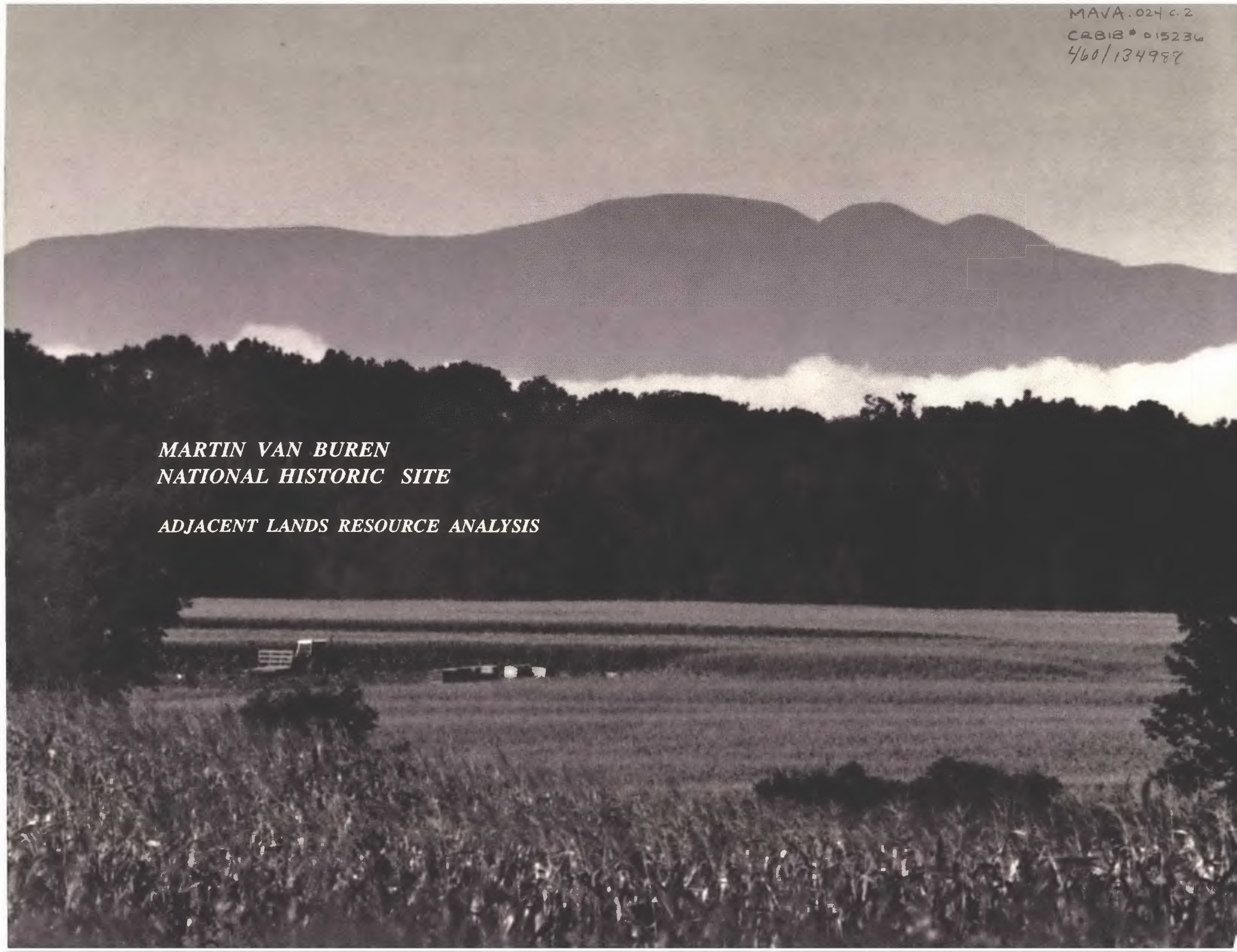


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*MARTIN VAN BUREN
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE*

ADJACENT LANDS RESOURCE ANALYSIS



MARTIN VAN BUREN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

ADJACENT LANDS RESOURCE ANALYSIS

September 1990

National Park Service
Department of the Interior

Assistance on this project was provided by the
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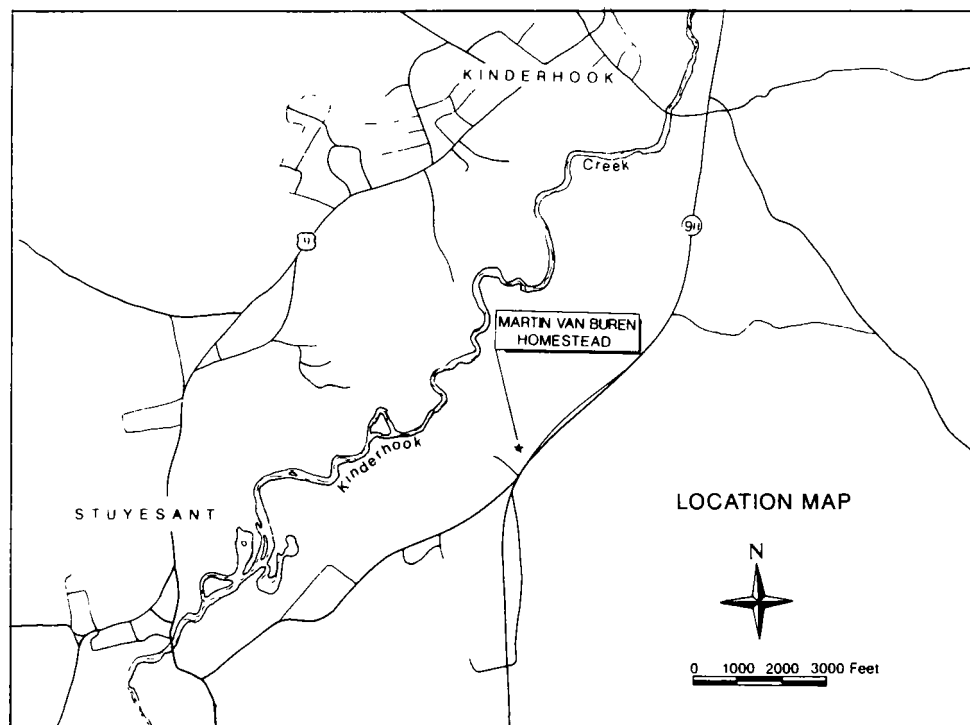
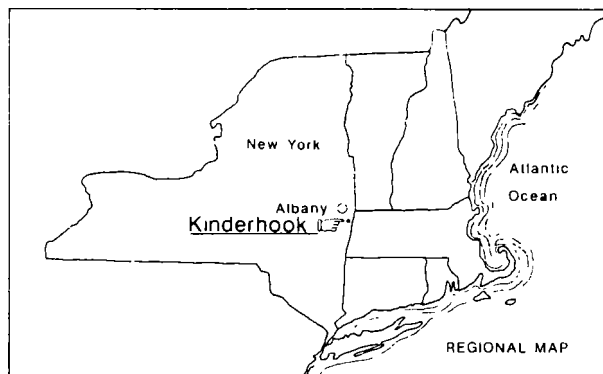
**MARTIN VAN BUREN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
ADJACENT LANDS STUDY**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Martin Van Buren National Historic Site (NHS) is located on Route 9H in the Town of Kinderhook, New York. The Town is within easy commuting distance from the state capitol of Albany, and residential development has been increasing. Due to concern raised by the "Friends of Lindenwald" and requests by Senator D'Amato, State Assemblyman Faso, and former Secretary of the Interior Hodel, the National Park Service (NPS) undertook an analysis of development pressures at the Site for their potential effect on the historic setting. The Columbia Land Conservancy provided background information and research for this project through a cooperative agreement with the NPS. The purpose of the study was to determine what NPS action is warranted to facilitate rural landscape character preservation and examine what cooperative strategies with other agencies would be appropriate to enhance cultural landscape preservation.

Martin Van Buren's land holdings included 220 acres when he lived at Lindenwald. Approximately one-tenth of the farm to which Van Buren retired is managed by the NPS. Today, a large portion of the non-NPS owned Van Buren farm land is still in agriculture.

The study team examined the natural features which comprise the local landscape character and researched the historic settlement patterns which created the cultural landscape of today. It was found that the present landscape character is a bucolic, rolling countryside dotted with farm buildings, hedgerows, and orchards and influence of the historic development pattern. The clustered pattern of development of villages with farm lands surrounding them, is still prevalent in

Kinderhook. It is this setting and historic landscape integrity that the NPS and some local interests wish to retain.

The study team analyzed constraints and opportunities for development in the Site's immediate vicinity. In sum, the Kinderhook Creek, with its associated wetland areas and floodplain, deters development in the creek vicinity. However, the topography and soils provide opportunity for development of road frontage.

The team also considered the magnitude of development pressure by examining the population changes in the area and residential construction increases. Although a trend toward suburbanization is taking place, it was determined that the majority of development pressure has been and will continue to be felt in the north-central portions of town, which are not within range of the National Historic Site and which are addressed in the Town's revised Master Plan.

The site's significance and interpretive and management goals were consulted. The Martin Van Buren National Historic Site's significance is derived from Van Buren's presidency, not on his accomplishments as a gentleman farmer. Thus, recreating a nineteenth century farm is not an NPS objective for the site. The NPS objective is to preserve "Lindenwald" in an agrarian setting, therefore, the NPS is supportive of the ongoing farming activity on portions of the historic farm.

As a result of the above analysis, the main concern of the NPS is the potential for residential development on some portions of the historic Van Buren farm. The existing residences and barn on the property blend well with the surroundings because they are tucked into the woodlands at the edge of the fields. Development in the open fields would be quite visible from the NHS. Because farm outbuildings, fields and fishing ponds of Van Buren were once situated on the land, the NPS would like to ensure that little or no additional development, beyond expansion of the farm operation, will occur. We believe that this could be accomplished either through conservation easements on portions of the historic farm, or limited development with accompanying restrictions on the open portions of the property that are more suitable for agricultural production.

To further protect the immediate surroundings within existing means, the NPS will continue to monitor existing easements. The acquisition through donation of the Old Post Road directly in front of the site, within the presently authorized boundary, would be an additional benefit to the site.

The NPS would provide alternate access to the remainder of the Old Post Road through the planned parking lot. This would improve traffic conditions by mitigating potential safety hazards at the present intersection with Routes 9 and 25, as well as allow more complete restoration of the Lindenwald grounds.

Cooperative approaches to management of development would be mutually beneficial for the NPS and local agencies and landowners. The NPS intends to work with local individuals to: support cluster historic preservation zoning put forth in the Town's revised Master Plan; encourage an inter-agency tourism management group which would address signage and information issues; support creek preservation and recreation assessment; encourage roadway improvements on 9H in the vicinity of the historic site, specifically at the Route 25 intersection; maintain a cooperative relationship with planners in regard to use of the nearby county land; and, encourage strict interpretation of existing zoning in regard to commercial properties.

I. INTRODUCTION

Due to concern raised by the "Friends of Lindenwald" and requests by Senator D'Amato, State Assemblyman Faso, and former Secretary of the Interior Hodel, the National Park Service (NPS) undertook an analysis of development pressures at Martin Van Buren National Historic Site for their potential effect on the historic setting. The Columbia Land Conservancy provided background information and research for this project through a cooperative agreement with the NPS. The purpose of the study was to determine what NPS action is warranted to facilitate rural landscape character preservation and examine what cooperative strategies would be appropriate to enhance cultural landscape preservation.

Background

Martin Van Buren National Historic Site contains the home and surrounding lands to which the eighth President retired at the end of his administration. The National Historic Site (NHS) was established by Public Law 93-486 on October 26, 1974, to preserve the structure and surrounding property, comprising "Lindenwald" where Martin Van Buren spent the last twenty-one years of his life as an elder statesman and gentleman farmer. Martin Van Buren was born near Lindenwald, in the village of Kinderhook, in 1782.

These words from the introduction of Van Buren's will exemplify his passion and connection to the tranquil environment of his farm,

"I, Martin Van Buren of the Town of Kinderhook, County of Columbia and State of New York, heretofore Governor of the State and more recently President of the United States but for the last and happiest years of my life, a Farmer in my native Town..."

Location and Site Description

Lindenwald is located in Columbia County, New York. It lies several miles from the Hudson River in the northwestern part of the county between the villages of Kinderhook and Stuyvesant Falls. Columbia is a rural county situated along the mid-portion of the Hudson Valley about 100 miles north of New York City and about 25 miles south of Albany. The county extends east from the Hudson River to the Massachusetts State line on the crest of the Taconic Mountains.

Martin Van Buren owned a total of 220 acres, and approximately one-tenth of his farm is managed by the NPS today. Current NPS properties encompass 20.26 acres in full fee ownership and an additional 18.24 acres protected through conservation easements. The NPS land essentially encompasses the "house lot" (see Figure 1). Today, a large portion of the non-NPS owned Van Buren farm land is still in agriculture.

The historic site is located on a terrace above the Kinderhook Creek. The mansion is situated near the center of the NPS property. The grounds surrounding the buildings are maintained as open lawn with occasional groupings of trees, several of which date back to Van Buren's tenure. A semi-circular driveway leads to the house from the Old Post Road. A mixed deciduous woodlot is at the northeast corner of the historic property. The woodlot visually separates the historic mansion from the non-historic portion of NPS property to the north and northeast.

The site's curatorial collection encompasses over 32,000 catalogued items. These include furniture, textiles, documents, metals, glass, ceramics, paintings, prints, and architectural samples. The site also has a large archeological collection which is currently stored off-site. Archeological site features include the North Gatehouse Foundation and potential remains of a barn and other outbuildings.

The NPS is currently pursuing funding for replacement of administrative facilities which are now housed in trailers, and for provision of a visitor orientation center which is now in the historic mansion. These will be sited on adjoining NPS property which was not owned by Van

Buren and, therefore, is not considered part of the historic core. Additionally, non-historic elements in the historic core will be removed and the disturbed area of the landscape will be restored to the extent possible given known historical records in compliance with Section 106 of National Historic Preservation Act, as detailed in the 1986 Development Concept Plan .

Management Objectives

The NPS analyzes and articulates the legislative mandates and management objectives for each National Park System unit. The management objectives for Martin Van Buren NHS stress preservation of the historic structures, collections, and landscape. More specifically, two of the resource preservation objectives are “to preserve the historic elements in the landscape at Lindenwald and to encourage the protection of the surrounding farm lands and wooded areas” and “to balance preservation and use in a way that preserves the essential character of the site but allows for creative uses which are compatible with NPS policies and regulations”.

The site’s Statement for Management of 1988 defines the management zoning for the site. It states that future development is to take place outside of the historic core. The historic core is defined as the NPS land holdings that were once part of the historic Van Buren farm. A portion of land within the NPS’s boundary was never owned by Martin Van Buren. These lands on the northern and northeastern boundary and Route 9H frontage were designated as the site’s development zone in the 1988 document.

Purpose of Study

Development pressures have increased in Columbia County, New York where Martin Van Buren National Historic Site is located. The surrounding landscape is primarily agricultural, with scattered villages. The lands surrounding the historic site face potential residential development pressure. The financial incentive to sell agricultural property for residential development is high due to escalation of land values in light of difficulties that have been experienced by many small-scale farm operators and in light of the site’s proximity to Albany, the state capitol.

The primary goal of this study is to provide federal land managers, regional and local planners, conservationists, landowners and developers with a constructive guide to protection methods and/or compatible development ideas for lands adjoining the site. To achieve this goal the study analyzes the regional and local development climate and explores strategies to protect the landscape character surrounding the estate of the eighth president. Any actions taken by the NPS regarding land protection will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and other laws and regulations.

Study Content and Methodology

First, the purpose of this study is articulated. Then, the study presents an overview of the historic settlement in the environs of Kinderhook, the cultural landscape elements associated with Van Buren, and the present day landscape in the Martin Van Buren NHS vicinity. The study area includes the historic Van Buren property, neighboring public lands, and the approach to the site. A landscape data base is provided that, in essence, delineates natural constraints and opportunities for development in the immediate surroundings. Next, the study describes the growth and development trends in the region and the town, and local land use controls that have further shaped that development. Finally, several options for federal, community, and cooperative land conservation and development are described.

MARTIN VAN BUREN

National Historic Site

Kinderhook, New York

HISTORIC FARM BOUNDARY 1845

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

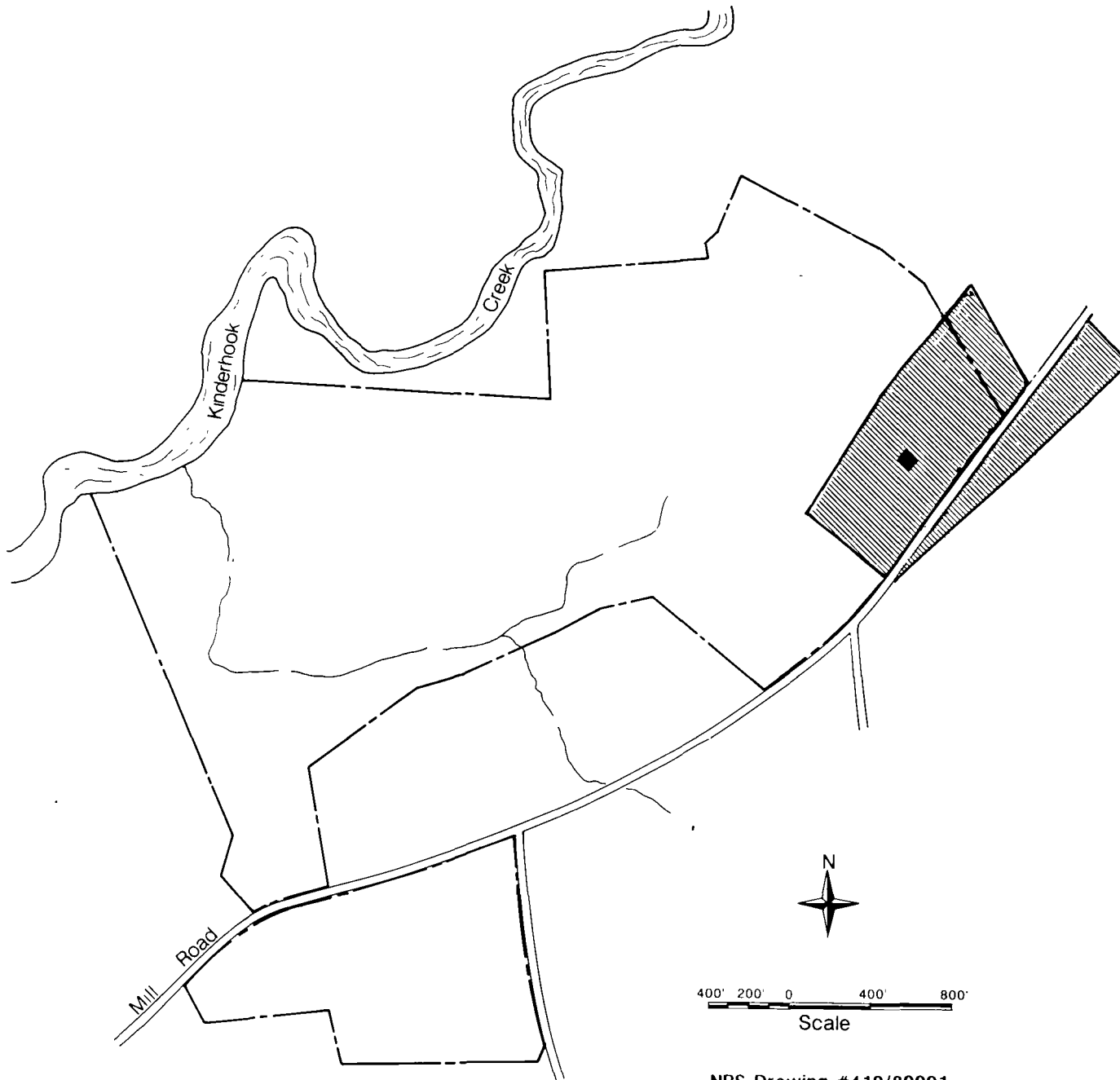
North Atlantic Region

Boston, Massachusetts

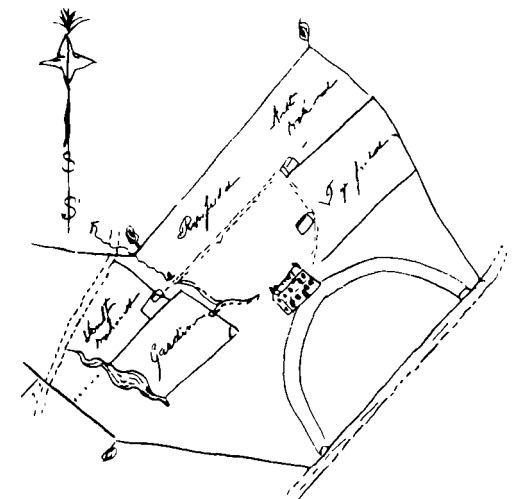
Legend

Historic Farm Boundary

Current NPS Ownership



NPS Drawing #410/80001
July 89



Tracing From Sketch Map of Lindenwald c. 1841

Figure 1

II. CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Martin Van Buren National Historic Site is located in the Town of Kinderhook on the southeasterly side of Kinderhook Creek midway between the incorporated Village of Kinderhook and hamlet of Stuyvesant Falls. Much of what survives today is similar to the environment known to Martin Van Buren, exclusive of a moderate amount of modern housing and commercial developments (see Figure 2).

Early Settlement Patterns

Before the Dutch settlement, native Americans occupied the creek flats. Artifacts from various prehistoric periods have been found at Lindenwald, in the immediate vicinity of the house and at local sites close to park property. Paleopoints, two burials, and a range of archaic materials have been found locally, which indicate Indian occupation.

The Dutch initiated settlement in the Hudson Valley soon after Henry Hudson explored the river in 1609. Despite the promise of the fur-rich North American territory, growth in the area was slow.

Some individuals purchased lands along the Hudson River where they established their own freehold farms, mills, and settlements. Historic documentation at Kinderhook begins in the 1660s as desirable landing points on the Hudson and along creek courses were acquired from Indians by the hydrologically minded Dutch. Lands along the Kinderhook Creek rise in gradual terraces seventy feet on the western bank and a hundred feet on the eastern side. Rather than typical European style enclosure and strip fields, these Dutch farm fields followed the natural contours of the terraces. These agricultural properties were large tracts, 500 to 600 acres and sometimes more,

because the small population put little pressure on land development. The lower terraces were the most prized farm lands, and sometimes changed hands at high prices while the upper terraces remained the property of the original owners. Wheat and timber were the principal market crops; cows and sheep provided for household need, and horses were kept for work and sport. Lands beyond the most suitable agricultural areas yielded wood for home use and probably for timber export.

The typical Dutch farmstead was comprised of several structures - the main dwelling, a large barn, and hay barracks. At first, some dwellings were situated on the lower terraces. Due to periodic flooding that occurs along the creek, early dwellings did not last; surviving eighteenth century structures were built at higher levels.

By the close of the seventeenth century a creek crossing gave prominence to what is now Kinderhook Village. It was an essential stopping place for persons traveling between Albany and New York City or New England. Here Abraham Van Buren, father of the President, kept a tavern on a large parcel of land between Kinderhook Village and Valatie. The fork of the public highway (now Route 9H) in front of Lindenwald, where the "Kings Highway" went south to Claverack and the other road led to the mills at Stuyvesant Falls, defined the eastern edge of agricultural settlement in the early 1700s.

Political and social upheaval characterized Kinderhook life even before the American Revolution as the Kinderhook Dutch culture was augmented by an influx of New England and German people. Most of these people farmed small tenant farms. In 1790, the freehold town of Kinderhook had proportionately more tenants than the New York manors and other large landholdings.

In the 1820's, Kinderhook was the home of several politically prominent lawyers. The waterpower at Stuyvesant and Valatie attracted English machinists who constructed water-powered textile mills. Valatie and Kinderhook villages grew and attracted real estate speculators who began to give Kinderhook the appearance it has today. Old Dutch frame houses were removed and replaced by newer architectural styles. Its streets were regulated and its dwelling and

garden lots of the colonial period were divided into house lots. This provided dwelling space for a larger population while leaving farmlands unchanged throughout the town.

By this time, there were a few large farms of approximately 400 to 450 acres left, but most farms along the creek were small - 150 to 200 acres and very productive. Farming continued as an important activity. By 1800, major changes had occurred that made wheat farming unprofitable; wheat growing lands in the western United States opened and wheat disease spread. Other grains and sometimes dairy production supplanted wheat farming. By the middle of the century, signs of fruit production, for which the Hudson Valley would soon become famous, were evident.

Until well into the twentieth century, property often descended through several generations of a family. However, land sales did occur upon the death of a farmer. In the 1950s and later, occasional small lots were sold off of larger farm parcels. These tended to be located along roads and at edges of farms. Some of these properties have been used for houses and occasional commercial purposes; others remain vacant.

Van Buren's Tenure

Martin Van Buren purchased the Lindenwald estate in 1839, planning for his retirement in 1841. He moved to Kinderhook following his defeat for re-election by William Henry Harrison. The purchase of Lindenwald enabled him to return to his hometown and to repossess property that once belonged to his paternal grandmother's family, the Van Alstyne's. The property had formerly been called "Kleinrood" by the previous owners, the Van Ness family. Van Buren worked hard to turn Lindenwald into a domicile and a profit-making farm. He occupied the property until his death in 1862.

Van Buren initially purchased 137 acres, including the mansion built in 1797. Between 1843 and 1845, he acquired three additional parcels of 28 acres, 12 acres, and 43 acres. This 220 acre farm property remained intact until 1874. In his journal accounts there are references to numerous farm structures, including greenhouses, a foreman's

cottage, stables, carriage houses and barns, and the gatehouses at either end of the semi-circular driveway. It is not known precisely which structures were transferred to his ownership, and which structures he constructed.

In addition to structural improvements, Martin Van Buren undertook a grand effort to replenish the meadows, reclaim some of the swampy land, create orchards and nursery plantings, impound several fishing ponds and revive the old Van Ness garden.

Van Buren became thoroughly absorbed in the pursuit of farming, especially upon the end of his political career. He actively enjoyed fishing in the ponds that he stocked, and riding horseback along the creek. Van Buren farmed the land for cereal grains, including rye, corn and oats and kept livestock for subsistence. He boasted of the potato crop and researched scientific methods for cultivating fruit orchards and grape vines.

Present Landscape Setting

Kinderhook's past land-use patterns left a strong imprint on the present landscape character. Van Buren's tenure at Lindenwald and other Dutch associations in the surrounding community imbue the landscape with a rich agricultural heritage. Surviving structures and historic and prehistoric archeological sites constitute a rich and complex cultural resource, in addition to the farmland itself.

Highlights of the area are the Village of Kinderhook, a district comprising several hundred dwellings, commercial structures, and outbuildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Several significant sites, including the birthplace site and grave of Martin Van Buren, are found in the village. The Stuyvesant Falls National Register District consists of an early nineteenth century stone textile mill and ancillary buildings and dwellings. Beyond the mill structures are nineteenth and twentieth century dwellings and shops. The Luykas Van Alen House, a National Historic Landmark, is a restored 1737 Dutch house owned and operated as a museum by the Columbia County Historical Society. The sites of three early Dutch dwellings and an early nineteenth century bog iron operation

MARTIN VAN BUREN

National Historic Site

Kinderhook, New York



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

North Atlantic Region

Boston, Massachusetts

Legend

-  Topographic contours
-  Vegetative cover

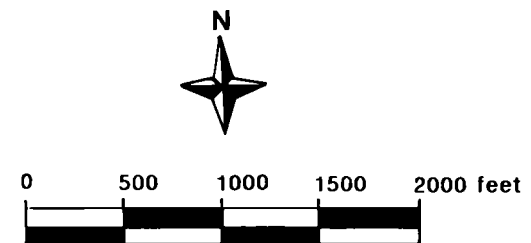
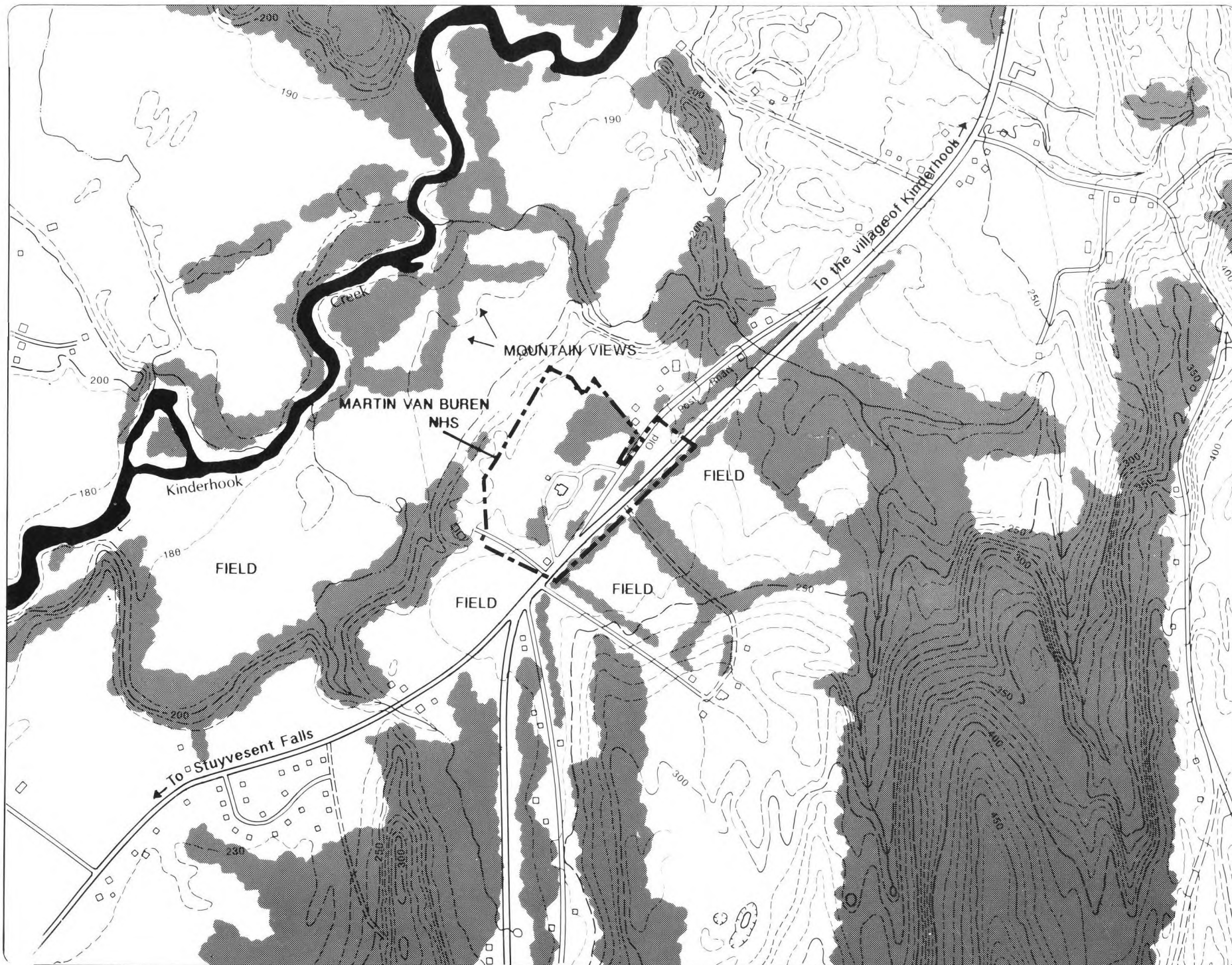


Figure 2



are known. Evidence of Indian occupation and use has been found in proximity to the creek.

The boundaries of major properties along the creek reflect the landholdings of the late seventeenth century. Some of the property boundaries are the same or close to ones established early in the colonial period. On the whole, the land along the creek has remained in agricultural usage.

Development is mostly concentrated in the villages, however, some subdivision and commercial activity is evident along the main roads. The overall ambiance of the Lindenwald area is one of level and rolling farmland with intermittent mountain views of the Catskills to the west. The area surrounding Lindenwald is comprised mainly of agricultural fields complete with farm buildings and alternating with small woodlots. The fields are delineated from one another by hedgerows; treelines define their extent. Fruit orchards are also prevalent in the area, especially in the northern part of the town. Trees in the local woodlots range from a mixture of oaks, maples, chestnuts, and elms to white pine, hemlock and other northern tree types.

The historic site stands approximately 1000 feet east of and on the second terrace above Kinderhook Creek at an elevation of about 235 feet above sea level. The creek flows at approximately 170 feet. Its floodplain is bounded by a bank and terrace. This first terrace rises eastwardly to about the 200 foot contour, where the slope to the second terrace begins. The second terrace slope rises to 250 feet, just east of Lindenwald. This area marks the rise to the hill country east of Lindenwald and the Old Post Road.

Martin Van Buren's land holdings totalled 220 acres when he lived at Lindenwald. Current National Park Service land interests total approximately 38.5 acres which encompass 20.26 acres in full fee ownership, and an additional 18.24 acres protected through conservation easements. Twenty-five of these acres were part of Van Buren's landholdings.

Today, a large portion of the non-NPS owned Van Buren farm land is

still in agriculture, as illustrated on the Landscape Character Map. The dwelling near the barn complex is thought to be that of Van Buren's farm manager, but its historic integrity is presently unknown.

Since 1950, approximately 28 acres of former Van Buren land on the opposite side of Mill Road, now Route 25, were developed as a subdivision in the 50s and 60s. These residences are not visible from Lindenwald.

In 1988 the 65 acre tract directly adjoining the northern boundary of the site was purchased by owners of a neighboring property for limited development; construction of one house is anticipated. A subdivision of four houses was previously considered by a developer.



III. DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Natural Features

The natural features of an area have a direct effect on the land's potential for development. Certain landscape types have higher potential for development because they pose little constraint on construction, allowing lower construction costs. Because these features also impact the community as a whole by effecting the economic base, water supply and storm water control, the lands which contain these features are often regulated for development. This section describes the "Lindenwald" area soils, wetlands, and surface water, and examines their effects on development (see Figure 3).

Although prime agricultural soils are prevalent in the Site's immediate area, especially in the Kinderhook Creek floodplain, there is little prime agricultural land on the upper terrace where Lindenwald sits. According to the county soil survey the soil types in the area include silty and sandy loams, including highly fertile soils typical of river valleys. Where well drained, these soils do not present impediments to construction, which is attractive to developers. The north-central portions of town have sandy loam soils which are conducive to the growing of fruit trees, and numerous large orchards are located there.

The vegetation of the area surrounding the NHS falls into the oak zone of the northern hardwood forest which includes a mixture of the following tree types: oaks, maples, chestnuts, elms, hemlock and white pine. Reptiles, amphibians, hawks and songbirds, fish, and

mammals in the site's vicinity are typical of agricultural areas in the temperate northeast region. No federal or state listed rare or endangered species have been identified in the site's vicinity.

There is an abundant supply of fresh sub-surface drinking water. In the Lindenwald area the soil permeability is moderate to rapid, and available water or moisture capacity is low to moderate. An analysis by the Town indicates that there is a scarcity of groundwater in the southern part of town.

Inland freshwater wetlands near Martin Van Buren NHS are found on neighboring farms along Kinderhook Creek, and along 9H south of the Old Post Road intersection. Wetlands include wet meadow, marsh, swamp, and open water. It is the public policy of the state to preserve and protect wetlands because they are critical to flood and stormwater control, wildlife habitat, water supply, good water quality, fisheries, and sustaining the food chain. Plus, wetlands are sources for public recreation, open space, natural resource education, and scientific research. The state protects wetlands by requiring a permit to build within 100 feet of a wetland. The state Department of Environmental Conservation reviews the permit application to determine if the permit should be granted or denied.

Wetlands pose constraint to further construction along Route 9H frontage within a mile south of the homestead. On the adjoining farm a wetland has been formed by the drainage of a small stream onto the second terrace. It conforms similarly to the floodplain and essentially precludes construction here.

The floodplain along Kinderhook Creek, is over two miles at its widest area. The 100 and 500 year floodplains have been mapped for the National Flood Insurance Program. Kinderhook participates in this program, therefore, national flood insurance is required to build within zones a and b of the 100 year floodplain. The floodplain corresponds generally within the 200 foot elevation contour. The floodplain poses significant deterrent to development along the Kinderhook Creek and to the north of the historic site on the lands below the 200 foot contour. According to the Town Supervisor, the first terrace was seven feet deep in water during the flood of 1938.

MARTIN VAN BUREN

National Historic Site

Kinderhook, New York

NATURAL FEATURES

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

North Atlantic Region

Boston, Massachusetts

Legend

Prime Agricultural Soil



Wetlands



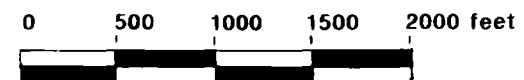
Floodplain

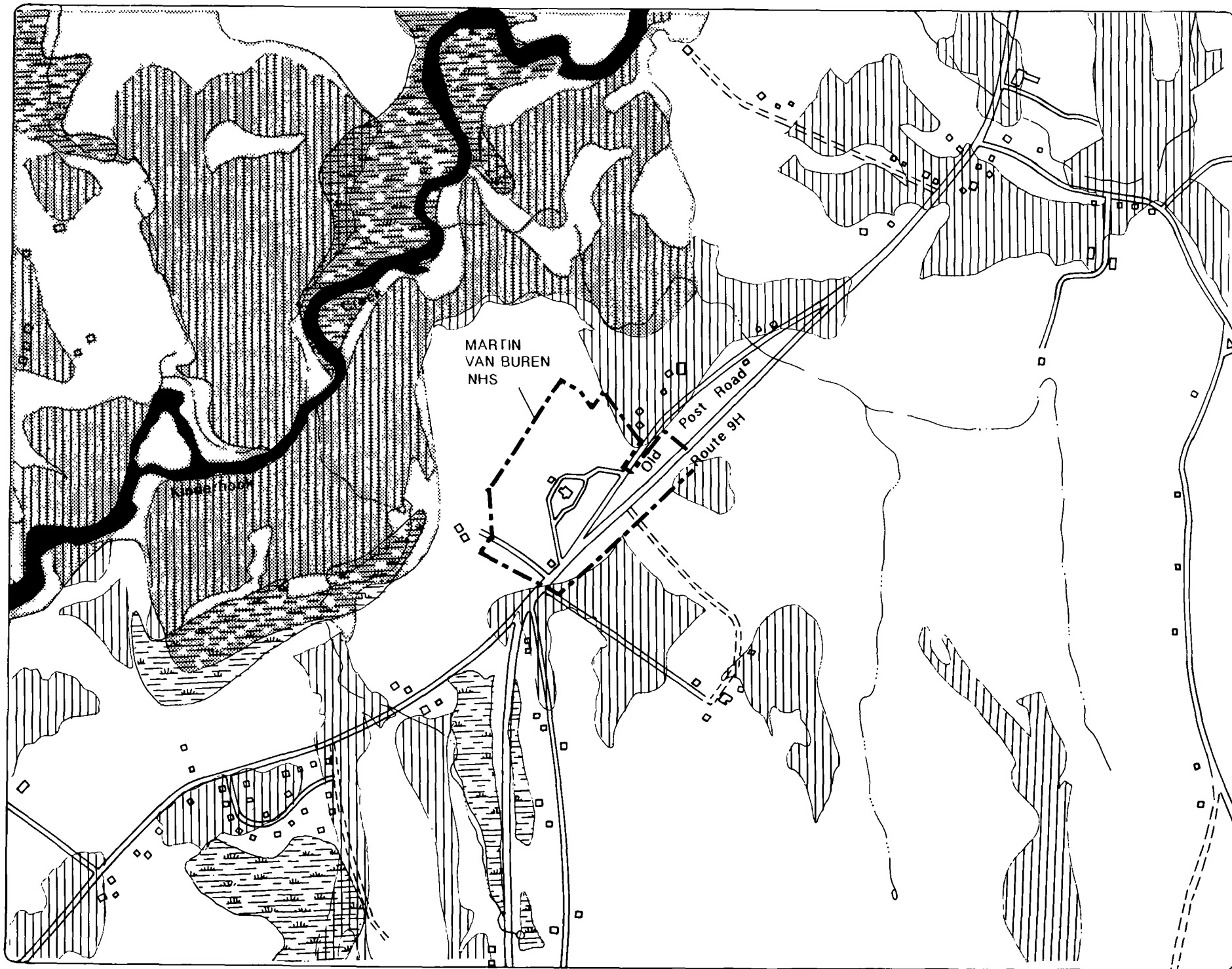


Stream Drainage



Kinderhook Creek





Land Use and Regulations

Neighboring Land Uses

There is a mix of agricultural, residential and commercial land uses in the Site's vicinity (see Figure 4). South and west of the site is the portion of the historic Van Buren Farm, which is in private ownership and commercially farmed for corn and other crops. Across the road there is a horse farm. Also, at the intersection of Route 9H and 25 where the road turns to the southeast, there is an auto repair shop, a pre-existing non-conforming use of present zoning.

Immediately to the north of the site are four private residences along the Old Post Road, ranging from an eighteen century to a contemporary house. Less than a mile north on Route 9H there is a county property with a park, which has the Van Buren Nature Trails, and a Department of Public Works maintenance outpost. The historic Van Alen House, a National Historic Landmark, and the Ichabod Crane School are located about two miles from the historic site, near a mobile home park and small commercial area.

Zoning Districts

There are three villages within the Town of Kinderhook, Kinderhook, Valatie, and Niverville. Niverville is the location of the Town offices. The other two villages are incorporated and have their own governmental bodies and regulations.

There are presently seven zoning districts in the Town of Kinderhook, plus a multi-family overlay zone. In the area surrounding the National Historic Site, the district is primarily the Resource Conservation District which allows for construction of one residence per five acres and limits building heights to thirty-five feet. There is also a cluster development provision which requires a minimum of twenty-five acres. Seventy-five percent of the property would be dedicated as permanently protected open space. It allows for one or 1.5 dwelling units per five acres on .5 or .75 acre lots depending on the method of water and sewage disposal. The other residential districts in the Town permit higher densities. Additional non-intensive uses are allowed by

special use permit. Frontage development is limited to two lots along existing highways.

Just up Route 9H near the Van Alen House is a small mobile home park district and a B-1 General Business District which allows for a wide variety of business purposes. The flood plain district which corresponds with the Federal Insurance Rate Map boundaries is prominent on the lower terrace of the creek. New development is severely restricted within this zone, which generally allows for agricultural and park purposes.

Agricultural Districts

The State of New York, to mitigate loss of farmland to development and to increase viability of commercial farms, instituted an agricultural districting program. It provides for special assessment on productive commercial farms within the district, which is in the form of property tax reductions. Commercial farms are included in the assessment program via a petition by the landowner and approval by a county agricultural districting advisory committee. The portion of the historic Van Buren property that is being farmed commercially is included in this program.

The district provides disincentive for development of farmland for purposes other than agriculture by requiring a penalty payment for such development. Programs of this type do not provide significant disincentive for larger developments because the developer can often absorb the penalty payments by revenues generated from sales of lots or homes.

National Historic Register Properties

There are three areas in Kinderhook listed in the National Register of Historic Places: "Lindenwald", or Martin Van Buren NHS, and the Van Alen House (both National Historic Landmarks), and the Village of Kinderhook (where a design review ordinance further supports historic preservation). The primary strength of this designation is required consultation with the state regarding development proposals. For federally owned sites, and for federally funded, licensed or

permitted projects, compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act is required. For National Register sites not involving a federal interest or funds, the New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law, Section 14.09 requires consultation for state licensed, funded or permitted undertakings with the state Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation.

Development Trends

Columbia County Economic and Agricultural Trends

From the earliest period through the present Columbia County has attracted people from Albany and New York City. The county's accessibility, first by the river, then by trains (1851), and later by auto, has made the place a crossroads for settlers and travelers alike. Today, the Town also has the advantage of being near several major transportation corridors - I-90, the Taconic Parkway and I-87, the New York State Thruway.

Columbia County's growth was rapid for a period following the American Revolution. In the 1840s, as people moved west, it stabilized and declined. After the Civil War, industrialization caused population to increase. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the shift of manufacturing to other regions in the country brought on a downswing; population and economic decline caused the county to fall into a state of benign neglect. One fortunate outcome of this was the preservation of traditional agriculture and historic communities.

Today, Columbia County is one of New York State's leading agricultural counties. This is evidenced in the Town of Kinderhook where a significant amount of the town's acreage is devoted to agriculture. However, between 1964 and 1981, according to Columbia County Planning Department statistics, the amount of land devoted to agriculture decreased by 30%. The census information also indicates that the type of agricultural production is changing from livestock to crops, including fruit. In Kinderhook, there are only two dairy farms and no commercial beef operations left. Production of field crops, such as grain, corn, wheat, and oats has increased, while the number of fruit

farms appears to have remained stable over the past 20 years.

Population Characteristics

The county's population has grown in the period over 1960-1980. From a population of 47,322 in 1960, the number increased gradually to 59,487 people in 1980. Except for the mountainous Greene County, this was the lowest population of all nine counties along the middle and lower Hudson Valley; Columbia County has had the second to lowest population in the Hudson Valley for over twenty years. The New York State Department of Commerce projected the county population to increase to 65,046 by the year 1990.

Of the nine Hudson Valley counties, only two counties have lower density rates. In 1980 the population density in Columbia County was .15 persons per acre as compared to the average of nine Hudson Valley counties of .54 per acre. In general, most of the county's residents, approximately 86%, lived in small villages or on farms.

Although Columbia County has one of the lowest population levels in the Hudson Valley counties, the Town of Kinderhook, despite its modest size (32.2 square miles), has for decades been one of the most populous in the county. The Town's population in 1980 was 7,674. The population projections prepared by Columbia County's Planning Department estimate a town population of 8,900 in 1990. According to that source, the Town population should not reach 12,000 until the year 2010. The population has been relatively dense in the Town's two incorporated villages — Kinderhook and Valatie — which retained the compact residential and commercial development.

Residential Development

The Town of Kinderhook, according to the Revised Master Plan and Generic Environmental Impact Statement prepared in 1989 by Bagdon Environmental Associates, a planning consulting firm, is moving toward a more suburban character. This trend is evidenced by the following: a decrease in farm/labor workers with an increase in professional and technical workers; an increase in average family income; an increase in percentage of workers commuting to the

MARTIN VAN BUREN

National Historic Site

Kinderhook, New York

LAND USE AND ZONING

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

North Atlantic Region

Boston, Massachusetts

Legend



Federal National Park Service Boundary



County Property



Commercial Structure
Zoning



Resource Conservation District



Business District



Flood Plain District



Mobile Home Park District

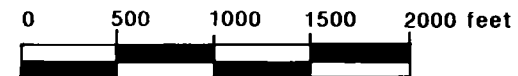
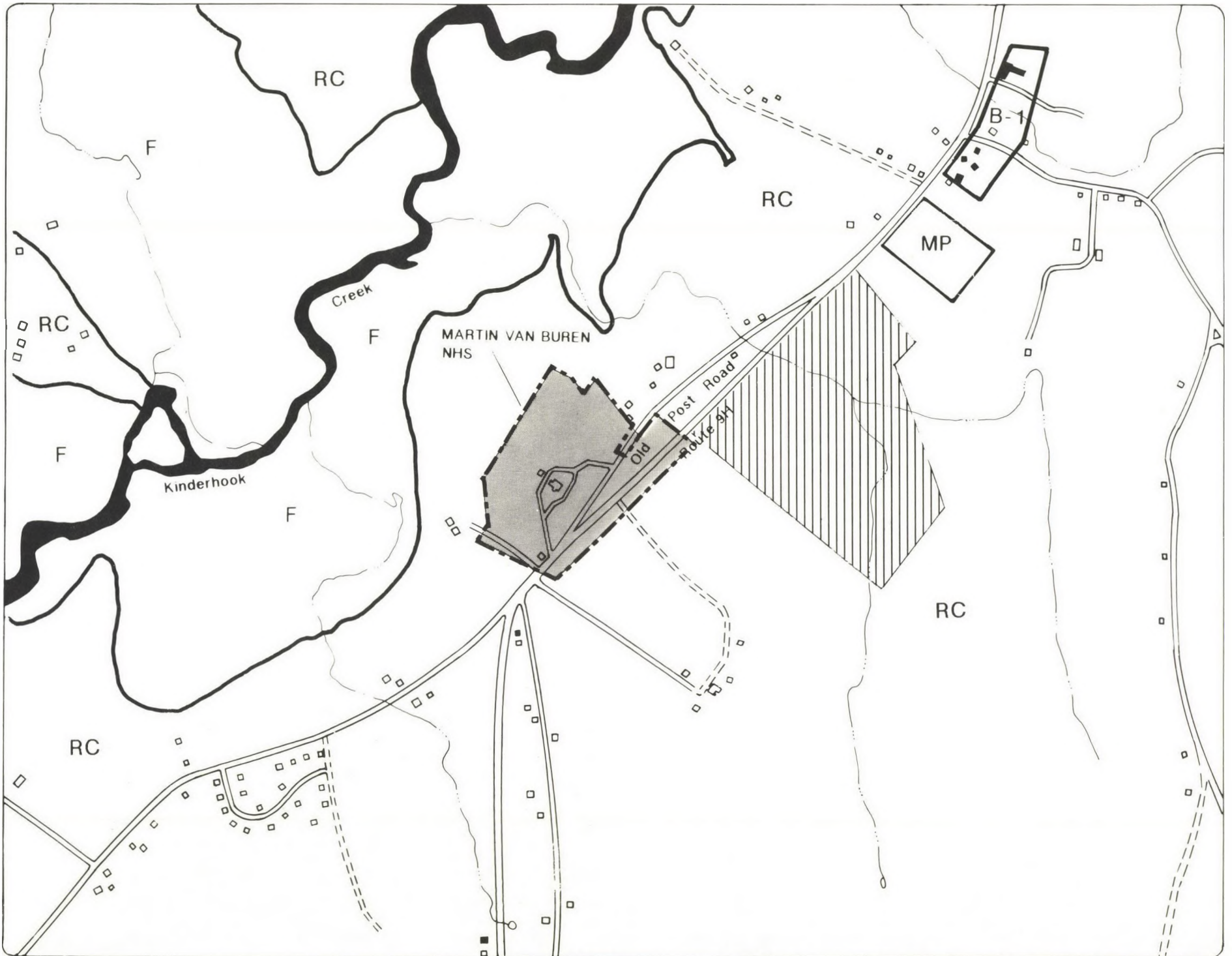


FIGURE 4



Albany area for employment; and, higher percentages of residents who are younger than 55 years old. The Master Plan also suggests that this residential development pressure will mainly be felt in the north-central areas of the town. The Town's movement toward suburbanization coupled with the decrease in acreage devoted to farming, can result in residential development pressure on land highly suitable for development. This market condition allows land values and housing prices to rise, which can, in turn, drive young natives from the area and attract a new population seeking an alternative to dense suburban areas or second homes.

In 1939, there were 11,686 dwelling units in Columbia County. Between 1940 and 1980, 13,092 new dwelling units were constructed in the county, which is an increase of over 110%. The sharpest increase in construction occurred in the early 70's. Clearly, residential development is a strong force in Columbia County, as it has been throughout the region.

Between 1979 and 1989, 180 new single family units were built in the Town of Kinderhook. This includes 91 new single family units added to pre-existing subdivisions. One new major subdivision has been added with 55 units. The majority of development has been concentrated in the north-central area of town. In 1988, there were applications for over 500 units before the planning board.

Typical of the northeast United States, area land values have escalated over the past 15 years in Columbia County. According to a general estimation of land per acre sales provided by the Columbia Land Conservancy, in 1974, properties could be purchased for \$1,000 per acre, while in 1987, properties in the Kinderhook area were selling for between \$2,000 and \$4,000 per acre, with certain choice properties selling for \$6,000 an acre and more.

Recent Town Planning

In early June 1988, the Town Board of Trustees enacted a nine-month moratorium on subdivisions to enable planners to update the town's Master Plan and zoning ordinances. This came in response to citizen concern about loss of open space, agriculture, and historic and rural

character. The master plan was done at this time to analyze the adequacy of zoning regulations and to articulate of the Town's planning and development goals and objectives. These included preservation of water quality, agricultural viability, open space, rural character, and recreational access, as well as, support for controlled residential, additional commercial, and industrial development.

The following recommendations for alteration to the existing zoning code were made: increase in the required lot dimensions; shift multi-family zones from Route 9 to areas near existing development; increase size of existing mobile park zones; establish a light industrial zone at the north end of town; change cluster provisions to encourage open space and agricultural preservation; adopt architectural design review and historic preservation ordinances; and, adopt stream corridor and small wetland area protection ordinances.

Changes to the existing zoning code affecting the Site's vicinity were subsequently enacted in July 1989. The district changed from two acre lot residential zoning to five acre lot resource conservation zoning. Cluster and site plan review provisions were also strengthened at this time.



IV. LAND CONSERVATION / DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

The intent of this adjacent lands resource analysis is to encourage all levels of government, private citizens and organizations to both independently and cooperatively pursue the preservation of important cultural resources in the vicinity of the Martin Van Buren NHS. Analysis of the local development climate found that current pressures are not great in the Lindenwald vicinity of town, however strategies are necessary in case this situation changes. Several approaches to land conservation, cooperative efforts, and support for local zoning initiatives are identified to promote preservation of the historic setting (see Figure 5).

Preservation of Martin Van Buren's Farmland

The retention of the remaining Martin Van Buren farm in active agricultural use is desirable. Because the site's significance is drawn from Martin Van Buren's political career, not from his accomplishments as a gentleman farmer, the goal is not to recreate and interpret his farm, but to retain the active farm operation and the open character. Thus, federal acquisition is not recommended or required. Preservation could be accomplished through a conservation easement on a portion, approximately 24 acres, of the neighboring property immediately to the south and west which was once farmland owned by Martin Van Buren. Several farm structures and fish ponds were located here and remnants are likely. As further documentary research on the cultural landscape of the NHS is undertaken, the resources outside the boundary should be located to provide information to landowners and area planning and conservation entities to further preservation efforts.

Development on the upper terrace of this farm, the frontage of the property which is suitable for development, would be quite visible from Lindenwald because the land is so open and flat. An easement would help to preserve the character of the landscape setting. An

easement may reduce local property taxes by reducing the use potential if the farming activity ceased to be eligible for special assessment under the agricultural districting program which currently provides for reduced taxes. Continued management and maintenance of the property would be achieved by the owner.

The historic surroundings are very important to the retention of the site character. Development on the slope and first terrace directly behind the mansion would also intrude on the historic setting and disturb potential archeological resources. The viewshed across the farmland experienced by Van Buren as well as present day site visitors is visually appealing. The NPS should insure that this historic scene, the views from the mansion and grounds west towards the Catskill Mountains, is protected. Adequate protection would be fostered by the additional easement previously recommended, which would be for the primary purpose of agricultural retention.

An easement which would restrict development of new, permanent non-agricultural structures would be advantageous. Acquisition by a land trust organization or limited development could achieve similar ends. Often non-profit land conservation trusts are formed to acquire such easements or undertake limited development conservation methods and to provide technical assistance on land planning and conservation methods. If a land trust organization were to purchase an easement, NPS could be involved by sharing monitoring activities if so authorized.

Through a limited development initiative by a landowner or land trust, an easement would be voluntarily placed on a portion of the property. Several house lots would be carefully sited, and developed or sold for development. The revenue from sale of the developable property and tax benefits of the easement would in essence offset loss of potential income from sale of the entire parcel for development. The net benefit would be the preservation of a significant portion of the farmland.

The present scenic easements held by NPS within the authorized boundary on adjoining private property essentially provide the site with a 100 to 300 foot wide buffer on both historic and unassociated

MARTIN VAN BUREN

National Historic Site

Kinderhook, New York







RECOMMENDATIONS

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

North Atlantic Region

Boston, Massachusetts

Legend

-  Van Buren Farm Boundary
-  Acquire Old Post Rd.
-  Support conservation easement
-  Monitor county land use proposals
-  Monitor conservation easements
-  Federal National Park Service Boundary

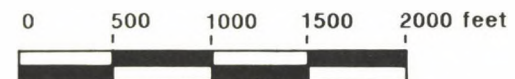
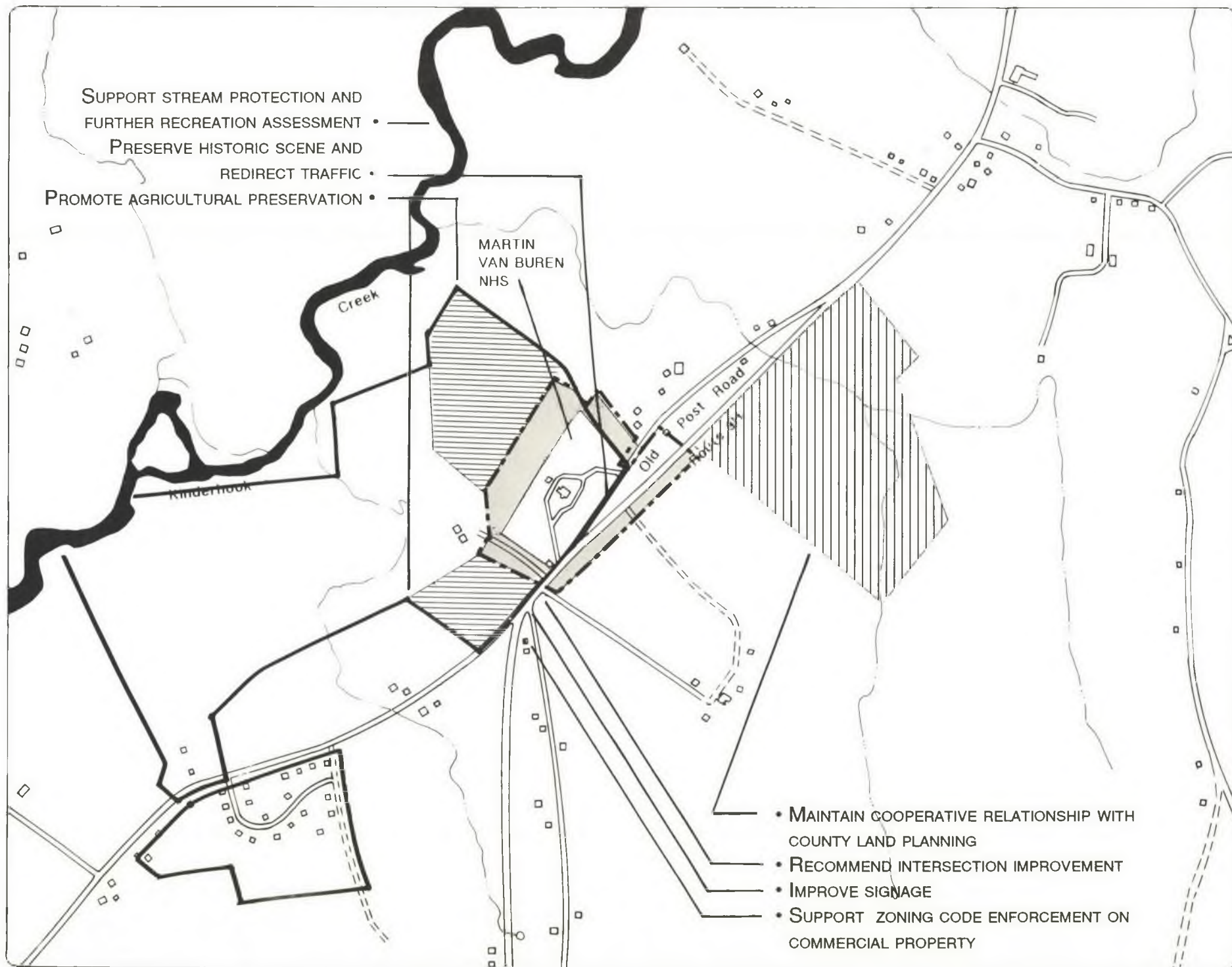


FIGURE 5



land. The easements on the north and east sides of the Site provide sufficient protection due to dense vegetative screening of and on the lands which do not have historic connection. These easements surrounding the Site should continuously be monitored to promote land conservation within existing means. The approach and land use across Route 9H from the site can be regulated through local processes.

The NPS must address the Town to pursue a more formal program of preserving the portion the historic Old Post Road. It has been a goal for several years to close the portion of the road in front of the Lindenwald mansion, and provide alternate access to the north, away from the dangerous Route 9H and Route 25 intersection. The NPS goal was identified in the mid-1980s during the development concept planning process. The site's current Land Protection Plan recommends that the road be donated in exchange for NPS provision of alternate access across NPS property to the Old Post Road residences and a new site parking lot, as discussed with the Town several years ago. The State Department of Transportation supports this proposed modification.

Land Use Planning and Zoning Options and Concerns

In general, thoughtful land-use controls surrounding the park should consist of a protective system that promotes present agricultural usage and other productive land uses that do not create drastic changes in the present landscape character. A number of steps have already been taken. The visions of community residents, and village, town, and county government officials regarding the future of the Site and the Town of Kinderhook have been articulated in this study and the master plan survey. Mutual goals and objectives can now be established focusing on resource and growth management issues.

The Town revised some aspects of its zoning as a result of the master planning process. The NPS supports the further strengthening of bylaws to preserve cultural and agricultural values. Increasing lot size requirements is helpful for maintaining a low density, rural landscape character and can protect environmentally sensitive areas, but it is also good to combine this with other more flexible development

options. Simply increasing lot dimensions does not often change the pattern of development from being concentrated on road frontage, which can be a by-product of large lot zoning. The new cluster provision is responsive to this and will be advantageous for farmland preservation. However, the Master Plan recommended that the Town consider a zoning provision which would allow productive farmland to fulfill the open space requirements of cluster development. The ownership of the residences and the agricultural land would remain separate. This would further promote economic viability of agriculture. The NPS would support this addition to the cluster bylaw as well as a bylaw encouraging preservation of historic areas.

The existing commercial activity across from Lindenwald at the intersection of Route 9H and Route 25 to Stuyvesant Falls should be monitored to insure that it conforms to the local zoning code. This code permits uses existing before zoning adoption to continue, but not to expand; it also provides a mechanism for enforcement in the event of code violations. The auto repair and maintenance service here has grown, and numerous autos are parked there for extended periods. Enforcement should occur as warranted. Fencing and screening the operation would be a minimal effort which would improve the quality of the existing site conditions, also.

The NPS would be interested in joining a partnership of governments and tourism groups which would work together to preserve the cultural heritage of the region and to stimulate cultural awareness and economic development through tourism management. Recognizing the economic generating potential of tourist destinations, including the National Historic Site, the nearby Van Alen House, historical society properties in Kinderhook village and the community's and county's other historical museums, is important to future planning. Numerous entities could form a historical collaborative for mutual comprehensive studies and planning to coordinate existing and future visitor facilities. Visitor services that are needed in general are improved signage; additional handicapped access; and information dissemination on historic sites, visitor accommodations and services in the region.

A simple plan to improve the sign system for visitor services could be undertaken to manage traffic. One coordinated series of modest

directional signs could be developed to direct tourists to these sites; another series could direct them to places where they can obtain meals, lodging, and gasoline. As funding was available, governmental agencies and groups could replace and augment existing signs. Compatible signage should be developed at Federal, state, county, and municipal levels to guide motorists. Local interest has been focused on this, and a joint approach would propel this effort further. The visitor approaches to Lindenwald are important, and the NPS would like to show more commitment to improving signage here.

The present intersection of Route 9H and County Route 25 is confusing and hazardous, and should be improved. Plans for such improvement are not now known to exist, but would likely be undertaken by state and county highway departments working in combination. Improvements are encouraged and the NPS would be interested in commenting on the details of the functional and aesthetic design.

The County owned park property is an asset to Lindenwald. There are opportunities for cooperative planning to make the Federal and County resources more complementary.

Some alternative ideas have been generated regarding the remainder of the county property behind the Kinderhook Highway Department garage. The northern portion of this property has been discussed recently as a possible site for a solid waste transfer 'convenience' station (and formerly as a potential county landfill site). If such a proposal arises the Park Service would participate in plan review. The NPS wants to make sure that there would be no adverse impacts on the National Historic Site if a Kinderhook site were chosen.

Finally, values associated with Kinderhook Creek enrich the Town's landscape. An upper portion of the Creek was studied in the 1970s in connection with possible inclusion in the Nationwide Rivers Inventory, but was found to be ineligible. The portion of the Creek in the Martin Van Buren area was not included due to the extent of existing development, however little development has taken place along the creek since then. Due to the natural and scenic qualities and the proximity of several National Historic Landmarks and Districts which include farms, houses and early industrial development, the creek is

worthy of further assessment. The creek should be reexamined by local and regional organizations for its recreational potential in linking open space, natural and cultural sites, and to preserve its important natural features. The protection ordinance recommended in the Town's Master Plan should also be strongly considered.

Conclusion

Cooperative approaches to management of development would be mutually beneficial for the NPS and local agencies. The NPS wishes to work with local groups and individuals to: encourage preservation of the open agricultural landscape, support historic preservation zoning put forth in the Town's revised Master Plan; encourage an inter-agency tourism management group which would address signage and information issues; support creek preservation and recreation assessment; encourage roadway improvements on 9H in the vicinity of the historic site, specifically at the Route 25 intersection; maintain a cooperative relationship with planners in regard to use of the nearby county land; and, encourage strict interpretation of existing zoning in regard to commercial properties.



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