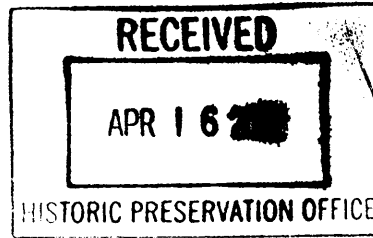


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" or "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 VanDerventer/Brunson House

other names/site number Vermeule Mansion

2. Location

street & number 614 Greenbrook Road not for publication

city or town North Plainfield Borough vicinity

state NJ code NJ county Somerset code 035 zip code 07060

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 [Signature] Date 3/8/04

John S. Watson Jr., Assistant Commissioner Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO
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 certifying official/Title _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

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

Signature of the Keeper [Signature] Date of Action 10/27/04

Van Derventer/Brunson House
Name of Property

Somerset, NJ
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	6	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	6	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is 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)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

SOCIAL/club house

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

CULTURAL/museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Second Empire

foundation stone

Colonial Revival

walls clapboard

roof slate

other aluminum

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

c. 1870-1911

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

SHPO Letter of Opinion HPO-E93-113

VanDerventer/Brunson House
Name of Property

Somerset, NJ
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 5.32

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 8	5 4 6 0 4 2	4 4 9 5 5 5 1
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dennis Bertland & Melody Lee-Imhof

organization Dennis Bertland Associates date November 5, 2001

street & number P.O. Box 11 telephone 908-689-6356

city or town Port Murray state NJ zip code 07865

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 The Borough of North Plainfield

street & number 263 Somerset Street telephone _____

city or town North Plainfield state NJ zip code 07060

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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section number 7 Page 1 Van Deventer/Brunson House, Somerset County, NJ

DESCRIPTION

Occupying a large, park-like lot in suburban North Plainfield, the Van Deventer/Brunson House is a substantial frame dwelling of mostly late 19th/early 20th provenance, in public ownership since its acquisition by North Plainfield in the 1970s under the New Jersey Green Acres program. Although popularly known as the Vermeule Mansion after earlier owners of the property, the house takes its historic name from the two individuals, Jeremiah R. Van Deventer and his grandson, Augustus J. Brunson, under whose ownership the dwelling achieved its present appearance during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Exhibiting both Second Empire and Colonial Revival style features, the frame, three-story, mansard-roofed dwelling consists of a large, five-bay main block with double-pile, center-hall plan and end-wall interior chimneys; a four-bay, double-pile east wing with interior chimney; and flat-roofed one- and two-story rear appendages. While exact construction dates remain unknown, physical and documentary evidence suggests that the house underwent four major phases of construction between about 1840 and 1930. The main block was built first, probably around 1840, perhaps somewhat earlier, an undated photograph (figure #1) depicts it with a gable roof and Greek Revival entry porch.¹ In a second major work program, which presumably took place sometime around 1870, the house was enlarged and remodeled in the Second Empire mode, acquiring a mansard-roofed third story and one and one-half story east wing with partially enclosed, wrap-around porch (figures #s 2 and 3). Major renovations also occurred in the early 20th century, most likely around 1911, when the east wing was extended to its east, raised to the height of the main block and covered with a matching mansard roof (figure #4). Concurrently, a small similarly detailed extension was made to the rear of the main block and Colonial Revival fireplaces and other features introduced. The house was again remodeled in the 1920s, evidently after 1924, in a fourth period of construction to accommodate its subdivision into several apartments, at which time the shed-roofed rear appendages were added. Despite the apartment conversion and a number of more recent alterations, the Van Deventer/Brunson House retains architectural integrity of the 1870–1911 period and the ability to reflect its historical and architectural significance.

The property also contains a number of modest secondary buildings (two garages and three cottages) erected in the middle decades of the last century behind the main house on the site of complex of 19th-century farm buildings (figure #s 3 & 4), as well as a Community Center constructed at the northwest corner of the lot in the 1990s. Located

¹ see Section 8, pages 7 & 8 for documentation of this construction chronology.

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Section number 7 Page 2 Van Deventer/Brunson House, Somerset County, NJ

at the rear of the property and partially screened by trees and other plantings, these non-contributing buildings present little visual distraction to the dwelling's park-like setting.

House: (feature #1 on the site map)

Exterior:

The exterior of the house presents an amalgam of 19th and 20th-century features (photo #s 1–11). The main block's stone foundation is faced with ashlar brownstone, an original feature, on the south or front elevation; the east wing foundation appears to be poured concrete and that of the rear appendages is parged masonry block. The clapboard siding and 6/6-sash windows are a mix of 19th and early 20th-century fabric. Some replacement siding on the west side of the main block is associated with window alterations during the (fourth-period) apartment conversion or more recently, which included the installation of two double 6/1-sash windows, as well as slightly moving the first-story front window to the left of the front entry and a few 6/1- and 1/1-sash replacements on the rear (photo #s 7 & 8). The front entry with its shouldered architrave surround and slightly raked head can be dated to the c. 1870 (second-period) renovations, presumably a replacement for the original single-leaf front door (photo #5; figure #s 1 & 2). Its double-leaf doors probably were replaced, in turn by the present glass-and-panel front door in the c. 1911 (third-period) remodeling. The 3-bay, flat-roofed front porch appears to incorporate elements dating to the first or second construction phases: the quirk-beaded ceiling boards and the two attached posts with paneled shafts in the Greek Revival style (photo #4; figure #s 1 & 2). The simple Colonial Revival entablature, railings, and posts evidently are third-period fabric, although the posts exhibit later reworking at their bases (photo #4; figure #4).

The wing's side entry features a distinctive, c. 1911, (third-period) Colonial Revival entry hood with simple entablature and fluted console brackets, as well as a panel door with multi-pane glass inset (photo #11). The wing's rear entry also is a third-period feature; the two doors above date to the fourth-period, apartment conversion and provided access to a fire escape, subsequently removed. The fourth-period rear appendages incorporate a second-story screen porch, and the first-story entry has a simple bracketed hood. The wooden deck at the back of the east wing and wooden handicapped ramp leading to the east end of the front porch are recent additions.

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Section number 7 Page 3 Van Deventer/Brunson House, Somerset County, NJ

The main block's bracketed cornice, patterned polychrome slate roof (now covered with modern aluminum cladding scheduled for removal in 2002) and segmental-arched dormers are Second Empire style features dating to the second period of construction (photo #s 2, 3, 6 & 56). Historic photographs indicate that the roof originally had a tracery balustrade and scrollwork cresting on the dormers (figure #s 2 & 3). In the third-period rebuilding of the east wing, the original mansard roof was carefully replicated except for the balustrade, which was replaced. Slate work, dormers and cornice brackets and moldings were copied (some elements probably were recycled), and a simple Colonial Revival balustrade was installed around the perimeter of the new and old roofs (photo #s 6, 7, 10 & 11; figure #4). The three massive brick chimney stacks featuring water tables and corbeled drip caps are contemporary with this work. While the balustrade and dormer cresting have not survived, the other elements remain intact.

Interior:

The interior of the house presents a largely Colonial Revival character created in the c. 1911 (third-period) renovation, but retains some earlier fabric, as well as features resulting from later remodeling. The main block has a central hall and flanking rooms on all three stories, apparently the original 19th-century arrangement, and a full cellar. The east wing has a four-room plan on each story including the basement, which contains finished service rooms, as well as a dumb waiter in Room 008 (photo #21). The staircase, located at the southeast corner, rises in several runs from the first to third stories (photo #s 38 – 41). Modifications resulting from the apartment conversion, or more recent changes, include removal of the main block staircase (photo #23) and relocating the lower portion of the wing staircase, as well as reworking various partitions and doorways (notable the removal of partitions separating rooms 102, 103 & 104 (photo #s 24 & 25), the installation of apartment kitchens and bathrooms (photo #s 33, 34, 42 & 47) and adding an acoustical-tile ceiling in the front hall (photo #23). That one or more of the bathrooms probably date to the third-period remodeling is suggested by the presence of contemporary fixtures (photo #42). The landing of the main staircase survives as a change in floor level in room 203.

In addition to the main block floor plan, some 19th-century finishes also survive. Architrave window and door surrounds, panel doors (both four-panel and vertical two-panel types) and window spandrel panels of 19th-century provenance are found throughout the first and second stories of the main block, and the third story features simple quirk-beaded door trim and panel doors apparently from the same period (photo #s 22, 27, 32, 44, 49, 49, 52, 59 & 60). The front entry's flanking pilasters probably also date to

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this era (photo #22). As was the case with the roof and cornices, care was taken to copy and reuse earlier interior elements in the c. 1911 (third-period) renovations of both the main block and east wing. In enlarging the northeast parlor (room 106), for example, window trim with spandrel panels matching that of the southeast parlor (room 105) was installed (photo #s 29 & 30). Parquet flooring also was laid down throughout much of the house during the third-period work (photo #s 26, 43 & 47).

The most notable Colonial Revival interior features are the main block fireplaces and east wing staircase, elements whose designs reflect not 18th but early 19th-century prototypes, elements which would not have been out of character with the dwelling's original architecture. The main block's first- and second-story east rooms each have a large brick fireplace with wooden mantel. Featuring Tuscan flanking columns and robust, symmetrically molded frieze, the design of the matching parlor mantels (rooms 105 & 106) evokes a distinctive Federal/Greek Revival mantel typical of the 1830s (photo #s 27 & 29). Examples are found in a number of area houses of that period, like the parlor mantel of the Abraham Staats House in nearby South Bound Brook (HABS NJ-57). The matching mantels in rooms 208 and 209 have squat paneled pilasters and wide entablature, copying a slightly later, simpler Greek Revival design (photo #45). With its slightly bulbous turned newel posts, slender turned balusters and oval handrails, the wing's staircase similarly reflects Greek Revival design influences.

Setting and Site Features:

The Van Derventer/Brunson House is surrounded by a suburban residential neighborhood that mostly developed in the middle decades of the 20th century with relatively modest dwellings sited on small lots along tree-lined streets. To the north across Carter Place is a municipally owned 2.5-acre lot with playground and athletic fields at the rear of which is the small, brick-walled graveyard of the Vermeule family, the local progenitors of which were among the community's first European settlers. The Van Derventer/Brunson House stands at the middle of a level, approximately 5-acre lot. Park-like grounds, informally landscaped with a variety of mature trees and shrubs, surround the house, extending on the front and east to Greenbrook Road and Clinton Avenue (photo #s 1, 12 & 13). A curving concrete sidewalk, apparently dating to the middle of the 20th-century, leads from Clinton Avenue to the house providing access to the front and side entries and continues around to the rear (photo #1). A few foundation plantings are present, notable a grouping which screens the handicapped access ramp in front of the east wing (photo #2). Historic photographs depict a driveway running from Greenbrook Road

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along the east side of the house to the back of the property (figures 3 & 4). The present gravel driveway leads from Clinton Avenue near the northeast corner of the lot to a small parking area behind the house.

The property also contains a number of modest secondary buildings (two garages and three cottages) erected in the middle decades of the last century on the site of complex of 19th-century farm buildings behind the main house (figure #s 3 & 4), as well as a brick and frame Community Center constructed at the northwest corner of the lot in the 1990s. The outbuildings are discussed in more detail below (photo #s 1 – 4 & 30 – 32).

Garage: (feature #2 on the site map)

Northeast of the house is a 4-bay, shed-roofed garage of frame and masonry-block construction that appears to be of mid-20th-century provenance, but may represent the reworking of a slightly earlier structure (photo #17). It is a non-contributing resource.

Garage/apartment: (feature #3 on the site map)

Standing behind the house and perpendicular to it is a, 2-story, flat-roofed building of stuccoed masonry block construction (photo #15). According to local resident, Ed Apgar, who lived on the property as a boy, it was erected in the 1930s and accommodated garage and storage areas on the first floor with an apartment above. It features a string-course at the second-floor level and 6/6-sash windows. The garage entry has been blocked up, and the interior has been remodeled for office use. Abutting its north side are small frame, gable and shed-roofed additions which may survive from the range of outbuildings on the site depicted in a historic photograph (figure 3) or may have been relocated from elsewhere on or off site (photo #16). The gable-roofed portion appears to be of mortise and tenon construction, but has been extensively remodeled, leaving little evidence of its original appearance, as is the case with the shed-roofed sections. The garage/apartment is a non-contributing resource.

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Cottages: (features #s 4 –6 on the site map)

These three small frame “Cape Cod” houses survive from a six-unit group, which, according to local resident, Ed Apgar, was erected just after World War II. The 1-story, 3-bay, gable-roofed dwellings have asphalt shingle siding, flush eaves and 1/1-sash windows. They are non-contributing resources.

Community Center: (feature #7 on the site map)

Erected on the site of a barn that, according to local resident, Ed Apgar, had been converted into apartments in the early 1950s, the Community Center dates to the middle of the 1990s (photo #14). Perhaps in an attempt to evoke the region’s vernacular 19th-century architecture, the frame 2-story, gable-roofed building has a wrap-around porch and brick, chimney-like, gable-end features serving as elevator and mechanical shafts. The Community Center is a non-contributing resource.

Integrity:

Although subject to a number of alterations since the 1920s, the Van Deventer/Brunson House still possesses the ability to reflect its historical and architectural significance. Despite modifications like the removal of the main staircase and west parlor partitions, most of the building’s character defining features remain intact. While the non-contributing outbuildings compromise its setting to a limited degree, the property still evokes the setting of its history period in such features as the relationship of the house to the adjoining streets and landscaping; it consequently retains essential integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

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SIGNIFICANCE

The Van Derventer/Brunson House has significance under Criterion C for architecture. The product of Colonial Revival renovations undertaken c. 1911 by Augustus J. Brunson of the residence of his grandfather, Jeremiah R. Van Derventer, itself a c. 1870 Second Empire style reworking of an earlier dwelling, the house provides a document of the transformation of a substantial farmhouse into a suburban mansion. It also reflects an eclectic, non-academic approach to Colonial Revival design current during the early 20th century in its embrace of the preservation and replication of the Victorian mansard roof and other early fabric, as well as the introduction of Colonial Revival motifs from a variety of sources. The design of the c. 1911 renovations looks beyond generic 18th-century Georgian sources to adopt stylistic motifs that reflect the region's early 19th-century domestic architecture. Notable interior features introduced by Brunson like the fireplace mantels and east wing staircase are elements which would not have been out of character with the c. 1840 dwelling's original architecture. In particular, the design of the matching parlor mantels (rooms 105 & 106) evokes a distinctive Federal/Greek Revival mantel typical of the 1830s (photo #s 27 & 29), examples of which survive in a number of area houses of that period, like the parlor mantel of the Abraham Staats House in South Bound Brook (HABS NJ-57).

Van Derventer/Brunson House is located on property owned and occupied by members of one of the locality's pioneer families, the Vermeules, and perhaps on the site of the site of a dwelling associated with them. According to local historians, the Vermeules, a family of Dutch extraction, were "among the earliest and most influential settlers" along the Green Brook in what is now North Plainfield, two of whom, Frederick and Cornelius, having moved to the area from Bergen County in 1726. An address given by Cornelius C. Vermeule to the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1923 recounted the history of the Vermeules' local landholdings (which encompassed well over 1,000 acres), and a map accompanying the address depicts and labels a house at the site of the Van Derventer/Brunson House as "Homestead built 1736." The family actively supported the American cause during the Revolutionary War, most notably Cornelius Vermeule, a member of the Continental Congress, who along with his four sons also served in the American army. The Vermeule property, known as "Blue Hills Plantation," is said to have been the site of small fortification built to guard the Old York Road.¹

¹ James P. Snell, (ed.), *History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey*. Vol. II, p. 861; *Looking Back: A History of North Plainfield*, page 34; "North Plainfield Past and Present," *The Somerset Advocate*, June 13, 1936; Friends of the Vermeule Mansion, "Vermeule Place," no date.

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Although there is little physical evidence to support the contention, local sources maintain that the southwest portion of the main block incorporates a small dwelling that was extant when John Vermeule sold the farm property to Jeremiah Van Derventer, a local resident who was also of Dutch descent, in 1835. The Vermeule family "burying ground" was exempted from the sale, and the small brick-walled graveyard survives today on property to the north of the Van Derventer/Brunson House across Clinton Avenue. Nevertheless, the much greater price (\$4,291) Van Derventer paid for the 38.8-acre lot upon which the graveyard was located than he paid for the adjoining tract of 74.75 acres (\$1,875) suggests that the first contained substantial improvements. What evidently is the original portion of the present dwelling on the site, as documented by a historic photograph (figure 1), may well have been erected by Van Derventer c. 1840 to replace an earlier house or was possibly extant when he acquired the property.²

In addition to operating his farm, Jeremiah R. Van Derventer (1805-89), was a successful businessman and held local political office. He served as president of the First National Bank of Plainfield, as well as that city's gas company, and invested successfully in real estate at a time when Plainfield and North Plainfield were developing as prosperous suburbs served by the Central Railroad of New Jersey. He served on the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders in 1872 and on the Plainfield Township Committee in 1877. The 1880 agricultural census for North Plainfield Township lists Van Derventer as proprietor of one of the locality's largest, most valuable farms with agricultural improvements worth \$18,000 and \$1,500 in farm income.³ Historic photographs document the prosperous appearance of his farm, as well as the renovations that he made to the house (figures 2 & 3). Executed in the Second Empire style, this work probably occurred around 1870 and perhaps was influenced by the houses in that architectural mode in "Washington Park," a planned residential community then being developed on the outskirts of Plainfield, whose Romantic Revival architecture and picturesque landscape design typify mid 19th-century taste.⁴

Van Derventer died in 1889, willing his homestead farm to his grandson Augustus J. Brunson (1870-1963), son of his daughter Caroline. City directories of the 1890s list Brunson as a lawyer and bank director living on Greenbrook Road, and the 1900 Federal

² Interviews with local source, Edward Apgar, whose family lived on the property in the 1950s, July and October, 2001; Somerset County Deeds, Book R, page 507.

³ Snell, Vol. II, pages. 861 & 862; "Death of Jeremiah Van Derventer." *Plainfield Daily Press*, 11/18/1889.

⁴ Washington Park Historic District National Register nomination form. 1984, pages 7-4 & 8-1.

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census indicates that the household consisted of him, his widow mother, unmarried sister and three Swedish servants.⁵ When his mother died in 1902, the family was living at the Park Avenue Hotel in Plainfield. While in his forties, Brunson purportedly was blinded as a result of an accident while attempting to invent a better match, and this tragic occurrence may have precipitated the family's move to the hotel. He and his sister remained at the hotel until 1903. In the 1904 city directory, he is listed as President of the First National Bank of Plainfield, residing at 149 Crescent Avenue in Plainfield. He remained at that address until 1911, and in the following year was back at the Greenbrook Road homestead. Having married his first wife by that time (their first child was born in 1910), one can postulate that the extensive renovations, which he made to his grandfather's house, were undertaken then in preparation for his new family's move there. Furthermore, a handyman employed by the Brunsons for many years recalled that he came to work for the family at Greenbrook Road in 1911.⁶

The Brunson family remained at Greenbrook Road throughout subsequent decades. Brunson's wife, Gertrude died in 1918, leaving him with two young children, a son and daughter. His second wife, Emily was engaged as his children's nurse shortly after his first wife's death. In 1919, Brunson transferred ownership of the house and other property to a real estate holding company.⁷ Brunson retained presidency of the bank until the 1920s, when he lost the position, purportedly because of some financial problems or irregularities. This must have occurred between 1922 when he was last listed in the city directory as bank president and 1924, the next year for which there is a directory, when he was described as having "no occupation." He returned to the practice of law by 1928, in which year the city directory describes him as a lawyer with offices at 105 East Front Street in Plainfield. The loss of his job as bank president is said to have caused financial difficulties that led Brunson to convert his house into apartments; if so, the renovations most likely occurred in the mid-1920s.⁸

⁵ Somerset County Wills, Book, M, page 488; *Plainfield City Directories*, 1890-1899; United States census, North Plainfield Borough, 1900.

⁶ "Death of Mrs. Brunson," *Plainfield Courier News*, June 6, 1902; *Plainfield City Directories*, 1900-10; Interview with Edward Apgar, October 2001.

⁷ Somerset County Deeds, Book N24, page 35; *Plainfield City Directories*, 1910-20; "Mrs. A. J. Brunson Died Yesterday," *Plainfield Courier News*, 4/24/1918; Interview with Edward Apgar, October, 2001.

⁸ "Plainfield City Directories, 1910-20; "Mrs. A. J. Brunson Died Yesterday," *Plainfield Courier News*, 4/24/1918; Interview with Edward Apgar, October, 2001.

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Brunson soon recovered from this setback, and throughout the middle decades of the 20th-century, he lived at Greenbrook Road, maintaining a law office in Plainfield for many years while continuing to make improvements to his homestead. The 2-story garage is reputed to have been erected in the 1930s, and contained an apartment for his chauffeur on the second story. The cottages were erected to provide additional rental property shortly after World War II, and the barn located on the site of the present Community Center was converted into apartments around 1950. Brunson died in 1963, leaving his property in trust for his surviving family members. His widow Emily died in 1973, and shortly thereafter the Borough of North Plainfield purchased the Greenbrook Road property with funding from the New Jersey Green Acres program. Since then, the property has been used as a community center. The house itself is managed by a non-profit group, the Friends of the Vermeule Mansion, incorporated in 1997, and is used for both a photography museum and as a meeting space. The Friends group has recently received a restoration grant from Somerset County to undertake much needed preservation measures. Recognizing the historic importance of the Van Derventer/Brunson House as a local landmark, the Borough and the Friends have joined together to secure the New Jersey and National Register listings it deserves.⁹

⁹ "Augustus J. Brunson, 93, Once Headed Bank in City," *The Courier News*, 12/5/1963; Interview with Edward Apgar, October 2001.

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The Somerset Advocate.

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National Park Service

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Somerset County Deeds

Somerset County Mortgages

Somerset County Wills

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the nominated property is delineated on the attached site boundary and photographic identification map and is verbally described in the following paragraph. The site and boundary map was made using sheet 56 of the current tax maps of the Borough of North Plainfield, which was prepared by C. H. Firstbrook, Borough Engineer, dated September, 1930, and subsequently updated.

The boundaries of the nominated property are those of block 199.01, lot 1, the lot on which the Van Derventer/Brunson House stands. The boundary begins at the southeast corner of block 199.01, lot 1, which point is located at the corner of Greenbrook Road and Clinton Avenue. It proceeds north along the east side of lot 1 and the west side to Clinton Avenue to the northeast corner of lot 1, also the corner of Clinton Avenue and Carter Place. From there it turns west along the north side of lot 1 and the south side of Clinton Avenue to the northwest corner of lot 1, also the northeast corner of block 199.01, lot 2. It continues south along the west side of lot 1 and the east sides of block 199.01, lots 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, then east and south again along the north and east side of block 199.01, lots 9 and 10, to the southeast corner of the latter lot on the north side of Greenbrook Road, also the southwest corner of lot 1. From there it runs east along the south side of lot 1 and the north side of Greenbrook Road to the place of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary of the nominated property corresponds to those of block 199.01, lot 1, which lot comprises all of the remaining lands appurtenant to the Van Derventer/Brunson House.

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National Park Service

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PHOTOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION

The following information is the same for all photographs submitted with the nomination:

Name: VanDerventer/Brunson House

Location: Somerset, NJ

Photographer: Dennis N. Bertland

Date: September 2001

Negative Repository: Dennis Bertland Associates

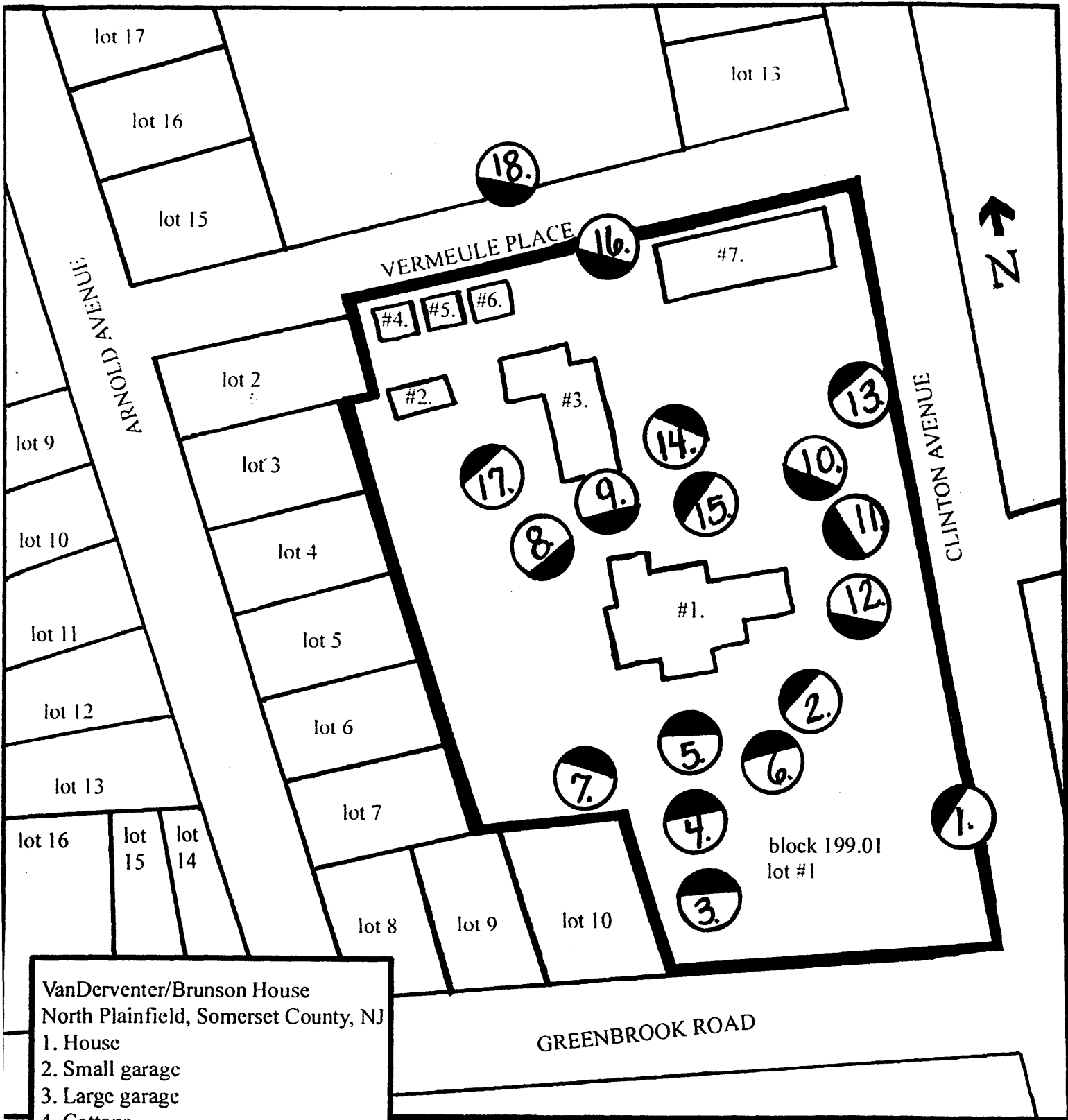
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1.	Bldg. # 1	NW
2.	Bldg. # 1	NW
3.	Bldg. # 1	N
4.	Bldg. # 1	N
5.	Bldg. # 1	N
6.	Bldg. # 1	N
7.	Bldg. # 1	NE
8.	Bldg. # 1	SE
9.	Bldg. # 1	SE
10.	Bldg. # 1	SW
11.	Bldg. # 1	SW
12.	yard	SW
13.	yard	NW
14.	Bldg. #7	NE
15.	Bldg. #3	NW
16.	Bldg. #3	SW
17.	Bldg. #2	NW
18.	Bldg. #4,5,6	SW
19.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 008	NE
20.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 009	SW
21.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 001	SW
22.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 101	S
23.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 101	N
24.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 102,103, 104	NW
25.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 102, 103	SE
26.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 105	SW
27.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 105	SE
28.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 105	NW
29.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 106	NE
30.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 106	NW

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<u>PHOTO #</u>	<u>SITE FEATURE</u>	<u>VIEW</u>
31.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 106	SW
32.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 108	W
33.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 109	S
34.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 110	NW
35.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 111	E
36.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 111	NW
37.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 112	SW
38.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 117	SW
39.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 117	NE
40.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 213	SE
41.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 213	SW
42.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 211	SW
43.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 208	NE
44.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 209	SE
45.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 209	NE
46.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 209	NW
47.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 214	SE
48.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 201	NW
49.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 202	E
50.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 203	NW
51.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 204	W
52.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 309	NW
53.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 313	SE
54.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 310	NE
55.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 307	NW
56.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 307	SW
57.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 311	SE
58.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 301	SW
59.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 302	NE
60.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 303	SW
61.	Bldg. # 1, Rm. 305	S



VanDerventer/Brunson House
 North Plainfield, Somerset County, NJ

- 1. House
- 2. Small garage
- 3. Large garage
- 4. Cottage
- 5. Cottage
- 6. Cottage
- 7. Community House
- property boundary
- photo number

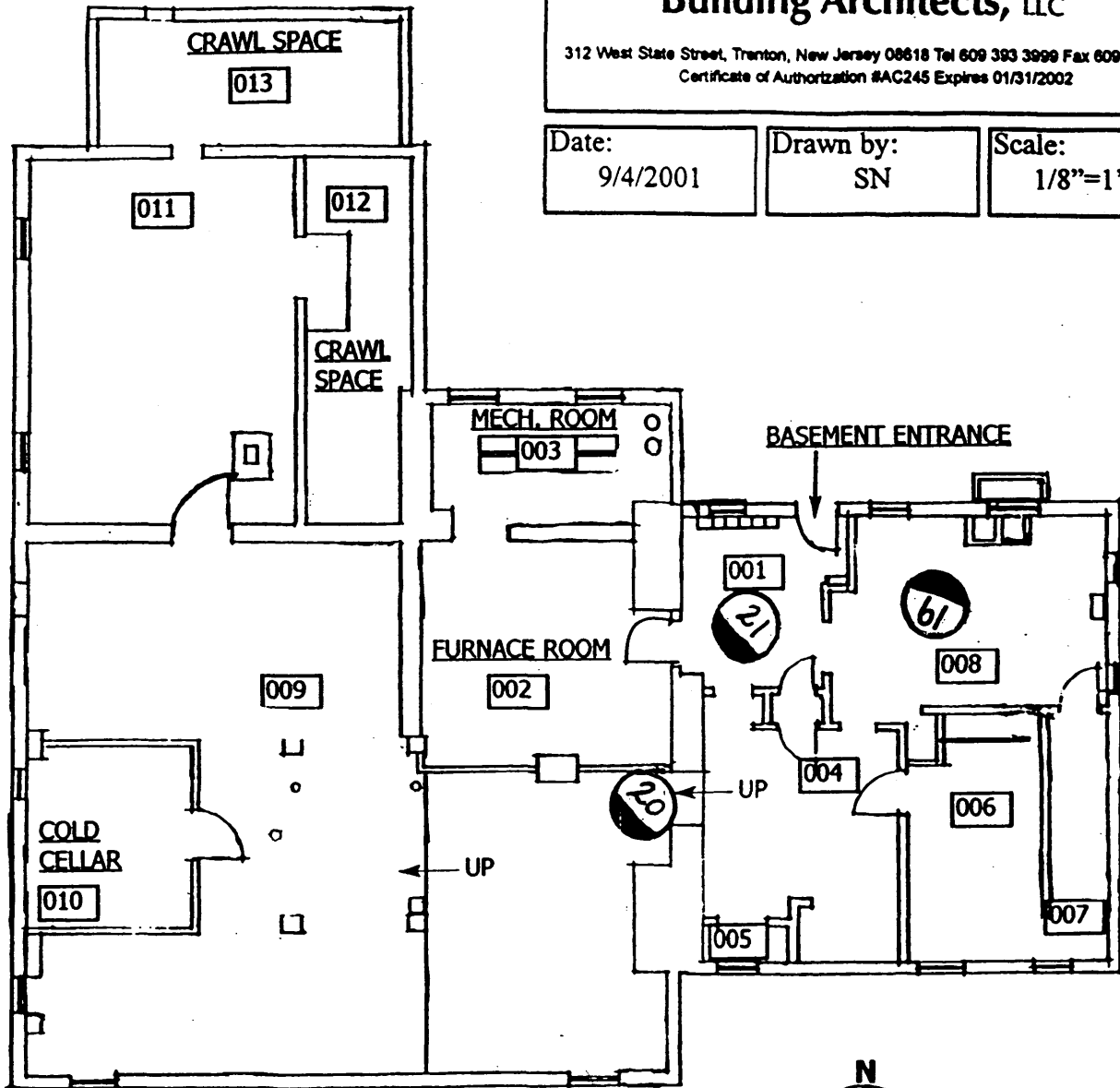
1"=100'

Existing Conditlon Survey of the
Vermeule Mansion
 614 Greenbrook Road
 North Plainfield, New Jersey 07060
 Borough of North Plainfield, Owner

Basement Plan

Historic Building Architects, LLC
 312 West State Street, Trenton, New Jersey 08618 Tel 609 393 3999 Fax 609 393 4333
 Certificate of Authorization #AC245 Expires 01/31/2002

Date: 9/4/2001	Drawn by: SN	Scale: 1/8"=1'-0"
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Existing Condiiton Survey of the
Vermeule Mansion
 614 Greenbrook Road
 North Plainfield, New Jersey 07060
 Borough of North Plainfield, Owner

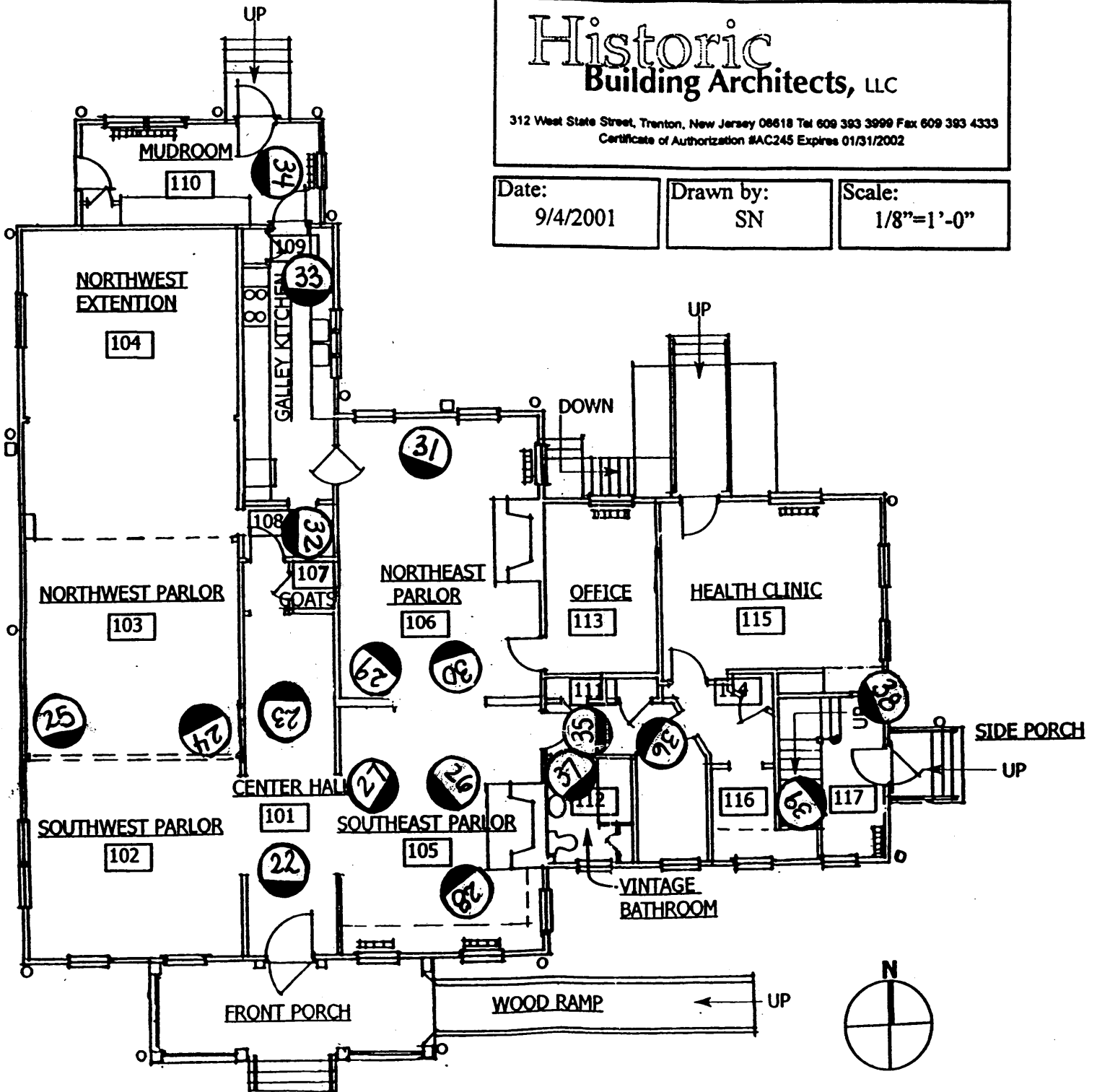
First Floor Plan

Historic Building Architects, LLC
 312 West State Street, Trenton, New Jersey 08618 Tel 609 383 3999 Fax 609 383 4333
 Certificate of Authorization #AC245 Expires 01/31/2002

Date:
 9/4/2001

Drawn by:
 SN

Scale:
 1/8"=1'-0"

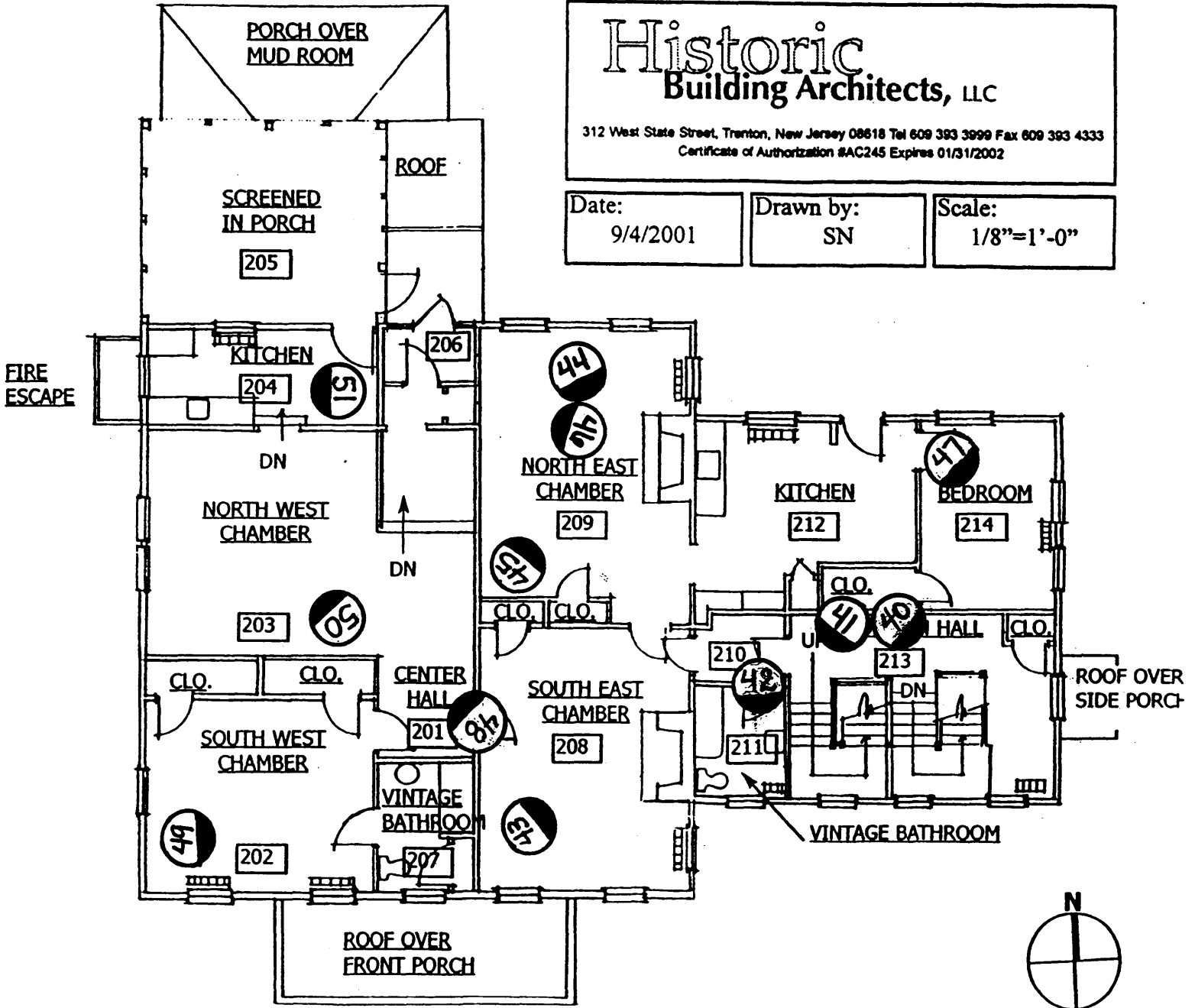


Existing Condition Survey of the
Vermeule Mansion
 614 Greenbrook Road
 North Plainfield, New Jersey 07060
 Borough of North Plainfield, Owner

Second Floor Plan

Historic Building Architects, LLC
 312 West State Street, Trenton, New Jersey 08618 Tel 609 393 3999 Fax 609 393 4333
 Certificate of Authorization #AC245 Expires 01/31/2002

Date: 9/4/2001 Drawn by: SN Scale: 1/8"=1'-0"



Existing Condiiton Survey of the
Vermeule Mansion
 614 Greenbrook Road
 North Plainfield, New Jersey 07060
 Borough of North Plainfield, Owner

Third Floor Plan

Historic Building Architects, LLC
 312 West State Street, Trenton, New Jersey 08618 Tel 609 393 3999 Fax 609 393 4333
 Certificate of Authorization #AC245 Expires 01/31/2002

Date:
 9/4/2001

Drawn by:
 SN

Scale:
 1/8"=1'-0"

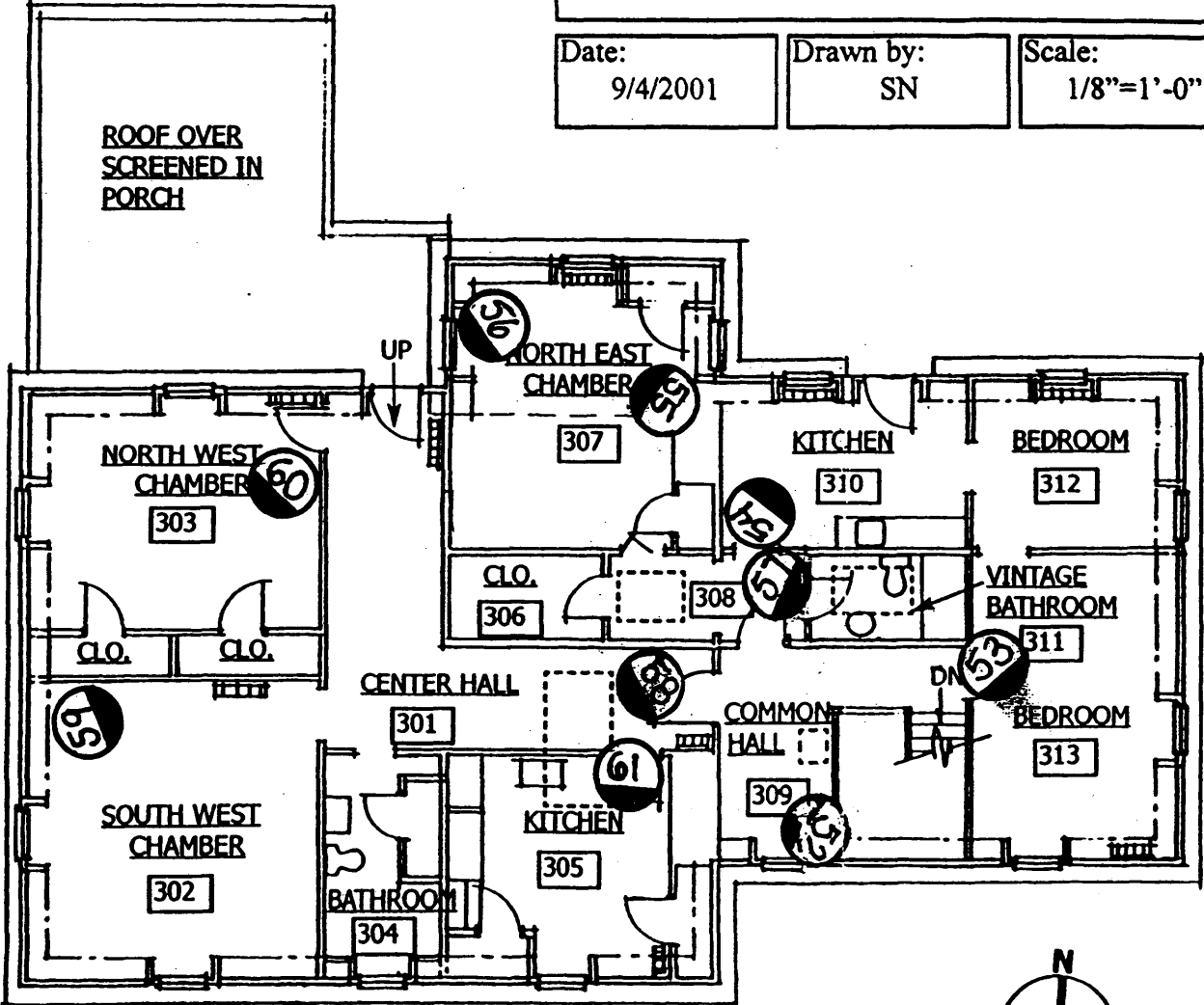
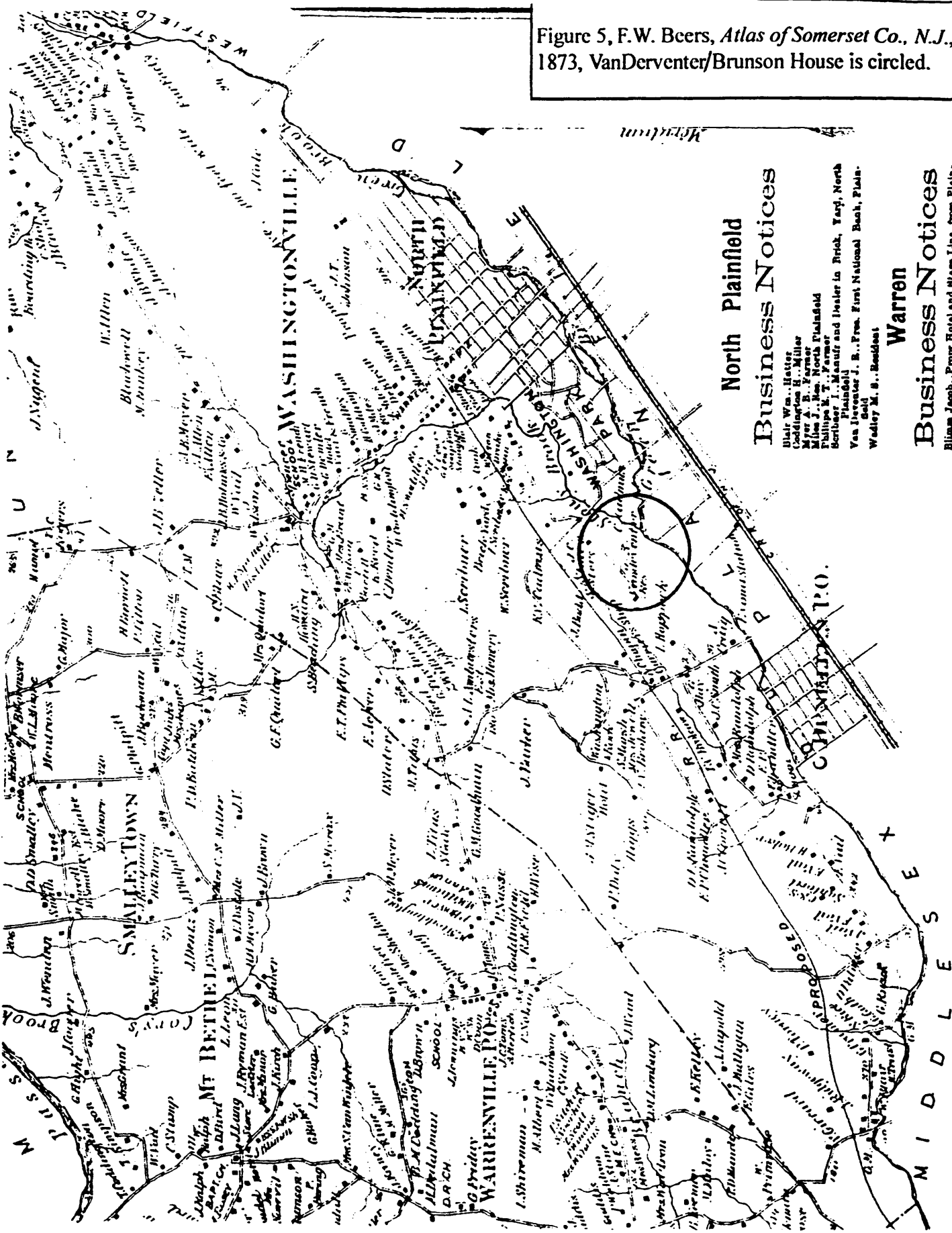


Figure 5, F.W. Beers, *Atlas of Somerset Co., N.J.*, 1873, VanDerventer/Brunson House is circled.



**North Plainfield
Business Notices**

- Blair Wm. Hatter
- Coddington H. Miller
- Myer A. B. Farmer
- Miles J. Van North Plainfield
- Phillips K. T. Farmer
- Scriber J. Manufacturer and Dealer in Brick, Yarf, North Plainfield
- Van Derventer J. B. First National Bank, Plainfield
- Wadley M. S. Resident

Warren

- Business Notices**
- Bloom Jacob, Proprietor Hotel and Stage Lines, from Plainfield to Mt. Bethel
 - Glady Above Great Country Store, Mt. Bethel
 - Miller Wm. Farmer
 - Road Wm. Farmer
 - Stevley Isaac. D. D. Farmer

Figure 6, F.A. Dunham, Atlas of the City of Plainfield, Union County, and the Borough of North Plainfield, Somerset CO., N.J., 1894
VanDerventer/Brunson House is circled.

TOWNSHIP OF NO

Copyright secured 1894 by F. A. Dunham C. E.

Gunnings

Augustus J. Brunson

Adam Pitter

Augustus J. Brunson



GREEN

Adam Pitter

BROOK



Figure 1, VanDerventer/Brunson House, northeast view, undated photograph documenting the dwelling's original appearance before the second empire style remodeling, which occurred c. 1860-80.

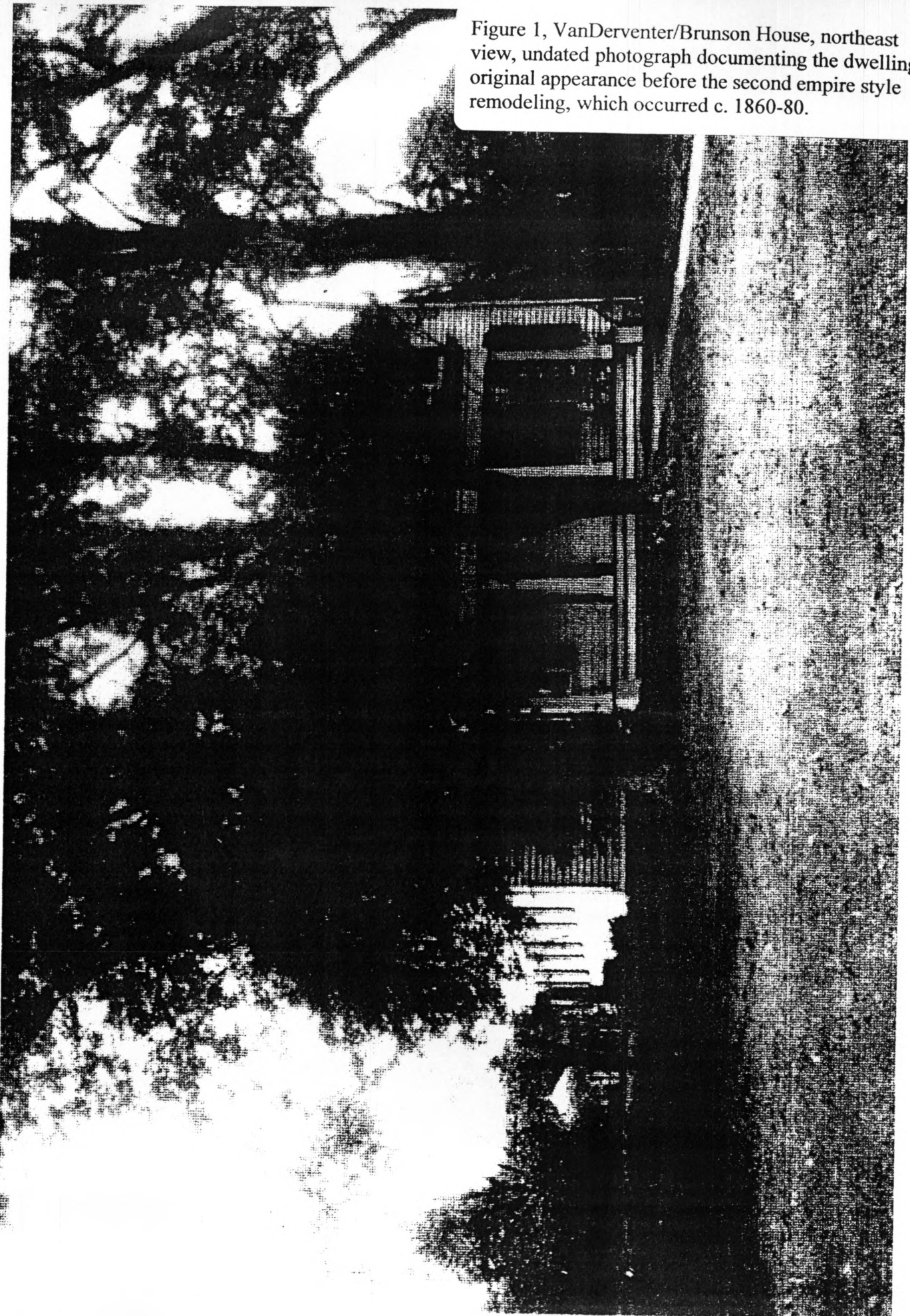


Figure 2, VanDerventer/Brunson House, northeast view, undated photograph documenting its appearance after the addition of the east wing and the mansard roof c. 1860-80.



Figure 3, VanDerventer/Brunson House, northwest view, undated photograph depicting house and farm complex before c. 1911 colonial revival remodeling.



Figure 4, VanDerventer/Brunson House, northwest view, undated photograph recording the c. 1911 colonial revival remodeling, taken after construction of the garage apartment in the early 1930's.

