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**United States Department of Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site

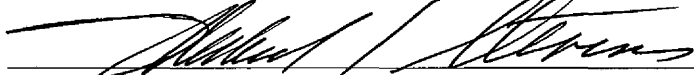
other names/site number Veteran's Memorial Park

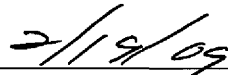
2. Location

street & number	Corner Street, bounded by Pleasant Street and Columbus Street	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Lodi	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI county Columbia	code 021	zip code 53555

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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


Signature of certifying official/Title


Date

State Historic Preservation Officer-WI

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site

Columbia

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall

4-9-09

for

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

building(s)
 district
 structure
 site
 object

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

contributing	noncontributing
2	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
2	0 total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE/park

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE/park

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/Prairie Style/Prairie Spirit

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation N/A

walls Limestone

Sandstone

roof N/A

other N/A

Narrative Description

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

Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site
Name of Property

Columbia
County and State

Wisconsin

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development
Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance

1933-1948

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Aust, Franz A.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site
Name of Property

Columbia
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9. Major Bibliographic References

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

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #___
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #___

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.8 acres

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

1 16 295140 4798230
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
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	Timothy F. Heggland/Consultant for the City of Lodi Historic Preservation Commission	date	February 22, 2008
organization		telephone	608-795-2650
street & number	6391 Hillsandwood Rd.	zip code	53560
city or town	Mazomanie	state	WI

Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site

Columbia

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

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/title	Mayor	date	February 22, 2008
organization	City of Lodi	telephone	608-592-3247
Street & number	130 S. Main Street	zip code	53555-1120
city or town	Lodi	state	WI
name/title	District Administrator	date	February 22, 2008
organization	School District of Lodi	telephone	608-592-3851 Ext 5481
Street & number	115 School Street	zip code	53555
city or town	Lodi	state	WI

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

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

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site
Lodi, Columbia County, Wisconsin

Description

The Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site consists of two parts that occupy portions of two city blocks located at the south end of the city of Lodi.¹ The Site is divided into east and west parts by the north-south running Corner St. (STH 113), but these parts are visually and historically connected.² The east part of the Site consists of a hillside that is situated just below the Lodi Primary School and this hillside occupies a large corner parcel that gives it two unequal length sides: a shorter one that faces south onto Pleasant St., and a longer one that faces west onto Corner St. The latter section is terraced and features four stone retaining walls and a system of stone stairways and paths. The west part of the Site consists of the Veterans Memorial Park, which was developed on the west bank of the north-south running Spring Creek, whose course roughly parallels and lies adjacent to that of the one-block-long Corner St. and whose banks are rip-rapped with stone. Both parts of the Site were designed in large part by noted landscape architect Franz A. Aust, who was the first professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. The construction of much of the Site was made possible by the use of grants for labor and materials provided by the federal government's Civil Works Administration (CWA) and Works Progress Administration (WPA) relief programs during the 1930s.

It was Spring Creek that was responsible for creating the setting of the Site. Spring Creek drains a large marshy area known as the Lodi Marsh, located a half mile to the southwest of the city. The creek ultimately empties into the Wisconsin River, which is located approximately three miles northwest of the city. In order to reach the Wisconsin River, Spring Creek had to wear its way through a tall ridge that once formed a part of the south bank of the much wider glacial period Wisconsin River, and as it did so, it created a narrow valley that cut through this ridge. The Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site is located at the place where this valley is narrowest, and the historic portion of the city of Lodi is arrayed on hillsides that overlook the Site and both banks of Spring Creek.

Because the portion of Spring Creek that is contained within the boundaries of the Site is the narrowest portion of the valley and because there is a fall of water through this portion, early settlers dammed the Creek at this point to generate water power, creating a millpond behind it. The dam and millpond remained until 1926, when the deteriorated dam was removed and the millpond drained. These acts, however, created an unsightly marshy area at the southern entrance to Lodi that many of its citizens thought should be turned into a park instead. In addition, these citizens also wanted to enhance the

¹ The city of Lodi had a population of 2925 in 2002.

² STH 113 has two separate names in Lodi. The southernmost part is called Corner Street, which connects to Main Street, the northernmost part.

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Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site
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hillside known locally as School Hill that overlooked the former millpond.³ The first steps to improve the appearance of School Hill occurred later in 1926 when a new stairway, a cement retaining wall, and three terraces were constructed at the north end of the hill. Lack of money coupled with the need to address other more urgent issues meant that nothing further was done to achieve these two civic goals until the creation of federally sponsored relief programs in the early 1930s made money for labor and materials available. Between 1933 and 1935, workers funded by the CWA extended the length of the terraces across the entire west-facing hillside and these are held in place by four stone retaining walls that still stretch across the west face of the hillside today. In addition, the banks of Spring Creek across Corner Street from the School Hill were cleaned up and rip-rapped with stone. Once completed, these conjoined projects turned what had once been an underutilized and unsightly part of Lodi into a highly attractive main entrance to the city and they still serve this function today. As a result, the Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site now constitutes one Lodi's two most historically significant examples of the blending of landscape architecture with community planning.⁴

School Hillside Improvement

Although the north end of the present hillside contains elements that date from 1926, this being the first period during which efforts to beautify it were made, all the elements that are contained within the Site's boundaries date from 1933-1935, the years during which the hillside achieved its current appearance.

Early photos taken shortly after 1898, when the first school was built atop School Hill, show that the north, west and south sides of the hillside below it were very steep and quite bare of vegetation, and they also show that the roadway then known locally as the Madison Road and officially called Corner Street (STH 113) actually cut into the base of the hill.⁵ These photos also show that the east bank of the millpond was located immediately west of the west edge of the roadway at that time.⁶

³ School Hill was so named because Lodi's first high school was located at the top of it on land that had been donated to the city for this purpose in 1896. The earliest portion of this school was built in 1898, and it, and a much larger addition that was built in 1916 and rebuilt in 1919, still housed the city's senior and junior high schools in 1926.

⁴ The other example, Goeres Park, shares a common development history with the Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site and it is the subject of a separate NRHP nomination that is being submitted for consideration in conjunction with this one.

⁵ The road was so-called because it originated in the capitol city of Madison, in Dane County, some 13 miles away.

⁶ Reinhold, Karen and Margaret Van Ness. *Historical Album, 1848-1973*. Lodi: 1973, pp. 51, 115 (Photos). See also: *Lodi Sesquicentennial: 1848-1998, A Generational Legacy*. Lodi: The Lodi Enterprise, 1998, p. 13 (Photo).

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Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site
Lodi, Columbia County, Wisconsin

Not surprisingly, the presence of a steep, barren hillside located directly above the roadway and very close to the school was considered to be both unsightly and unsafe, and it also resulted in continual maintenance problems. Thus, in 1926, the northwest-facing side of the hillside that overlooked the downtown was finally terraced to improve its appearance and stability. In order to do this, the slope of the hillside was cut back and a series of three terraces were created that stepped down the hillside to Corner Street. These three slightly sloping terraces were extended much further across the west-facing slope of the hillside that overlooks the millpond between 1933 and 1934 and these later terraces are still intact today and they are each held in place by battered four-foot-tall stone retaining walls, while a fourth identical retaining wall supports the west edge of the level school grounds at the top of the hill. These four walls vary in length, but they are all constructed out of dry-laid, locally quarried, randomly coursed sandstone blocks. The lowest of these four walls abuts the concrete sidewalk that runs along the base of the entire west-facing (Corner St.) hillside and it consists of two portions, the northernmost being the part that was built between 1933 and 1934, and the southernmost, the part that was built between 1934 and 1935. The northernmost portion is itself comprised of two parts: a 50-foot-long eight-foot-tall double-tiered section at the north end, and an adjoining 275-foot-long four-foot-tall section. A recent report on the condition of the northernmost portion of the lowest wall prepared by the Dry Stone Conservancy described these walls as follows.

At first glance, the sandstone walls appear to be of mortar-bedded stone construction, however upon closer investigation they are found to be dry-laid, as evidenced by stone to stone contact throughout. At some point after original construction, probably while repairs to failing sections were undertaken, the sandstone walls were heavily pointed with cement mortar.⁷

This description also applies to the other three 1933-34 retaining walls above, which are identical in design and construction and which are also built of the same randomly coursed sandstone blocks that were also later pointed with cement mortar. The length of these three walls varies but in general they measure about 300-400 feet long, the terraces that they support are largely covered in mown grass, and both of the middle two terraces slope gently down to the ones below.

When completed, these four retaining walls and the terraces that are associated with them extended at regular intervals and in parallel lines across much of the width of the west-facing side of School Hill, but while practical, they lacked a truly naturalistic appearance. They did, however, provide the setting for the work that would be undertaken on School Hill's west and south-facing sides in the years between 1934 and 1935. This work was designed by Prof. Franz A. Aust of the University of Wisconsin and it featured

⁷ Draft Stabilization & Preservation Plan for Deteriorating Stone Walls, Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site. Lexington, KY: Dry Stone Conservancy, May 2005, p. 4.

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Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site
Lodi, Columbia County, Wisconsin

the naturalistic treatment that is typical of his work. Aust's designs for the hillsides consisted of three separate but interrelated projects. The first project was a continuation of the lowest west-facing stone retaining wall from the south end of the 1933-1934 work up to and around the Pleasant Street corner and on up the south-facing Pleasant Street side of the hillside. The second project was the creation of a grand stone stairway and associated terracing that would ascend up to the top of the hillside from the sidewalk at the base of the Corner Street-Pleasant Street corner. The third project was the creation of a second staircase that was to begin at the north end of the 1933-1934 terracing and gradually ascend from street level to the level of the third terrace via a system of short flights of stone steps that connected the several terraces and also utilized portions of them as paths. All three projects were executed using dry-laid limestone, the walls being laid up in a naturalistic, stratified way, while the treads and risers of the steps and parts of the paths consist of limestone flags. The recent report on the condition of the hillside's retaining walls that was prepared by the Dry Stone Conservancy described the limestone walls associated with all three projects as follows.

The dry-laid limestone walls are easily recognized by the lack of mortar ... as well as by their formal bonding pattern, regularly-bedded coursework, well executed vertical joints, the absence of face pins or chinks, a good face batter, and the use of continuous courses of substantial capstones. Essentially, the limestone walls display virtually every hallmark of top-quality workmanship and have performed remarkably well over time.⁸

Like the sandstone retaining wall that its north end connects to, the 1934-1935 limestone portion of School Hill's lowest west-facing retaining wall also consists of northern and southern portions. The shorter northern portion consists of two four-foot-tall tiers, the upper tier of which is set back somewhat, for a total height of eight-feet, while the longer southern portion is four-feet-tall, the two portions together having a total length of some 75-feet. The southern end of this wall is then continued in a southeasterly direction diagonally across the corner that is formed by the intersection of Corner Street and Pleasant Street, and it then continues for an additional 60-feet further east up the lower edge of the south (Pleasant Street) side of School Hill.

The diagonal portion of the lowest retaining wall that cuts across the corner is three-sided and consists of two 30-foot-wide 6.5-foot-tall sections that flank a 58-foot-wide 6.5-foot-tall center section. Centered on this 58-foot-wide center section is the opening of a 13.5-foot-wide stairway that ascends the hill from the sidewalk at its base up to the school grounds above. Historic photos show that the sloping hillsides above this center section that flank both sides of this stairway are themselves terraced with as many as six

⁸ Draft Stabilization & Preservation Plan for Deteriorating Stone Walls, Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site. Op. Cit, p.3.

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Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site
Lodi, Columbia County, Wisconsin

additional lesser terraces that are supported by two-foot-tall limestone retaining walls.⁹ Taller limestone retaining walls also line both sides of the stairway itself, which has limestone treads and risers, a straight run, and a single landing located about halfway up.¹⁰

Aust's third design project was the creation of a second stairway at the north end of School Hill's west-facing Corner Street hillside. This stairway was built in 1934-1935 and it provided a way of reaching the north end of the school grounds from the street level by utilizing a system of several short flights of stone steps to connect the several 1933-1934 terraces, portions of which are also utilized as paths. The street level entrance to this stairway is located at the north end of the lowest level of the 1933-1934 retaining walls and it was created by removing a section of the sandstone retaining wall to make the 10-foot-wide stairway entrance. In the process, short stretches of the demolished sandstone retaining walls that were located on either side of the new entrance were replaced with dry-laid limestone blocks. Limestone flags were used to make the steps of the new stairway and the first flight of these new steps climbed half the height of the first terrace before reaching a landing. The steps then turn ninety degrees to the right (south) and climb a second short flight of steps until they reach the level of the first terrace. Subsequent flights of steps follow the same pattern as they continue the climb up the hillside, finally stopping when the level of the third terrace is reached. One then continues south along the length of this grass-covered terrace, which is bordered by the fourth (uppermost) retaining wall on the east and by a pipe railing on the west, until reaching several more very short flights of steps at the terrace's south end. The path then turns east and enters into the school grounds.¹¹ Each of these flights of steps has stone retaining walls on either side of it and some of these are actually portions of the 1933-1934 retaining walls, while others were built out of limestone at the same time as the stairway.

Much of this work is now obscured from view by shrubs and trees that have been planted or that have grown up in the vicinity of both stairways and neither of these stairways is now in use. Never-the-less, the original elements that comprise both are still almost all extant and are in good condition, and the grass-covered terraces that comprise parts of the north stairway continue to be maintained and this stairway can still be enjoyed by the intrepid pedestrian.

⁹ These lesser terraces and their retaining walls are still extant today but they are now almost completely obscured by the evergreen trees and shrubs that were subsequently planted on these terraces.

¹⁰ These stairs have now been closed off by a chain link fence at the top and by a wood wall at the bottom on which is painted the legend "Lodi Primary School."

¹¹ While the original walkway up the hill is still intact, the lower entrance to the stairway has been closed off by a rebuilt section of retaining wall and the first flight of steps has now been covered over with soil and planted with grass. In addition, a chain link fence now blocks access from the third terrace into the school grounds, although a gate in this fence still makes limited access possible.

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Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site
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Veterans Memorial Park

The second part of the Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site is located directly west of and across Corner St. from the School Hill hillside terracing project just described and it consists of two parcels of land that are situated on the east and west banks of the north-south-flowing Spring Creek, the two parcels being bounded by the north-south-running Corner St. (STH 113) on the east, the north-south-running Water St. (STH 60) on the west, and the Pleasant Street bridge on the south. All of this land had been flooded and was part of a millpond from the 1860s until 1926, when a dam at the north end of the pond that had controlled the flow of Spring Creek was removed. The removal of this dam returned the flow of Spring Creek to its historic channel, but it also left the lands on both banks of this channel in poor condition and created an unsightly marshy area at what was then and still is today the south entrance to the city of Lodi. Not surprisingly, this area quickly became the focus of community activists who wanted it turned into a park that would welcome rather than repel visitors to the city. Work to achieve this goal would not begin until 1933 and it was not completed until 1948. Today, this portion of the Site consists of three separate but conjoined elements: the rip-rapped streambed of Spring Creek; Veterans Memorial Park, which occupies the land on the left bank of the Creek; and the Lodi Community Rain Garden, which occupies the land on the right bank of the Creek.

The transformation of this area occurred during two separate periods. The first period lasted from 1933-1935 and it was undertaken under the auspices of the Civil Works Administration (CWA), one of the first "make work" programs initiated by the Roosevelt administration. The major focus of the CWA's first Lodi project was a general cleanup and stabilization of the banks of Spring Creek, the course of which flows not only through the Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site but through almost all of the rest of the city of Lodi. The work undertaken within the Site's boundaries included the removal of trash, the removal or trimming of trees and shrubs located adjacent to and overhanging the streambed, and the rip-rapping of the banks of the Creek with stone. The Creek's west bank stonework consists of somewhat regular blocks of sandstone that were dry-laid in courses. Larger rectangular blocks of stone form the base of the rip-rap, which decrease in size and regularity as they approach the top of the bank. The east bank of the stream, meanwhile, was rip-rapped with larger stone boulders that were more roughly laid along the water's edge. The west bank's rip-rapping forms a clearly defined retaining wall whose height increases at its north end in response to the fall of the Creek and helps to maintain a uniform elevation for the land behind it. The east bank's rip-rapping serves the same purpose but it was left in a more natural state. The rip-rapping on both banks of the

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Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site
Lodi, Columbia County, Wisconsin

Creek terminates at the elbow the Creek makes at the northern limits of the Site, with the rip-rap on the east bank terminating shortly before that of the west.¹²

While the rip-rapping was being constructed, the land lying between the east bank of the Creek and Corner Street above was being graded and terraced and sown with grass and the land on the west bank lying between the Creek and Water Street was being treated in a similar manner. In addition, shrubs and groups of trees were planted on both sides and an informal flight of stone steps that led down to the water's edge was also constructed where the rip-rap ended at the north end of the west bank.

The rip-rapping of these banks helped beautify the Site; it also helped prevent erosion and helped control the flow of Spring Creek as it descended gradually from south to north through the Site. Likewise, the cleaning up, grading, and planting of the land on both sides of the Creek was a significant improvement over what had existed previously. Never-the-less, the overall result still fell short of what those in the community who were concerned about the city's parks and its civic image thought it should be. The subsequent development of Lodi's Goeres Park and the entry of the United States into World War II prevented any further work being done on this part of the Site until the end of the war.

As World War II drew to a close, agitation began anew to complete the transformation of this part of the Site into a true city park. The second period of the work that would finally complete this transformation lasted from 1945-1948 and it was undertaken under the auspices of Lodi Garden Club, which had been established in 1934, in the midst of the Site's first period of development. The Garden Club's efforts were limited to just the land on the west side of Spring Creek and, what with the war being on everyone's mind, the members of the club proposed that this area should be made into a park that memorialized the Lodi men and women who had served during the nation's wars. The club's first step was to have plans for the park prepared by a landscape architect who worked for the McKay Nursery Co. in Madison. These plans were then presented to the Lodi Common Council in March of 1945 and their subsequent acceptance was followed by the beginning of the actual work, which was funded mostly by the club itself and by donations from many other members of the community.

Creating the park involved the grading and filling of some of the land, all of which was then covered with sod, and many of the existing shrubs and some of the trees were removed and were replaced with new examples. In addition, a central place was also created that was intended to be the future site of

¹² Similarities in the design of this stonework with that of the stonework that was being constructed at the same time on the School Hill hillside improvement on the other side of Corner Street strongly suggest that the streambed work was planned or at least guided by Franz Aust and his associates as well.

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Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site
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an Honor Roll that would list the names of those from the Lodi area that had given their lives in the nation's wars. As the work progressed, some of the work that had been done during the park's first period of development was retained, such as the rip-rapping along Spring Creek and a grove of evergreen trees that were located at the park's north end, but most of the plantings were new and many of these were associated with the park's future centerpiece. The early decision to have the future Honor Roll face west towards Water Street dictated the subsequent placement of the plantings and other elements that were put in place at this location. At first, the new memorial consisted of a metal flagpole that was placed behind a bronze plaque mounted on a raised concrete pad that bore the words "MEMORIAL PARK – IN MEMORY OF THE MEN AND WOMEN FROM THIS COMMUNITY WHO SERVED IN OUR ARMED FORCES – SPONSORED BY THE LODI GARDEN CLUB. 1944." Shrubs and other planting materials were then used to form a backdrop for these two elements and this was how the memorial area looked when the completed park was dedicated in 1948.¹³ Since then, all of these original planting materials in this area have been replaced by a low horseshoe-shaped evergreen hedge whose open end faces west towards Water Street. The flagpole is still located in its original position at the apex of the curve of the hedge, but the above mentioned plaque has been moved forward several feet and it is now mounted flush with the ground. In its place and occupying the place of honor is a large memorial stone that comprises the actual Honor Roll. This memorial stone is made out of polished black granite and on it are inscribed the words "LODI AREA LIVES SACRIFICED IN WAR."¹⁴

The latest addition to the Site is the Lodi Community Rain Garden, which occupies all the land on the east bank of Spring Creek, this being the side opposite the Veterans Memorial Park. This addition to the park was begun in 2002 and it was sponsored by the Lodi Park Commission in partnership with the Wisconsin DOT and the Wisconsin DNR. It was developed as a way of buffering Spring Creek from runoff caused by the reconstruction of STH 113 at this location and by the replacement of the Pleasant Street Bridge that crosses Spring Creek at the southern boundary of the Site.¹⁵ The development of this garden was funded by the Wisconsin DOT and it involved replacing most of the older plantings on the east side of the Creek with prairie plants that are now reaching maturity. Fortunately, the east side of the Creek had never been intensively landscaped and the new garden does not detract from the historic resources that comprise the majority of the Site. Indeed, one suspects that this use of native plantings would have been warmly approved of by Franz Aust, who dedicated much of his career to educating people about the virtues of using native plant materials in landscaping projects such as this.

¹³ Reinhold, Karen and Margaret Van Ness. *Historical Album, 1848-1973*. Lodi: 1973, p. 154 (photos).

¹⁴ There are currently 61 names inscribed on the stone and these memorialize those who died in the Civil War, World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

¹⁵ The original bridge here was built in 1927. It has been replaced by a new one that was built in 2006-2007.

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It is therefore believed that both the School Hillside Improvement Site and the Veterans Memorial Park and the retain a sufficient degree of integrity to contribute to our understanding of the period of significance, 1933-1948. Not surprisingly, changes have been made to some of parts of the Site in the 60 years since the Veterans Memorial Park was dedicated. On the hillside, a sign and a fence close off the stairway at the corner; however, the stairs are still intact and are visible. Other alterations include the addition of mortar to some portions of the retaining walls, the closing of the north stairway, and the loss of many original plantings. There is also an abundance of newer plantings and growth that obscures some of the original features of the hillside terracing. Never-the-less, the original stonework that comprises the retaining walls and the stairways in both parts of the Site is still largely in place. In the Park, one area of the stream bank has been rebuilt but most of the rip-rapped walls are still highly intact and while many of the park's smaller decorative plantings have been replaced, the general plan of the greenspace and the original site of the Park's memorial flagpole and its 1944 plaque have been retained. The improvements that were made to these two parts of the Site during the period of significance continue to be important visual landmarks at the southern entrance to Lodi today, and it is believed that their current appearance accurately reflects the historic intent of their designers and that of the Lodi community.

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Significance

The Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site consists of two adjacent landscaped parcels of land that are located on either side of Spring Creek at the south end of the city of Lodi. The Site is located in a narrow valley that was formed by Spring Creek and two major highways, STH 113 (Corner St.) and STH 60 (Water St.), run along opposite sides of this valley, which functions as the southern gateway to the city. The Site was identified by the Lodi Intensive Survey in 1999 as being a potentially eligible site having local significance under National Register (NR) criteria A and C.¹⁶ Research was undertaken to assess the potential for nominating the site to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) utilizing the NR significance areas of Landscape Architecture and Community Planning, themes which are also identified in the State of Wisconsin's *Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP)*.¹⁷ The results of this research are detailed below and show that the Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site is locally significant under NR Criterion C as a fine, largely intact example of the landscape work of Franz A. Aust, who was the first professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Wisconsin in the nearby capitol city of Madison and an important Wisconsin advocate of naturalistic landscape and the use of native plant materials.

The Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site is also believed to be of historic significance (Criterion A) because of its associations with the city of Lodi and the desire of the people of this community to improve their quality of life through the creation of parks and by visually improving the city's setting. Funding for the landscaping of the School Hill hillside and for rip-rapping work on the banks of Spring Creek came from 1930s era public relief funds provided by the federal government. The subsequent creation of Veterans Memorial Park on the west bank of Spring Creek was funded by donations from the citizens themselves and was a project of the Lodi Garden Club. The period of significance for the Site spans the dates from 1933 to 1948. Some of the design work and construction of the original retaining walls on the adjacent north-facing hillside part of the Site predates 1933, but 1933 marks the beginning of Lodi's use of federal work relief funding to achieve its civic goals. In addition, the earlier work lacks the artistic quality of the later landscaping. The period of significance ends in 1948, the year the Lodi Garden Club completed work on Veterans Memorial Park, the dedication of which marked the realization of a long-held civic desire to turn this important but previously neglected area into a park setting that was worthy of the city.

¹⁶ Hegglund, Timothy F. *City of Lodi Intensive Survey Report*. Lodi: 1999.

¹⁷ Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.) *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*. Madison: Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1989.

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Community Planning and Development

The Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site is believed to eligible for listing in the NRHP for its associations with the area of Community Planning because the completion of the two adjacent parts that it contains marked the culmination of a several decades-long struggle on the part of citizens of Lodi to improve and beautify the southern entryway to the city. The setting of the Site is a narrow valley through which Spring Creek flows, and the two most important highways that pass through Lodi both have routes that pass through this valley on either side of the Creek as they enter the city. Consequently, this location is one of the first things a visitor to the city sees before entering the downtown commercial core, which is located one block to the north of the Site. As automobile traffic increased at the beginning of the twentieth century, Lodi's citizens soon realized that this location provided visitors with their first impression of the city. It was the desire to ensure that this impression was a favorable one that ultimately resulted in the two projects that now comprise the Site.

In 1836, when eastern speculators known as the Western Land Co. made the first purchase of land in the Town of Lodi (which encircles today's city of Lodi), all the land within today's Columbia County was included within the boundaries of the larger and as yet undivided Portage County and was then without formal governmental organization. The first actual settlers in what is now the Town of Lodi were M. C. and G. M. Bartholomew, brothers who came to the Town from Illinois in 1844-1845. They were followed in 1845 by the Rev. Henry Maynard and his wife and family, by James McCloud, and by several others. In 1846, these first settlers were joined by the 37-year-old Isaac Palmer.

Isaac H. Palmer (1809-1889), a native of Binghamton, New York, had arrived in Milwaukee in 1837 with his wife, Anne, with the intent of making his family a home in the open country of Wisconsin. His first efforts in this direction took him first to the just created capital "city" of Madison as one of the crew recruited by A. A. Bird to build the first state capitol building. Once there, Palmer quickly built himself a log cabin near the capital square and then returned to Milwaukee to bring back his wife and their household goods. The Palmer's first child, also named Anne, was born soon thereafter, she being the second white child born in Madison, and the family's new home also served as the community's first school house in 1838. In 1839, Palmer was appointed the first probate judge of Dane County, thereafter being known as Judge Palmer, and he also served in the territorial legislature in 1842 and 1843. In 1845, a hunting trip brought Palmer to the headwaters of Spring Creek in nearby Columbia County and to the future site of the city of Lodi.

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Impressed by the water power potential this site offered, Palmer acquired 40 acres of land bordering Spring Creek in Sec. 27 of the Town of Lodi in 1846 and soon thereafter built himself a log cabin (non-extant) nearby. Palmer, like so many other town founders of that time, settled along a river or stream because it provided both a reliable source of water and the only readily available means of generating power for industrial purposes.

By 1846, population in the region had grown to a point where it made sense to set Columbia County off from Portage County. Also in 1846, the first schoolhouse (non-extant) was built in the Town and in 1847, Palmer applied to the Federal government for permission to establish a post office in Lodi and to the Territorial Legislature for permission to establish a horse-powered ferry across the Wisconsin River just northwest of the community to be. Both were granted and, as a result, the new vestigial community was now a recognized place in the government's eyes and had made a place for itself on the shortest route between Madison and Baraboo. In 1848, Wisconsin became a state and Palmer took office as the community's first postmaster on April 17, 1848. On June 25, 1848, Palmer recorded the first plat of the new village, which he named Lodi and which included both sides of S. Main Street from the Spring Creek crossing south to its intersection with Columbus Street; both sides of Columbus Street east for two blocks from that point, and both sides of Spring Street north to the creek crossing. This first plat embraced part or all of six of today's blocks and Palmer soon thereafter built the village's first store on the street that he had named Main Street.¹⁸

The downtown core of Lodi developed where it did because of the adjacent Spring Creek, which passes through Lodi on its northwesterly course towards the nearby Wisconsin River. In the 1840s–1860s, Spring Creek was the only source of water power in the area surrounding Lodi and locations along its banks were thus the logical place to establish saw mills, flour mills and grist mills, all of which required water for power, and for the establishment of other industries that required water as part of their manufacturing processes. Indeed, it was for these reasons that Isaac Palmer purchased land bordering the Creek in this area in the first place and built the area's first saw mill in 1848. Building such a mill was often the first step in building up a community because the lumber that came out of it was usually the only building material that was available for newly arrived merchants and farmers wishing to build their first permanent structures in the days before the coming of the railroads. The same was true for Samuel Ring, who constructed the village's first grist mill (non-extant) on Spring Creek late in 1848, and in 1850, Isaac Palmer took further advantage of the available water power when he built the village's first flouring mill on the Creek. It was the placement of these three mills (all now non-extant) in close proximity to one another on the banks of Spring Creek that first defined

¹⁸ Main Street is divided into north and south sections by the intersecting Lodi-Portage streets.

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where the business core of the village would eventually develop.

The construction of these three mills and the concurrent establishment of a road from Madison, the state capital, through Lodi and on to Palmer's ferry on the Wisconsin River and beyond to the growing village of Baraboo on the other side of the river served to ensure Lodi's eventual success. With the completion of the mills and the road, Lodi area farmers could now bring their harvest to these new mills for processing and then either to the river, where water transport to distant markets was possible, or else overland to Baraboo or to Madison, both of which were growing markets for agricultural products. This combination of transportation access and the availability of water power meant that Palmer's new community of Lodi became the natural center of commercial activity in the area surrounding Lodi, and inevitably, more roads were soon established that connected Lodi with other nearby communities as well. In Lodi, these roads were (and still are) called Columbus Street, which extends in an easterly direction towards the city of Columbus; Lodi Street, which extends in a westerly direction towards the city of Sauk City; and Portage Street, which extends in a northeasterly direction towards the city of Portage.

These new roads brought commercial activity of every kind into the fledgling village and created a need for the construction of buildings within which to conduct it. At first, these buildings (as well as the first houses in the village) were grouped mostly around the two major points where the east-west roads intersected with Main Street: Main Street and Columbus Street; and Main Street and Lodi Street-Portage Street, both intersections of which were also adjacent to the village's three mills.¹⁹ The place where Lodi's business core first evolved was also defined in part by the location of Spring Creek itself and by the extent of the two large mill ponds that were created when Palmer and Ring constructed dams (non-extant) across the Creek in order to provide power for their three mills. The earliest extant published map of Lodi, printed in 1861, shows that these water features, both natural and man-made, acted as barriers that effectively enclosed what was to become the business core of the village to the south, west, and north. And it was within this enclosed area that Palmer laid out the first plat of the village, with the lots being located along both sides of the newly created Main Street (today's South Main Street) and Spring Street between Columbus Street to the south and the place where Spring Creek crossed the path of Main Street to the north, which lies just south of Portage Street.

¹⁹ The 1861 Ligowsky & Wasmund map of Columbia County contains separate maps of a number of county communities including Lodi. The Lodi map shows that Palmer's flour mill and grist mill (both non-extant) were located close to one another just to the west of the Main Street-Columbus Street-Corner Street intersection (where Spring Creek still runs) while Samuel Ring's grist mill (non-extant) was located approximately where the rear portion of the current J. I. McFarland building (105 S. Main Street) is now.

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Lodi experienced only very gradual growth in the 1870s and the 1880s and growth would remain modest throughout the rest of the nineteenth century.²⁰ This would seem to indicate that even though a railroad line had finally been built through Lodi as early as 1871, the village had essentially reached its natural place in the economic order of things as a small but prosperous rural trading center whose economy was and would remain dependent on the larger agricultural community that surrounded it. If this dependence placed limits on Lodi's growth and size, the village and its mercantile establishments would continue to benefit from the steadily increasing prosperity of the surrounding farms.

And yet, gradual though Lodi's growth may have been, it was still sufficient to create a need for new and larger schools, so in 1898, Lodi built its first building that was intended exclusively for use as a high school. This was a two-story frame building that was constructed to a design furnished by local architect Carl C. Menes, who also acted as the contractor, and it was built on land that had been donated to the village for this purpose in 1896 by the Palmer sisters, who were the daughters of Lodi's founder, Isaac Palmer.²¹ This land consisted of a steep three-acre hilltop site located at the south end of Lodi overlooking Spring Creek and the southernmost of Lodi's two millponds. The main road to Madison (today's Corner Street, a.k.a. STH 113) ran along its west-facing base, while Pleasant Street formed its southern edge. The new school was accessed from Pleasant Street and because its location was a highly visible one it was not long before the site acquired its nickname: "School Hill."

Lodi's first high school continued to house both the junior and senior high school students of Lodi until 1914, but even by 1910, Lodi's population had climbed to 1044 and the city once again needed more space for its students. Consequently, in 1914-1915 a new one-story brick high school building designed by the Racine architectural firm of Chandler & Park was built adjacent to the 1898 building. Part of the work of constructing the new building also involved alterations to the School Hill site and these alterations were described in the local newspaper as follows:

Lodians will remember that a few years ago the rear part of the high school hill was graded down and leveled off for a playground. The present plan is to move the earth that is to be taken from the front part of the hill, to the rear part until the front and back meet on a level. The present [1898] school building will be moved forward approximately forty feet, and also to the east, and the front of the new building will be on a line with that of the old. This will make the grounds larger and better for all purposes.²²

²⁰ Lodi's population in 1881 was 771.

²¹ *Lodi Enterprise*, January 6, 1899, p. 1.

²² "High School Hill Will Be Lowered." *Ibid*, July 31, 1914, p. 1.

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One of those Lodians who was most involved in the creation of the new high school was Dr. T. O. Goeres (1881-1971), a young dentist who had come to Lodi in 1910 and had, by 1914, been appointed president of the Lodi Board of Education. Besides his interest in the high school building itself, Goeres also appears to have had an equal interest in its site and in the area surrounding it. In a tribute to Dr. Goeres that was held in 1962, Prof. Franz A. Aust of the University of Wisconsin remembered that it was in November of 1915 that Dr. Goeres first approached him. Aust was then the brand new head of the Landscape Extension Service of the Department of Horticulture of the University, and Goeres had come to him seeking both counsel and also development plans for projects that he was interested in perfecting in Lodi. It is not certain if Goeres approached Aust as a private citizen or in his capacity as president of the school board, but the first project he discussed with Aust was the approach to and the landscaping of the new high school building, the construction of which would have been well underway by that time. What plans the two men made at this time are not known, but future events showed that the seeds that were planted in 1915 would later bear fruit.

That Goeres was sensitive to issues of design and was dissatisfied with some aspects of the new high school's appearance and grounds can be seen in a letter to the public that was published in the *Lodi Enterprise* a week before the formal dedication of the new high school. Speaking in his official capacity as the president of the Board of Education, Goeres urged the public to attend the dedication the following week and carefully inspect the interior of the new school, but even while doing so he also noted that its exterior and surroundings left something to be desired.

We admit that our high school building is not of the showy or classy style; we admit that it is rather of a distasteful style, especially with the present condition of the grounds. Nevertheless we are proud of the interior of our building—the general arrangement, the simplicity, the conveniences, the practicability, and the lack of waste of space.²³

It would be another fifteen years, however, before Goeres' dislike of the appearance of the high school grounds would begin to be addressed. During this period, it is safe to assume that Goeres continued to lobby for improvements to the school grounds, but no action seems to have taken place until 1925, when the village board finally approved funding for the project. Construction had to wait until the following year, however, and action may actually have been spurred on by the failure of the dam that impounded the millpond opposite the school gave way, which resulted in the draining of the pond and its consequent transformation into an unsightly marsh.²⁴ Interestingly, just one week after the dam

²³ "H. S. Dedication Appeals to You." *Lodi Enterprise*, March 24, 1916, p. 1.

²⁴ "Part of Mill Dam Gives Way on Friday Night." *Ibid*, May 6, 1926, p. 1.

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went out, an editorial appeared in the local newspaper that sought to rally public opinion in favor of civic programs such as the transformation of the school grounds.

A civic program, seriously undertaken and modestly carried out, is commendable in any community. Such a program instantly marks that community as progressive; it shows that the citizens work together in harmony for the common good of their home.

What should such a program include and what should it mean to the people adopting it? Civic improvements are assuredly the main part of the plan. To be a progressive, happy people, we must have an ideal for our town which we keep constantly in mind and work for consistently.

We believe that every municipality should have a definite goal in the way of improvements which are carried out as quickly as is reasonable. We believe that part of the money earned in a town should be put back into permanent improvements which will make the citizens feel that they are part of community life. ... For Lodi we have in mind a schedule which would include a

Great White Way
Municipal Park, accessible, equipped, and maintained
Recreational Center
School Grounds of which we may be proud
Tourists accommodations²⁵

Two months later the Village Board accepted a bid for work to improve the school grounds and work finally commenced in August. The first phase of this work was concentrated on the north end of the school grounds, this being that portion that faces northwest toward Lodi's downtown and the intersection that Corner Street makes with Columbus and Main streets.

Improvement of the high school grounds, a matter long agitated, is at last in the process of becoming a reality under the direction of Raymond Oleson. A sum was voted for the work a year ago July and the acceptance of Mr. Oleson's bid for the job, July 17th, has finally started the dirt rolling up on the hill.

The old steps up the hill have been torn out, and new ones, somewhat narrower, are being built a few feet to the left of the old path. These will probably take the form of three terraces: at any

²⁵ "A Civic Program." *Lodi Enterprise*, May 6, 1926, p. 4.

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rate, at the top of the hill a walk branching in three directions will be built, one straight ahead to the door of the alleyway between the two buildings, one to the left, to the junior high building, and another to the right to the front door of the high school.

An attractive four foot retaining wall of concrete has already been built at the foot of the hill the whole length of the grounds front. The hill slope is being graded, and three inches depth of black dirt will be hauled preparatory to seeding down the entire grounds anew.²⁶

By mid-September, this first phase of the work was completed.

The work on the front campus of the high school is nearing completion after several weeks of steady application by Raymond Oleson and his crew. This news comes with joy to the Lodi folk who have long wished and fought for the removal of the former unsightliness.

According to plans of the school board, the work will be continued until the entire campus is landscaped as soon as more money for the purpose is appropriated by the taxpayers.

The campus has been graded into three terraces, each bank being sodded and the level seeded. An attractive concrete and brick wall has been built at the base of the hill and sidewalk and steps corresponding to the terraces have been put in from the base to the summit, with walks leading to the front steps of the main building, to the front steps of the Junior high school, and to the runway between the buildings.²⁷

But while the end result was a vast improvement over the previously unkempt and unlandscaped hillside, nothing had yet been done to the much longer west-facing side of the hillside that overlooked the millpond. The onset of the Depression, however, meant that the village could do nothing more until additional funding could be found. Fortunately, the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933 and the creation of the first of his New Deal programs in the same year would provide the means to continue and expand the work already begun.

The first of the new "make work" programs created by the Roosevelt administration was the Civil Works Administration (CWA), which began operation on 1933, and village leaders in Lodi were quick to see that this new funding and employment source could help them achieve some of their

²⁶ "School Grounds Are Being Improved." *Lodi Enterprise*, August 19, 1926, p. 1. When the new high school building was built in 1916, the old 1898 building became the junior high school.

²⁷ "Improvement Of School Grounds Nears Finish." *Ibid*, September 16, 1926, p. 1.

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longstanding civic improvement goals. Among the leaders seeking federal assistance was Dr. T. O. Goeres, who by 1933 had become the president of the Lodi Canning Co., one of the village's largest seasonal employers. Addressing the Lodi PTA late in 1933 and speaking as the president of the Lodi welfare committee, a citizen's action group, Goeres recommended that the PTA join with other civic organizations to plan for a recreational park for the village. He then went on to address other issues.

In addition to the recreational park, Dr. Goeres said that the village should sponsor a separate tourist park and that steps should be taken to beautify the roads leading into the village.

Along this line it was reported that the civil works project being started here this week would continue the terracing of the high school grounds and would beautify the creek and its surroundings.²⁸

The project being referred to in this statement was also the lead subject in another column of the same issue of the newspaper.

Sixty of Lodi's unemployed men went to work this week on the first local civil works project.

The project started here this week includes the widening, straightening, and rip-rapping of Spring Creek within the village. This covers about 4,000 feet of creek, including two mill races.

Part of the money is also being devoted to the landscaping of the high school grounds, and the terracing of the front lawn will be continued as far around the hill as is possible.

Project number one, that of cleaning up the creek and landscaping the school grounds, was given an official O.K. on Saturday by telephone by Robert C. Johnson, civil works administrator for Wisconsin, after the county committee had agreed upon the plan. This project calls for the employment of 30 men until Feb. 15.²⁹

The rip-rapping of Spring Creek involved much more than just that 400-foot-long portion of the creek that lies opposite School Hill. The course of Spring Creek actually divides the whole of Lodi into east and west sections and it flows directly behind and through the city's historic business district on its way northward through what would soon become Goeres Park and on to the city limits. At the time that the CWA-funded project began, however, very little of the land on either side of the creek was owned by

²⁸ "P.T.A. Votes To Back Move For Lodi Park." *Lodi Enterprise*, November 30, 1933, p. 1.

²⁹ "60 Local Unemployed Receive Work Clearing Spring Creek, Landscaping School Grounds." *Ibid.*

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the Village. Consequently, the village made a canvass of the owners of these lands before work began to secure the rights to improve the creek. Fortunately, this proved to be a popular cause.

Sunday morning a canvass of owners of land along the creek was begun, and most property owners gladly gave the right to the village to improve their property. A few, however, desirous of maintaining a more natural growth along the banks, declined. In those cases only actual obstructions can be removed.³⁰

By early December, the local newspaper was reporting that tree trimming and the rip-rapping of the creek and the work on the school grounds was progressing.

Lodi is getting its "back yard" cleaned up.

Spring Creek, which meanders through town, has been a sort of public "back yard" for years; its banks have received a huge share of the village refuse and its waters have carried off the sewage. To cover part of the ugliness, trees, brush, and weeds have been allowed to grow unhampered along the flats and meadows, until a veritable jungle was created.

Last week some 70 men went to work cutting out the jungle, removing the debris, opening up the creek bed, rip-rapping the banks, and doing everything that is necessary and possible to make Spring Creek a beauty spot instead of an eyesore.

The high school campus too, is being groomed. The side of the hill facing Main street was terraced and landscaped several years ago and now the terracing is being extended around the western side of the hill. Rough disorder of the hill is giving way under the efforts of a crew of men to a stone retaining wall and smooth terraces.

All this work is part of the CWA—Civil Works Administration—and the money is appropriated by the federal government.³¹

Work on these walls and on the rip-rapping of the creek ended for a short time in March of 1934 when the CWA itself came to an end, leaving both projects half-finished.

³⁰ "60 Local Unemployed Receive Work Clearing Spring Creek, Landscaping School Grounds." *Lodi Enterprise*, November 30, 1933, p. 1.

³¹ "CWA Project Provides Jobs For Lodi Men." *Lodi Enterprise*, December 7, 1933, p. 1.

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Actual work in the village ended a number of weeks ago, leaving two projects unfinished, while the men were sent elsewhere to be employed. The terracing work at the high school grounds is in such condition that the board of education will undoubtedly feel it necessary to spend some money for labor in order to "taper off" the job and make an acceptable looking terrace.

The village will also probably feel called upon to hire some labor to complete the unfinished work along Spring creek.³²

The work done up to that point had created a terraced west-facing hillside that had four evenly spaced, nearly identical sandstone retaining walls that stretched from north to south across about two-thirds of its face. These walls supported two sloping grass-covered terraces at the base of hill and two grass-covered flat terraces at the top. This new work differed noticeably from the 1926 work, the principle difference being in the treatment that the terraces received. The 1926 terraces had (and still have) sloping sod-covered faces that are not held in place by retaining walls. The 1933-1934 terrace extensions, however, are held in place by retaining walls that have battered faces and that are of dry-laid sandstone blocks. Similar stone work characterized those portions of the stone rip-rapping that had been laid up along the banks of Spring Creek as well.

It is not known who devised the plans that guided the work on these two projects up to this point, but while the general idea of terracing the hillside and rip-rapping the creek may well have been Franz Aust's, the new terrace retaining walls lacks the naturalistic appearance that Aust always strove to achieve in his own work, and it is questionable that he had direct involvement with the project at this stage. This would soon change, however.

Even before the advent of federal funding for civic improvement projects had begun, a number of persons in Lodi who had long sought to implement just these kinds of projects had formed a civic organization called the Lodi Welfare Committee, which subsequently became the Lodi Civic Improvement Committee. The availability of federal funding energized the members of this organization, chief among whom was its chairman, Dr. T. O. Goeres. When Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) funding became available in mid-1934, Goeres and his organization quickly seized the opportunity to utilize it to continue and complete the work that had already been done.

Work of improving the high school grounds begun last fall by the CWA, has been resumed and the building of retaining walls and leveling of the lawn will be completed by a small group of

³² "CWA Emergency Work Program Is Completed; Men Are All Laid Off." *Lodi Enterprise*, March 29, 1934, p. 1.

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men working under the FERA plan. A limited amount of the FERA fund allotted to Columbia County has been set aside for this work, which is one of several projects being undertaken in the county at the present time.³³

By July, the same workers had been put to work straightening and rip-rapping Spring Creek and the Civic Committee had been assisting the village in acquiring a future park site where the old mill pond had been, and securing better plans to guide the work of improving the school grounds.

The stretch of property known as the "Old Mill Pond" has been in a sad state; old tin cans dumped there, weeds, brush, and what-not, and this at the entrance to the village on highways 60 and 113.

Lately, through the efforts of some of our citizens and the village board this fertile piece of land with the winding creek running through it has been purchased by the village. This is a move in the right direction as this land, from the bridge to the old dam, will now be made into a PARK and instead of being a sorry looking sight to the stranger entering our village it will be in future years a garden of beautiful flowers and shrubs, a credit to our town.

Through the efforts of Dr. T. O. Goeres, chairman of the Civic Improvement Committee, very splendid plans for landscaping our high school grounds have been secured through the cooperation of the University of Wisconsin. Mr. Holmes, of the university, came out, looked over the situation, took John Weber, N. H. Brainard, and Elbert Oleson to Madison to show them similar grounds and each and every citizen of Lodi will be interested in watching the development of what promises to be one of the most beautiful high school sites in the state.³⁴

In October, L. W. Holmes returned to Lodi to present completed designs for the high school improvements to the Lodi Village Board. As the minutes of the Board note:

³³ "Complete School Grounds Project Under FERA Plan." *Lodi Enterprise*, June 21, 1934, p. 1. The difference between the two agencies was that the CWA could offer jobs to the unemployed both on and off relief, while the FERA had to confine itself to just those on the relief rolls. Moneys from both agencies were allocated by grants-in-aid to the individual states.

³⁴ "Civic Improvement Committee Considers Parks, Landscaping, To Banish Many 'Eye-sores.'" *Lodi Enterprise*, July 19, 1934, p. 1. "Mr. Holmes" was L. W. Holmes, who was an instructor in the UW Horticulture Department in 1934 and who appears to have been an associate of Prof. Franz Aust at the University of Wisconsin but about whom nothing else is known.

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Be it resolved: that the plans & specifications for the improvements of the high school premises ..., shown on the blue prints prepared by L. W. Holmes of the State University of Wisconsin, at the request of the Lodi Civic Improvement Commission [sic], be & the same are accepted & approved, that a committee ... is hereby appointed to see that said plans & specifications are carried into effect.³⁵

With the new plans to guide them, the work continued under FERA sponsorship and by August of the following year, the local newspaper could report that the work was completed.

The work of terracing high school hill, which was in progress for several months as a FERA project, has been completed so far as the village is concerned. The school district is keeping some of the men on the job to put the land south of the school buildings in shape for suitable play ground. The terraced hill is now an attractive place.³⁶

The land referred to above that lay south of the school buildings was the old mill pond property that had been acquired by the village late in 1933.³⁷ Besides the rip-rapping of the creek banks, grading, seeding, and the planting of a small grove of trees at the north end of this property, nothing further would be done at this site for another ten years. This was due at first to the fact that Lodi's park-building energies would be engaged elsewhere for the rest of the decade by the creation of what is now known as Goeres Park, but even this work would finally be halted by the nation's entrance into World War II. And yet, even before the war had ended, there were those in the Lodi community who were already setting about the task of completing the work of turning the old mill pond site into still another park for what, since 1941, was now officially the city of Lodi.

The driving force behind the creation of what would become the Veterans Memorial Park at the old mill pond site was the Lodi Garden Club. This club had been founded in March of 1934 and it had been active ever since then in promoting gardening through the sponsorship of lectures on the subject, and by holding flower shows and garden tours. For the members of the Club to take on the task of commissioning and developing an entire park was a big step but it was seen by them as the logical civic extension of the work that they had already been doing privately as individuals. Their first step was to get permission from the City for the use of the land, which they secured on September 5, 1944. By March of 1945, the Club was ready to make the first public announcement of their plans.

³⁵ Lodi Village Board Minutes. October 2, 1934.

³⁶ *Lodi Enterprise*, August 8, 1935, p. 1.

³⁷ Lodi Village Board Minutes. December 7, 1933. This land, lying between highways 113 and 60, was purchased by the village from Herbert Palmer and Jule Moyers.

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Plans were revealed this week by the Lodi Garden Club for a proposed Memorial Park, erected in honor of the Lodi area men and women serving in the armed forces. The park will encompass the area between state trunk highway 113 and 60 and between the Home Feed Company property and the concrete bridge to the southwest. Focal center of the landscaped park will be an Honor Roll, eventually to be built of permanent materials.

Garden Club members have been making plans for the Lodi Memorial Park project for many months. At a meeting Monday night ... a landscape plan of the park was presented by a landscape gardener from the McKay Nursery Co.

The park is to be 400 and 500 feet long and 100 feet wide extending towards Highway 113 from Highway 60. Present plans are for the Honor Roll to face 60. A detailed sketch of the proposed park is on display in the front window of Gray's Drug Store. It shows exactly how flower, shrub, and tree groupings will be set out, where the Honor Roll will be located, and how the park will be intersected by the stream.

While this is a Garden Club project, members will welcome financial and manual assistance from the entire community. Nursery stock to the amount of approximately \$600 will be needed.

At present the area south of the Mill makes more or less of an ugly entry to Lodi on its two main highways. The proposed park would be a thing of beauty and a great asset to the community.³⁸

By October, work on the new park was well underway.

Work on Lodi's new Memorial Park has been renewed during recent weeks. A large amount of grading has been done and filling is now being hauled to low spots. All the fall plantings are being shipped this week and it is expected that shrubbery and tree plantings will be in the ground by the weekend. Seeding will follow that and it is anticipated that by the time the ground freezes a vastly improved park will be put to bed for the winter. Much of this work has been done by individuals, both Garden Club members, and others.

The Lodi Garden Club undertook the project of cleaning up the creek bed area west of the Lodi mill last spring. The once offensive appearing weed and brush patch became the proposed site

³⁸ "Plan Offered For Memorial Park On Mill Stream Site." *Lodi Enterprise*, March 8, 1945, p. 1. The McKay Nursery's headquarters were in Madison. The "concrete bridge" was the Pleasant Street Bridge that crosses Spring Creek.

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for a Memorial Park with the thought in mind that eventually it would serve as a fitting background for a permanent Honor Roll for service men and women.³⁹

By late the following summer, much progress had been made.

A place that a year ago was a desolate weed patch and catch-all is now one of the prettiest spots in our community. Memorial Park this summer has blossomed out into a thing of beauty. Tree and shrub plantings made last fall and this spring have come along beautifully and the grassy plots are smoothing out nicely. A long retaining wall of cemented rock now holds the Lodi creek in its course along the edge of Highway 113.

The park now gives to Lodi another delightful entrance into the city and should do much to establish our town as a place of beauty.

Another summer's hard work finally brought the project to completion and the Veterans Memorial Park was officially dedicated on Memorial Day, May 30, 1948. This and the other parks in Lodi were first privately managed by the Lodi Civic Improvement Commission. In 1956, however, the parks became the responsibility of the City and, in 1971, the Lodi Parks Commission was established to oversee the care and planning of the city's park system. Since then, plantings in the park have been replaced as necessary and the area around the flagpole and the granite Honor Roll has been somewhat altered to more clearly focus attention on the Honor Roll itself. Otherwise, Veterans Memorial Park, like the adjacent School Hill hillside, is still in excellent and largely original condition today.

Consequently, it is believed that the Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site is eligible for listing in the NRHP at the local level of significance because the two resources that the Site contains are both the result of long-standing community planning efforts on the part of the citizens of Lodi. Much of the work and much of the money that was expended in the creation of these two resources came from the citizens themselves, but when other means became available, they did not hesitate to avail themselves of them. When federal relief programs made money available for labor and materials in the depth of the Depression, Lodi was one of the first recipients and it continued to make use of these funds as long as they were available. In addition, Lodi also availed itself of expertise that was available close at hand at the University of Wisconsin, and the designs that came from the UW's Landscape Architecture Department and from Prof. Franz A. Aust in particular, did much to elevate these resources above the more usual work of the period.

³⁹ "Memorial Park Plans Progress With Plantings." *Lodi Enterprise*, October 11, 1945, p. 1.

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Landscape Architecture

The Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site is also believed to be locally eligible for listing in the NRHP at the local level of significance under NR Criterion C (Architecture) because of its associations with prominent Wisconsin landscape architect Franz A. Aust. Aust was the first professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Wisconsin and his work was heavily influenced by the work and philosophy of internationally known landscape architect Jens Jensen and others who advocated naturalistic landscape designs and the use of native planting materials. In addition, Aust was also the founder of the Wisconsin chapter of the important early conservation organization, The Friends of Our Native Landscape, an organization that had been founded by Jensen. The name of Franz Aust is associated with much of the civic improvement work that was done in Lodi between 1915 and 1943 and his influence on the two resources that comprise the Site was largely responsible for their current appearance and the high quality of their design.

Franz A. Aust was born on May 10, 1885, in Defiance, Ohio. After his father's death, Aust's mother moved the family to North Dakota to be with her relatives. Aust subsequently attended public schools in North Dakota, including the State School of Science in Wahpeton, North Dakota, then enrolled at the University of Minnesota, where he received a B.S. in physics in 1909. After receiving his M.S. in physics from the University of Minnesota, Aust was diagnosed with asthma. Being advised by his doctors that working in a physics lab might lead to a premature death, Aust changed careers and instead pursued the study of landscape architecture at the University of Michigan, where he was the first graduate of Michigan's new five-year Masters in Landscape Architecture program.

Following graduation, Aust accepted an Extension position at the University of Illinois. Then, in June 1915, Aust accepted an offer from the University of Wisconsin at Madison to teach landscape architecture, to prepare plans for the University's campus, and also to promote landscape architecture through the University's Extension program.⁴⁰ One of Aust's trademarks was his "hands on" teaching style. His students were involved directly in many of his projects and they also participated in field trips to visit noted landscape architect Jens Jensen at The Clearing, his Door County studio, and to hear Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin.⁴¹ Around Memorial Day, Aust would take his students on a three-day trip to Chicago to see both Jensen's and Wright's works first hand. Aust continued to teach at the University until his retirement in 1943.

⁴⁰ Aust's appointment ultimately led to the founding of the University's degree program in Landscape Architecture in 1926.

⁴¹ Aust and Wright first met when Aust was teaching at the University of Illinois between 1913 and 1915, a meeting that may have been arranged by Jens Jensen, another friend. Aust and Wright subsequently became friends and would later collaborate on an unrealized sculptural project that was to be located in Nakoma, then a Madison, Wisconsin suburb.

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Aust's involvement in the transformation of Lodi's School Hill and the adjacent old millpond site began shortly after Aust came to Madison in 1915, when he was approached by Dr. T. O. Goeres and asked to consult on the landscaping of the site of Lodi's new high school building on School Hill. What the initial outcome of this early consultation was is not known, but Aust's role in the future landscaping of the hillside appears to have begun at this time and it lasted through to its completion. It is likely, given Aust's working methods and his practice of involving his students in the design process, that the designs he produced for the School Hillside and for the Spring Creek rip-rapping were actually the work of a number of hands, since documentary evidence of this has survived in his work for Lodi's Goeres Park, which began immediately after the School Hillside work was completed. What is certain is that as far as Lodi was concerned, the work done on the school hillside was primarily due to Aust.

Prof. Aust of the University of Wisconsin will be the guest speaker at the P.T.A. meeting next Monday night at 8 o'clock. His topic will be "Landscape Gardening" and everyone in the community should show their interest by coming to hear him. Prof. Aust planned the landscaping on our high school hill and the committee feels that every citizen should be interested.⁴²

Aust had a broad interest in landscape design that included urban and rural planning and conservation and his professional associations indicated these broad interests. He was a member of the American Civic Association and the Association of City Planners. He was chairman of the Committee on Slope Erosion Control and a member of the Roadside Development Committee of the National Research Council's Highway Research Board. He was the founder and longtime secretary of the Wisconsin chapter of the Friends of Our Native Landscape and was managed editor of the chapter's publication: *Our Native Landscape*.⁴³ Through his associations with the University of Wisconsin Extension program, Aust also traveled and spoke throughout the state. In addition to his teaching and University Extension duties, he was also active as a private landscape designer and consultant. Aust died in Madison on October 21, 1963.⁴⁴

While a number of well-known historically significant landscape architects completed important projects in Wisconsin, Franz Aust was the first significant landscape architect to establish his residence

⁴² "Prof. Aust of U.W. To Speak at P.T.A. On Monday Evening." *Lodi Enterprise*, October 24, 1935, p. 1.

⁴³ For an excellent discussion of Jensen and Aust's role in the Friends of Our Native Landscape, see: Tishler, William H. and Erik M. Ghenoju. "Conservation Pioneers: Jens Jensen and the Friends of Our Native Landscape." *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, Vol. 86, Number 4, Summer 2003, pp. 2-15.

⁴⁴ Biography taken from the Franz Aust Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society, Archives.

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and practice in Wisconsin and he was also the first person in the state to be hired to teach landscape architecture at the university level.

Aust's own landscape works are characterized by the use of native plants and construction materials. He was also strongly opposed to the pruning of trees and shrubs, preferring them in their natural state. In this approach to landscape design, Aust followed and shared the philosophies of Jens Jensen. Jens Jensen was a leading practitioner of the Prairie movement in landscape gardening. Wilhelm Miller codified the principals of this school of design as: conservation (or preservation), restoration, and repetition. Conservation and restoration referred to the landscape designer's use of naturally occurring elements in their landscape designs. Repetition was the use of stratified materials and forms in ways that imitated their natural occurrence, which can be seen in Aust's use of dry laid stone walls built up of irregular courses of flat, naturally worked stone.⁴⁵ Aust's use of stonework and the designs of his stone retaining walls and council rings, in particular, closely mirrored elements that were also signature elements of Jensen's work, and his debt to Jensen's work is clearly visible in the stonework he designed that was executed between 1934 and 1935 on Lodi's School Hill. Aust's labor-intensive stonework was also, of course, ideally suited to the employment goals of the various federal funding agencies that financed the work.

While Aust designed several estates and is credited with several large projects, including the design of portions of the UW campus, most of his known his work concentrated on the common landscape and on small public projects. Aust also devoted a great deal of time and energy addressing local garden and civic clubs on landscape issues. The Lodi Hillside project and the rip rapping of Spring Creek in the Veterans Memorial Park are excellent and largely intact examples of the small public improvement projects that Aust both supported and promoted.⁴⁶

The Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site is therefore being nominated to the NRHP for its local significance under Criterion C because the resources it contains constitute a visually impressive, architecturally significant grouping designed by University of Wisconsin Professor of Landscape Architecture Franz Aust that is representative of both the naturalistic Prairie Style of landscape design that is closely associated with Aust himself and with his better known mentor and inspiration, Jens Jensen. Both the stonework and the plantings used in the design of the Site are representative of this

⁴⁵ Grese, Robert E. *Jens Jensen: Maker of Natural Parks and Gardens*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992, pp. 45-46.

⁴⁶ Much of the information on Aust and on his role in this project was first put together in a Determination of Eligibility form prepared by Daina Penkiunas for WisDOT projects that were carried out on STH 113 in Lodi between 2002 and 2007. Permission to quote from this document was given and is acknowledged with gratitude by the author.

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style of landscaping and the completed designs are, along with Lodi's Goeres Park, which is being nominated separately, among Aust's finest known designs. Their significance is further enhanced by their high degree of integrity and their well-maintained state of preservation.

Archeological Potential

The extent of any archeological remains in the Site is conjectural at this time. It is possible that some archeological remains may still be extant despite the subsequent construction activity that took place when the Site's resources were created. No information about possible prehistoric remains in this area was found in the course of this research. It is likely, however, that any remains of pre-European cultures located within the boundaries of the Site would have been greatly disturbed by the construction activity associated with the subsequent development of this area.

Preservation Activity

Fortunately, the Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site's resources are municipally owned and they are still largely intact and well maintained. In addition, the Lodi Historic Preservation Commission has recently had both parts of the Site designated as Lodi Landmarks and they have also acted as the sponsor of this nomination.

Acknowledgment

This project has been funded with the assistance of a grant-in-aid from the Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended. Historic Preservation grants-in-aid are administered in Wisconsin in conjunction with the National Register of Historic Places program by the Division of Historic Preservation of the Wisconsin Historical Society. However, the contents and opinions contained in this nomination do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the National Park Service or the Wisconsin Historical Society.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property begins at a point that corresponds to the northeast corner formed by the intersection of the east-west running Pleasant St. and the north-south running Water St. (STH 60). The boundary line then proceeds in a northerly direction along the E curbline of Water St. for a distance of 329 feet, then turns and proceeds in a southeasterly direction to the N end of the rip rapped W bank of Spring Creek, where there is a drainage pipe. The boundary then continues E across Spring Creek and up the hillside on the E side of Spring Creek to a point that is located on the W curbline of the north-south running Corner St. (STH 113). The boundary then continues SE across Corner St. to the E curbline of said street, then turns and continues in a northerly direction along said E curbline to the N end of the stone retaining wall that flanks this curbline. The line then turns and continues in a southeasterly direction up the hillside that is located behind the retaining walls and up to the topmost of the four levels of the wall. The boundary then turns and runs in a southwesterly direction along the top of the uppermost retaining wall until it joins with a chain link fence that edges the school grounds at the top of the hillside. The boundary then follows this fence line in a southerly direction until it intersects with the E end of a stone retaining wall that runs along the N edge of Pleasant St. The line then continues S to the N curbline of Pleasant St., then turns and continues in a westerly direction along said N curbline to the northeast corner formed by the intersection of Corner St. and Pleasant St. The line then continues W across Corner St. to the NW corner of the intersection, then proceeds in a westerly direction along the N curbline of Pleasant St. to the POB. Said boundaries contain 2.78 acres MOL. These boundaries contain land that is part of Outlots 18, 36, 37, and 38, City of Lodi.

Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to encompass the limits of the features that are historically associated with the site. That portion of the Site that is located to the east of Corner St. (STH 113) is the Lodi School Hillside Improvement portion while the portion that is located west of Corner St. is the Veterans Memorial Park portion. Note: while an original 1930s stone retaining wall extends further up the hillside along Pleasant Street, that portion located beyond the chain link school fence mentioned above was not included within the boundaries because of alterations and additions to the wall beyond the fenced area.

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Items a - d are the same for photos 1 - 8.

Photo 1

- a) Lodi School Hillside Improvement Site
- b) Lodi, Columbia County, WI
- c) Timothy F. Heggland, November 2007
- d) Wisconsin Historical Society
- e) Main School Steps, View looking NE
- f) Photo 1 of 8

Photo 2

- e) General View of School Retaining Walls, View looking NE
- f) Photo 2 of 8

Photo 3

- e) North Stairs Detail., View looking SE
- f) Photo 3 of 8

Photo 4

- e) North Stairs, Upper Terrace, View looking SW
- f) Photo 4 of 8

Photo 5

- e) Upper Terrace with Veteran's Memorial Park below, View looking SW
- f) Photo 5 of 8

Photo 6

- e) Spring Creek with Veterans Memorial Park, View looking N
- f) Photo 6 of 8

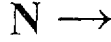
Photo 7

- e) Spring Creek, View looking N
- f) Photo 7 of 8

Photo 8

- e) Spring Creek, North End, View looking N
- f) Photo 8 of 8

**FIGURE 1:
LODI SCHOOL HILLSIDE
IMPROVEMENT SITE
LODI, COLUMBIA COUNTY, WISCONSIN**



--- BOUNDARY LINE

1-INCH = 200-FEET

