

JOHN W. CONNER HOUSE
160 Prarie Avenue
Kalamazoo
Kalamazoo County
Michigan

HABS No. MI-406

HABS
MI-406

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
Northeast Region
Philadelphia Support Office
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, P.A. 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

JOHN W. O'CONNOR HOUSE

HABS No. MI-406

Location: 160 Prairie Avenue, Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo County, Michigan

USGS Kalamazoo, Michigan Quadrangle (7.5 Minute Series)
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
16.614780.4683140

Significance: The house is a contributing structure in the Henderson Park/West Main Hill Historic District. This district is an early example of a "naturalistic" subdivision originally laid out in 1888 by Frank Henderson, a wealthy regalia manufacturer and developer.

Description: The house is located at the intersection of Prairie Avenue and West Main Street, facing Prairie Avenue. A two-car below grade flat-roofed concrete block garage opened onto West Main Street. The garage roof was used as a patio at the rear of the house. The doors have since been infilled and the grade built up across the former doorway. The site is elevated about five feet above street level and a small brick retaining wall runs along the West Main Street sidewalk. A flight of concrete steps approaches the front door and ends in a stoop with low concrete-capped brick railings and piers.

The house is a one and one half story Arts and Crafts style cottage with a side gabled bracketed roof. The nearly square plan is set on a concrete block foundation. The front facade is symmetrical, with an arched blind eyebrow dormer over the central sidelit doorway, which is flanked with tripartite windows. The dormer's curve is slightly irregular, suggesting alteration or inexpert construction. The wood clapboard siding is flared at the base of the wall, and the window heads at the rear sunroom are slightly peaked. A small square gable-roofed bay window faces north and is supported on sturdy brackets. Windows are multilight over single light sash, with simple trim. The rear portion consists of a cross-gabled sunroom porch, part possibly used for a sleeping porch. A central door gives access to the pantry and kitchen area. Small paired windows centered in the gable ends light the upper half story.

The interior layout is economical; rooms open into one another. A small foyer opens through an elliptical arch into the living room and a short hall links the first floor bedrooms and bath, also with an elliptical arch. The well-lit living room is set off with a simple brick fireplace flanked by windows; French pocket doors open into the dining room. The living room and dining room have simple crown molding and trim. The dining room features a built in glass-doored corner china closet and a cabinet and drawers built into the bay window's base. A second set

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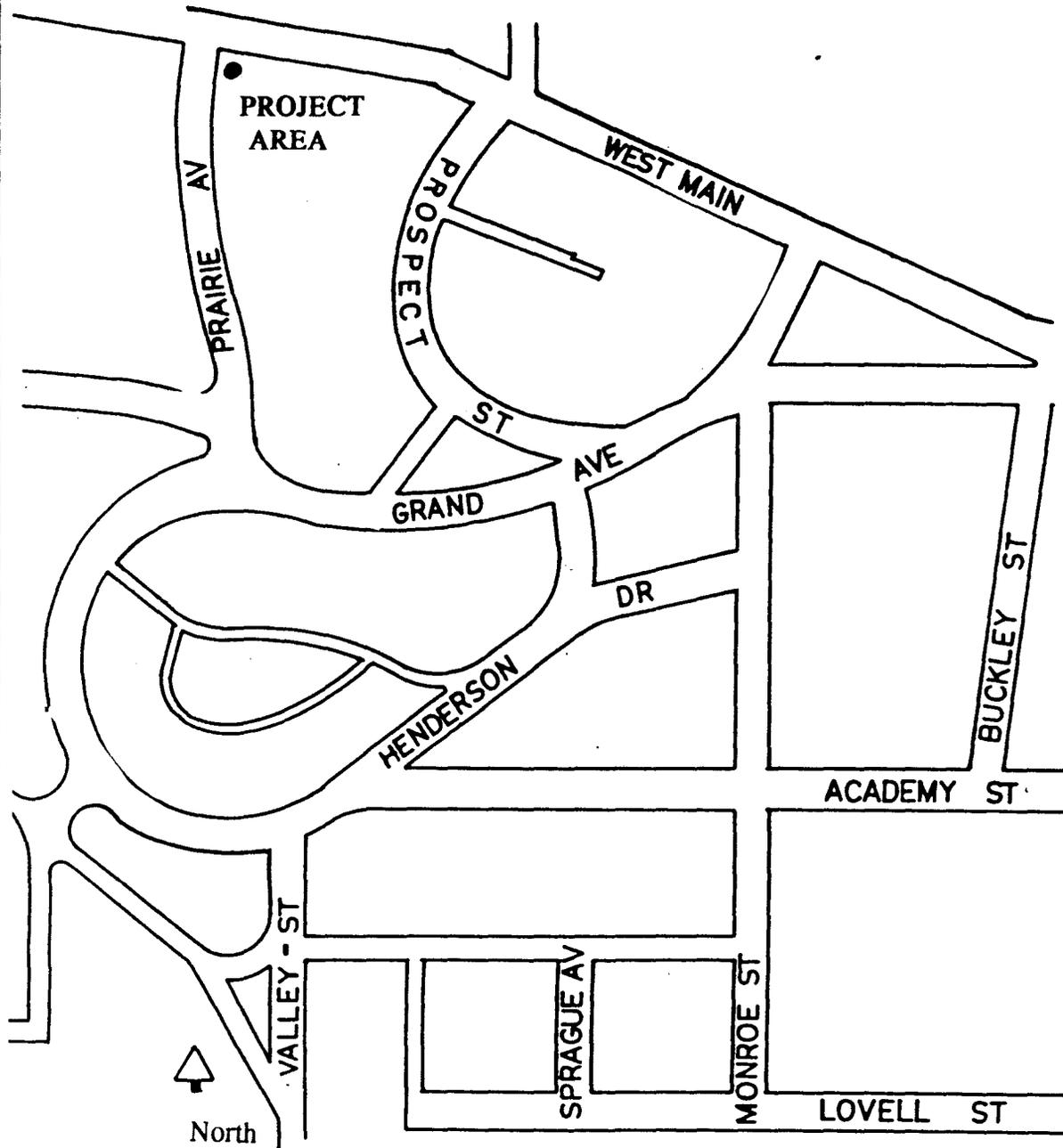
of French pocket doors open into the sunroom. The kitchen occupies the house's center and two bedrooms and a bath the house's south side. The bedroom wing is also economically laid out; the hallway doors are at a forty-five degree angle to the room, saving on space. Two additional bedrooms and a bath are found upstairs. The upstairs bath may be a later addition. The stairs are enclosed and rise, unusually, from the dining room. The basement was not accessible.

The interior walls and ceilings are plaster on wood lath. The flooring is hardwood strip flooring with tile used in the bath and various linoleum and vinyl floorings seen in the kitchen and utility areas. The interior stained woodwork used in the bedrooms is oak and/or chestnut, with faceted glass and brass hardware. Other woodwork is painted. The house has either hot water or steam radiator heat.

History: The house was constructed and occupied in c. 1922 by local builder John W. O'Conner and his wife Elizabeth. The O'Connors remained in the house until 1934 when it was purchased by Calvin L. Bachelder and his wife Ruth. Bachelder was a sales representative for the Paper Maker Chemical Company, an important Kalamazoo business. In 1937 the property was bought by William and Kathie Darling. Darling was a prominent coal and coke merchant. The property was sold again in 1956 to Fred and Amy Morlock. Fred was a maintenance worker and painter. The Morlocks resided in the house until the early 1970's when it became a student rental, which it remained until being purchased by the State of Michigan. The State plans to sell the building and have it relocated, hopefully within the Henderson Park subdivision.

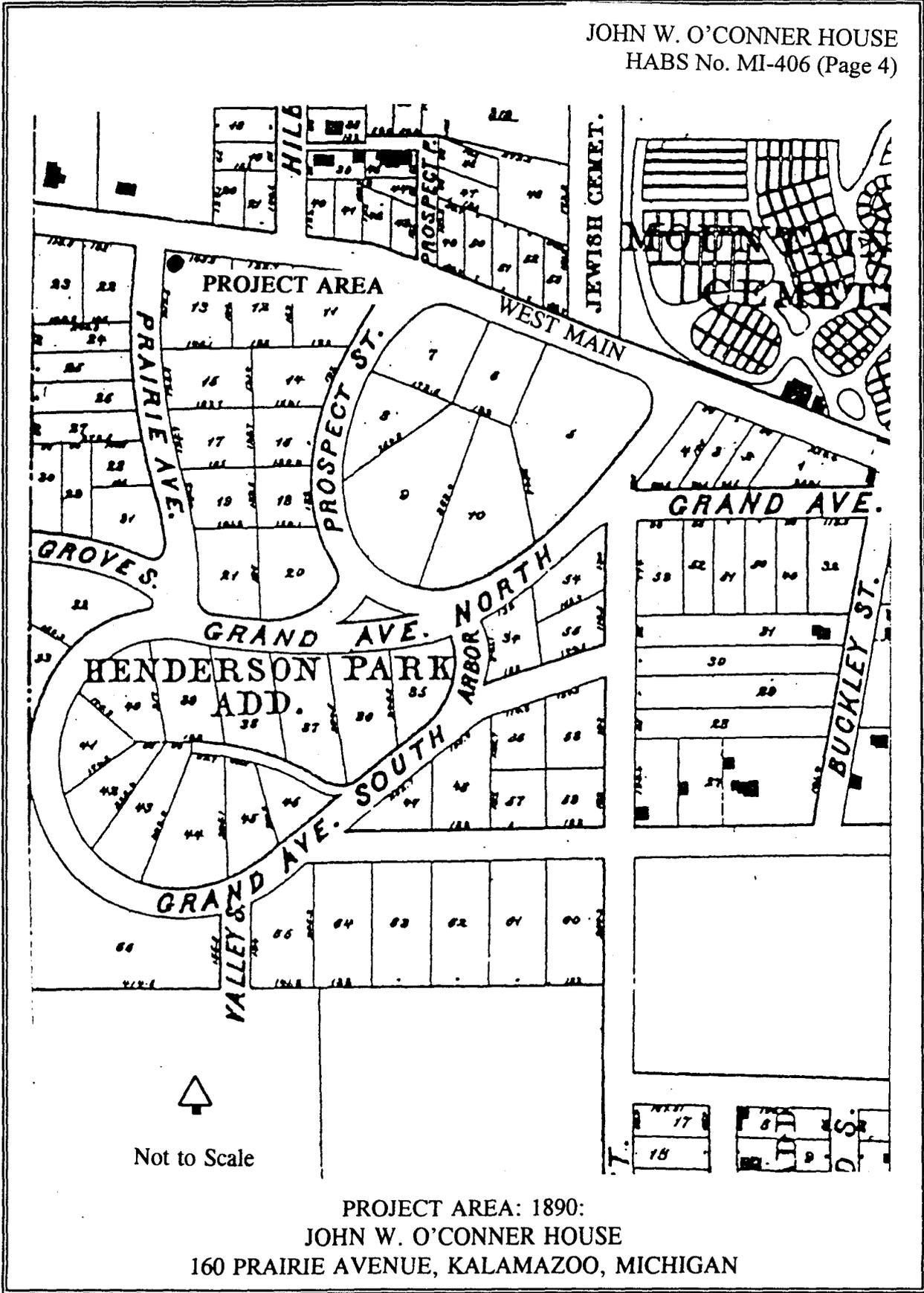
Source: Henry, Irene and William Henry. Kalamazoo Historic Districts: Intensive Level Survey Report and National Register Nominations, 1994.

Historian: Irene Jackson Henry, R.A., NCARB
Henry and Henry Preservation and Architectural Consultants
August 29, 1995



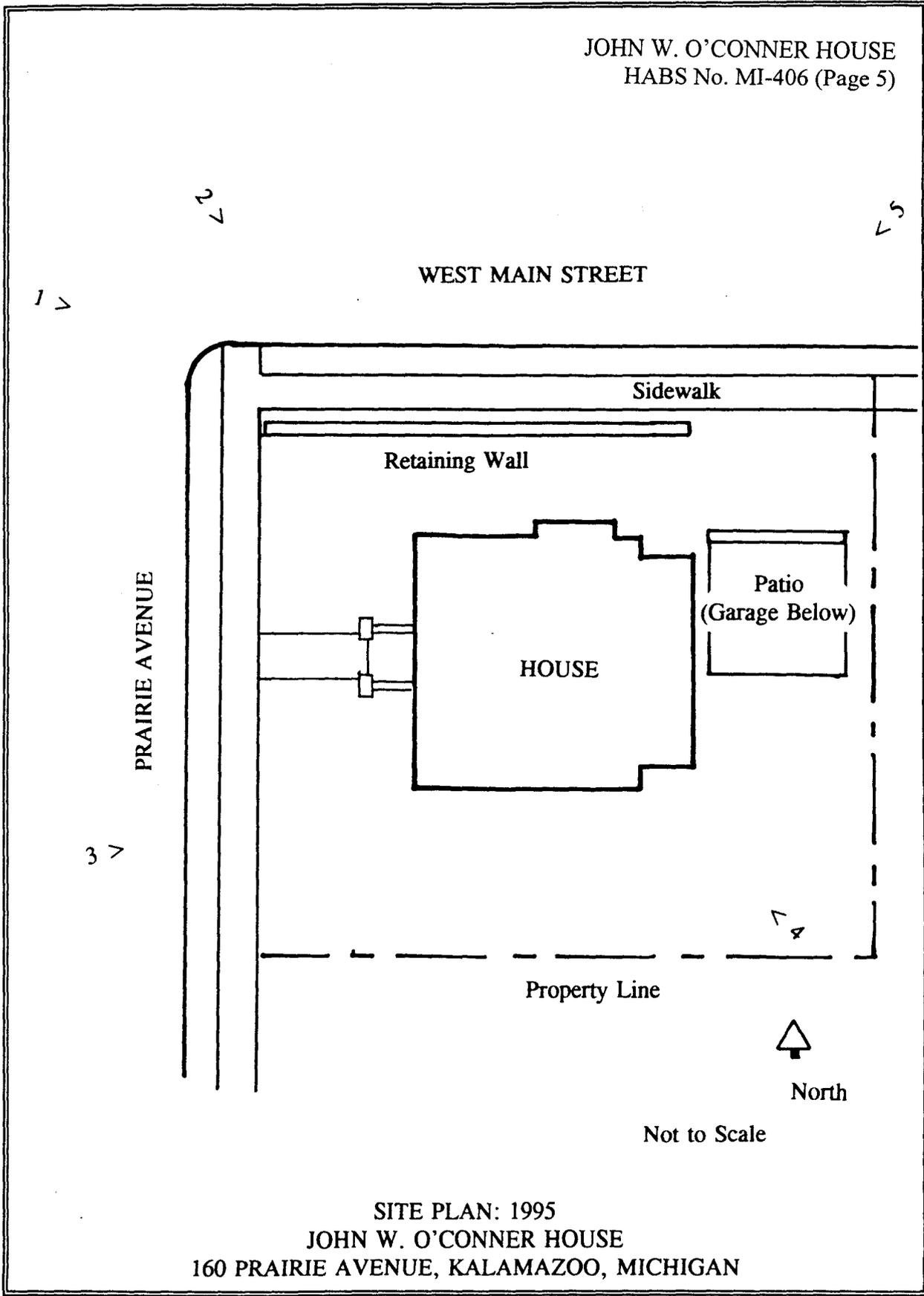
Not to Scale

LOCATION MAP:
JOHN W. O'CONNER HOUSE
160 PRAIRIE AVENUE, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN



PROJECT AREA: 1890:
JOHN W. O'CONNER HOUSE
160 PRAIRIE AVENUE, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

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WEST MAIN STREET

PRAIRIE AVENUE

Sidewalk

Retaining Wall

HOUSE

Patio
(Garage Below)

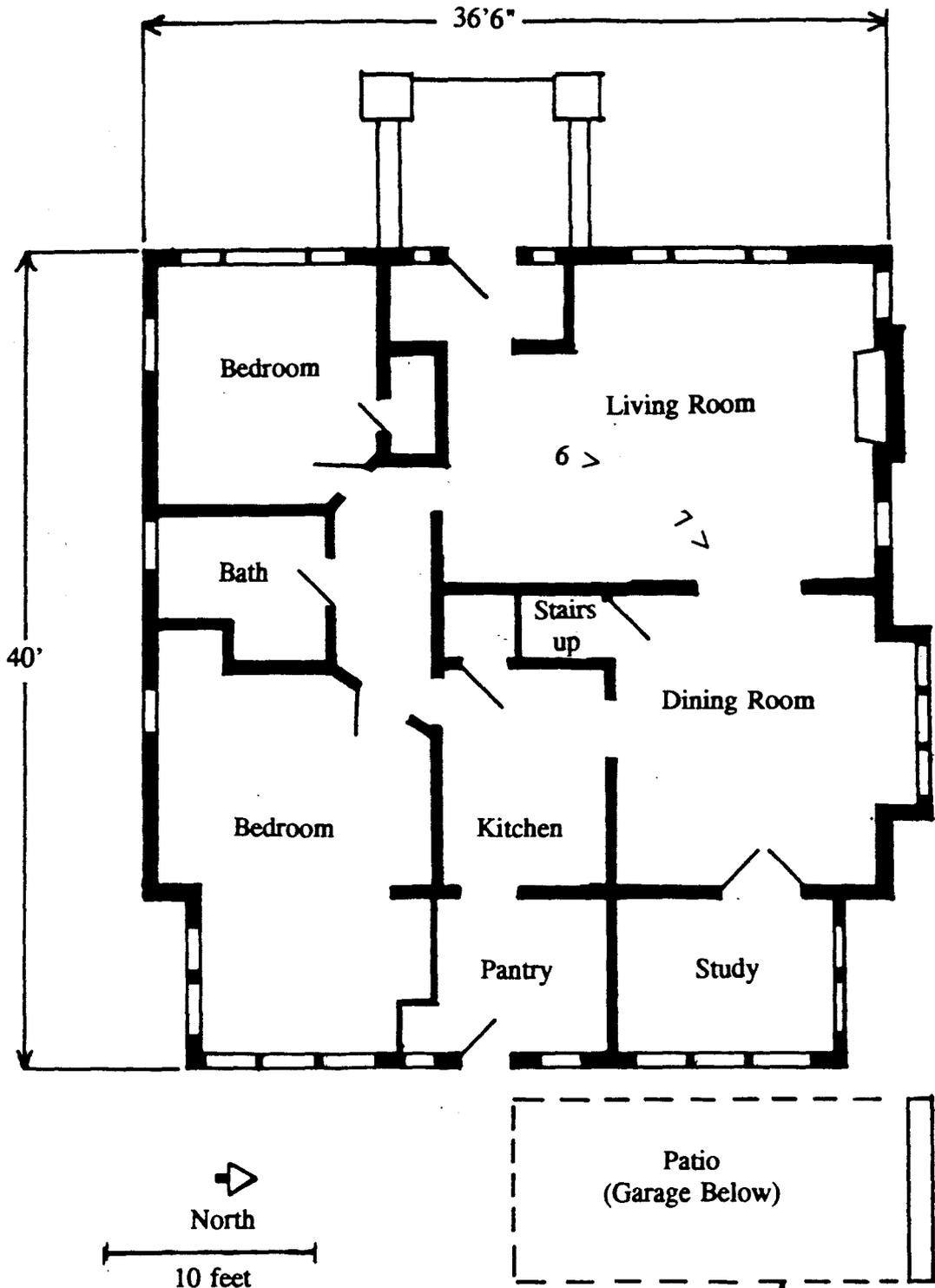
Property Line

North

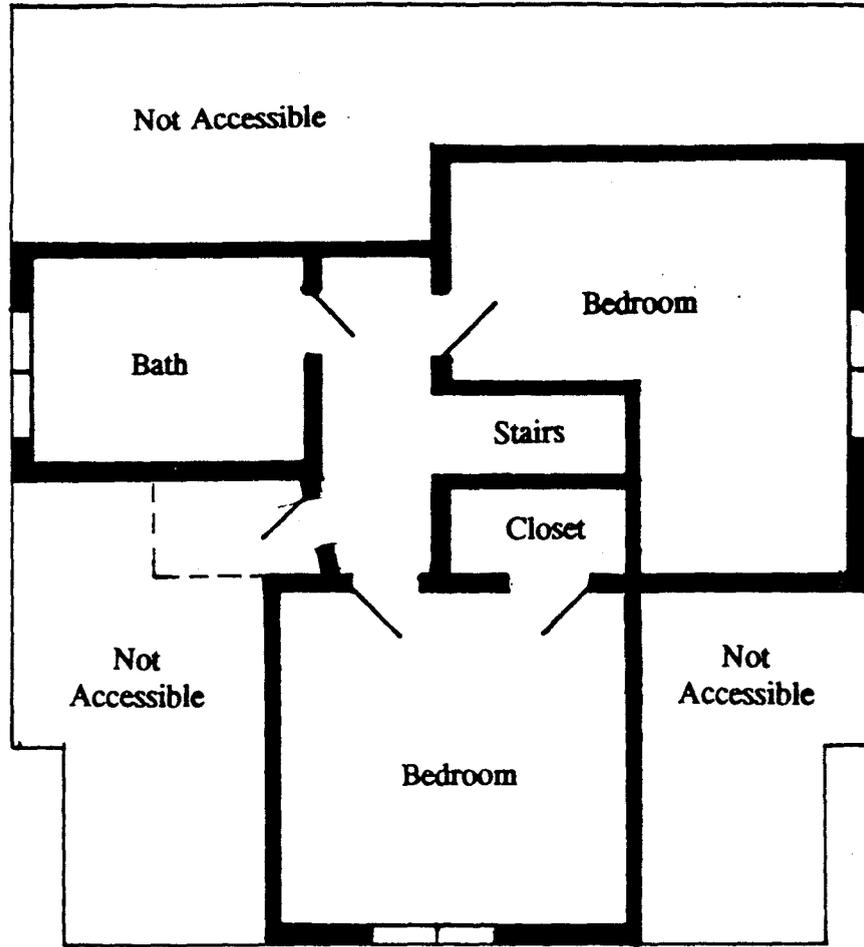
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SITE PLAN: 1995
JOHN W. O'CONNOR HOUSE
160 PRAIRIE AVENUE, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

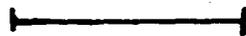
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GROUND FLOOR PLAN
JOHN W. O'CONNOR HOUSE
160 PRAIRIE AVENUE, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN



North 


10 feet

SECOND FLOOR PLAN
JOHN W. O'CONNER HOUSE
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