami River. Under the leadership of one of Middletown's most prominent industrialists, Paul J. Sorg, the city was able to reach a compromise with the C&S Company, and the line was moved to its current location, one mile west, closer to the city center. As a result, the city began expanding eastward toward the railroad. The railroad separated what would become residential areas to the east from the industrial and commercial interests in the city to the west. An example of this growth can be observed by the construction of the Paul J. Sorg Tobacco Plant across the road from the C&S depot established to serve Middletown (Crout 1960:84). This immense tobacco processing plant has since been demolished and replaced by small commercial buildings and parking lots.

Paul J. Sorg was a prominent member of the Middletown business community and philanthropist. Sorg was born in Wheeling, West Virginia in 1840 to German immigrant parents, Henry and Elizabeth Sorg. In 1851, the family moved from Wheeling to Cincinnati. Sorg was highly ambitious and was able to attend night school to gain a business education. He became an apprentice to a foundry moulder and quickly was promoted to foreman. In 1864, Sorg met a Cincinnati tobacco roller, John Auer. Auer was a skilled tobacco processor but was unable to keep books. Although Sorg knew nothing of tobacco processing, his night school classes had taught him book keeping. Sorg and Auer organized a tobacco firm which would consolidate with the firm of Wilson and Jacoby, who owned a factory in Cincinnati but lived in Middletown (Crout 1960:105-106).

In 1878, the newly consolidated firm constructed the large tobacco processing factory in Middletown, west of the C&S railroad. Shortly after the factory was constructed, Sorg and Auer sold their interests in that company. They formed a new business of their own and chose to construct their new Paul J. Sorg Tobacco Plant across the street from the C&S depot, on the eastern edge of the city. By the end of the nineteenth century, the industrial complex had grown to fill an entire city block. In 1898, the Continental Tobacco Company purchased the plant from Sorg. Eventually the tobacco factory came under the management of the P. Lorillard Company which operated it until the mid-twentieth century (Crout 1960:105-107). Thanks to the efforts of Sorg, companies such as the McSherry Manufacturing Company, maker of grain drills, and the Miami Cycle Manufacturing Company, maker of bicycles moved their plants to Middletown. Sorg also used his wealth to support the construction of a church, a hotel, and an entertainment venue known as the Sorg Opera House (Crout 1960:106-107).

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A third major railroad line that would prove vital to Middletown was championed by Sorg. Despite the two successful railroads already passing through Middletown, local industrialists and businessmen during the late nineteenth century wanted a direct link to the Pennsylvania Railway System, the leading line in America at this time. It was decided that a short stretch of railroad track would be laid eastward from Middletown to connect with the Cincinnati, Lebanon, and Northern Railroad to form a junction with the Pennsylvania line. Local citizens provided investments, and T. C. Simpson, an employee at Sorg's company, was placed in charge of the line's construction. Simpson was a strong leader and the line was completed in a short time. The quality of Simpson and his crew's workmanship is demonstrated by the bridge for the line constructed over the Little Miami River, as it is one of the few bridges in the region to survive the torrents of the Great Flood of 1913. Although at first this line was difficult to operate, it proved to be a vital resource when the American Rolling Mill Company (ARMCO) began to utilize it to bring in raw materials and ship out finished products from its industrial complex at the beginning of the twentieth century (Crout 1960:84–85).

Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, Middletown continued to experience population growth. In 1880, the population of community had risen to 4,538 (Crout 1960:98). The growing population of Middletown resulted in it becoming a city in 1886, with 810 out of 1,275 voters approving the town's upgrade to a city. Middletown was granted the status of a Grade 4B city with the approval of the state and county board (Crout 1960:98). The population of the city continued to rise during the last couple decades of the nineteenth century, growing to 7,681 in 1890 and then to 9,215 by 1900 (Crout 1960:98, 109).

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, the C&S Railroad was incorporated into the Big Four Railway. The first line of the Big Four Railway was completed in 1851 between Cleveland and Columbus as part Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati (CC&C) Railway. From Columbus, it joined with the Columbus and Xenia Railroad which connected with the Little Miami Railroad, extending the line to Cincinnati. In 1868, the CC&C merged with the Bellefontaine Railroad and was reincorporated as the Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, and Indianapolis Railway. This line was popularly known as the "Bee Line" or the "3C and I" (Smith Pabst 1963:79–80).

In 1872, the Little Miami Railroad was acquired by the Pennsylvania Railroad, breaking the Bee Line's connection with Cincinnati. Luckily for Middletown, this required the Bee Line to establish a new route to Cincinnati. The loss of the Little Miami Railroad was quickly remedied by leasing the recently completed C&S Railroad, as well as 24 miles of track between Dayton and Springfield from the Cincinnati, Sandusky, and Cleveland Railroad. This acquisition reestablished the Bee Line's connection to Cincinnati. In 1884, the original wood-frame C&S depot in Middletown burned and was replaced by another wood-frame depot.

The Bee Line operated the along the east edge of Middletown until 1889, when it merged with the Cincinnati, Indianapolis, St. Louis, and Chicago Railway and was reincorporated as the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis (CCC&StL) Railway, popularly known as the "Big Four" (Smith Pabst 1963:80–81). The 1890 Sandborn map shows that the CCC&StL Passenger Depot was sited along Third Street (now Central Avenue), while the CCC&StL

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Freight Depot was located north of the passenger depot and west of the intersection of Vail Avenue and Grimes Street (Figure 11) In 1906, the New York Central Railroad acquired the Big Four Railway, and the Big Four became a division of the New York Central (Clendenin and Miller 2011:105–107). The 1907 Sanborn map shows that the both the CCC&StL passenger and freight depots remained, but the freight depot appears to have been expanded (Figure 12).

By the start of the twentieth century, Middletown was experiencing an industrial boom. On January 1, 1901, the *Middletown News-Signal* published a scholarly edition summarizing Middletown's accomplishments of the nineteenth century. While the historical summary was educational, arguably the most important article in this paper concerned the future of Middletown. ARMCO was poised to open a giant new industrial complex in Middletown to produce steel. Under the leadership of company president and treasurer, George M. Verity, ARMCO began operations in the middle of January, 1901, employing approximately 500 workers (Crout 1960:108–109).

After the death of Paul J. Sorg in 1902, Verity became Middletown's leading industrialist and promoter. Verity was born in 1865, attended a variety of schools and finally graduated from high school in Georgetown, Ohio. He then attended college at Nelson's Business College in Cincinnati. Verity served as a store keeper for the camp grounds of the Cincinnati Conference of the Methodist Church because his father was a member of the organization. It was there that he met his future wife, Jean Standish, and began his business career. After Standish's father passed away, Verity was assumed the management of the family's wholesale grocery store and oyster depot. He successfully managed the store until Kroger chain grocery stores began to dominate the Cincinnati grocery market and the Standish family sold their store (Crout 1960:108–109).

In 1889, the American Steel Roofing Company in Cincinnati was so successful that the company's owners were ready to open a new plant in Philadelphia and they needed to find an able manager to take over their Cincinnati factory while they worked to get the Philadelphia factory running. The owners had heard of Verity's business abilities and despite Verity only being 24 years old, he was offered the manager position for the Cincinnati factory. He accepted the offer and managed the company for ten years. While running this factory, Verity realized that if he could combine steel production and sheet rolling into one factory, then he would be able to cut costs as well as ensure a steady supply of sheet steel to process into a growing variety of finished products (Crout 1960:109–110).

Verity began searching Ohio for a suitable location to establish this new factory. He narrowed it to between Middletown and Zanesville, Ohio. The site offered by Middletown proved more acceptable, in large part because of the convenient railroad access. On December 2, 1899, ARMCO was organized and the contract to locate the new factory in Middletown was signed. By July 12, 1900, the site of the ARMCO plant had been prepared and the cornerstone laying ceremony was held. To celebrate this monumental occasion, stores and factories in Middletown were closed and city residents formed a parade and marched to the factory site to enjoy the festivities. By 1903, the reputation for quality of ARMCO steel had been established and a representative from the Westinghouse Electric Company traveled to Middletown with specifications for a new type of steel required by the growing electricity industry. ARMCO was

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able to create this specialty steel and sent its first shipment in June 1903. This specialty steel production enhanced ARMCO's marketability within the steel industry and increased demand for its product (Crout 1960:110-112).

Shortly after the New York Central Railroad took over the Big Four Railway in 1906, the Middletown Business Man's Club began a push for the construction of a new passenger station in response to Middletown's rapid economic growth during this period. The Club was the "leading organization of the city, taking the initiative in all matters of pertaining to the industrial and business advancement of the community" (Simms 1906:86). The organization was originally established as the Quixotic Club in 1870 by V.C. Hatfield but was reorganized into the Middletown Business Men's Club at the start of the twentieth century. The newly reorganized club held its first meeting on March 3, 1903, and by 1906, had a membership of over two hundred. Every male citizen of Middletown over the age of 21 and of good repute was eligible for membership. The purpose of the club was to discuss and develop plans for business priorities and matters of general public interest. Most of the prominent men of Middletown, including both Paul Sorg and George Verity, were members of the group, and through their efforts, many new commercial and industrial ventures were encouraged as well as substantial publicity and advertising campaigns for the city (Simms 1906:86-88).

The growing industrial base and improving economy in Middletown resulted in 1909 being one of the most significant years in Middletown's history. By that year, ARMCO was so successful that they had outgrown their original plant location and older production machines. Plans were made for ARMCO to expand and modernize. When this industrial expansion became known, other communities began to try to woo Verity and ARMCO away from Middletown. Local Middletown businessmen acted to prevent ARMCO from leaving the community. Efforts led by Hatfield, a founding member of the Middletown Business Men's Club, were successful in convincing Verity to stay in Middletown with the promises of meeting the public utility needs required by such a large-scale factory. These needs included a right-of-way for new railroad spurs to provide efficient transportation for the plant, an adequate water supply from the river, and ample sewage for wastewater disposal (Crout 1960:112-116).

In addition to meeting the needs of the huge factory complex, Verity also demanded that the community itself be improved because it was where his employees lived as well as worked. These community improvements included the construction of the new passenger railroad depot, creation of a public library, the establishment of a YMCA and a public hospital, expansion of school services, and completion of a park to provide recreational opportunities to the citizens. Verity fulfilled his promise of building a massive new steel processing plant, and the city of Middletown followed through on its promises of community improvements (Crout 1960:116-118).

With the expansion of ARMCO and the demands made by Middletown residents led by the Business Men's Club, the New York Central Railroad determined that the existing wood-frame passenger depot was showing its age, and the construction of a more modern facility would be practical. The New York Central was comprised of multiple formerly independent railroads, each having their own depot design standards. While this provided a large diversity of station designs,

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a popular replacement design built by the New York Central was constructed of brick with a rectangular footprint and an overhanging hipped roof, similar in appearance to the Big Four Depot in Middletown (Grant and Bohi 1978:40). Some depots would opt for the more impressive and expensive roof covering such as clay tiles or slate, so the red clay tile roof of the Big Four Depot shows that it was valued more than many of the standard replacement depots (Grant and Bohi 1978:61).

In 1909, while ARMCO was in the process of expanding, the second wood-frame depot was moved several blocks north and was converted into offices for the station agents and employees. This wood-frame depot has since been demolished. The freight depot, sited north of the wood-frame passenger depot was demolished, and a new freight house for the Big Four Railway was constructed on Columbia Avenue, approximately a half mile northwest of the passenger depot. The freight house was constructed adjacent to a now demolished rail yard. This freight house has been adapted for use by Family Services of Middletown (McCrabb 2010).

Construction of the current passenger depot began in June 1909 (*The Telegraph* 1909:1). The first ticket agent for the new depot was George Kyle who was promoted from telegraph operator by the Big Four Railway in June 1909 during the construction of the new depot (*Hamilton Evening Journal* 1909:8). Unfortunately, the actual architect of the Big Four Depot in Middletown could not be identified through research. Scholars of railroad and depot history point out that “mergers and over-all poor record keeping have caused much information about small depot design to be destroyed” (Grant and Bohi 1978:24). The Big Four Depot in Middletown appears to have suffered from that loss of design records.

While 1909 was a significant year for Middletown’s growth, four year later, another significant event, the Great Flood of 1913, resulted in massive destruction in and around Middletown. It is possible that the Middletown newspaper records from 1909 are so scarce because the library was just one of many buildings flooded during this event. Beginning on March 23, 1913, a steady rain began falling across Ohio. Over the next couple days, a total of six to eleven inches of rain had fallen on the state. The ground was quickly saturated and the rivers began to rise. The Great Miami River, along the west side of Middletown, quickly topped its banks and spilled into Middletown. Historic photographs, taken on March 25, 1913, show the extent of the flood damage with water reaching near the top of the first story of the commercial buildings along Central Avenue near the river. The Big Four Depot, located over a mile east of the river, may have experienced minor flooding, but with no basement, the damage would have been very minor compared to the rest of the city. The Middletown business community was devastated by the flood, but clean-up began almost immediately. ARMCO supplied railroad equipment to assist with the clean up, and Middletown gradually began to recover, thanks in large part to the railroads ability to quickly remove debris while bringing new construction materials into the city (Crout 2000).

The Middletown Big Four Depot served the passengers of the railroad for the next several decades. The Big Four Railway linked residents of southwestern Ohio to other significant railroads, including the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Railroad and the Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) Railroad. The importance of the Big Four Railway to travelers in Ohio can be seen in the

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various excursion rates offered for special events. Events worthy of special rates included religious conferences, political conventions, social organization and club gatherings, and trips to a variety of Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) encampments. GAR encampments provided Civil War veterans the chance to reconnect with their comrades. Since many of these encampments were held in places far from Ohio where much of the action during the Civil War occurred, the Big Four Railway provided Civil War veterans with low fares and excellent accommodations while transporting them to their encampments (Smith Pabst 1963:43–48). In addition to Civil War veterans, the Big Four Railway transported local soldiers in both World War I and World War II from this depot (Crout 1960:84).

The Big Four Depot in Middletown, similar to other railroad depots around the nation, would have been a hub of activity for the city (Grant and Bohi 1978:1). Middletown experienced significant population growth during the early twentieth century. The population of the city had risen to 13,152 in 1910, then jumped to 23,584 in 1920, and reached 29,992 by 1930 (US Census Bureau 2013). The depot was strategically located on the eastern edge of Middletown's business corridor, now known as Central Avenue. By 1923, Third Street had become such an important business corridor for Middletown that it was renamed Central Avenue to reflect its importance. The location of the depot provided travelers easy access to this commercial corridor, and Middletown grew eastward to meet the depot (Crout 2000). In addition to expanding the commercial district, the depot was also at least partially responsible for influencing the location of several industrial concerns, including the large tobacco factory formerly located opposite Charles Street from the depot. The railroad and depot, originally located approximately a mile east from downtown, is now engulfed by the city.

The significance of the railroad began to decline following World War II. Similar to the canals of the early nineteenth century, passenger rail service began to be replaced in turn, by the automobile. As the road network continued to improve, particularly the construction of the nationwide interstate system, travelers could more conveniently journey to locations throughout the country just by driving. The population growth in Middletown also slowed during this period. Between 1930 and 1940, less than 1,300 citizens were added and the population only grew to 31,220. A little over 2,000 citizens were added during the next decade, with the population increasing to 33,695 in 1950. Railroad passenger patronage continued to decline to the point where the last passenger train departed the Big Four Depot in 1961 and all passenger service in Middletown ended in 1971 (Crout 2000).

As the importance of the passenger railroad system waned and the railroad companies shuttered many depots, some were sold to communities or private individuals to be converted to museums, stores, restaurants, private homes, or any number of various uses (Grant and Bohi 1978:172). In 1978, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) published a citizen's manual on how to adaptively reuse railroad stations. The examples provided in the manual focused on large ornate stations around the country, but suggestions for small depots were included. One of the new uses suggested by the manual was to convert the depot into a gift shop, which is what happened in Middletown (US DOT 1978:1–3).

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After passenger rail service was discontinued from the Big Four Depot in Middletown, there was no longer a need for a passenger depot. The population of Middletown grew to 42,115 in 1960 and then to 48,767 in 1970 but declined to 43,719 by 1980. Despite the disuse of the depot, the building was not demolished. A historic preservation plan created by the Middletown Historic Preservation Council in 1980 identified the old train station on Charles Street as evidence of an earlier period of transportation for the community. In addition, they asserted that the building had not been altered and remained in reasonably good condition (Middletown Historic Preservation Council 1980:19). In 1981, the depot was renovated into a commercial retail building known as the Whistle Stop Shop without substantially altering the exterior or interior materials or design (Crout 2000). The depot continues to be utilized as a gift store.

In addition to its historic significance for the development of transportation and the growth of Middletown, the Big Four Depot also has architectural significance for representing the Prairie School architecture style. The building exhibits the character defining features of a low-pitched hipped roof with wide overhanging eaves, a horizontal belt course, horizontal bands of windows, and portico supported by substantial pillars.

According to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office's National Register Database, there are only two resources in Butler County associated with the railroad transportation category currently listed on the National Register: the Rossville Historic District (75001332) and the Oxford Railroad Depot and Junction House (80002949). The Rossville Historic District is located in Hamilton and is composed of 123 resources, including stone railroad arches and trestles constructed during the mid-nineteenth century. The Oxford Railroad Depot has since been demolished but the Junction House remains. The Big Four Depot in Middletown is distinct from these other railroad-related National Register properties.

Two "Big Four" depots are currently listed on the National Register: Big Four Depot (75001350) in Galion, Ohio, and Big Four Depot (03000548) in Lafayette, Indiana. The Galion depot is a Queen Anne style two story depot, and the Lafayette depot is a Richardsonian Romanesque style one-story hipped-roof brick building. The Middletown depot is similar to the Lafayette depot, both single story brick buildings with a low-pitch hipped-roof with large overhanging eaves. This type of brick depot with low-pitched hipped roofs was a popular replacement design built by the Big Four Railway and the New York Central Railroad. Because the Big Four Railway, similar to the New York Central Railroad, was composed of multiple independent railroads, each having different depot design standards, it is not surprising that the Big Four Depot in Middletown would be styled somewhat differently than the station in Lafayette (Grant and Bohi 1978:40). The Lafayette depot has experienced greater alterations in comparison to the Middletown depot. The Lafayette depot has been moved from its original location, the windows and doors have been replaced, and the roof has been covered by new asphalt shingles. The Middletown depot features historic integrity of location, materials, and workmanship. The Middletown depot also features an original red tile roof. The selection of more expensive red clay tiles for the roof demonstrates the importance of the Big Four Depot to the Middletown community (Grant and Bohi 1978:61).

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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United States Department of Transportation (US DOT)

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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 # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Name of repository: MidPointe Library System: Middletown

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.64

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

2. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

3. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

4. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1. Zone: 16N Easting: 724189 Northing: 4376844

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property consists of four legal parcels: Q6543038000003 (NW corner), Q65320280000083 (NE corner), Q65320280000088 (SE corner), Q65320280000087 (SW corner). The outside boundaries of these parcels represent the nominated property.

Boundary Justification

This property is bounded by Charles Street on the west, Central Avenue on the south, the railroad tracks and North University Boulevard on the east, and Manchester Avenue on the north. It is appropriate because historical photos reveal that the site was historically associated with the depot.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Benjamin M. Riggle/Senior Historian
organization: Hardlines Design Company
street and number: 4608 Indianola Avenue
city or town: Columbus state: OH zip code: 43214
e-mail: briggles@hardlinesdesign.com
telephone: (614)-784-8733
date: April 29, 2013

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photo Log

Name of Property: Big Four Depot

City or Vicinity: Middletown

County: Butler State: OH

Photographer: Terry Glaze and Benjamin M. Riggle

Date Photographed: April 4, 2013 and July 11, 2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 20___Southwest corner of the Big Four Depot, view looking northeast

2 of 20___Southeast corner of the Big Four Depot, view looking northwest

3 of 20___Northeast corner of the Big Four Depot, view looking southwest

4 of 20___Northwest corner of the Big Four Depot, view looking southeast

5 of 20___Detail of main entrance, west elevation of the Big Four Depot, view looking southeast

6 of 20___Detail of windows, west elevation of the Big Four Depot, view looking southeast

7 of 20___Detail of dual cargo doors, west elevation of the Big Four Depot, view looking southeast

8 of 20___Detail of projecting bay, east elevation of the Big Four Depot, view looking northwest

9 of 20___Detail of rounded corner with windows, east elevation of the Big Four Depot, view looking west

10 of 20___Detail of dual cargo doors, east elevation of the Big Four Depot, view looking northwest

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- 11 of 20___Detail of windows, east elevation of the Big Four Depot, view looking northwest
- 12 of 20___Interior detail of main entrance of the Big Four Depot, view looking northwest
- 13 of 20___Detail of ticket area in the Big Four Depot, view looking southeast
- 14 of 20___Detail of corridor in the Big Four Depot, view looking south
- 15 of 20___Detail of former office in the Big Four Depot, view looking southeast
- 16 of 20___Detail of ceiling in waiting area of the Big Four Depot, view looking northwest
- 17 of 20___Detail of fireplace in waiting area of the Big Four Depot, view looking northwest
- 18 of 20___Detail of door and radiator in waiting area of the Big Four Depot, view looking southeast
- 19 of 20___Detail of windows and stained-glass window behind ticket area in the Big Four Depot, view looking east
- 20 of 20___Detail of wood paneling and molding in the Big Four Depot, view looking west

List of Figures

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- Figure 2. Larger scale location of the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio
- Figure 3. Aerial photograph of the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio
- Figure 4. Butler County Auditor's map showing parcels associated The Big Four Depot
- Figure 5. Photo view map
- Figure 6. Floor plan Big Four Depot
- Figure 7. Ca. 1909 photograph postcard of the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio, looking southwest
- Figure 8. Ca. 1915 postcard depicting the New York Central (Big Four) Depot in Middletown, Ohio, looking northwest
- Figure 9. Ca. 1920 photograph postcard of the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio, looking northeast

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Figure 10. Ca. 1920 postcard depicting the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio, looking northwest

Figure 11. Ca. 1930 postcard depicting the park area south of the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio, looking north

Figure 12. Ca. 1950 photograph showing the overgrown park area south of the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio (note the small waiting room building sited opposite the tracks on the right side of the photograph), looking north

Figure 13. 1890 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio

Figure 14. 1907 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio

Figure 15. 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio

Figure 16. 1924 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio

Figure 17. 1931 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio

Figure 18. 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio

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.460 et seq.).

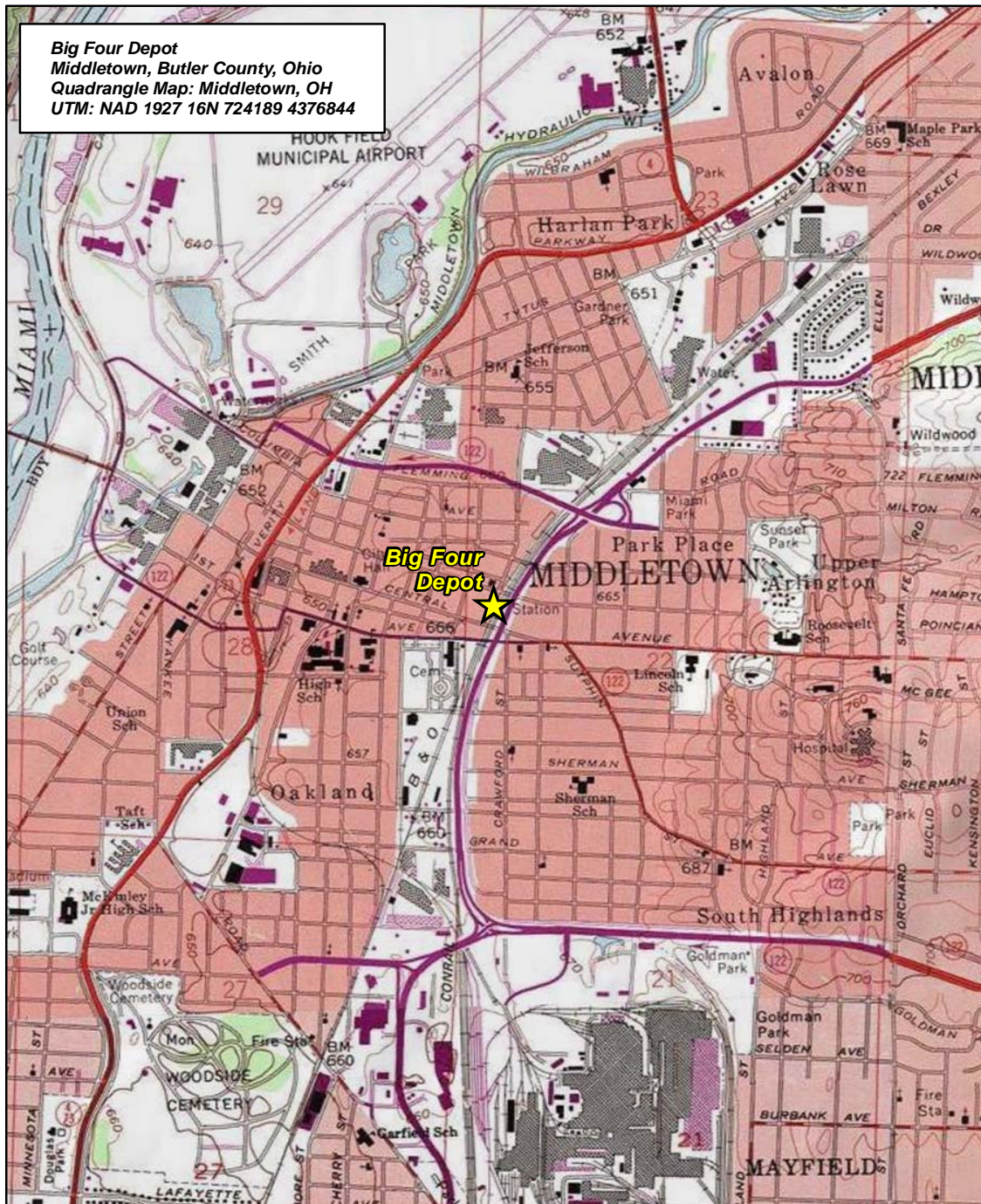
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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National Park Service

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Scale 1:24,000

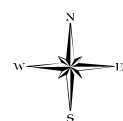
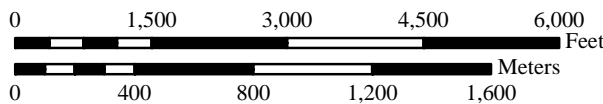


Figure 1. Location of the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio

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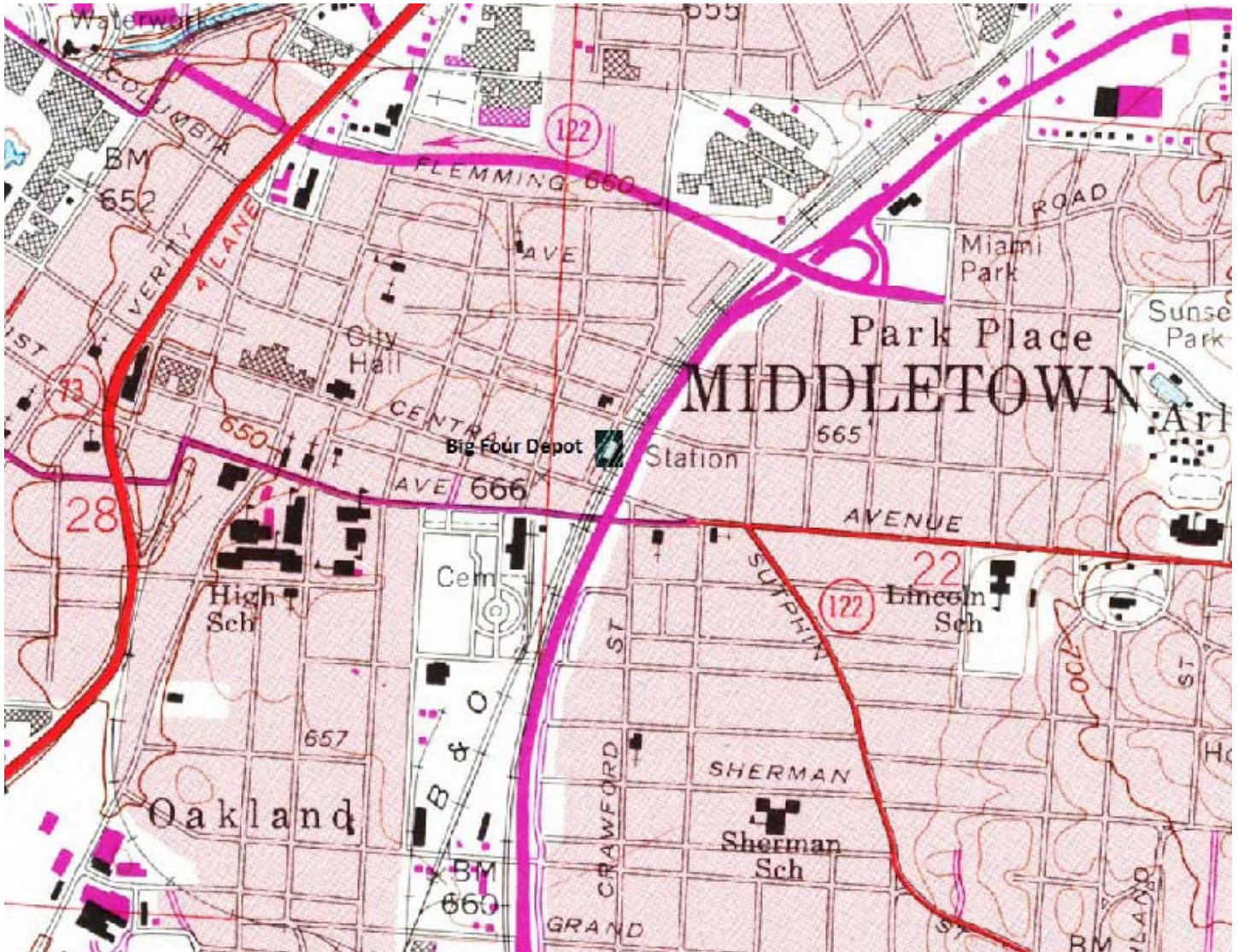


Figure 2:
Big Four Depot
 Middletown, Butler County, Ohio
 Quadrangle Map: Middletown, OH
 UTM: NAD 1927 16N 724189 4376844

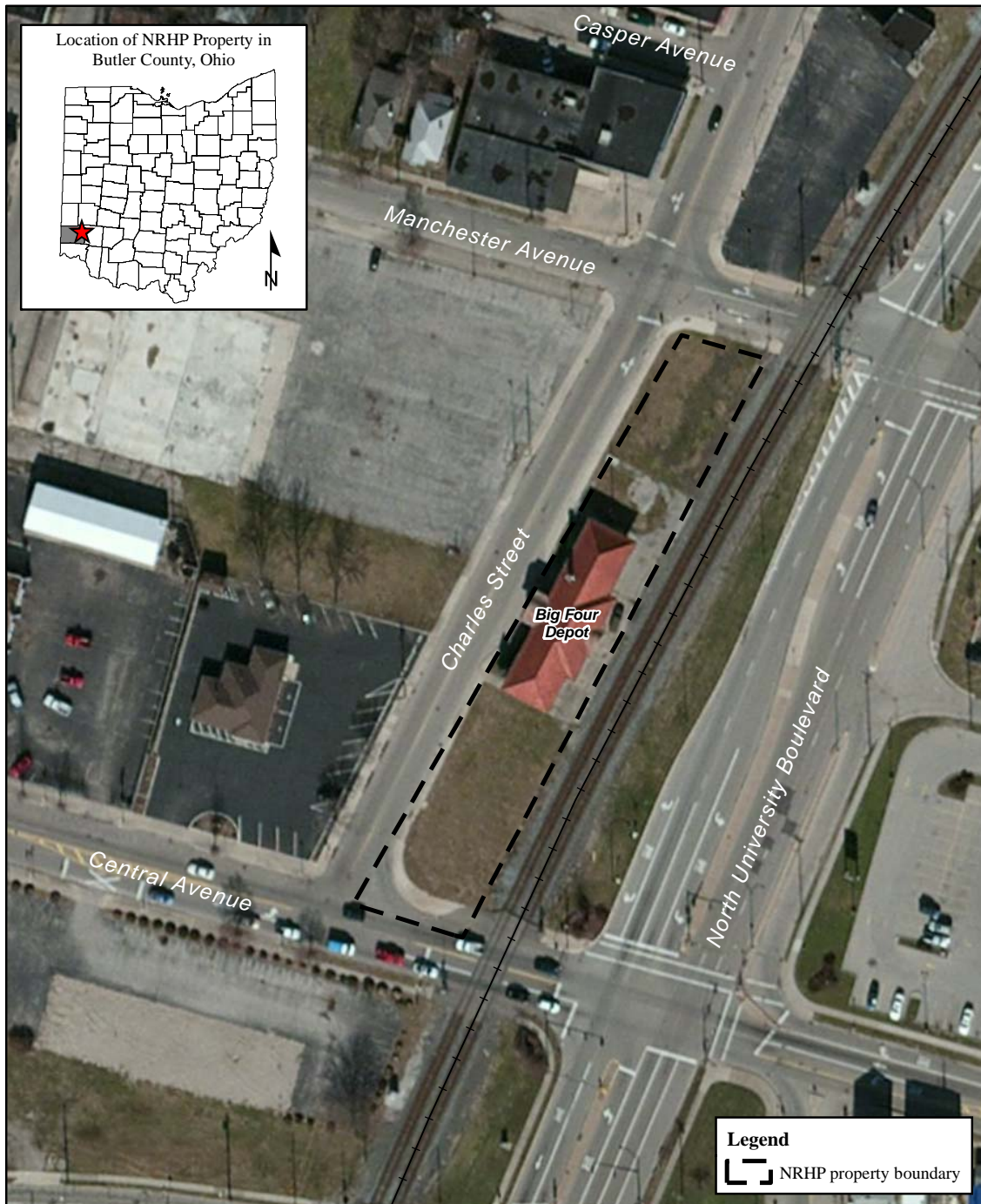
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HDC 2013
Source: Butler
County Auditor

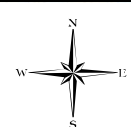
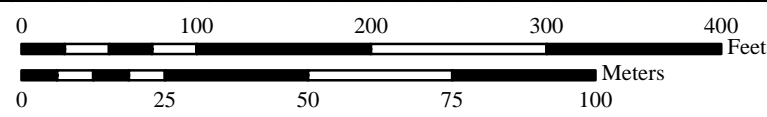


Figure 3. Aerial photograph showing the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio

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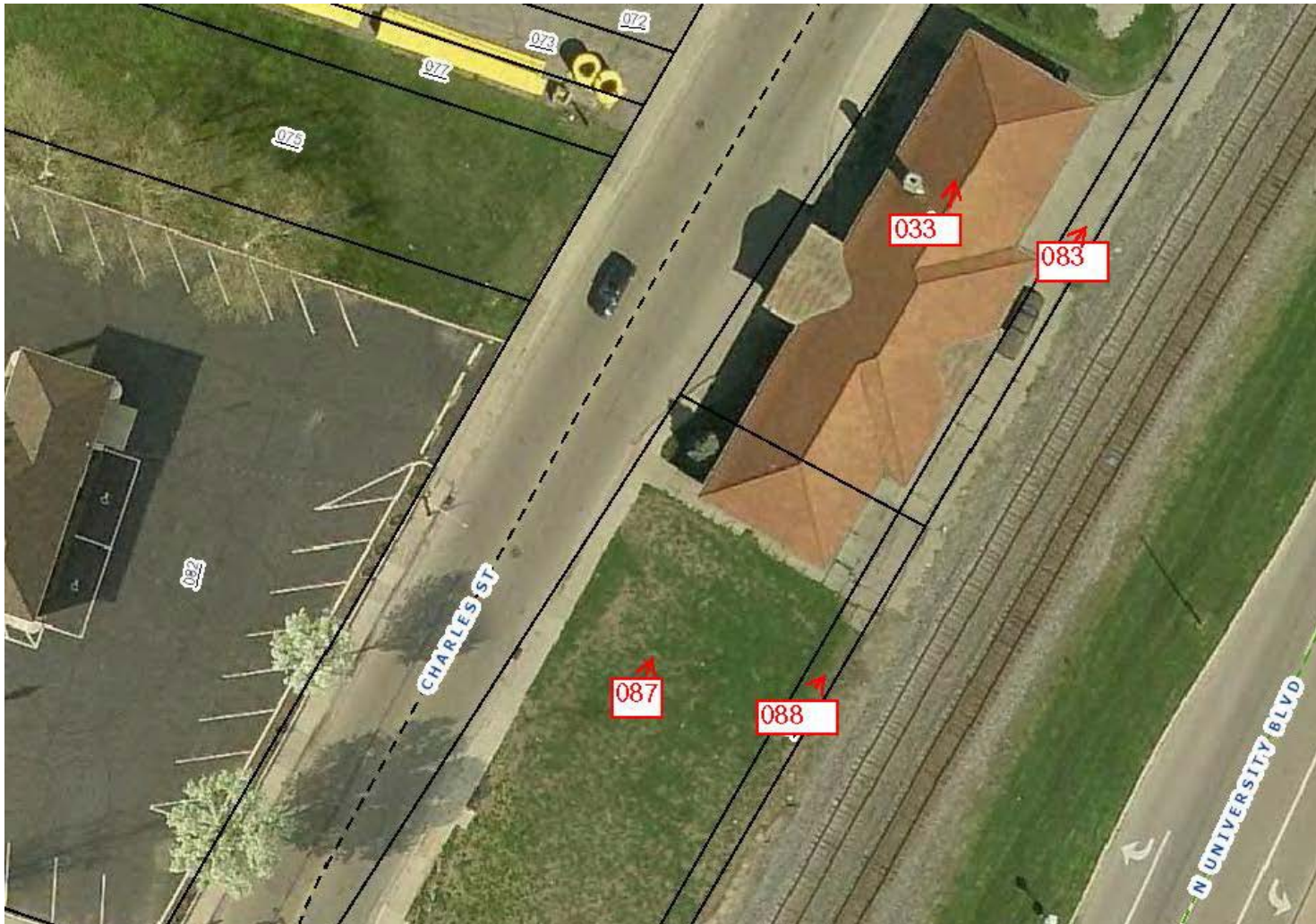


Figure 4: Butler County Auditor's map showing parcels associated with the nominated property

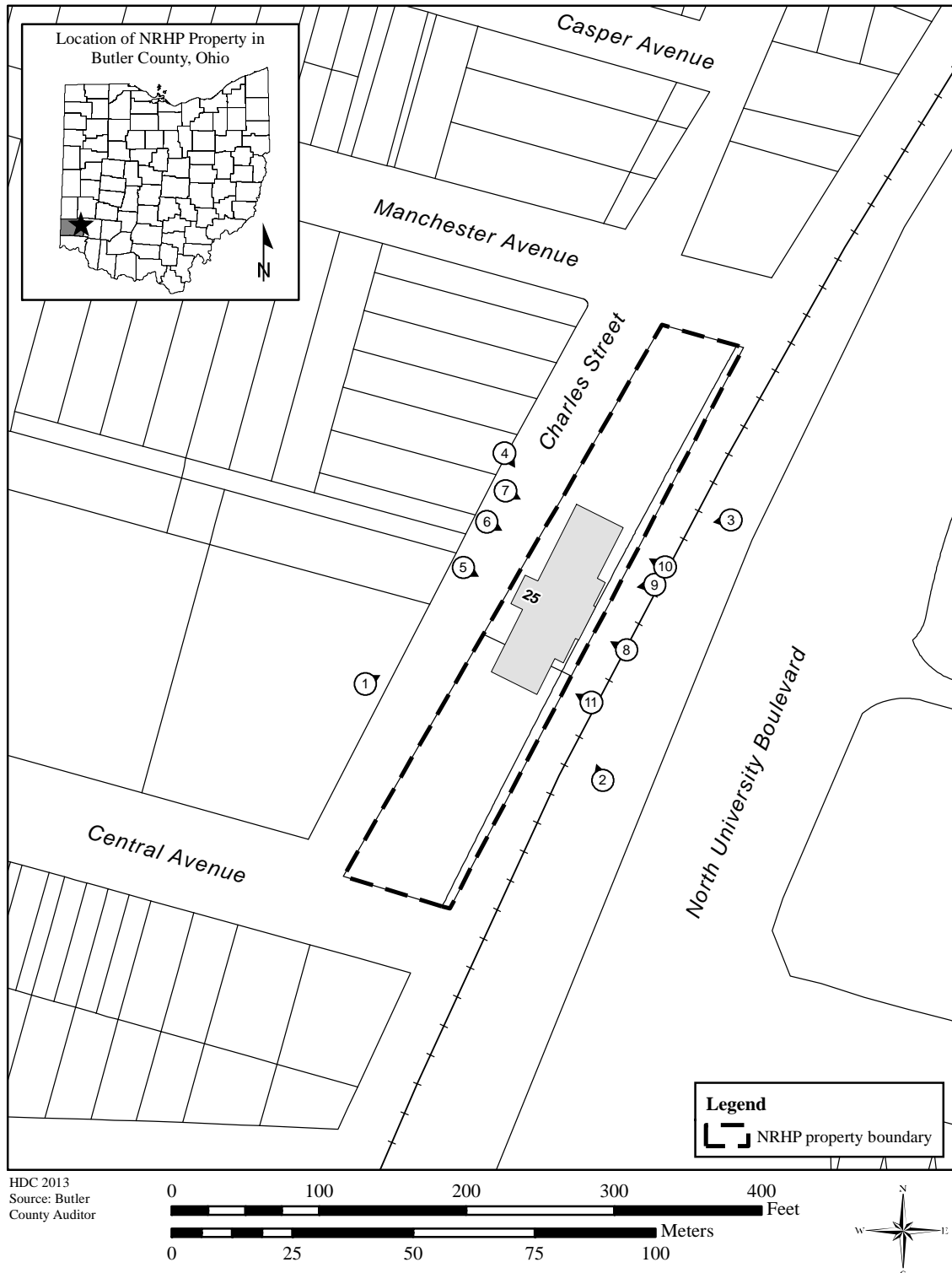
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HDC 2013
Source: Butler
County Auditor

Figure 5. Photo view map of the Big Four Depot

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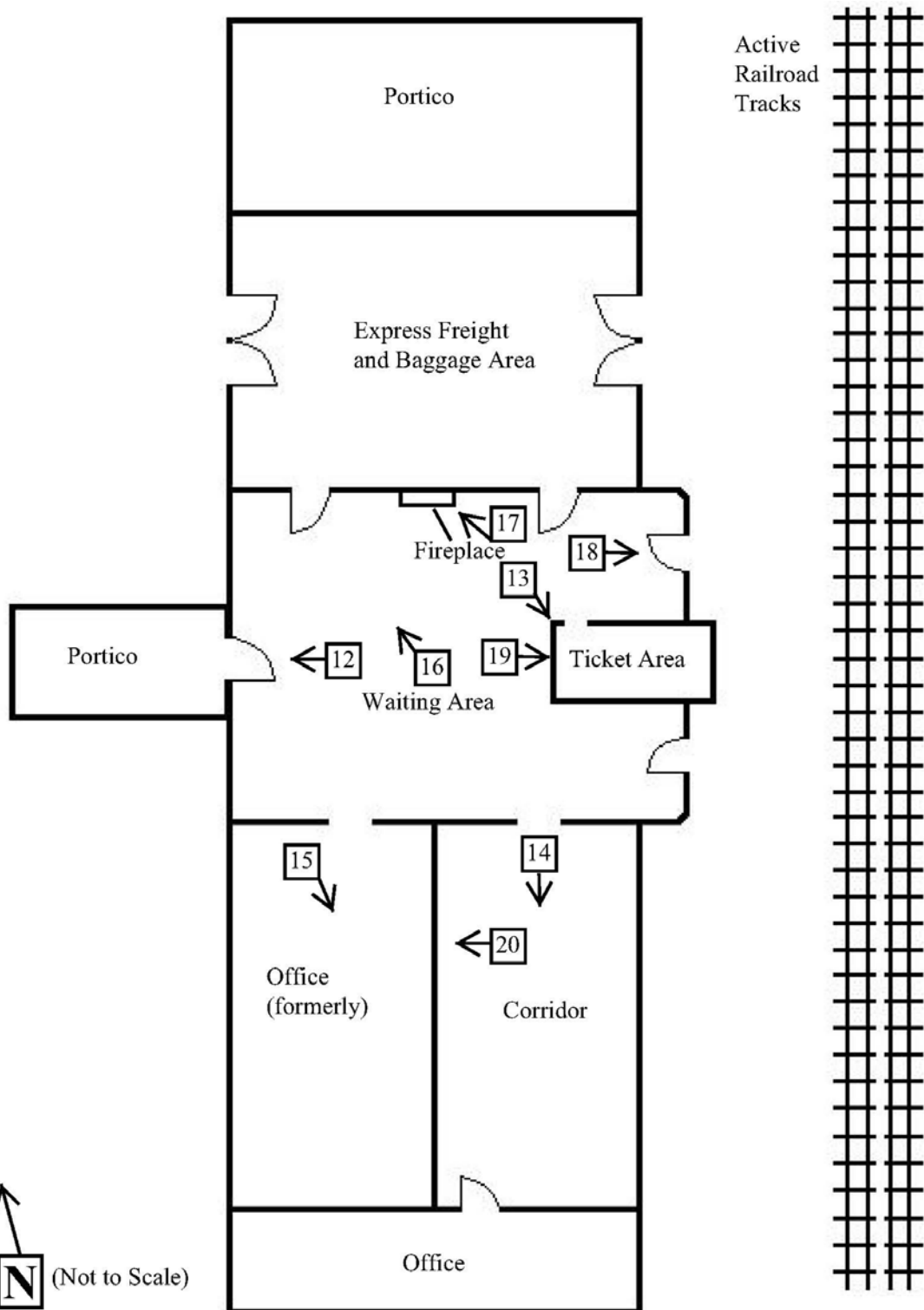


Figure 6. Floor plan of the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio

Source: Drawn from a site visit conducted by Benjamin M. Riggle, Hardlines Design Company, July 11, 2013.

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Figure 7. Ca. 1909 photograph postcard of the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio, looking southwest
Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio



Figure 8. Ca. 1915 postcard depicting the New York Central (Big Four) Depot in Middletown, Ohio, looking northwest
Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

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Figure 9. Ca. 1920 photograph postcard of the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio, looking northeast
Source: Clendenin and Miller 2011:105



Figure 10. Ca. 1920 postcard depicting the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio, looking northwest
Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

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Figure11. Ca. 1930 postcard depicting the park area south of the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio, looking north

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

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Figure 12. Ca. 1950 photograph showing the overgrown park area south of the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio (note the small waiting room building sited opposite the tracks on the right side of the photograph), looking north

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

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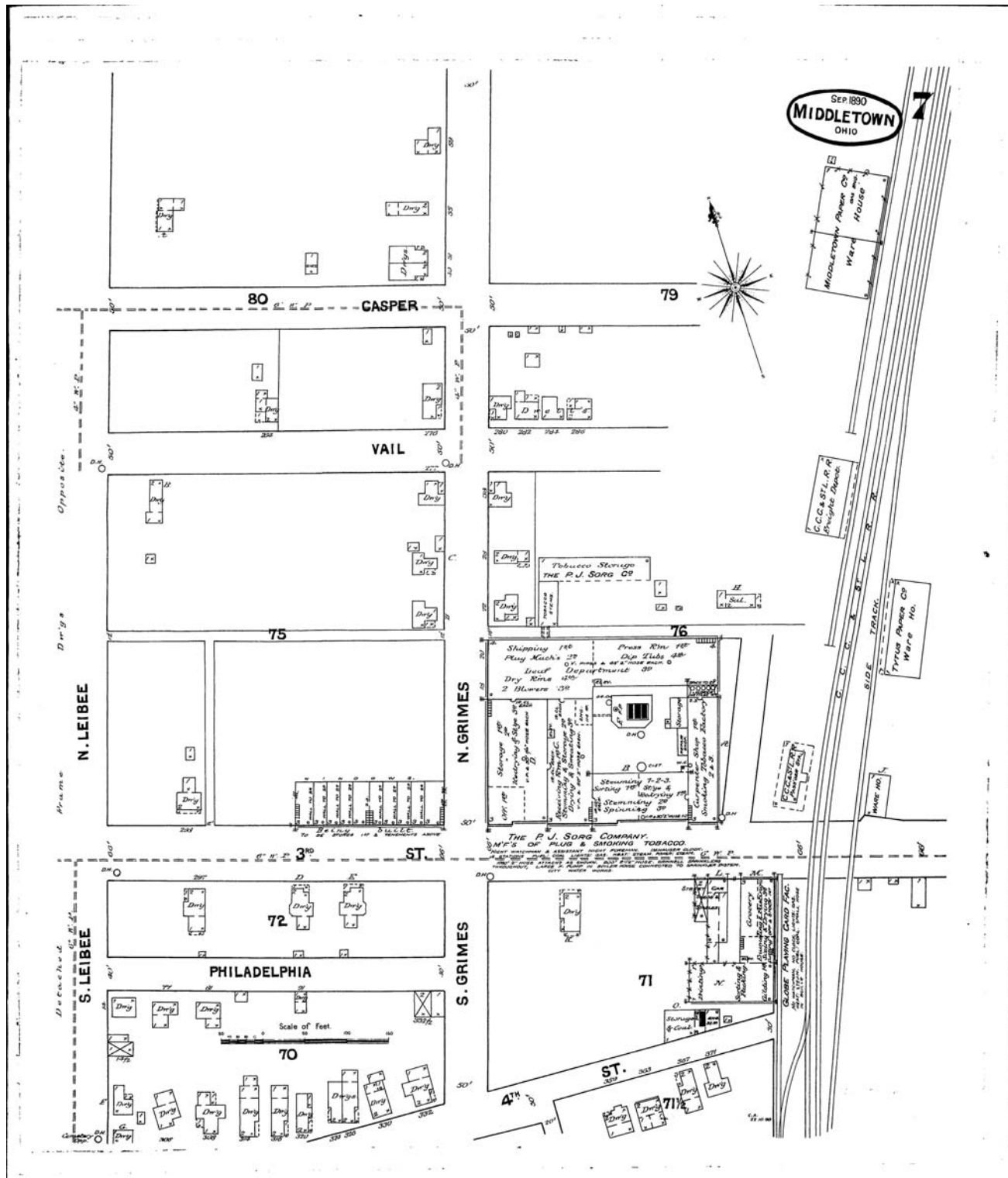


Figure 13. 1890 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio
Source: Sanborn Map Company; Bell and Howell Information and Learning

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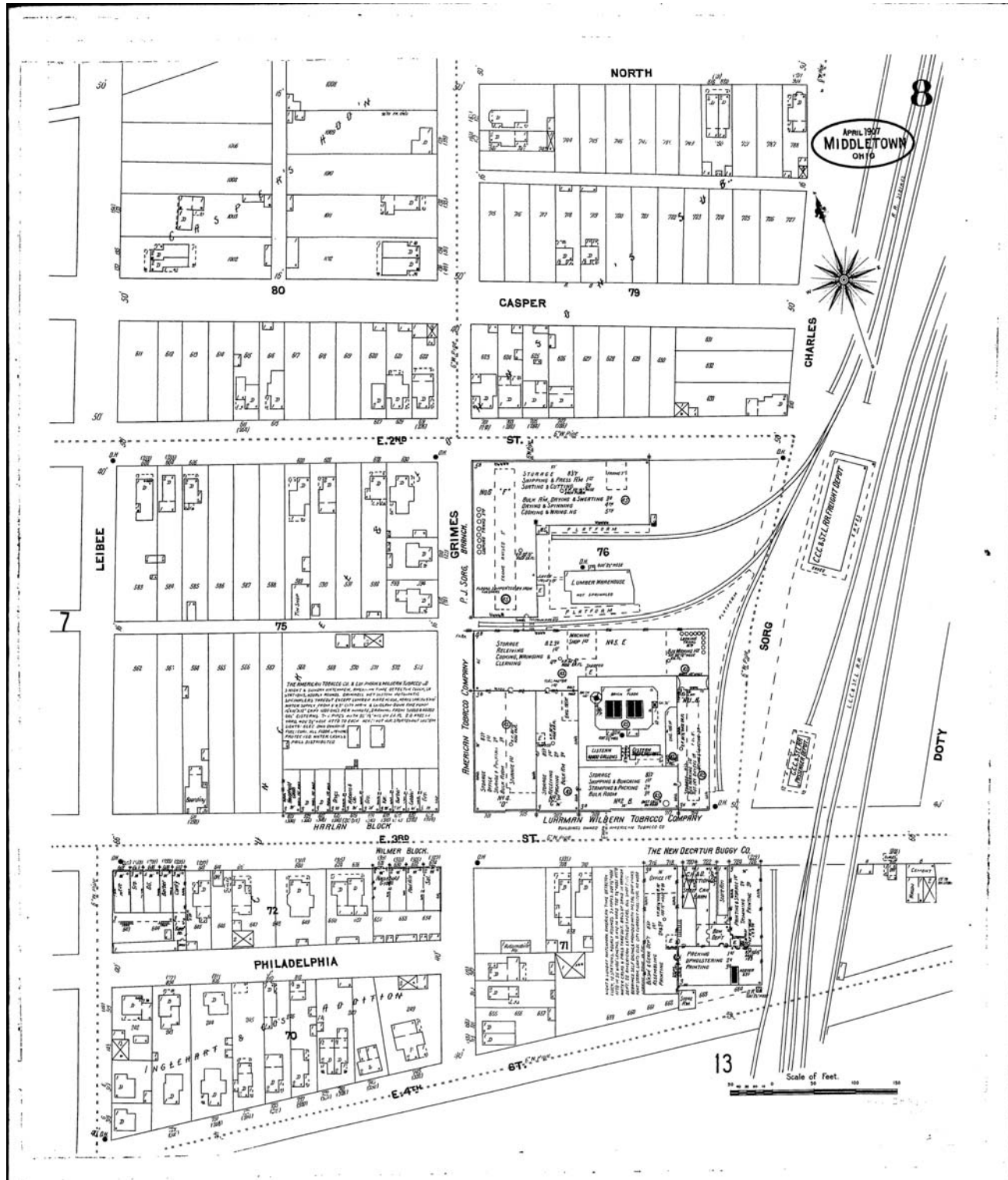


Figure 14. 1907 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio
Source: Sanborn Map Company; Bell and Howell Information and Learning

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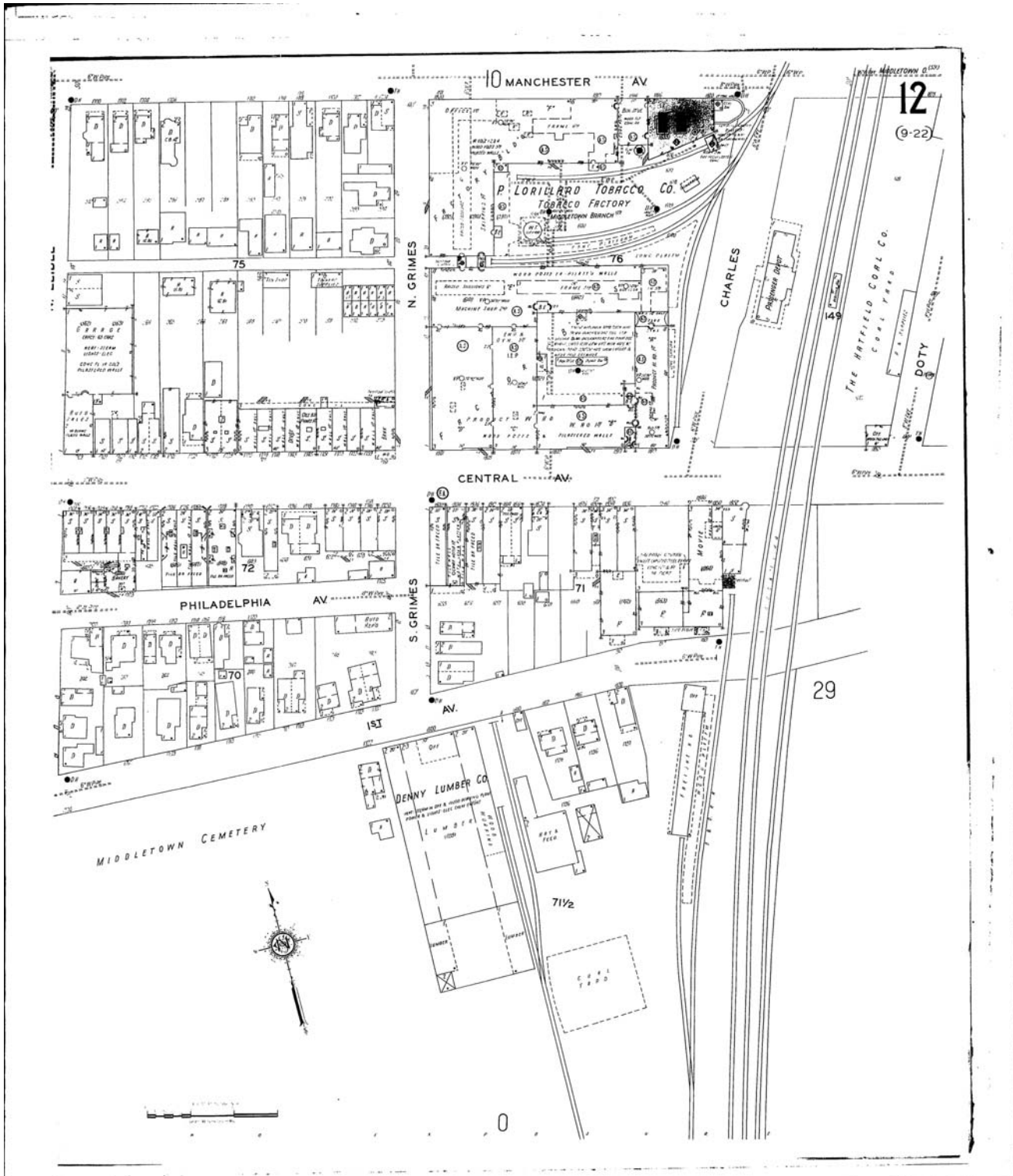


Figure 17. 1931 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio
Source: Sanborn Map Company; Bell and Howell Information and Learning

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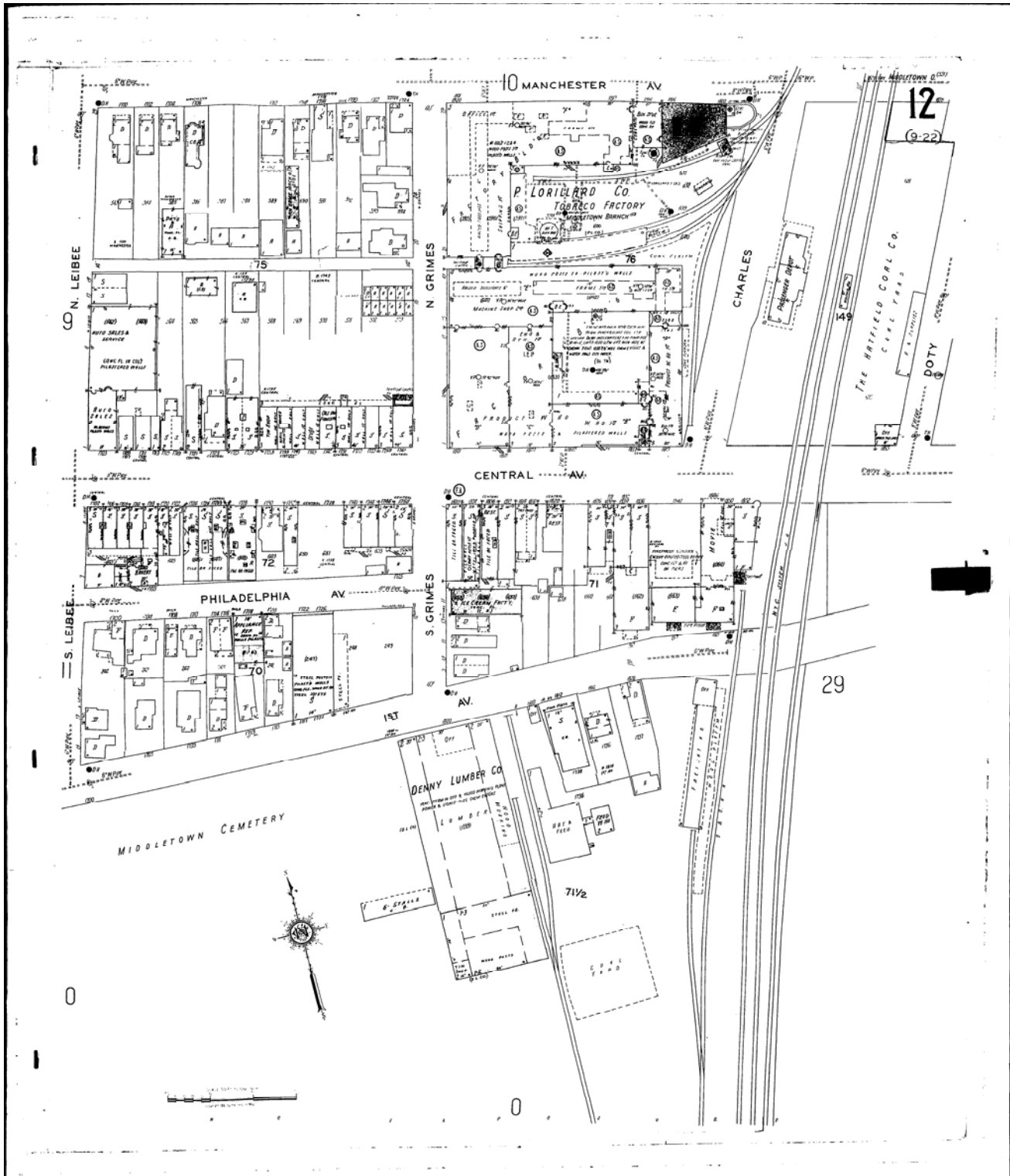


Figure 18. 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio
Source: Sanborn Map Company; Bell and Howell Information and Learning



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DEPT

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White wire shelving unit containing jars, baskets, and other small items.



4 Piece Kitchen Set
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Small items on a display stand.

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PAT RICHTER





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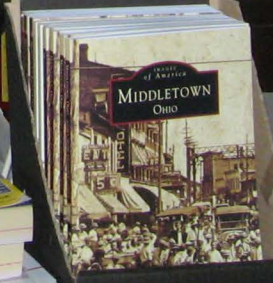


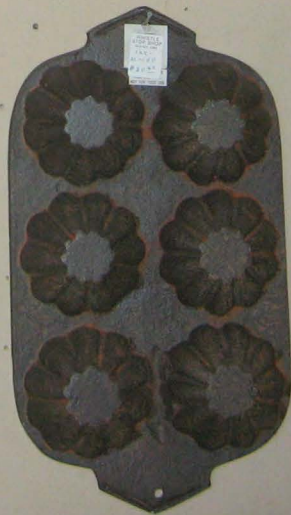
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Big Four Depot
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: OHIO, Butler

DATE RECEIVED: 11/08/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 12/09/13
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/24/13 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/25/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000979

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 12/24/2013 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Early 20th century railroad depot associated with
the development of Middletown, OH.*

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept AEC

REVIEWER Patrick Andrus

DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE _____

DATE 12/24/2013

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NPS TRANSMITTAL CHECK LIST

OHIO HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
800 E. 17th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43211
(614)-298-2000

The following materials are submitted on Oct. 30, 2013
For nomination of the Big Four Depot to the National Register of
Historic Places:

- Original National Register of Historic Places nomination form
- Multiple Property Nomination Cover Document
- Multiple Property Nomination form
- Photographs = TIFFs only
- CD with electronic images
- Original USGS map(s) = Electronic
- Sketch map(s)/Photograph view map(s)/Floor plan(s)
- Piece(s) of correspondence
- Other Electronic NR submission = copy of signed NR 1st page

COMMENTS:

- Please provide a substantive review of this nomination
- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- The enclosed owner objection(s) do _____ do not _____
Constitute a majority of property owners
- Other: _____



October 30, 2013

Ms. Carol D. Shull, Keeper of the
National Register
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye Street, NW (2280)
Washington DC 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find two (2) new National Register nominations for Ohio. All appropriate notification procedures have been followed for the new nomination submissions.

NEW NOMINATION

Big Four Depot

COUNTY

Butler

Hanford Village George Washington
Carver Addition Historic District

Franklin

The enclosed disks contains the true and correct copy of the nominations for the Big Four Depot and Hanford Village George Washington Carver Addition Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places.

If you have questions or comments about these documents, please contact the National Register staff in the Ohio Historic Preservation Office at (614) 298-2000.

Sincerely,

Lox A. Logan, Jr.
Executive Director and CEO
State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosures

OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Ohio Historic Preservation Office

800 East 17th Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43211 ph: 614.298.2000 fx: 614.298.2037

www.ohiohistory.org