

**A LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN  
for  
"THE POINT"**



*A historic designed landscape associated with the Hoyt House,  
a property located within Mills-Norrie State Park*

**NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION AND  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION -- TACONIC REGION**

**Staatsburg, New York**

prepared by

**DOELL & DOELL  
Garden Historians and Landscape Preservation Planners  
Syracuse, New York**

for

**THE FRIENDS OF MILLS MANSION**

**June 1998**

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# **A LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR "THE POINT"**

MILLS-NORRIE STATE PARK AND  
THE NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION & HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
TACONIC REGION – STAATSBURG, NY

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"The Point" is a remarkable Hudson Valley estate noted for its picturesque character. For more than a hundred years (1855-1963), it served as a country residence for three successive generations of the Lydig M. Hoyt family. Their stone residence, known today as "Hoyt House," is the architectural centerpiece of this 91-acre property which thrusts into the Hudson River just north of the hamlet of Staatsburg, New York. In 1963, the Taconic State Park Commission acquired "The Point" and incorporated the parcel into the adjoining Ogden Mills and Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State Park. Since July 1, 1970, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP) has held stewardship responsibility for "The Point."

### ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The Landscape Management Plan (LMP) for "The Point" consists of two components: (1) a report that offers site-specific preservation recommendations for the property based on an analysis of field observations and historical research; and (2) a set of plans illustrating the site's existing conditions, historical development and treatment recommendations.

The report is organized in five sections. **Chapter One** introduces the reader to the historical and contemporary significance of the property, establishes the purpose, methodology and procedure for the study, and identifies the site's location.

**Chapter Two** provides a detailed look at the physical condition of the existing landscape. It examines the features that contribute to the historic character of "The Point," particularly its topography, vegetation, natural systems, circulation, water features, structures, and visual/spatial relationships.

**Chapter Three** presents the results of historical research and analysis to establish a context for understanding the landscape features that survive today. Five period plans provide a succinct graphic summary of landscape development at "The Point" over the past two centuries, while the supporting narrative addresses: the historical origins of the property; the pre-design character of the landscape; the design objectives of the Hoyts and their landscape architect; the estate's original layout and design; the incremental landscape changes initiated by three generations of the Hoyt family from the mid-1850s through the early-1960s; and, the site alterations made by the Taconic State Park Commission and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation from 1963 to the present.

**Chapter Four** evaluates "The Point" according to recently adopted standards for historic landscapes established by the United States Department of the Interior for the National Register of Historic Places. Included is a discussion of the site's classification as a historic landscape, an assessment of the landscape's significance and an evaluation of its historical integrity. The chapter concludes with a general concept or philosophy for preserving the historic landscape at "The Point."

**Chapter Five** offers options for historic landscape preservation and maintenance at "The Point" based on the findings of this study and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

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## HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE

"The Point" is nationally significant for its exceptional design heritage and intrinsic scenic beauty. Its picturesque architectural and landscape elements embody the distinctive characteristics of a mid-nineteenth century country estate laid out in accordance with the American "Landscape Gardening" style.

The property's significance is heightened by its association with Calvert Vaux, a distinguished American architect and planner, and a proponent of the Romantic styles in rural art and architecture. In his designs and writings, the English-born designer advocated the harmonious union of buildings and scenery, and his work at "The Point" is a tangible expression of these Romantic ideals. Here in the idyllic Hudson Valley during the mid-1850s, he not only had the opportunity to design a picturesque country house and farm cottage for his client, but also, to plan the landscape settings associated with these structures. His integrated architectural and site planning work at "The Point" was an antecedent of his enlightened designs for many of America's public parks, particularly New York City's *Central Park*, which he designed in collaboration with Frederick Law Olmsted shortly after completing plans for the Hoyt estate.

Preserved by members of the Hoyt family for more than a century and maintained by the State of New York since 1963, "The Point" survives today as:

- ❑ a rare example of Calvert Vaux's residential work during the formative years of his professional career in America (1850-1895);
- ❑ one of the earliest, and perhaps the first, of Vaux's solo commissions after the death of his partner and mentor, Andrew Jackson Downing, on July 20, 1852; and
- ❑ one of the last, if not the only, property remaining in America with an extant Gothic-revival residence and a complementary landscape setting designed by Calvert Vaux.

In light of the property's historical and contemporary significance, the Hoyt House is included within the *Hudson River National Historic Landmark District* -- a 20-mile long area of contiguous estates, towns and hamlets that extends along the eastern shore of the Hudson River in Columbia and Dutchess Counties.<sup>1</sup> The lands that comprise "The Point" also form part of two scenic districts designated by the State of New York: the *Mid-Hudson Historic Shorelands State Scenic District*;<sup>2</sup> and a *Scenic Area of Statewide Significance*.<sup>3</sup>

## PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This report presents the findings of a comprehensive multi-year study of the historic landscape at "The Point." The purpose of the project was three-fold:

- (1) to assess the site's preservation needs through an analysis of existing conditions and historical resources;
- (2) to formulate a long-range plan to guide the NYSOPRHP in treating and managing this historic landscape in a manner consistent with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*; and
- (3) to serve as a model for others engaged in the conservation of historic landscapes through the use of a "Landscape Management Matrix" that highlights preferred/alternative preservation treatments for "The Point," and the rationale for their selection.



This report also incorporates the research, analysis and recommendations of three consulting landscape architectural firms that worked on the project, in succession, from 1990 through 1997.<sup>4</sup> They are:

- Hudson & Pacific Designs, Inc. of Kingston, NY. (1990-1992);
- Maloney Associates/Landscapes of Saratoga Springs, NY. (1993-1995); and
- Doell & Doell, Garden Historians of Syracuse, NY. (1996-1997).

Hudson & Pacific Designs began work on the project in 1990 with a review of pertinent, but limited, documentary resources available at the Taconic Regional Office of the NYSOPRHP at Mills-Norrie State Park in Staatsburg. Their researchers supplemented this information with additional materials collected from selected libraries, archives and governmental offices throughout the Hudson Valley.<sup>5</sup> To help document oral traditions associated with "The Point" and the Hoyt family, the firm invited interested members of the community to attend a public meeting in Staatsburg and share their recollections with historians.<sup>6</sup> Hudson & Pacific Designs also conducted field investigations to record the location and condition of the site's historic landscape features.<sup>7</sup> A comparative analysis of site and archival evidence enabled the landscape architects to identify distinct periods in the estate's development, to attribute origins to specific character-defining features, to assess Calvert Vaux's design intent for the property, and to generate period plans illustrating the site's historical appearance. The firm's preliminary findings, which also included an assessment of the site's historical integrity and preservation needs, were compiled in a draft report dated October 3, 1992, and a set of eleven over-sized site plans.<sup>8</sup>

Maloney Associates initiated a new phase of site and archival study in 1993. The firm successfully located several historic aerial photographs of "The Point," as well as pertinent information about Calvert Vaux and Andrew Jackson Downing.<sup>9</sup> Using detailed site plans prepared by Berger Engineering and Surveying (Poughkeepsie, NY.), the firm conducted additional field observations to assess the historic landscape's character-defining features. They also photographed the site to record its present condition and visual character. Their findings were compiled in a series of draft reports dated February 1994, September 1994, and September 1995.

Work on the landscape management plan resumed in 1996 when Doell & Doell began to study the history, condition and preservation needs of "The Point." A 40-scale site plan of the property, prepared by James E. Holdridge (Principal Engineering Technician, OPRHP - Taconic Region), served as a base map for the firm's extensive field surveys. Building on the data base compiled by the previous consultants, Doell & Doell recorded the identity, condition and size of significant plant materials (including the annual growth rings on stumps), the nature and extent of ecological succession, and the quality of the site's visual/spatial character. In addition, the firm discovered and mapped a number of miscellaneous cultural resources (ruins of structures, wall remnants, etc.) and anomalous landscape features (mounds, depressions, etc.) scattered throughout the site.

Doell & Doell conducted only a limited amount of new research on "The Point," focusing on 19th-century deeds and agricultural census records. Nevertheless, the firm gained new perspectives on the property's historical development through the following tasks:

- a comprehensive review of the draft research reports prepared by the two previous consultants, and selected primary sources revealed in these studies;

- 
- an investigation of the writings by Calvert Vaux and Andrew Jackson Downing to identify the design characteristics of landscape gardens in the picturesque mode;
  - a detailed content analysis of period photographs, particularly high-resolution aerial views from 1935, 1956, and 1975, to reveal historic land use patterns and features;
  - a comparative analysis of site evidence and archival information to attribute the estate's character-defining features to specific time periods, and to assess their historical integrity; and
  - the preparation of revised period plans and related analytical illustrations to reflect these findings.

Once the analysis was complete, Doell & Doell used the information to significantly revise the previous reports, to develop statements of historical significance and integrity, and to prepare site-specific treatment recommendations for preserving the historic landscape at "The Point."

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING LAND USE

"The Point" is located within the historic Hudson Valley of New York State in the Dutchess County hamlet of Staatsburg. It is situated on a promontory of land that thrusts from the eastern shore of the Hudson River -- the mid-reach of the Hudson River Estuary -- approximately 78 miles north of the river's confluence with the Atlantic Ocean at New York City. Comprised of 91.17 acres of land, the site is contained entirely within Mills-Norrie State Park -- a public park administered by the Taconic Regional Office of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. "The Point" is bordered on the north by the Ogden and Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State Park. The balance of the 1,000-acre park contains a variety of year-round recreational resources that include a marina, campground, cabins, environmental museum, two nine-hole golf courses, a clubhouse restaurant, and picnic areas, as well as hiking, cross-country skiing, and bridle trails.

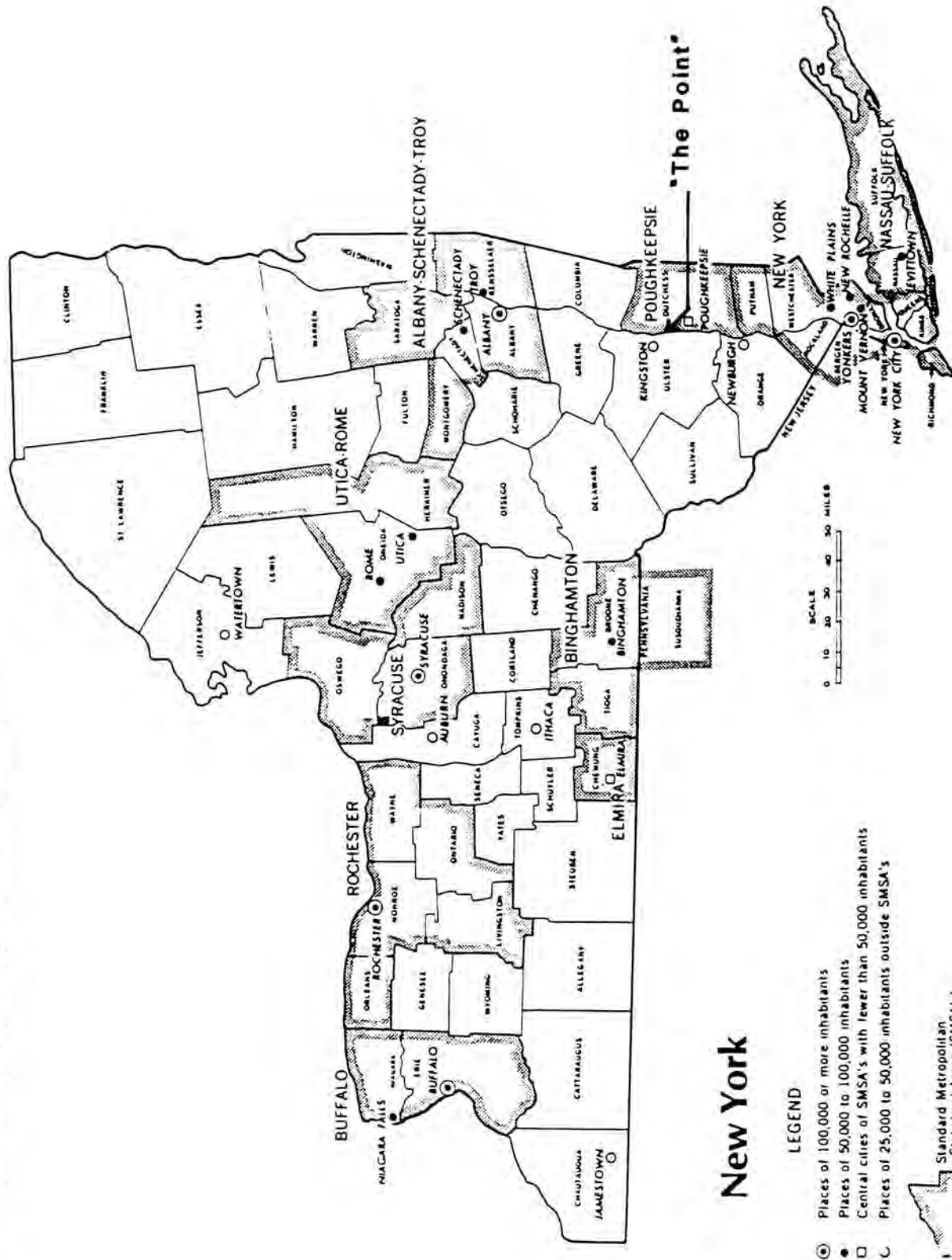
Please consult Figures 1-1 through 1-3 for maps illustrating the site's location and surrounding land use.

#### ACQUISITION HISTORY

On April 17, 1963, the Taconic State Park Commission purchased "The Point" from Mrs. Lydig (Helen Hoadley) Hoyt for the sum of \$300,000, thus ending the Hoyt family's century-long ownership of the property. Terms of the sale entitled Mrs. Hoyt to reside at "The Point" for an additional five years; however, she elected to vacate the property less than six months later. "The Point" was the largest of several Staatsburg-area properties that the Commission acquired in the early-1960s to unite Ogden and Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State Park with Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park, creating Mills-Norrie State Park.

Please consult Figure 1-4 for a 1962 boundary survey of the Hoyt property.

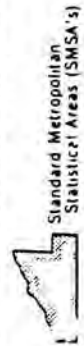
Figure 1-1: Location of "The Point" within Dutchess County, New York.  
 (Credit: New York State Department of Commerce.)



# New York

## LEGEND

- Places of 100,000 or more inhabitants
- Places of 50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants
- Central cities of SMSA's with fewer than 50,000 inhabitants
- Places of 25,000 to 50,000 inhabitants outside SMSA's



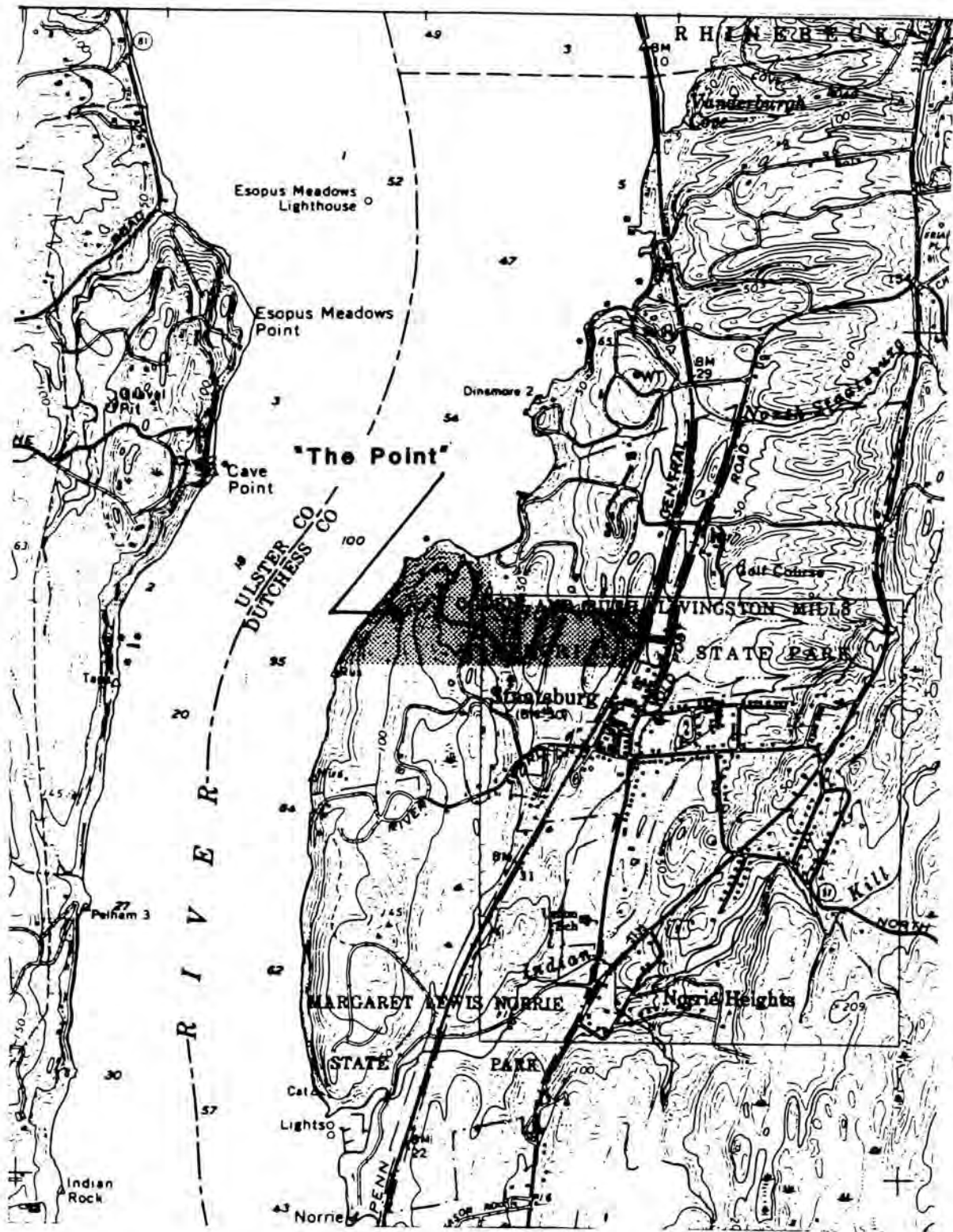


Figure 1-2: Location of "The Point" within Hyde Park Quadrangle.  
(Credit: New York State Department of Transportation, 1973.)

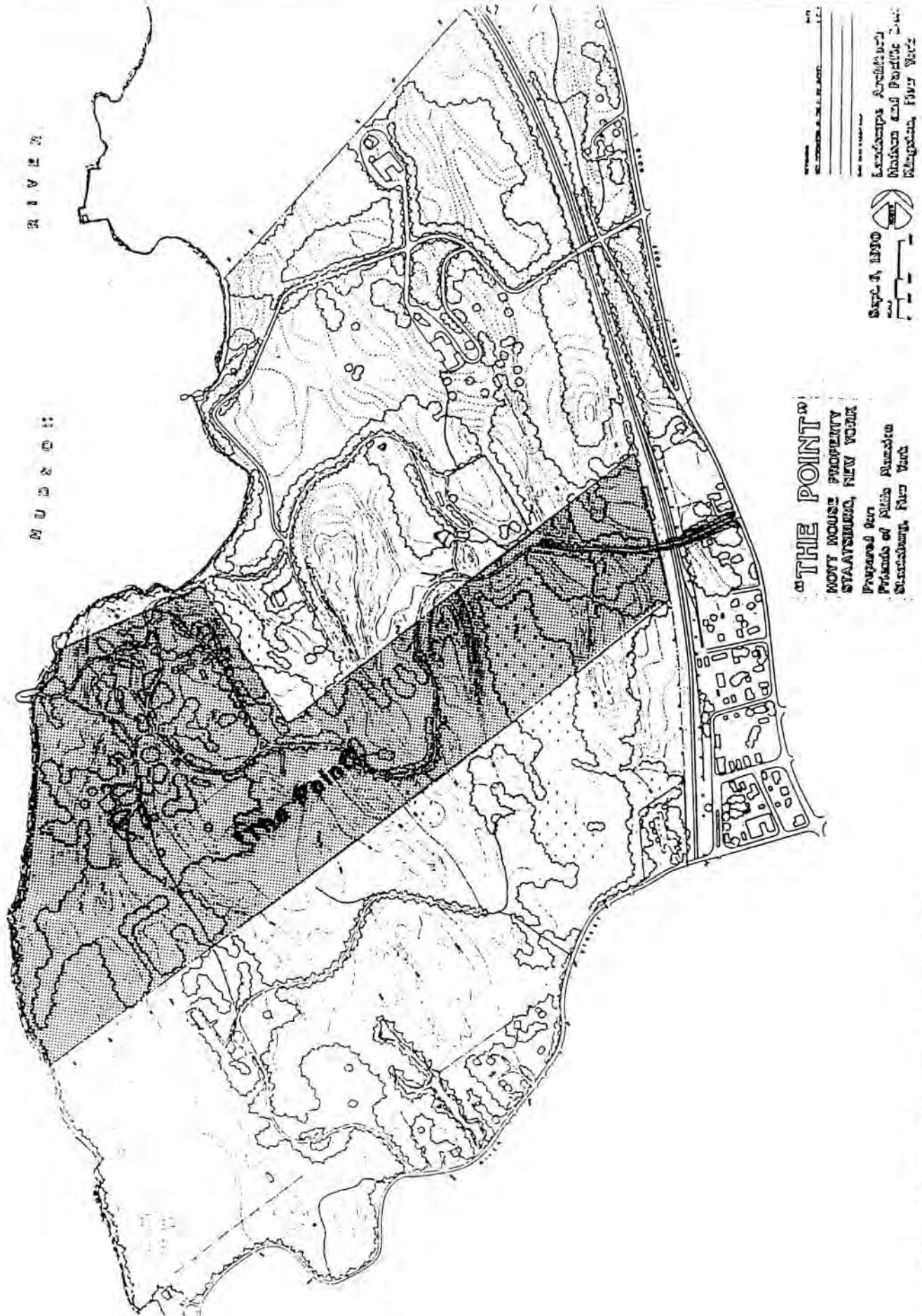


Figure 1-3: "The Point" and Surrounding Land Use.  
(Credit: Final Draft of Landscape Management Report for The Point - Hoyt House,  
prepared by Hudson & Pacific Designs, October 3, 1992.)

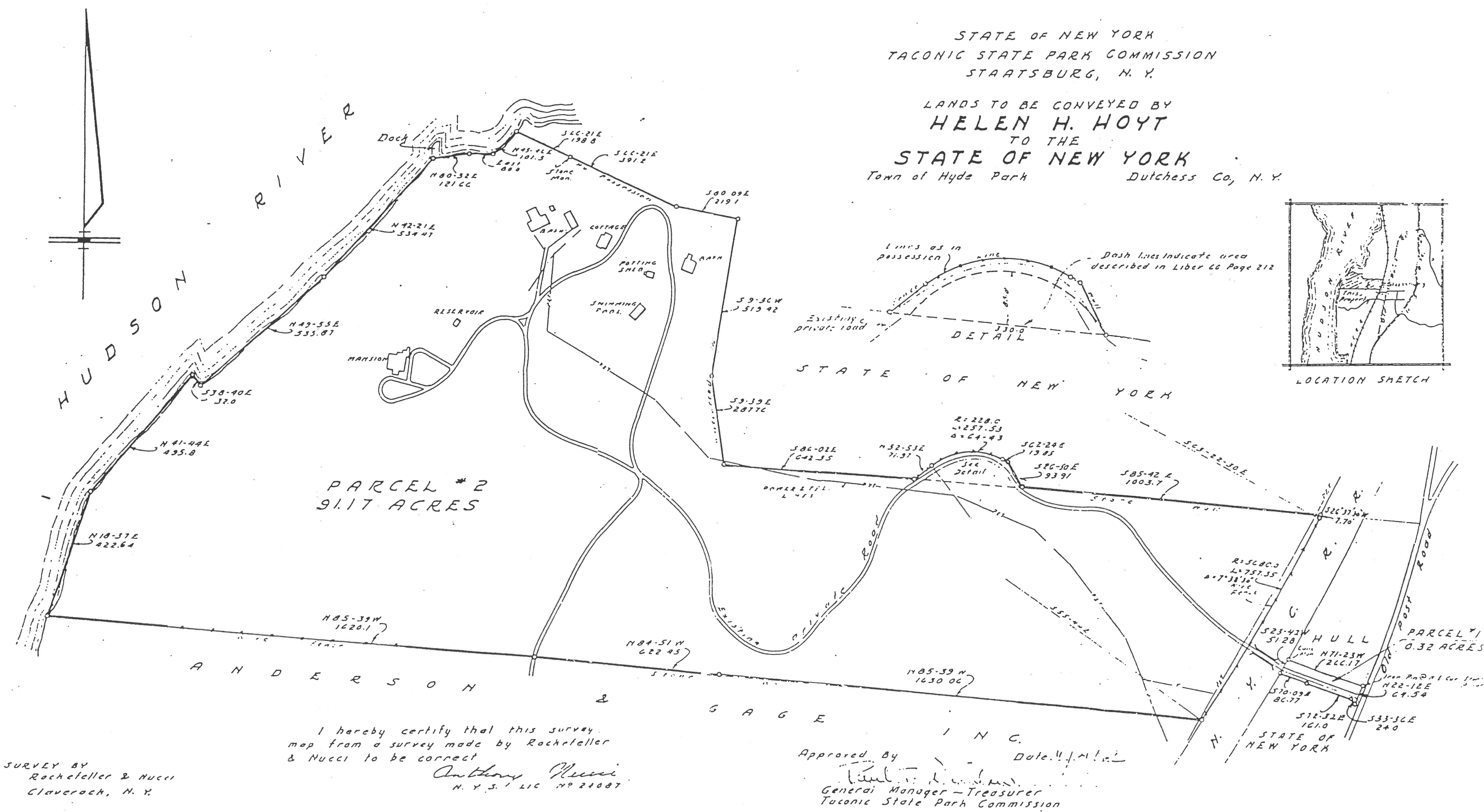


Figure 1-4: 1962 Boundary Survey of "The Point" by Rockefeller & Nucci.  
 (On file at NYSOPRHP - Taconic Region, "Map of "Lands to be Conveyed by Helen H. Hoyt to the State of New York," November 4, 1962.)

## ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

- 1 From 1979 through 1989, the Hoyt House was listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing feature of the *Sixteen Mile Historic District*. Located along the eastern shore of the Hudson River south of the Town of Clermont, the *Sixteen Mile Historic District* contained an important collection of 30 contiguous estates associated with the Livingston family and other prominent figures in New York and American history; many of the properties were designed by America's foremost architects and landscape designers of the 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1990, the Secretary of the Interior designated this portion of the Hudson River's eastern shore as *The Hudson River National Historic Landmark District*.  
  
For additional information about the district, please refer to Peter D. Shaver, The National Register of Historic Places in New York State, (New York: Rizzoli, 1993) p. 40.
- 2 In 1980, New York State's Commissioner of Environmental Conservation established the *Mid-Hudson Historic Shorelands State Scenic District* -- a twenty-five mile long portion of the eastern shoreline of the Hudson River that begins at West Market and Dock Streets in Hyde Park in New York's Dutchess County, and ends at Germantown Landing Road (Co. Rt. 80 at State Route 9G) in southern Columbia County. For additional information about the district, please refer to an undated Management Plan Report prepared for the Hudson River Shorelands Task force by landscape architect Robert M. Toole.
- 3 In 1993, New York State's Secretary of State designated "The Point" and adjoining lands as a *Scenic Area of Statewide Significance* under provisions of the Coastal Management Act.
- 4 To the degree possible, this report uses footnotes and credit lines to acknowledge the distinct contributions of each firm to the project.
- 5 Researchers for Hudson and Pacific Designs also examined publications and documentation at: the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; the New York State Museum; the Dutchess County Planning Department; the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, NY.; Historic Hudson Valley, Inc.; the Avery Library at Columbia University; and the New York Public Library.
- 6 The 1990 meeting was open to interested members of the community and the Staatsburg Association for Village Efforts (SAVE) -- an organization devoted to issues of general interest to the village of Staatsburg. The recollections of Mrs. Janet Graham, a descendant of the Hoyt family, were particularly helpful in this regard.
- 7 Allan Tymczuk, a Landscape Architect with the NYSOPRHP, assisted the staff of Hudson and Pacific Designs with this task.
- 8 This report, titled Landscape Management Report for The Point, includes reductions of four existing conditions plans (Maps #4, 7, 8 & 9), three historic period analysis plans (Maps #10, 11, & 12), two landscape stabilization plans (Maps #13 & 14), and two historic landscape development plans (Maps #15 & 16).
- 9 Archives investigated by Maloney Associates included the American Institute of Architects in Washington, DC., and the New York State Bureau of Historic Sites at Peebles Island, NY.

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TACONIC REGION -- STAATSBURG, NY

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## **CHAPTER 2: EXISTING CONDITIONS & SITE ANALYSIS**

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## CHAPTER 2: EXISTING CONDITIONS & SITE ANALYSIS

### INTRODUCTION

Landscapes like "The Point" are composed of a number of features which contribute, individually or collectively, to their historic character. In planning treatment projects for historic landscapes, it is essential to document the location and existing condition of these character-defining features. The Department of the Interior recognizes eight distinct categories of historic landscape features in its *Draft Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Landscapes* (May 1992). These include: topography, vegetation, natural systems, circulation, water features, furnishings and objects, structures, and views and spatial organization. The following narrative, which presents the findings of a detailed condition assessment of historic landscape features at "The Point," is therefore organized in a comparable manner.

The chapter also includes a number of graphic resources which supplement information presented in the narrative. For ease of reference, these maps, photographs and related illustrations are typically placed at relevant locations in the text; however, the following illustrations may be useful to the reader throughout the entire chapter:

- Figure 2-1: Aerial photograph of "The Point" -- May 1, 1956.

This image provides a clear, synoptic view of the 91-acre site near the end of the Hoyt family's 110-year tenure at "The Point." All major structures, circulation systems, drainage features, and vegetation patterns are readily visible, including most of the site's avenue and specimen trees. It also illustrates the site's relationship with the Hudson River, the railroad, the Old Post Road, and the adjoining Mills Mansion property. Equally important, the image offers a different perspective on anomalous features observed in the field (mounds, depressions, etc.) that may be the remains of "lost" structures, roads or fences. Consequently, this 1956 aerial photograph provides an excellent resource for evaluating the site's "existing condition" despite drastic changes in vegetation patterns at "The Point" over the past 40 years.

- Figure 2-2: Composite aerial photograph of "The Point" -- April 10, 1975.

This image is a composite of three separate aerial photographs [MM 1-31, 46 & 61] taken in 1975 as part of a photogrammetric mapping project for the adjoining Mills Mansion property. Like the 1956 aerial view, these high-resolution images provide detailed documentation of the site's character-defining features. They also reveal the location and extent of changes made by the Taconic State Park Commission (1963-1970) and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation (1970-1975) during their first 12 years of stewardship at "The Point." With lawns and meadows in the early stages of ecological succession, these 1975 photographs provide an excellent resource for evaluating the site's existing condition.

- Figure 2-3: Tree Mass Comparison Map: 1956 vs. 1995. (300 Scale; Reduction of Original) NYSOPRHP (1995)

This map complements the 1956 aerial photograph (Figure 2-1) by providing a comparative view of vegetation patterns on the site between 1956 and 1995. The map also notes the location and identity of avenue trees along the approach road and specimen trees in the vicinity of the Hoyt house and its outbuildings.

- Figure 2-4: Existing Conditions Map: Eastern Half. (44% Reduction of 100 Scale Original) Hudson & Pacific Designs (December 6, 1990)  
and

- Figure 2-5: Existing Conditions Map: Western Half. (44% Reduction of 100 Scale Original) Hudson & Pacific Designs (December 6, 1990)

These two drawings provide a general overview of the site's existing topography, circulation, and structures, as well as a detailed information concerning the location and identity of avenue trees and specimens in the vicinity of the Hoyt House and its outbuildings.

- Figure 2-6: Site Analysis Map. (50% Reduction of 150 Scale Original)

This map reveals evidence of historic landscape patterns at "The Point" based on analysis of extensive field observations. The map documents the location of anomalous features (mounds, depressions, etc.) and evidence of "lost" elements (stone wall remnants, etc.), and their relationship to natural features (ridges, wetlands, etc.) that map have influenced site development since the 1790s.

- Figure 2-11: Key to Historic Buildings and Landscape Structures. (Scale: 1" = 150')

This map provides a comprehensive reference to the location, name and origins of all known buildings, structures, architectural ruins, and former building sites at "The Point." Extant structures are also identified with a number from 1 - 13, while architectural ruins and archaeological sites are identified by a letter from A to R.

Existing photographs of specific landscape features are noted throughout the chapter by the abbreviation "EP" followed by a specific number (example: EP-1, EP-2, etc.). For ease of reference, all of these images are contained in the Appendix of the report.

Similarly, historical photographs of specific landscape features are noted throughout the chapter by the abbreviation "HP" followed by a specific number (example: HP-1, HP-2, etc.). For ease of reference, all of these images are contained in the Appendix of the report.



Figure 2-1: Aerial photograph of "The Point" -- May 1, 1956.

Figure 2-2: Composite aerial photograph of "The Point" -- April 10, 1975.

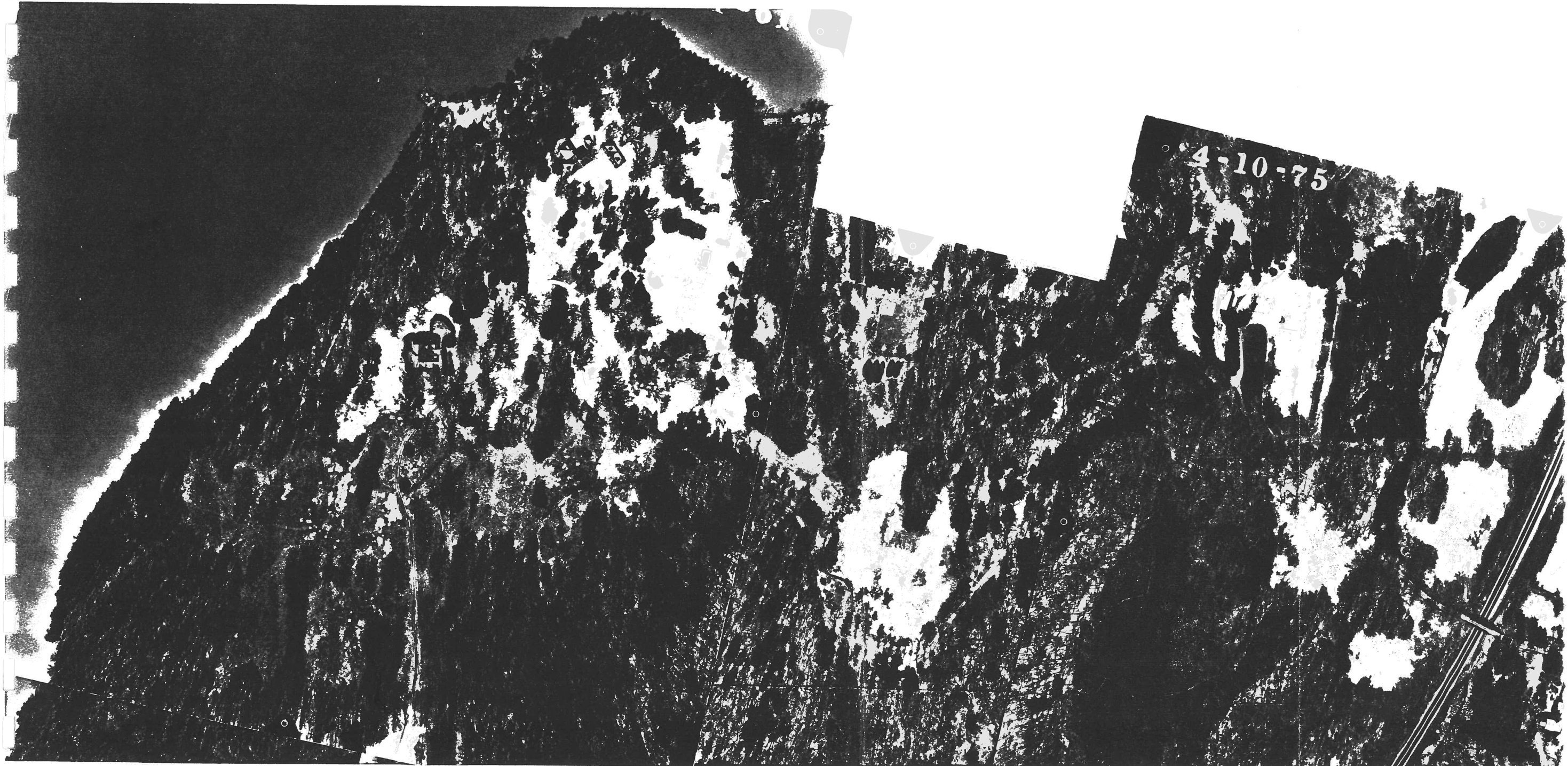


Figure 2-2: Composite aerial photograph of "The Point" -- April 10, 1975.

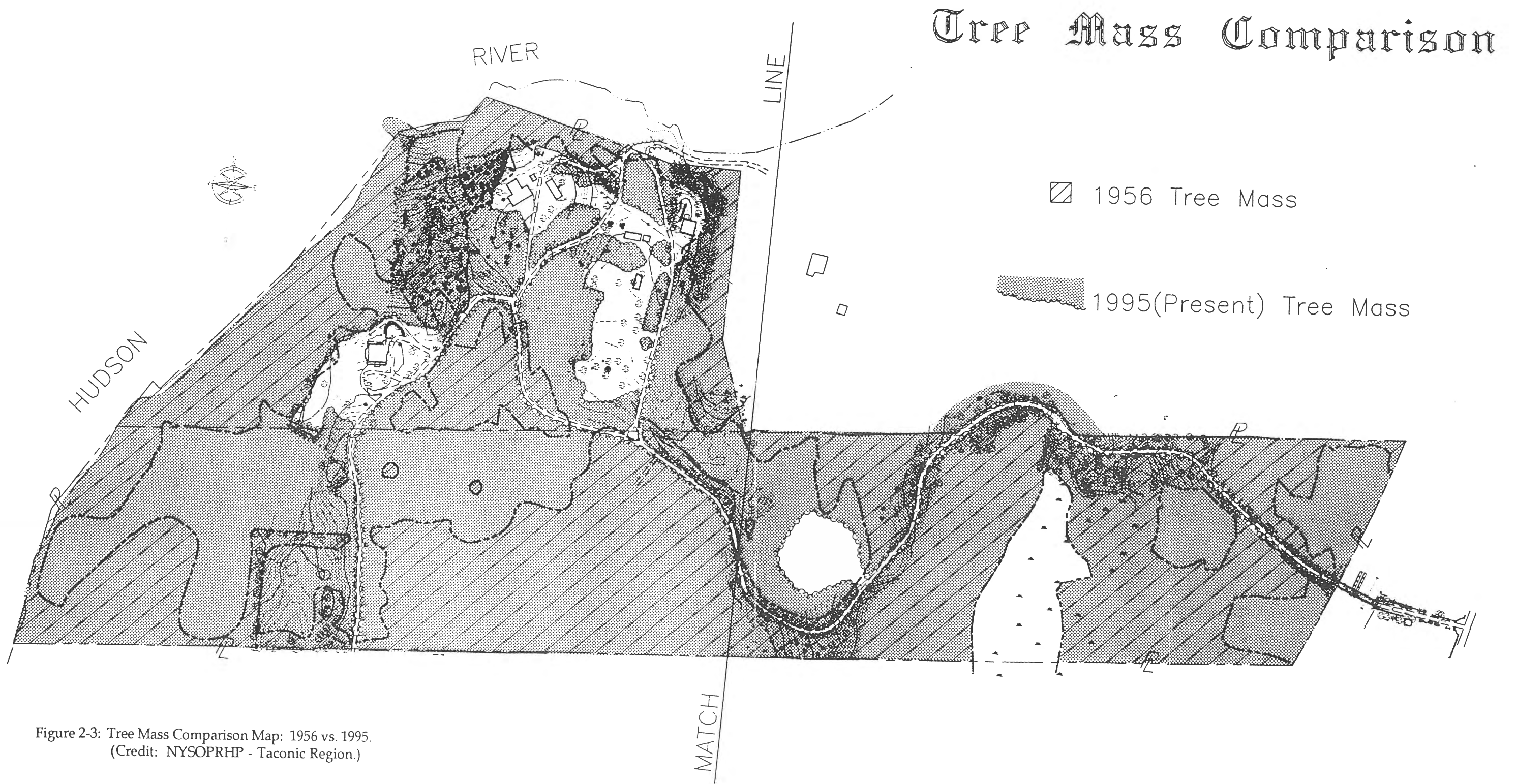


Figure 2-3: Tree Mass Comparison Map: 1956 vs. 1995.  
(Credit: NYSOPRHP - Taconic Region.)



**LEGEND**

| SYMBOL             | FEATURE                          |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| [Solid line]       | BUILDING                         |
| [Dashed line]      | FOUNDATION                       |
| [Thick solid line] | STONE WALL                       |
| [Thin solid line]  | MASONARY WALL                    |
| [Double line]      | PAVED ROAD                       |
| [Single line]      | UNPAVED ROAD/PATH                |
| [Square with dot]  | UTILITY POLE                     |
| [Square]           | FORMER UTILITY POLE LOCATION     |
| [Circle]           | DRAINAGE STRUCTURE               |
| [Triangle]         | PIPE                             |
| [Circle with dot]  | MONUMENT                         |
| [Dashed line]      | CONTOUR                          |
| [Number]           | SPOT ELEVATION                   |
| [Dotted area]      | DEPRESSED AREA                   |
| [Dashed line]      | FENCE                            |
| [Dotted line]      | PET CEMETARY                     |
| [Circle]           | WELL                             |
| [Wavy line]        | BOAT STORAGE PATH                |
| [Circle with key]  | DECIDUOUS TREE WITH SIZE AND KEY |
| [Circle with key]  | EVERGREEN TREE WITH SIZE AND KEY |
| [Circle]           | STUMP                            |
| [Wavy line]        | EDGE OF WOODS/TREE CANOPY        |
| [Wavy line]        | SHRUB MASS                       |
| [Wavy line]        | EDGE OF WATER                    |
| [Wavy line]        | WETLAND                          |
| [Dashed line]      | STREAM CENTERLINE                |
| [Dashed line]      | PROPERTY LINE                    |
| [Dashed line]      | GRAVEL BEACH                     |
| [Dashed line]      | FENCE/GATE_POST                  |

REVISIONS: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

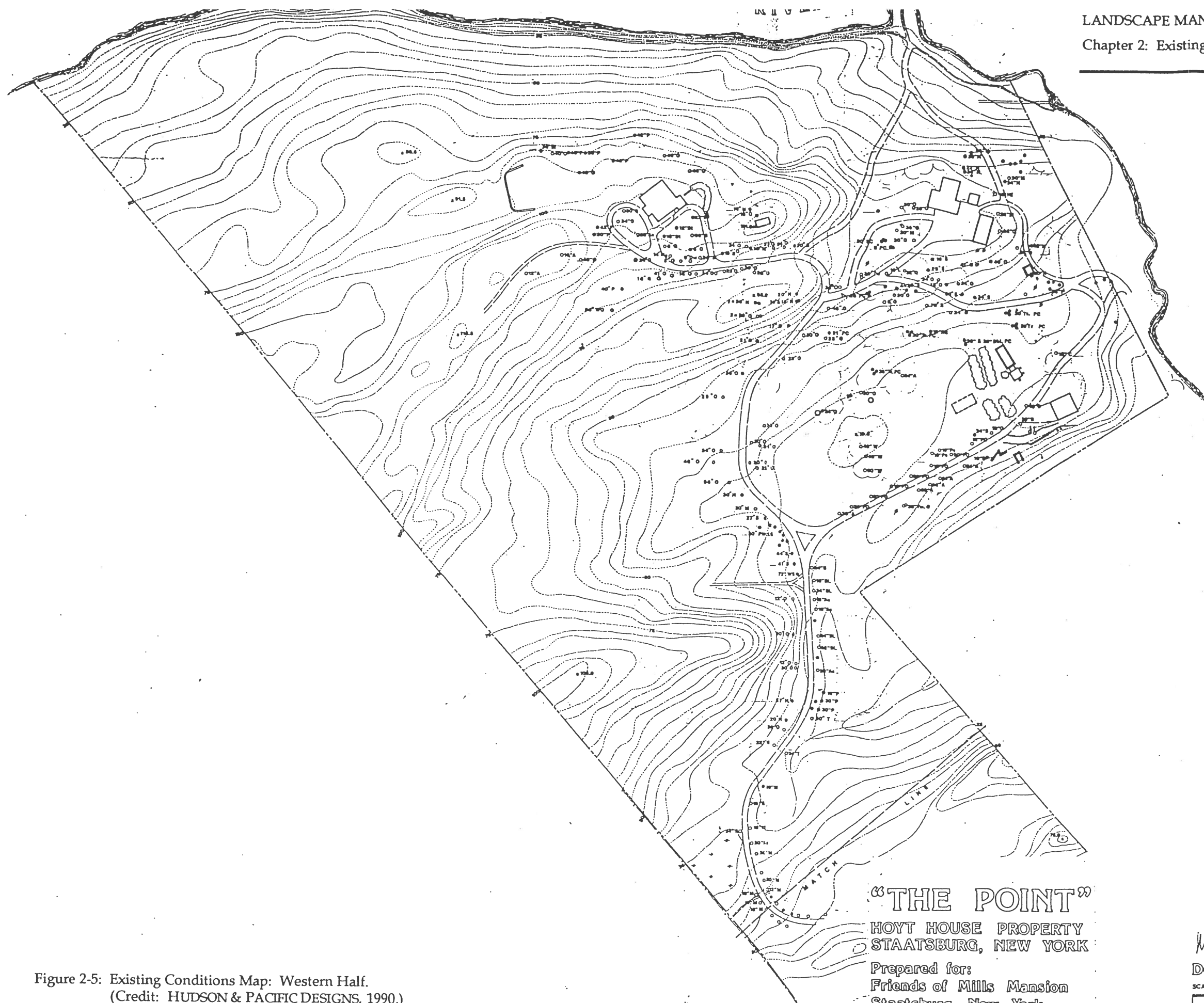
**"THE POINT"**  
 HOYT HOUSE PROPERTY  
 STAATSBURG, NEW YORK  
 Prepared for:  
 Friends of Mills Mansion  
 Staatsburg, New York

MAP # 8  
 Dec. 6, 1990  
 SCALE: \_\_\_\_\_



LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:  
 HUDSON AND PACIFIC DESIGNS  
 KINGSTON, NEW YORK

Figure 2-4: Existing Conditions Map: Eastern Half.  
 (Credit: HUDSON & PACIFIC DESIGNS, 1990.)



LEGEND

| SYMBOL                   | FEATURE                          |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| [Solid line]             | BUILDING                         |
| [Dashed line]            | FOUNDATION                       |
| [Dotted line]            | STONE WALL                       |
| [Long-dashed line]       | MASONRY WALL                     |
| [Double line]            | PAVED ROAD                       |
| [Single line]            | UNPAVED ROAD/PATH                |
| [T-shaped symbol]        | UTILITY POLE                     |
| [Square symbol]          | FORMER UTILITY POLE LOCATION     |
| [Circle symbol]          | DRAINAGE STRUCTURE               |
| [Triangle symbol]        | PIPE                             |
| [Circle with dot symbol] | MONUMENT                         |
| [Wavy line]              | CONTOUR                          |
| [Number symbol]          | SPOT ELEVATION                   |
| [Dashed line]            | DEPRESSED AREA                   |
| [Dotted line]            | FENCE                            |
| [Circle with dot symbol] | PET CEMETARY                     |
| [Circle symbol]          | WELL                             |
| [Dashed line]            | BOAT STORAGE PATH                |
| [Circle with 'M' symbol] | DECIDUOUS TREE WITH SIZE AND KEY |
| [Circle with 'E' symbol] | EVERGREEN TREE WITH SIZE AND KEY |
| [Circle with 'S' symbol] | STUMP                            |
| [Wavy line]              | EDGE OF WOODS/TREE CANOPY        |
| [Wavy line]              | SHRUB MASS                       |
| [Wavy line]              | EDGE OF WATER                    |
| [Wavy line]              | WETLAND                          |
| [Dashed line]            | STREAM CENTERLINE                |
| [Dotted line]            | PROPERTY LINE                    |
| [Dotted line]            | GRAVEL BEACH                     |
| [Dotted line]            | FENCE / GATE POST                |

"THE POINT"

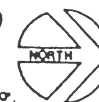
HOYT HOUSE PROPERTY  
STAATSBURG, NEW YORK

Prepared for:  
Friends of Mills Mansion  
Staatsburg, New York

MAP #9

Dec. 6, 1990

SCALE: 0' 50' 100' 200'

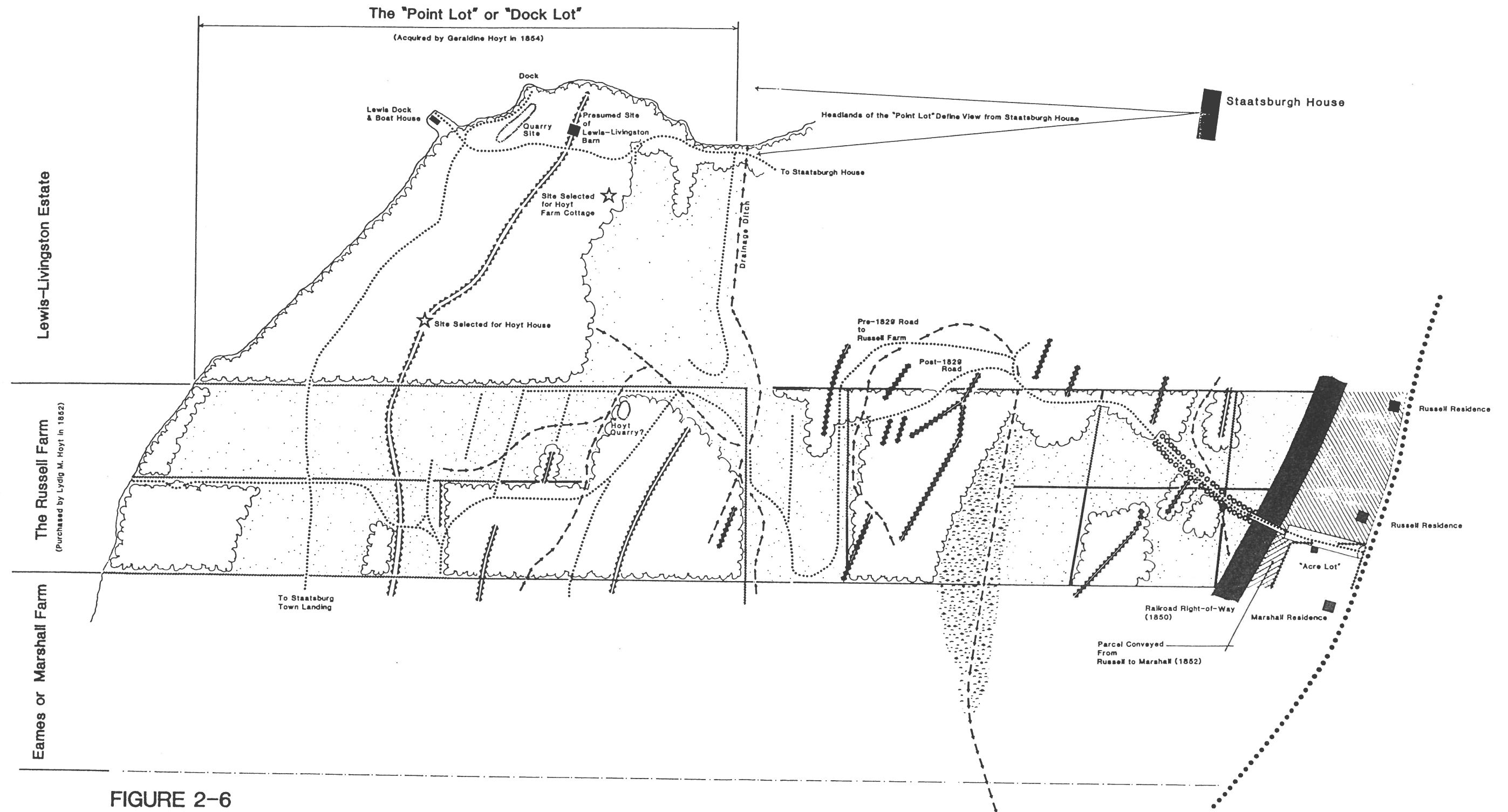


REVISIONS: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
NEW INFORMATION AS PER 12/1990 SURVEY 1/1/91

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:  
Hudson and Pacific Designs  
Kingston, New York

Figure 2-5: Existing Conditions Map: Western Half.  
(Credit: HUDSON & PACIFIC DESIGNS, 1990.)





**FIGURE 2-6**  
**SITE ANALYSIS MAP**

An Analysis of Pre-1852 Historic Landscape Patterns & the Natural Factors that May Have Influenced Site Development

0 100' 200' 300' 400'  
Scale in Feet



**DOELL & DOELL**

Garden Historians and Landscape Preservation Planners  
310 Ball Springs Road, Syracuse, New York 13224-1651



**Key to Symbols**

- |                          |                                    |                                   |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Natural Ridge            | Extant Stone Wall                  | Pre-1852 Structures               |
| Steep Rock Face or Cliff | Evidence of Robbed Stone Wall      | Historic Woodlands                |
| Drainage Feature         | Presumed Site of Robbed Stone Wall | Pre-1852 Sugar Maple Avenue Trees |
| Marsh                    | Historic Farm Lane                 | Land Retained by Russell          |

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## TOPOGRAPHY

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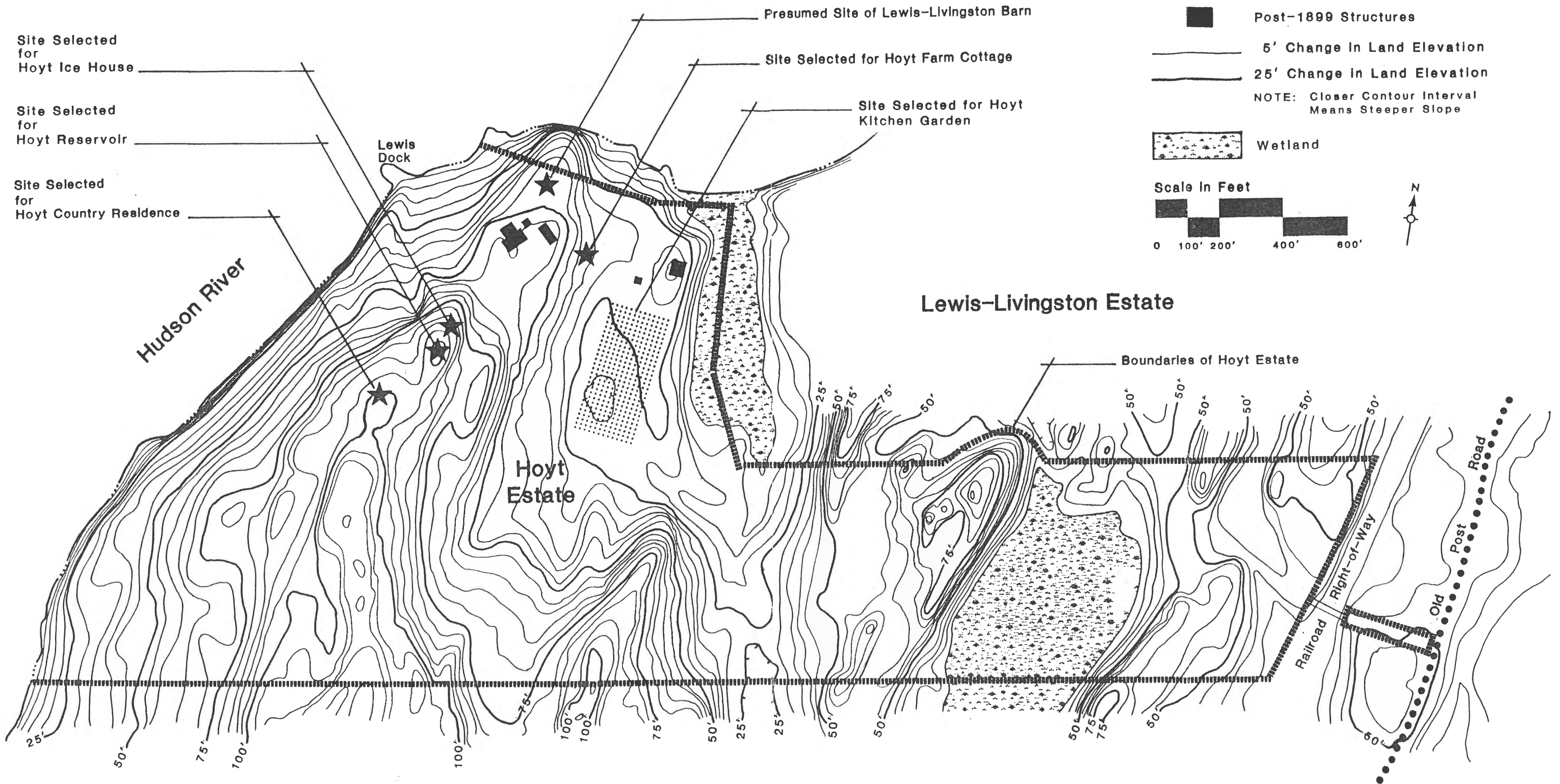
Topographic features at "The Point" are inherently diverse, distinctive and often dramatic. As revealed in Figures 2-6 and 2-7, the site is dominated by a massive ridge of bedrock that thrusts northward into the Hudson River, forming a natural promontory or headland. The Hoyt House stands at the crest of this steeply-sloping landform which rises to a height of more than 100 feet above the water's edge; this vantage point offers an extraordinary vista of the distant Catskills across four-miles of open water. Beyond the house site, smaller knolls along the ridge are occupied by the Hoyts' former reservoir (elevation 101 ft.) and coach house/ garage complex (elev. 58 ft.). The cow barn (elev. 36 ft.) is situated atop a small rise of land near the easternmost tip of the headlands, while the potting shed and swimming pool (elev. 25 ft.) occupy a broad hollow that drains the eastern slope of the river ridge. The western slope, by contrast, meets the Hudson River in a precipitous bluff that exceeds 25 feet in height for much of its length. Further north, land contours near the water's edge are gradual enough to permit a spacious landing near the ruins of the estate's former deep-water dock.

Three additional north-south ridge lines stretch across the width of the property between the railroad right-of-way and the dominant river ridge. These dramatic geological formations tower more than 50 to 80 feet above the adjoining fields, woods and wetlands, and are characterized by steep slopes, bedrock outcrops and cliff-like escarpments. In fact, the site's second ridge proved to be virtually impenetrable to one of the property's earlier owners, James Russell. In order to gain convenient passage to his farmlands beyond the ridge, Russell found it necessary to divert his farm lane northward onto a neighbor's property ("Staatsburgh" - the Morgan Lewis estate), skirting the base of the steep slope.

Landforms at "The Point" also contain evidence of several quarries, as revealed in Figure 2-6. A large, oval cavity (40' x 75') in the north end of the third ridge appears to be a stone quarry. Although now partially filled with household and construction debris, this pit may have served as a source of the bluestone used in construction of the Hoyt House and the entrance gate piers/walls. A cliff-like wall of stone (approximately 6-10' high and 150' long) along the eastern slope of the river ridge directly south of the Hoyt House may have been similarly quarried for its bluestone. There is also a narrow, rocky ravine along the east side of the landing near the "Lewis dock." This area may have provided a source of stone for one or both of the nearby docks on the Hudson River. A large hollow on the eastern slope of the second ridge near the southern boundary wall may be the site of an old sand or gravel pit. The soils in this area appear to be quite deep and sandy, and may have served as a source of raw materials for the mortar used in constructing buildings on the estate.

A railroad right-of-way (approximately 135 ft. wide) along the eastern boundary of "The Point" is also a significant man-made topographic feature. Although the southwest corner of the site is roughly at the same elevation (33 ft.) as the right-of-way, the railroad corridor cuts into the natural land contours further north, creating a steep earthen embankment (at least 10 - 15 ft. high) along the west side of the tracks. Since the deck of the railroad bridge (approximate elevation 54 ft.) stands at least 13 feet above the area's original land contour (approx. elev. 40 ft.) and 20 feet above the railroad tracks (approx. elev. 33.5 ft.), portions of the approach road west of the tracks have been filled with as much as 13 feet of soil to meet the grade of the bridge. Eighteen stone/concrete tree wells protecting ancient Sugar maples flanking the road provide clear evidence of this significant grade change. Comparable filling has also occurred at the east end of the bridge but over a much smaller area.

Figure 2-7 -- Land Form Analysis Map



Elevations along the approach drive generally stay within a range of 45 feet (from 20' to 65') as it negotiates the slopes and valleys between the railroad right-of-way and the third ridge; however, the drive rises more than 81 feet (from 20' to 101') as it ascends the eastern slope of the river ridge approaching the Hoyt House.

There are also a number of minor anomalous landforms (linear mounds, depressions, unnatural embankments, etc.) on the 91-acre site that seem to reveal evidence of significant historic landscape patterns. Many of these cultural features are noted in Figure 2-6; however, the nature and extent of these anomalies, and their possible association with other features, are discussed in subsequent portions of this chapter, particularly vegetation and structures.

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## NATURAL SYSTEMS

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### *Geology and Soils*

"The Point" is underlain by the Austin Glen geological formation, a mixture of graywacke, sandstone, shale and other sedimentary materials, that was deposited over 250 million years. Above this bedrock formation, the site is covered with lacustrine glacial deposits of very fine sands, silts and clays. These stratified sediments, generally less than 50 feet deep, were deposited beneath the receding waters of Lake Albany -- a glacial lake that once submerged vast areas of the Hudson River Valley. Consequently, "The Point" contains six distinct soil types that are classified within the Hudson soil group:

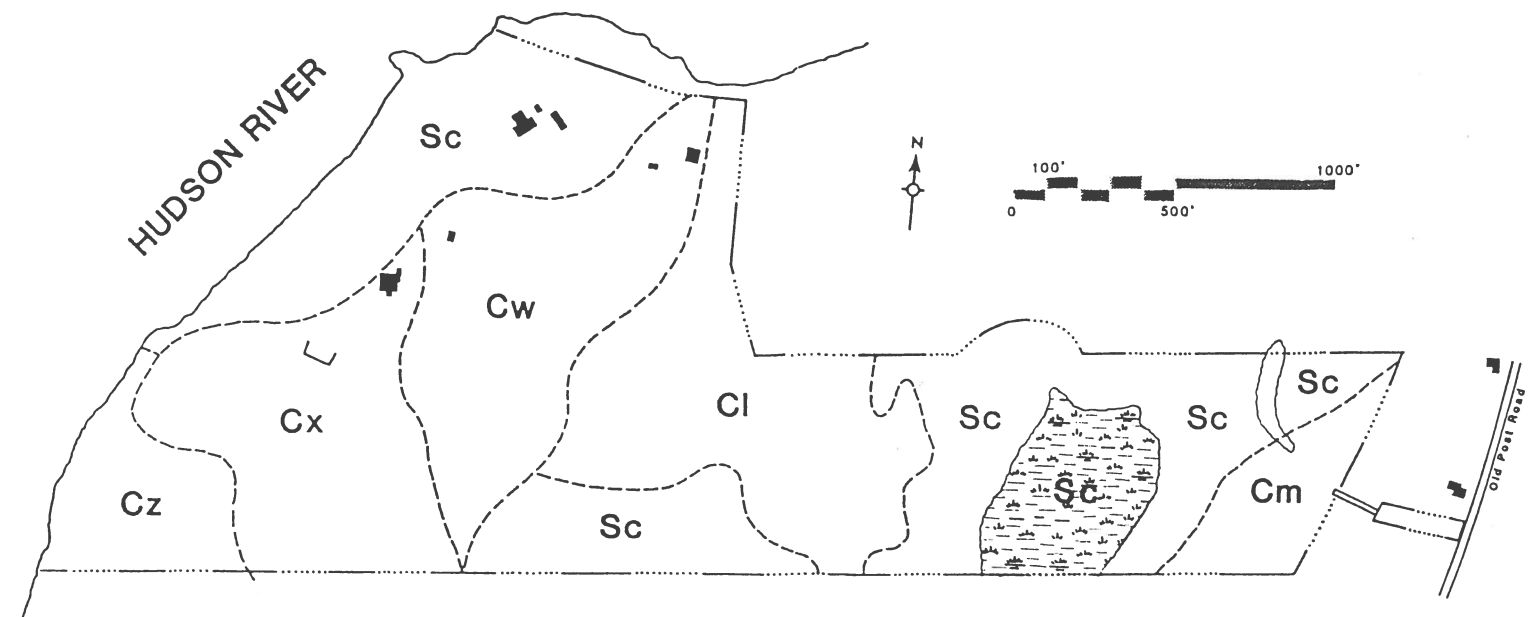
- ❑ two Colonie fine sandy loams (Cl and Cm) between the railroad right-of-way and the eastern ridge, and in a pocket between the second and third ridge;
- ❑ three Cossayuna loams (Cx, Cw, Cz) on the river ridge in the vicinity of the Hoyt House and its former lawns, garden and fields; and
- ❑ one Staatsburg gravelly loam (Sc) in the vicinity of the coach house/garage complex and along the three ridges that traverse the site.

Please consult Figure 2-8 for a chart that highlights the characteristics of these soils, and key map that illustrates their relative distribution throughout the site.

### *Hydrology*

Situated along the mid-reach of the Hudson River Estuary, "The Point" lies entirely within the Hudson River drainage basin. The eastern third of the site contains a small stream (between the railroad right-of-way and the first ridge) and an extensive upland marsh (between the first and second ridges) which drain slowly south across nearly level terrain into a tributary of Endekill Creek. The creek, in turn, empties into the Hudson River at the Mills-Norrie State Park marina southwest of Staatsburg. The central portions of the site (between the second and fourth ridges) drain northward through a network of small streams and springs which form a low-lying wetland along the Hoyt-Mills boundary before entering the Hudson River in a small cove northeast of the cow barn. Please consult Figure 2-6 for the location of these drainage features, and the "Water Features" section of this chapter for additional information on this subject.

Figure 2-8: Soils Key Map and Chart.



|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Well-Drained, Nearly Level to Sloping &amp; Deep over Bedrock</b>   |   |   |
| <i>DERIVED FROM MEDIUM TO HIGH-LIME GLACIAL TILL</i>   |   |   |
| Cx Cossayuna gravelly loam, undulating & rolling phases (3-15% slopes)   | A moderately well-drained soil with a depth to bedrock ranging from 2 to 10 feet with frequent outcrops; prone to erosion if cultivated over a long period of time.   | The soil has minimal management requirements for pasture or cropland, and is readily reclaimable for good cropland. Oak, maple, hickory, dogwood and tulip-tree are the predominant native forest vegetation. Some ash, basswood, hemlock and beech are also present.                                   |
| Cz Cossayuna stony silt loam, rolling phases (5-15% slopes)  | A moderately deep well-drained soil that is irregular in relief and too strong for cultivation.   | This soil type can support a pasture of fair quality with intense initial tillage and good management, but it is best suited to forest. Oak, maple, hickory, dogwood and tulip-tree are the predominant native forest vegetation. Some ash, basswood, hemlock and beech are also present.               |
| <i>DERIVED FROM GLACIAL OUTWASH AND SANDY LACUSTRINE MATERIAL</i>  |   |   |
| Cl Colonie fine sandy loam, nearly level phase (0-3% slopes) and<br>Cm Colonie fine sandy loam, rolling phase (5-15% slopes) | These soils are well-drained, light-textured, and relatively free of stones with a depth of bedrock ranging from 5 to 7 feet.   | Colonie soils are moderately productive as cropland and pasture land, and are highly responsive to good management practices. Hemlock, hard and soft maples, white, red, black and chestnut oaks, hickory, black birch, beech and flowering dogwood are the predominant native trees in forested areas. |
| <b>Well-Drained, Hilly, Moderately Steep &amp; Deep Over Bedrock</b>   |   |   |
| <i>DERIVED FROM GLACIAL TILL &amp; OUTWASH</i>   |   |   |
| Cw Cossayuna gravelly loam, hilly phase (15-30% slopes)  | A moderately well-drained soil that is susceptible to erosion if rapid surface runoff is not controlled on steeper slopes. Areas that are cultivated over a long period of time typically show signs of moderate erosion; however, it is readily reclaimable for good cropland. | A durable soil with minimal management requirements for pasture or crop land. Oak, maple, hickory, dogwood and tulip-tree are the predominant native forest vegetation. Some ash, basswood, hemlock and beech are also present.   |
| <b>Well-Drained, Nearly Level to Very Steep &amp; Very Shallow with Numerous Bedrock Outcrops</b>                            |   |   |
| <i>DERIVED FROM GLACIAL TILL</i>   |   |   |
| Sc Staatsburg gravelly loam, very ledgy hilly phase (15-30% slopes)  | Tillage is almost impossible on this hilly and rocky soil. Runoff is rapid, and the soil is too shallow to hold much water, making it droughty.   | It can support a fair pasture, but it is best suited for forest. Oak, maple, hickory, ash, tulip tree, basswood and dogwood are the predominant native forest vegetation. Some white pine, red cedar, hemlock, cherry, beech and birch are also present.  |

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## VEGETATION

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Trees and other forms of vegetation throughout "The Point" have been categorized into distinct zones based on their shared characteristics (genus, species, size, etc.), and their association with natural landforms (the ridges, marsh, etc.) and/or historic designed features (the approach drive, garden, etc.). These findings reflect a compilation of surveys and field observations conducted between 1990 - 1996, and an analysis of aerial photographs from 1935, 1956 and 1975. The standard reference for measuring tree size – the diameter of the trunk at breast height (dbh) -- was used to provide a relative gauge of tree age; this abbreviation appears repeatedly throughout the chapter.

Please consult Figure 2-9, titled Key Map of Vegetation Zones, for the location and position of each area described in the following narrative. The seven major categories are:

- ❑ Avenue Trees [A1 - A12]

These twelve zones document the existing condition of the property's avenue trees -- primarily regularly-spaced Sugar maples and native oaks -- that line the margins of the approach road and principal farm lanes. They begin at the bluestone entrance piers near the Old Post Road, and generally proceed from east-to-west across the site.
- ❑ The First Ridge [R1a - R1h]

Eight zones document the existing condition of vegetation on the slopes of a north-south ridge located between the railroad right-of-way and the upland marsh. This is the first of four such ridges on the 91-acre property.
- ❑ The Upland Marsh [M1a - M1b]

These two zones document vegetation patterns within an extensive marshland situated between the site's first and second ridge lines.
- ❑ The Second Ridge [R2a-R2e]

Vegetation on the slopes of this landform -- a steeply sloping ridge that borders the western side of an upland marsh -- is sub-divided into five different zones.
- ❑ The Wetland [W1]

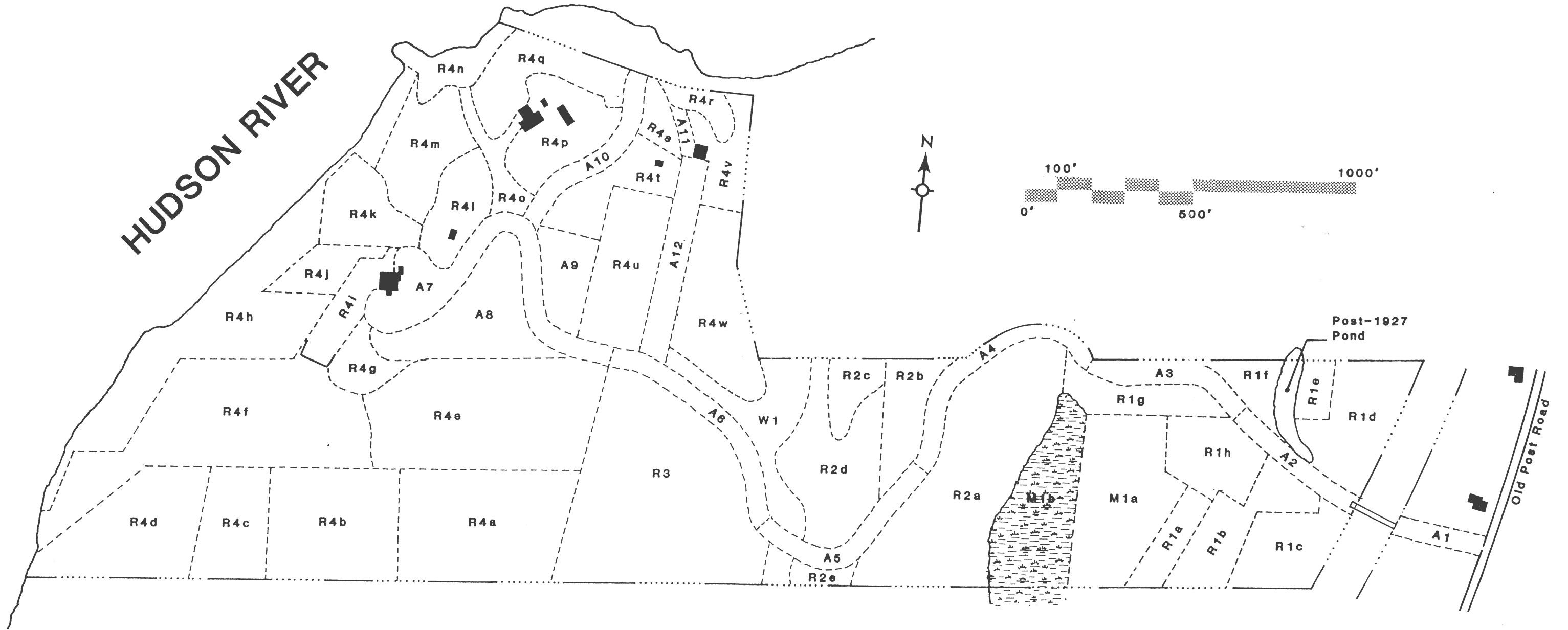
This T-shaped zone documents the condition of existing trees, shrubs and vines within a low-lying area that drains portions of the second, third and fourth ridges.
- ❑ The Third Ridge [R3]

Only one zone is used to categorize the vegetation on the heavily-wooded, rocky slopes of the third ridge, which is situated between the second ridge and the river ridge.
- ❑ The Fourth or River Ridge [R4a - R4w]

Twenty-three zones surrounding the Hoyt House document the patterns and conditions of existing vegetation on the slopes of this massive ridge bordering the Hudson River.

For detailed information concerning features within these zones, the reader may find it helpful to refer to aerial photographs from 1956 (Figure 2-1) and 1975 (Figure 2-2) as well as the three existing condition maps (Figures 2-3 through 2-5) which appear at the beginning of this chapter. In addition, a 1935 aerial photograph of the entire property [HP-1] and a master plant list can be found in the Appendix to this report.

Figure 2-9: Key Map of Vegetation Zones.



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*Avenue Trees [A]*

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- A1 Located between the Old Post Road and the railroad right-of-way, this section of the drive is lined with very tightly-spaced (8-15' apart) trees. The north side of the road features a combination of 8 hemlocks (12-18" dbh), 4 White pines (30-48" dbh), 2 old Sugar maples (30-36" dbh) and several young volunteer trees. Those closest to the bridge are protected by stone tree wells. Annual growth rings on a branch of the largest White pine place its origin at 1830 or earlier, while the stump of a dead tree (possibly a White pine) appears to date from 1795-1800.

The south side of the drive is lined with 5 old hemlocks (12-30" dbh) and a White pine (36' dbh) halfway along its length. Near the bridge, however, 5 Norway maples (18-36" dbh) border the road below a 6-foot high stone retaining wall. Two volunteer trees (hackberry and walnut) are growing near the ruins of a small building south of the drive. Old Sugar maples also border the stone entrance piers and semi-circular walls near the Post Road; one on the south side (30" dbh) and three on the north (12-30" dbh).

- A2 There are 23 old Sugar maples (most 24-42"; one 54") bordering the drive between the railroad right-of-way and the saddle of the first ridge. The majority are spaced at a 20-foot interval, and 10 are protected by stone retaining walls. Empty tree wells, stumps and other site evidence suggest that at least 10 avenue trees have been lost from this section. Approximately 250' west of the bridge, a solitary Silver maple stands along the drive near the wetland. Poison-ivy also covers a neighboring 18" Sugar maple.
- A3 On the shallow, rocky soils between the first ridge and second ridge, the drive is bordered by heterogeneous mixture of 4 old Sugar maples (15-36" dbh.), 2 old native oaks (36-48" dbh), 2 Black locust (18-24" dbh), and many younger trees of these varieties. The annual growth rings of 2 large stumps near the west end of the zone place their origins circa 1800; bark remnants suggest that one of these may have been a White pine. An assortment of young volunteers (osage-orange, sassafras, locust, maple and elm) are growing along the base of the north boundary wall, while an understory of young ash and maples are growing among the older White pine (30" dbh) and native oaks (18-42" dbh) on the rocky ledges between the drive and the upland marsh. Remnants of wire fencing are embedded in the trunks of several of these trees. High-canopied walnuts and locusts (24" dbh) dominate an area east of the rocky knolls.
- A4 As the drive curves around the north end of the second ridge and descends along its western slope, it is bordered irregularly on the steep uphill side by at least 4 old hemlocks (16-36" dbh) and 6 native oaks (20-36" dbh). The downhill side, by contrast, features a more regularly-spaced mixture of mature Sugar maples (24" dbh), hemlock (33" dbh), and beech (26" dbh) trees along the boundary diversion, but predominantly native oaks (24-48" dbh) along the balance of the route. A mixture of mature White pine and hemlock dominate the rocky knolls just west of the road.
- A5 The north side of this J-shaped portion of the drive is lined with 10 Sugar maples (20-36" dbh), 1 hickory, 1 Black locust (20" dbh), 1 ash (20" dbh), 1 Red Maple (18" dbh), and 1 sycamore (16" dbh). The latter materials appear to be much younger than the maples, and may be 20th-century replacements for Sugar maples that may have been lost as water levels rose in the area. Only 7 Sugar maples (16-18" dbh) still survive along the south side of drive; a single sycamore (24" dbh) near the wetland may also be a later addition. Stumps, dead trees and archival evidence [HP-1; please consult [Appendix](#)] suggest that a t



least 20 to 30 avenue trees have been lost along this section of the drive (13 on the north; 7 on the south).

- A6 As the drive traverses the base of the third ridge, one old Sugar maple (22" dbh) and a few irregularly-spaced hemlocks and oaks line its uphill slope. After intersecting with a farm road that ascends the third ridge, however, the drive is bordered by 4 towering Norway spruces (24-42" dbh) and a semicircle of 6 White pines (24-36" dbh). It appears that these evergreens were planted to screen a large stone quarry at the north end of the ridge. A stump and several depressions along this semicircle confirm that the pines were originally spaced only 10 feet apart, and suggest that at least 5 trees have been lost for this screen planting over the years.

By contrast, the downhill (north) side of the road is bordered with 2 tulip-trees (24-30" dbh), and an assortment trees spaced at 20-foot intervals: 3 White pines (18-30" dbh), 1 ash (20" dbh), 4 Black locusts (24-30" dbh), 2 hickories (16-21" dbh), and a walnut (12" dbh). Except for the White pines, all of the trees north of the drive appear to be considerably younger than 140 years old. Since the grade of the drive appears to have been elevated in this area, the locusts, hickories and other materials may have origins in the early-20th century. The old White pines are heavily infested with poison-ivy.

- A7 One hundred feet west of the old stone quarry stands a large Sugar maple (36" dbh) that appears to mark a historic border between the old Russell and Lewis-Livingston farms. This massive tree is probably a "volunteer" that became established at the base of a stone boundary wall between 1790 and 1854. At this point, the approach drive begins to ascend the river ridge to the Hoyt House, passing through an old grove of 6 native oaks (20-54" dbh) at the base of the hill. Two additional oak stumps stand nearby. Remarkably, the 360+ annual growth rings on one of these stumps (32" diameter) place its origins in the 1630s -- more than 200 years before the development of the Hoyt estate.

Between the oak grove and a sharp bend in the drive halfway up the slope (a distance of 320 linear feet), there are only two old native oaks (36" dbh) and two Sugar maples (24" dbh) and a hickory (15" dbh) along its margins. After the turn, however, both sides of the approach drive are lined with venerable forest trees. The south edge features 5 large native oaks (36-48" dbh; 2 heavily covered with vines), a Sugar maple (36" dbh), a hickory (18" dbh), and a White pine (30" dbh), as well as tangible evidence (stumps, depressions, etc.) of additional trees spaced at a 20-foot interval. At the terminus of the drive near the pine, there is also an oak stump (36" diameter) with at least 316 annual growth rings -- placing its origins in the 1680s. On the opposite side of the road, the steep slope beneath the reservoir is lined by a combination of 3 beech trees (18-30" dbh; two dead), 2 hemlocks (20-24" dbh), and a single tulip-tree (30" dbh).

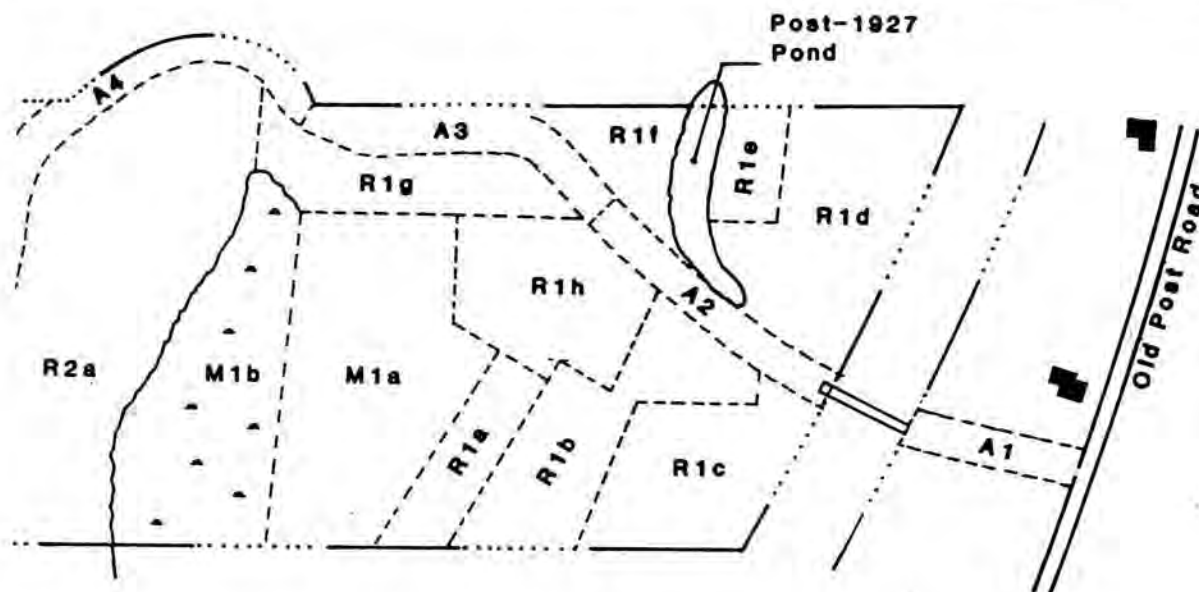
The driveway loop in front of the Hoyt house contains 3 old native oaks (30" dbh) and a hickory (30" dbh), while the service loop on its east side contains 1 old Sugar maple (30" dbh), a large beech tree (55" dbh; half-dead), a Norway spruce (24" dbh), and a Saucer magnolia. Both areas are covered in lawn. An overgrown yew hedge (15-18' high; 16' wide) in the shape of a semi-circle defines the entrance to a 1-car garage at the northeast corner of the Hoyt House. Two large stumps (18-24" diameters) are located near the eastern end of the hedge.

- 
- A8 The hillside enclosed within the U-shaped approach drive is dominated by a variety of high-canopied forest trees, including at least a dozen native oaks (20-48" dbh), 2 hemlocks (15-36" dbh), 2 hickories, and 1 larch (26" dbh). The area also contains clear evidence (stumps, depressions, etc.) of at least 10 former trees. Like adjoining areas, the annual growth rings of a recently-topped hillside oak (24" diameter; 250 rings ) confirm its origins in the 1740s. Many of these venerable trees, but particularly the larch, are endangered by heavy infestations of arbor-forming vines, such as poison-ivy, bittersweet, and wild grape; others display evidence of severe storm damage (torn limbs, split trunks, etc.). Vigorous successional growth is also a major threat to the older specimens. The entire slope is covered with a dense growth of mixed native hardwoods (1-6" diameter; 40' high) competing for light, water, space and nutrients.
- A9 The area between the approach drive and the western boundary of the Hoyts' former garden contains 7 old, native oaks (24-48" dbh) and 1 large hemlock (30" dbh), as well as evidence (stumps, mounds, etc.) of at least 3 former trees. Like the area within the U-shaped drive [A8], this portion of the site is covered with mixed native hardwoods (1-6" diameter; 40' high), dense underbrush and assorted vines. This vigorous successional growth poses a serious, long-term threat to the older specimen trees as they compete for light, water, space and nutrients. Between the base of an old Chestnut oak (48" dbh) and a White oak (42" dbh) at the eastern edge of the zone, there is subtle topographic evidence (low, linear mound) of a road profile; from the Chestnut oak, the mound makes a gradual turn to the northwest, disappearing into the hillside near a large Sawara cypress with three trunks (18" dbh each). This anomalous topographic feature may be the remains of a portion of the approach drive that originally passed just west of the Hoyts' kitchen garden. An historic photograph [HP-10] of the garden, taken from this vicinity, documents a curving drive in the foreground of the view. Another spur apparently continued northward before branching into two forks near the former farm cottage. Both features are evident in a 1935 aerial photograph of the site [HP-1]. Please refer to Zone A10 for more information about this north-south lane.
- A10 A combination of old, native hardwoods and younger exotic species (primarily evergreens) line both sides of the farm drive east of the coach house/stable complex. A large Chestnut oak (26" dbh) on the east side of the drive (opposite the site of the former farm cottage) appears to be the dividing line between the older and newer materials. Land contours near the base of the Chestnut oak suggest that the tree stands at the fork of a "lost" north-south road documented in a 1935 aerial photograph [HP-1]. It appears that one spur continued north to join the alignment of the existing road just east of the farm cottage site, while the other turned to the northwest and ascended the slope to join another "lost" road above the cottage site. The present drive southwest of the Chestnut oak appears to be a 20th century alteration; presumably, the exotic trees that flank the road were planted to screen the old alignment and define the new route. The trees on the southeast side of the road that perform this function include: 4 Colorado spruce (15-18" dbh); a solitary Sawara false cypress (triple trunk; 18" dbh each); and a Purple beech (48" dbh). Those on the northwest side include a larch, a Colorado spruce, and 2 Norway spruce (15-24" dbh).

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About 135 feet north of the Chestnut oak, a solitary Red oak (48" dbh) borders the west side of the farm drive. This massive oak, which once stood within 40 feet of the Hoyts' farm cottage, may be the tree illustrated in a vignette of the cottage which appeared in Calvert Vaux's 1857 book, *Villas and Cottages*. (Please consult Figure 3 - 10 and HP-5) There are also five large, regularly-spaced stumps along the west side of the road 50 to 100 feet north of the Red oak. The annual growth rings on one of these stumps (36" dbh; at least 170 rings), known to be a White pine, place its origins in the mid-1820s. Two additional stumps (30" dbh) located on the opposite (east) side of the drive just to the north may have similar origins. Consequently, that portion of farm lane associated with these trees may also date from the early-19th century.

- A11 This line of old Sugar maples, oaks and hickories (20-36" dbh) bordering the farm lane west of the cow barn appears to mark the site of an old fence line along a rocky knoll. The annual growth rings on a felled tree (30" diameter; 180 rings minimum) at the northern end of this line place its origins circa 1810; the farm lane that runs parallel with these trees may have similar origins. Subtle topographic evidence (a line of mounded soil) approximately 12 feet from the tree line indicates that the road originally ran 10 to 20 feet closer to the trees. Two large stumps in the courtyard directly south of the cow barn also appear to be located on the old tree line. In contrast, there is only one old tree on the opposite (west) side of the lane in this area -- a large White oak (48" dbh) southwest of the cow barn.
- A12 Eight Pin oaks (15-24" dbh), spaced at 50-foot intervals, line the west side of a farm lane from the approach drive to the cow barn; many of these trees are covered with a heavy growth of vines (poison-ivy). Four dead apple trees (20 - 24" dbh), also covered with vines, line the opposite side of the lane. About 45 feet south of the last apple stands a large Red oak (36" dbh) with twin trunks. The age and position of this tree suggest that it may mark the alignment of an old garden fence. The balance of the zone is dominated by a dense growth of mixed hardwoods (1-6" dbh) of post-1975 origins



#### The First Ridge [R1a - R1h]

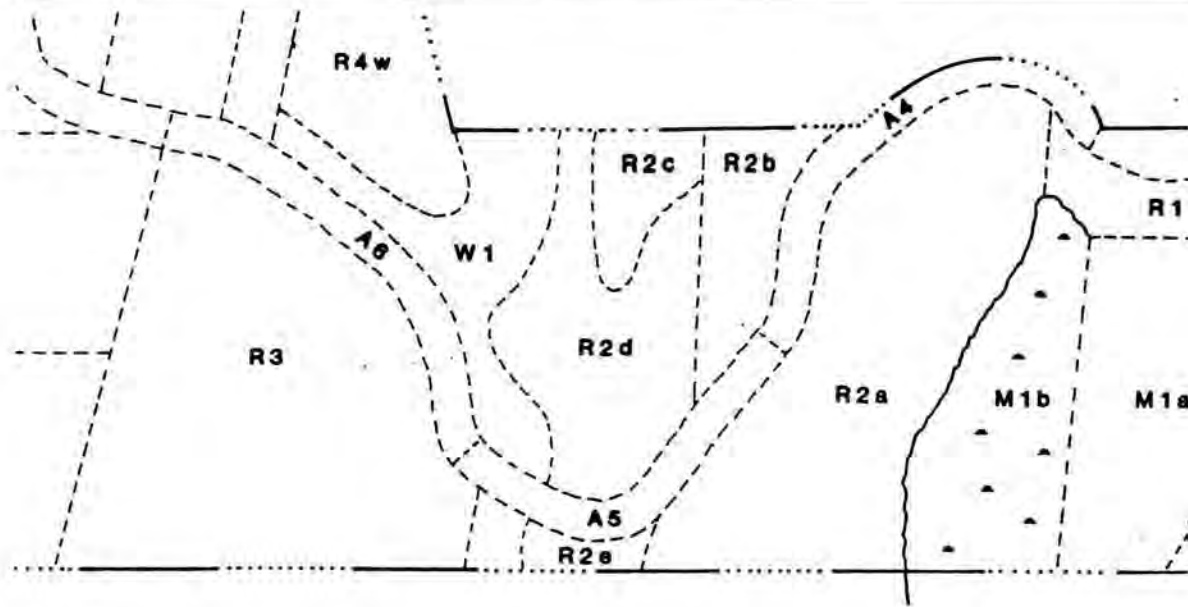
- R1a The precipitous and rocky western slope of the first ridge is covered with a stand of old hemlock trees (most 6-18" dbh; 50-60' tall) that includes a few very large specimens (18-24" dbh; 60-80' tall). A few oaks (6-12" dbh) and Sugar maples (20" dbh) are growing at the northern end of this narrow zone which borders the upland marsh on the west.
- R1b The crest of the first ridge between the approach drive and the southern border is covered with a mixture of native hardwood trees, predominantly Red oak (18-42" dbh), Sugar maple (12-36" dbh) and Choke cherry (12-24" dbh). Barbed wire is embedded in a line of trees along the zone's western border near the approach road.
- R1c Young locust, ash and choke cherry trees of post-1975 origin dominate this moderately sloping area on the east side of the first ridge. The lower half of the zone contains smaller locusts and ash (6-12" dbh; 40' high), while the upper half features larger locusts and choke cherries (12-18" dbh). There are also 4 very large locust trees (18-30" dbh; 60-80' high) growing along the southern boundary wall. These appear to be the remnants of an old windbreak or screen planting visible in the 1935 aerial photograph [HP-1]. A few mature walnut trees are growing along the eastern property line with the railroad right-of-way.
- R1d A mixture of locust, oak, maple and walnut trees of post-1975 origin cover this moderately sloping area on the east side of the first ridge. Low-lying areas bordering the pond feature young oaks and walnuts (4-6" dbh), while high areas near the northern boundary wall contain mostly oak and maple saplings. With the exception of a line of old Red Oaks along the borderline with the railroad, the balance of the zone is covered with Black locust trees (2-6" dbh; 40-50' high).
- R1e This tiny zone, a rocky knoll north of the approach road, is bordered on the east by the remnants of a 'robbed' stone wall and on the west by a small pond. It contains a large White oak (45" dbh) and number of old Sugar maples (18-30" dbh).

- R1f A mixture of native oaks and Sugar maples cover the steep, rocky slope of this north-south ridge. The trees closest to the approach road appear to be quite old; however, droughty soils may have stunted to growth of the zone's smaller trees.
- R1g This rocky knoll between the approach drive and the marsh contains several large native oaks (18-42" dbh), 1 old White pine (30" dbh), and numerous smaller Sugar maples (12-15" dbh) and hickories (12-24" dbh). A line of 3 dead Eastern red cedars (2 trunks, 1 stump) along the zone's western border may mark the alignment of an old fence line. Vegetation patterns visible in a 1935 aerial photograph [HP-1] suggest that a this fence line may have extended across the length of the marshland to the property's southern border. Remnants of wire fencing are also embedded in the trunk of the White pine and several other trees in its vicinity.
- R1h Young locusts and oaks of post-1975 origin cover virtually all of this zone on the western slope of the first ridge. The upper portion of the slope is dominated by native oaks (2-6" dbh; 50' tall), while the lower portion features a dense growth of locust trees (2-4" dbh; 40' tall). In addition, 1 large locust (24" dbh) and 3 old walnuts (18-24" dbh) with high, broad canopies tower over the zone in the vicinity of the approach drive. The western boundary of the zone is defined by a line of maples (12-30" dbh) and locusts (12-18" dbh) that appear to be growing along the remnants of a "robbed" stone wall or former fence line. The zone's eastern boundary is also marked with remnants of barbed wire embedded in the trunk of several trees.

#### *The Marsh [M1a-M1b]*

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- M1a Isolated clumps of water-tolerant hardwoods, primarily Red maple and elm, are distributed across the eastern half of the upland marsh; the largest of these trees stand 30-40 feet tall, and have diameters ranging from 6 to 18 inches. The western limit of these trees appears to coincide with a line formed by 3 dead red cedars in the adjoining zone [R1g] near the approach road. These trunks/stumps may mark the site of an old fence line that ran parallel with, but 80-100 feet east, of a large north-south ditch that drained the entire length of the marsh. Aerial photographs of the site from 1935 [HP-1] 1956 (Figure 2-1) and 1975 (Figure 2-2) reveal subtle evidence of old field patterns within this zone, and suggest that it may have been sub-divided into a series of meadows or pastures when water levels were lower in the area. In fact, this zone may be the pre-1920 "wetland fields" described in oral accounts of the site.
- M1b This portion of the site contains a mixture of water-tolerant grasses and shrubs characteristic of an upland marsh. A few small trees (Red maple, elm) are also present, but these are generally limited to the margins of the zone.



### The Second Ridge [R2a - R2e]

- R2a** There are few major trees on the steep eastern and northern slopes of the second ridge. Its rocky, droughty, and unstable soils support only the hardiest species, predominantly Red oaks and Sugar maples (4-18" dbh) with stunted or contorted habits. The rocky plateau atop the second ridge is dominated by venerable oaks (24-30" dbh) and hemlocks (16-20" dbh) with high forest canopies, and an occasional White pine (30" dbh). The more moderate slopes and rocky outcrops along the west side of the ridge contain a spotty mixture of mature oaks, hemlocks, Sugar maples and White pine with very little understory.
- R2b** This triangular-shaped zone bordering the approach drive is nearly level and sluggishly drained by a small stream/ditch that runs northward through the center of the area. Its western boundary is defined by a line of very large trees that are growing along the remnants of a "robbed" stone wall. These venerable trees include: 2 White pines (48 & 60" dbh); a large oak (48" dbh); a sycamore (30" dbh); and tulip-tree (26" dbh). The remains of a dead Eastern Red-cedar are also located along the former wall. The zone is dominated by a stand of five large White pines (36" dbh) which tower over the area; 2 large stumps, perhaps the remains of other White pines, are located nearby. Native oaks cover a rocky knoll at the northeast corner of the zone, and a pair of nearby hemlocks border a depression that may mark the site of a former farm lane.
- R2c** This small but steep ridge is covered primarily with native oaks (18-30" dbh) of moderate size. The property's northern boundary wall ends at the northwest corner of this zone.

- R2d The sloping, central portion of this irregularly-shaped zone remains relatively open with only scattered clusters of young oak, dogwood and ash trees. Areas bordering the approach drive's avenue trees contain a mixture of young pines (8" dbh), dogwoods, red cedars (4" dbh), ash, hickories, walnuts and tulip trees. By contrast, the zone's level, eastern boundary features a dense growth of young hardwood saplings (ash, elm, maple, etc.), many of which are concentrated on a north-south linear mound that runs parallel with the remains of a "robbed" stone wall. This feature may mark the site of an old farm lane. A parallel break in grade about 180 feet to the west may also signal an old cultivation line. This feature is clearly visible in aerial photographs from 1956 (Figure 2-1) and 1975 (Figure 2-2).
- R2e White pine and hemlock are the dominant materials in this small zone situated between the property's southern boundary wall and a large bend or oxbow in the approach drive. The zone's eastern border is defined by a grove of 5 tall pines (18-30" dbh) that stand along the remnants of a "robbed" stone wall at the base of the third ridge. A small pond/wetland separates these trees from a cluster of 5 pines (20-30" dbh) and 3 hemlocks (18-24" dbh) that are growing on a gently rising slope to the west.

#### *Wetland [W]*

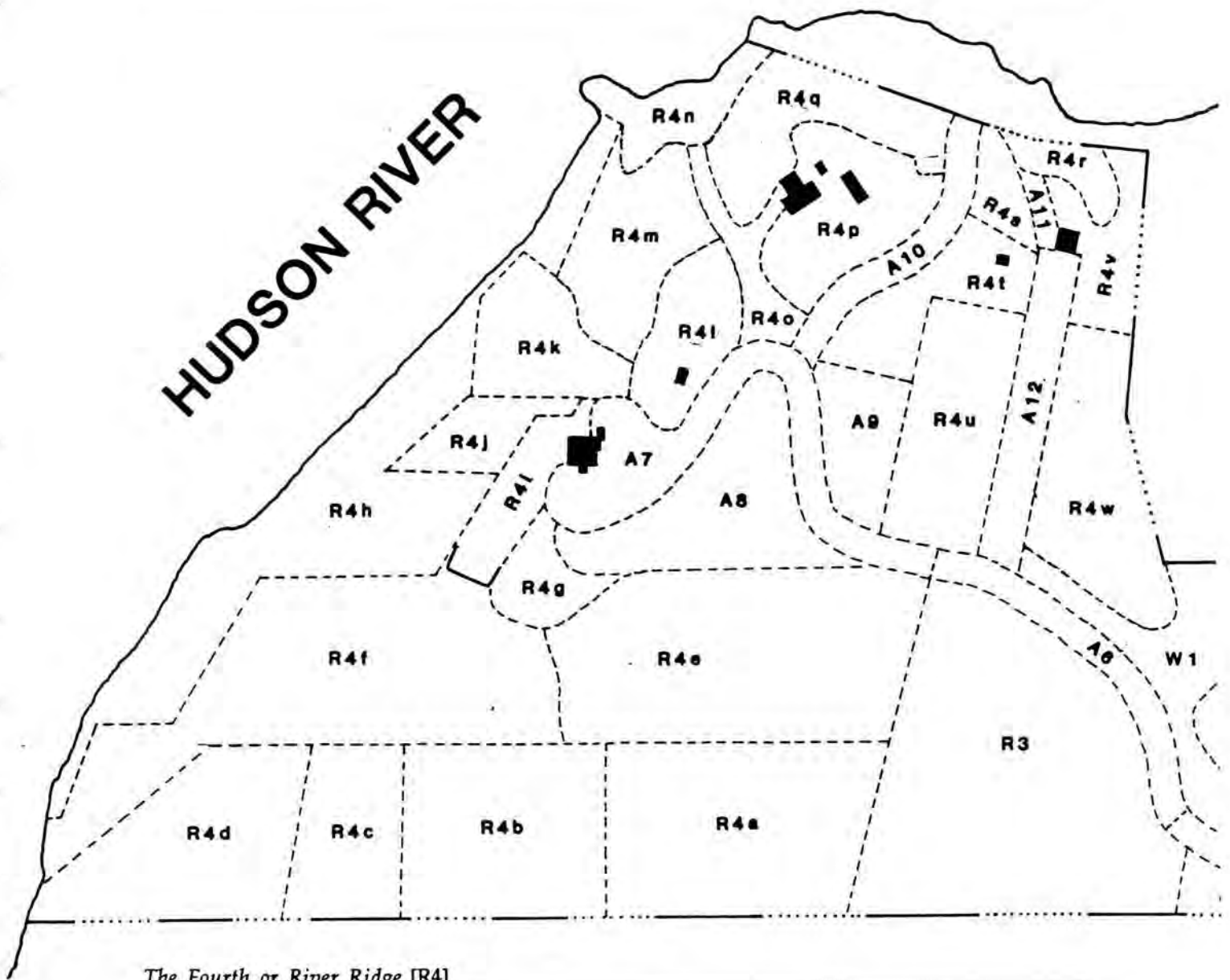
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- W1 This T-shaped zone is low-lying area situated at the confluence of drainage features (springs and streams; some in culverts) from the second, third and fourth ridges. The western arm of the zone is located between the approach drive and a low ridge that has a clearing for a bridle trail. Young locust, elm and walnut trees (6-12" dbh) dominate in the area which is also heavily overgrown by vines (bittersweet and poison ivy). A massive maple tree (72" dbh) at the western end of this section is situated along an historic boundary, and appears to be an old fence line "volunteer." It is heavily covered with an arbor of vines. The eastern arm of the zone, which also contains a stream/spring, is covered with a dense thicket of young water-tolerant shrubs (buckthorn) and trees (walnut, locust, elm). The northern arm, which drains into an extensive wetland north of the site, contains several large hardwood trees, and a few large stumps from former trees, within the broad stream bed.

#### *The Third Ridge [R3]*

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- R3 The western slope of the third ridge is dominated by old stands of hemlock (12-36" dbh), intermixed with high-canopied oaks and Sugar maples (4-18" dbh). There is also a stand of White pine near the base of the slope southwest of the quarry. It is situated above an intermittent stream which contains a number of venerable oaks (42-48" dbh) and Sugar maples (36" dbh) within its rocky stream bed. In contrast, the more moderate eastern slopes contain mostly native oaks, maples and hickories (4-18" dbh), with only an occasional cluster of hemlock trees (12-16" dbh). Atop the crest of the ridge, soils are rocky and droughty, and trees are very sparse, predominantly stunted oaks and Sugar maples.



*The Fourth or River Ridge [R4]*

R4a Located on the eastern slope of the river ridge, this zone is bordered on the north by remnants of an old stone wall, on the east by an intermittent stream, on the south by a high stone wall, and on the west by a cliff-like rock face. The gentle slopes in the zone's eastern half feature a forest of widely-spaced native oaks, maples, hickories (6-12" dbh) with lofty canopies (80-90' high). In contrast, the rocky slopes in the zone's western half contain several old Sugar maples (18-24" dbh), a large oak (54" dbh), and massive stumps from at least three former trees (54-60" diameter) in the vicinity of an old farm lane. This area, which is covered predominantly by a mixture of native hardwoods (6-18" dbh; 60-80' high), also contains a few isolated hemlocks (12-15" dbh).



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- R4b This small zone on the western slope of the river ridge is bordered on the north by a line of 7 very large trees along the remnants of an old stone wall. The trees include 3 Red oaks (36-54" dbh), 1 Sugar maple (48" dbh), 1 Black walnut (30" dbh) and a hickory. The western boundary is marked by a line of younger oaks, hickories and locusts (16-20" dbh) growing on a 5-foot high embankment that appears to mark an old cultivation line [HP-1]. The zone's southern edge is defined by a linear mound and a line of old oaks and maples (24-48" dbh) that mark the site of a "robbed" stone wall. Trees of comparable age and variety also mark the zone's eastern border – a rocky cliff. A low, wet, rocky area in the central portion of the zone features one magnificent oak (60" dbh) and several other venerable oaks (18-30" dbh) and Sugar maples (18-50" dbh). Aside from these noteworthy trees, the balance of this rectangular zone is covered by a dense growth of young, mixed hardwood trees (1-4" dbh; 30-40' high) of post-1975 origins. A narrow north-south clearing near the eastern edge of the zone accommodates a modern service road that connects the Hoyt property with other portions of the Mills-Norrie State Park.
- R4c This narrow rectangular area is bordered on the east and west by lines of oaks, hickories and locusts (16-20" dbh) that appear to be growing on linear mounds/embankments that mark the limits of old cultivated fields [HP-1]. Like adjoining areas, the southern boundary is defined by remnants of a "robbed" stone wall and old fence line trees (oaks and Sugar maples), while the northern border shows subtle evidence (a tree line) of another "robbed" wall. Within these boundaries, the area is generally covered by a dense growth of young maple, ash, oak and other hardwoods (2-6" dbh; 30-40' high) of post-1975 origins.
- R4d This irregularly-shaped polygon is bordered on the north by a line of old White pines (18-48" dbh) and oaks along the remnants of a "robbed" stone wall. On the east, it is defined by a line of oaks, hickories, and locusts growing on a linear mound that appears to mark the limits of an old cultivated field [HP-1]. Old trees growing along the remnants of another "robbed" wall mark the zone's southern limit, while a narrow diagonal band of dense, young (pre-1956) successional forest defines its western edge. These hardwood saplings are growing within an old vista clearing that once extended from the Hoyt House all the way to the river bluff [HP-1, 12, 13 & 15]. Within these borders, the area is covered with a mature forest of native hardwood trees, predominantly large oaks and maples (18-24" dbh) with very high canopies (80-100' high).
- R4e This large rectangular area is covered with a dense successional growth of post-1975 mixed hardwoods (1-6" dbh; 30-40' high), predominantly native oaks, Sugar maple and Black walnuts. Limited areas have been thinned or cleared of their trees to create a bridle trail that crosses from east-to-west through the zone. Within this young forest are two venerable specimens: a massive oak with a storm-damaged limb situated atop on a rocky outcrop (48" dbh); and a large, vine-covered Red cedar (42" dbh) that appears to mark the site of an old fence line and a 20-foot wide farm lane. Portions of the zone's southern boundary are marked by remnants of an old stone wall, and a number of older Sugar maples (18" dbh) are growing just north of the wall. A few larger maples (24 - 36" dbh) can also be found atop bedrock outcrops in the zone's southeast corner, and within the stream bed that defines the zone's eastern border. The zone's western border is defined by a narrow north-south clearing that accommodates a modern service road connecting the Hoyt property with other portions of the Mills-Norrie State Park.
- R4f This irregularly shaped zone on the western slope of the river ridge is covered with a dense, young forest of mixed hardwoods (1-6" dbh), primarily native oaks, hickories,

maples and birch. It extends from the crest of the ridge to the river bluff, and includes a narrow swath that was once part of the southwest vista [HP-1, 12, 13 & 15].

- R4g There are 3 old apple trees (12-16" dbh) atop this small knoll directly south of the Hoyt House. Two are located on the east side of a north-south clearing for a modern service road, while a third tree is located on the west side. Approximately 60-70 annual growth rings on the western tree suggest that the apple grove dates from the 1920-1940 era. The balance of the knoll is covered with a dense growth of mixed young hardwoods (1-6" dbh; 30-40' high), particularly along the alignment of an old path on the eastern slope.
- R4h Mature hemlocks (12-36" dbh) predominate within this T-shaped zone that extends for 1,700 linear feet along the Hudson River bluff from the old "Lewis dock" to the former southwest vista. While many of the hemlocks range in height from 80-90 feet, smaller stunted forms exist near the precipitous bluff, and along a rocky ridge immediately south of the dock. There are also clusters of younger oaks, hickories, maples, tulip-trees and other native hardwoods (generally 6-18" dbh) of comparable height inter-mixed with the hemlocks. The eastern edge of the zone features a line of large hemlocks (15-36" dbh), an old Sugar maple (30" dbh), and a tall White pine (30" dbh) just below the edge of the lawn nearest the Hoyt house. The deteriorating stumps/trunks of at least 5 other trees are also located nearby. The zone's southern edge is defined by line of venerable oaks and hickories (30-42" dbh) that are growing along a low, linear mound. This feature may be the remnants of an old stone boundary wall. Another line of old oaks parallel with the river along the zone's eastern boundary may indicate an old cultivation line.
- R4i This rectangular zone west and southwest of Hoyt House is devoted largely to lawn. It contains only 1 old specimen tree -- a massive White oak (48" dbh; 80' spread) -- and the decaying trunk of another White oak (39" dbh; 30 feet high); there is also site evidence (stumps, depressions) of at least 3 other "lost" trees within the zone. Three Black walnuts of post-1975 origin stand near a deteriorating brick wall in the zone's south end.
- R4j Perhaps one of the most important vegetation zones at "The Point," this area west of the Hoyt House contains significant evidence concerning the location and orientation of the property's original historic vistas [HP-2]. Although most of the zone is covered with a mixture of maples, oaks, hickories and hemlocks (1-6" dbh) that are less than 40 to 50 years old, there a number of old trees just below the edge of the lawn that are worthy of note. They include: a cluster of 4 large native oaks (18-32") approximately 150 feet west of the house and directly on-line with the center of its west façade; the dead trunk of a solitary White pine (30' dbh; 40' high) approximately 120 feet west of the house; two large vista-defining oaks (36" & 48" dbh) approximately 60 feet from the north façade; plus a large oak (24" dbh) and a hemlock (24" dbh) approximately 160 feet northwest of the Hoyt house. It appears that the latter trees were once part of a line of old trees (now stumps) that extended into the adjoining zone [R4k].
- R4k Young oaks, maples and hickories (1-5" dbh; 30-40' high) of post-1956 origins dominate in this zone northwest of the Hoyt house. Perhaps more important, the southwest corner of the zone contains a line of 7 huge stumps approximately 160 feet from the northwest corner of the Hoyt House. The massive trees that once stood in this location undoubtedly had a significant influence on the location and orientation of the Hoyts' vistas [HP-2].
- R4l Old hemlocks, oaks and hickories (18-30" dbh) predominate on the steep slopes that surround the reservoir building.

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- R4m Sugar maples and oaks of moderate size (15-18" dbh) dominate the central portion of this zone, between two groves of young hemlock trees (12 - 18" dbh); however, the linear arrangement of the hemlocks in the southern grove suggest that they were consciously planted for design or screening purposes during the 20th century. (Figures 2-1 & 2-2).
- R4n An assortment of young hardwoods (1-5" dbh; 40' high), predominately hickories, oaks and walnuts, cover this relatively level area or landing in the vicinity of the old "Lewis dock." A rocky ravine that borders the area on the east may be an old quarry that supplied stone for one or both of the two nearby docks.
- R4o This irregularly-shaped zone is generally covered with a dense growth of mixed hardwoods (1-6" dbh), with a few larger trees that include: native oaks (9-15" dbh); tulip trees (8-12" dbh); Black walnuts (10" dbh); and Sugar maples (12-20" dbh). The area also contains a large Sugar maple (42" dbh; heavily covered with vines), an old hickory (15" dbh) and a trunk of a dead tree (30" dbh) along the drive. Additional site evidence, in the form of decomposing stumps, small circular depressions, and subtle changes in land contour reveal that this area was the intersection of several drives and farm lanes that linked the Hoyt House with the carriage house/garage complex, the farm and the "Lewis dock."
- R4p A mixture of old hardwood trees are located in the immediate vicinity of the coach house/garage complex. A grove containing 2 oaks (30" dbh), 2 hickories (24" dbh), 1 Sugar maple (20" dbh), and 3 hemlocks (12-36" dbh) are located directly south of the coach house and stable. It also includes a cluster of 4 rhododendrons. Anomalous topographic features (mounds) in the vicinity of these trees suggest that the area may have been used as a carriage turn-around. Four additional large oaks (30-36" dbh) and 1 Red maple (24" dbh) are also located near the 5-bay garage. Land contours between the garage and the site of the Hoyts' farm cottage suggest that 3 of the oaks may have once lined a north-south drive in the middle of this hillside. Several large stumps and depressions south of this area also provide site evidence of this former road alignment; however, it appears that 5 exotic evergreen trees (a larch, a Colorado spruce, and 2 Norway spruce; 15-24" dbh) were subsequently planted along the present drive to conceal evidence of this former road alignment. (Please see Zone A10 for additional information about these evergreens)
- R4q Dense stands of old hemlock trees (10-24" dbh; 80' high) flank both side of a road that descends the steep slope to the "Lewis dock" northwest of the coach house/garage complex. Additional hemlocks are also located along the site's northern border; however, there is evidence of an old clearing (i.e. volunteer hardwood trees) near the crest of the river ridge. These younger trees, and the presence of building debris/trash in its vicinity, suggest that the area is disturbed and may be the site of a former building. Two old hemlocks (24" dbh) are also located south of the road to the dock in the vicinity of a stone foundation. In addition, ancient hemlocks cover the entire headlands of the river ridge on the adjoining Mills Mansion property. (Figures 2-1, 2-2 & HP-1)
- R4r Three clusters of old hemlock trees (10-30" dbh) and a few mature oaks cover the steep slope north of the cow barn. Narrow areas between the groves contain mixed hardwood trees (walnut, elm, oak, maple, cherry, tulip-tree) of more recent origins.
- R4s Mixed hardwoods trees (3-6" dbh) of post-1975 origins cover this small area which is bordered on the west, north, and east by old farm lanes, and on the south by a clearing for overhead power lines that extend from the cow barn to the 5-bay garage. Two large

stumps (30" diameter) at the northern end of the zone may be the remains of hemlocks or pine trees that once bordered historic roads. In addition, banks of soil south of the stumps clearly define the location and alignment of a semicircular loop road through the zone.

- R4t This zone, in the vicinity of the estate's old potting shed and greenhouse is dominated by exotic ornamental trees and post-1975 volunteers. As noted in zone A10, an old Chestnut oak (26" dbh) stands along the drive south of the farm cottage site. Land contours in the vicinity of the Chestnut oak appear to indicate that the tree stood at the fork of a north-south road [HP-1]. It appears that one spur continued north to join the alignment of the existing road just east of the farm cottage site, while the other turned to the northwest and ascended the slope to join another "lost" road above the cottage site.

South of the Chestnut oak, there is also subtle topographic evidence of a north-south road profile bordered by three clusters of Sawara false cypress (15-36" dbh). The first clump of 2 trees is located on the west side of the former road at distance of 55 feet from the oak; the second cluster of 3 trees is located another 55 feet further south. The third group (3 trees) is situated on the east side of the former road at the south end of the zone. Between this cluster and a nearby Chestnut oak (48" dbh) in an adjoining zone, it appears that the north-south road joins remnants of an old approach drive that ascends the hillside on its way to the Hoyt House [HP-1]. Two additional clumps of 3 Sawara false cypress are also located in this zone near the remains of a greenhouse. Site evidence suggests that these exotic ornamentals once lined a pathway from the farm/gardener's cottage to the greenhouse area, and perhaps the cow barn.

South of an old potting shed and the ruins of two greenhouses, masses of overgrown lilacs flank a broad pathway that leads to a former swimming pool; however, an abundance of young hardwood trees (1-5" dbh) are also growing among the lilacs. Near the west end of the old greenhouse foundation, there is subtle topographic evidence (low, linear mound) of a pathway that ran between the lilacs and a cluster of 2 Sawara cypress (24 & 30" dbh). It appears that this path originally defined the western edge of the Hoyt family's large kitchen/flower garden. Above this path, the gently sloping hillside is covered with a stand of young hardwood trees (1-5" dbh) amid a dense thicket of shrubs (including mock-orange and other ornamentals) and vines.

- R4u Five large willow trees (10-54" dbh) growing amidst a pool of standing water at the southern end of this gently sloping lawn date from the second quarter of this century (Figure 2-1 & HP-1). The balance of this rectangular plot contains a few, widely-scattered walnuts, locusts and elms (6-12" dbh) of post-1975 origins. Additional volunteer trees and shrubs are located near a former swimming pool at the zone's north end.
- R4v This steep, rocky, slope east of the cow barn is covered with a stand of volunteer trees of moderate size, including: ash (12-20" dbh); maple (12-15" dbh); tulip-tree (15" dbh); hickory (20" dbh); cherry (12" dbh); walnut (12-18" dbh); and oak (20-24" dbh).
- R4w Black walnut trees of various sizes dominate this entire area. The zone's eastern boundary features a line of large walnut trees (24-30" dbh; pre-1956) growing on a low, linear mound that appears to mark the site of an old fence line. A series of locust posts and wire remnants running uphill across the central portion of the zone appear to define another former fence line. The southern third of the zone contains at least 6 very large Black walnut trees (24-36" dbh) that may define the alignment of an old network of farm lanes. The balance of the zone is covered with walnuts (6-12" dbh) of post-1975 origins.

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## CIRCULATION

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### *The Approach Drive*

The approach drive to the Hoyt House begins at the Old Post Road where a pair of bluestone piers and semicircular walls define the former estate's modest entrance. The entry apron is approximately 14 feet wide and flares down to 10 feet between the stone columns. The edges of the apron are irregular and lack evidence of any structural edging. From the stone piers, the earth and gravel drive proceeds in a serpentine route for nearly a mile (4,600 linear feet) before reaching the front door of the Hoyt House. Along the way, it follows the natural contours of the land in gentle, even curves as it negotiates a diverse and dramatic sequence of ridges, wetlands, woodlands and fields. (Please consult Figure 2-10: Key Map of Circulation Features).

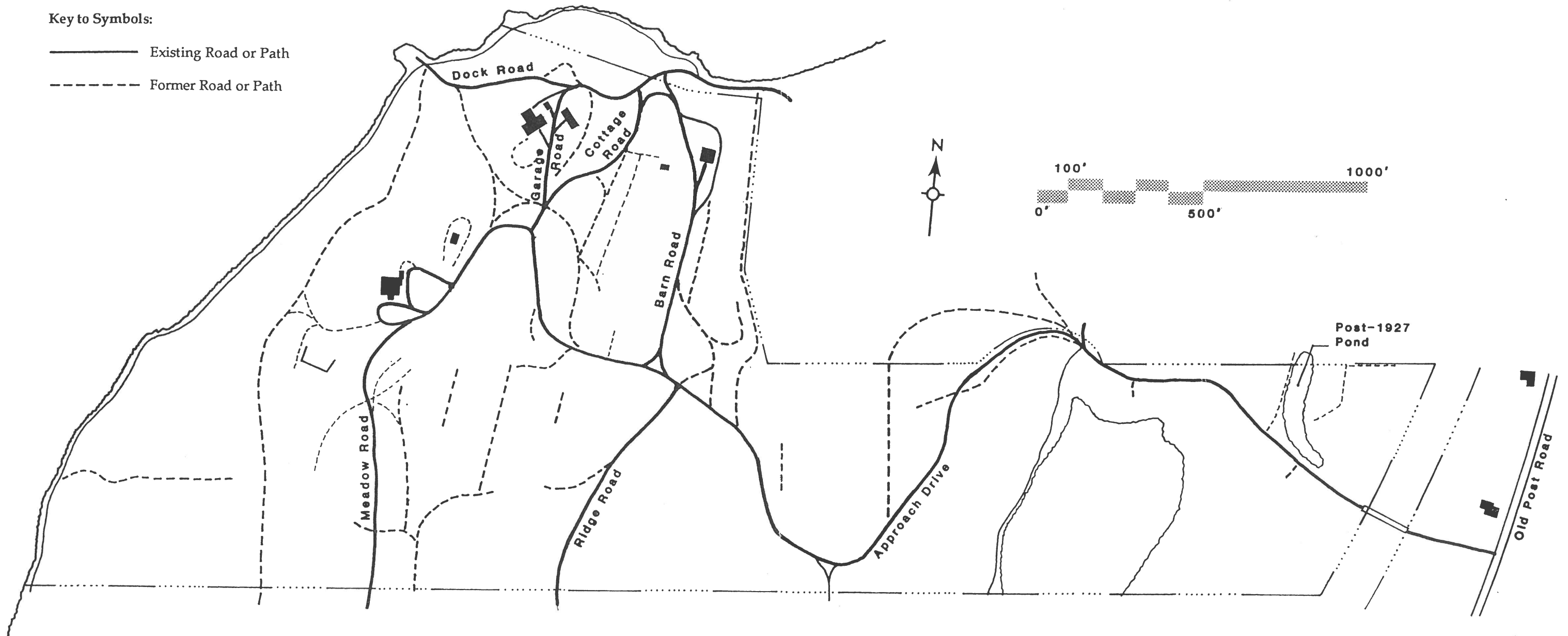
Flanked by lines of old pine and hemlock trees, the first section of the drive is short, straight and level (260 linear feet). As it approaches a narrow steel bridge which carries the road more than 20 feet above a pair of railroad tracks, stone retaining walls to either side help to elevate its grade. At the west end of the bridge, the drive turns to the right and proceeds in a straight line (280 linear feet) down an elevated grade between two rows of venerable Sugar maples protected by stone/concrete retaining walls. A culvert beneath this section of the road is intended to drain a low-lying area to the north; however, obstructions in the culvert (perhaps a result of sedimentation or deterioration) have slowed drainage through the area, resulting in the formation of a small pond between two rocky knolls. From this point, the maple-lined drive begins a brief ascent (12' high) over the first north-south ridge line, before turning sharply to the left (west) as it nears a high stone wall that marks the boundary between the Hoyt and Mills properties. Running parallel with the wall at a distance of 40-50 feet from its face, the drive gradually descends (12 feet) through a copse of old oaks, pines, maples and hemlocks where it bends northward to avoid the impassable slopes of the second north-south ridge. Portions of this route display evidence of considerable fill. A short spur from the drive links the former Hoyt estate with service roads on the adjoining Mills property; however, this road is a non-historic feature that was added by the OPRHP after 1970.

At this juncture, the approach drive starts a gradual, curving ascent around the base of the second ridge, rising 30 feet in height over a distance of 300 feet. Land contours on this steep hillside suggest that the drive once followed a course approximately 20-30 feet south of its present alignment. Old native oaks, plus a few hemlocks and maples, border the existing route to its high point (elevation 68 feet) on the second ridge. The drive subsequently begins a prolonged descent (a 48-foot fall over 1,400 linear feet) through the central portion of the property until it intersects with two north-south farm roads just north of the third ridge. The road also changes alignment at least four times en route as it traverses the site's natural contours. It starts as a straight line descending the western slope of the second ridge, curves abruptly to avoid the property's southern boundary wall, and then turns again to skirt the toe of the third ridge. Much of this segment borders low-lying, wetland areas, and associated road profiles show evidence of considerable fill (minimum 2-3 feet). The avenue trees which flank the drive also vary with the terrain across this section. As the drive descends the second ridge, the oaks that border the road give way to an allée of stately Sugar maples along the oxbow. These well-ordered trees, in turn, transition into an occasional oak and hemlock as the road bends around the north end of the third ridge, with regularly-spaced White pine, Black locust, Sugar maple and hickory on the downhill (north) side of the road. Near the lane that leads to the cow barn, a break in the line of avenue trees provides a vantage point for views across a tree-shaded meadow -- perhaps the most spacious interior vista on the property.

Figure 2-10: Key Map of Circulation Features.

Key to Symbols:

- Existing Road or Path
- - - Former Road or Path



From this intersection, the drive begins its final approach to the Hoyt House. As it surmounts the wooded eastern slope of the massive river ridge, it rises more than 80 feet in elevation over a span of 1,250 linear feet; however, a portion of this drive is uncharacteristically steep (40 feet of rise over a span of 400 feet) and turns abruptly to reverse direction midway up the slope. This switchback is also joined at an awkward angle by a spur that descends the hill to the garage/farm complex. These qualities, plus its poor sight-lines, eroded margins and crudely-paved concrete surface, clearly indicate that this portion of the approach road has been severely altered. The drive transitions from concrete to dirt as it rounds the switchback curve and ascends the ridge along the base of a steeply-sloping knoll. Although the surface of the drive is heavily eroded across the area, its old cobblestone gutters (18 - 24" wide) and narrow stone curbs (13 feet apart) appear to be relatively intact.

As the approach drive reaches a small plateau on the river ridge, the east façade of the Hoyts' stone country house is suddenly exposed less than 200 feet away. Continuing south and west, the drive gradually reveals dramatic oblique views of the south and east façades, and the suggestion of a vista to the southwest, as it terminates in a teardrop-shaped loop formed around a small grove of old trees. Near the southeast corner of the house, a northward spur provides access to a yew-enclosed garage/service court before returning to the main drive. Continuous concrete curbs, uncharacteristic of the period, border the drives in the vicinity of the house. The historic approach drive also connects with a modern service road directly south of the Hoyt House. This conspicuous dirt road, which provides access to adjoining portions of Mills-Norrie State Park, ascends the crest of the river ridge.

#### *The Farm/Service Roads*

There are six main farm/service roads at "The Point" today, as well as evidence of several others. For the convenience of the reader, these routes are identified in the report as: the dock road; the barn road; the cottage road; the garage road; the ridge road, and the meadow road.

The "dock road" may be the oldest of all the service/farm roads at "The Point." It begins at a landing along the Hudson River near the ruins of the "Lewis dock" where it climbs a steep, hemlock-covered slope to the crest of the river ridge (a 40-foot rise in elevation). From there, it begins a curvilinear descent (a 20-foot drop) along the eastern slope before crossing the site's northern boundary on its way to the Mills property. Along its 700-foot course, the dock road intersects with the barn, cottage and garage roads. There is also evidence of a spur near the crest of the ridge that provided access to one or more former outbuildings (Figures 2-1 & 2-2).

The "barn road" is a north-south dirt lane that extends from the approach drive to the dock road along the eastern margin of the farmyard plateau. Approximately 900 feet in length, the road rises 10 feet elevation to reach the site of the cow barn where it forms a level barnyard directly in front of the primary façade. South of the barn, the drive's alignment is nearly straight as it descends along the crest of a ridge. Young Pin oaks line its western margin, while dead apple trees border it on the east. Within 150 feet of the approach drive, however, high earthen embankments (3' high) on both sides of the barn road indicate that the area has been filled considerably to cross a wetland. There is also site evidence (land contours, flagstone paving, etc.) to suggest that another farm lane once passed between the stone foundations of two small outbuildings south of the barn. It may have also continued northward along the alignment of an existing lane that provides access to the barn's lower level. North of the cow barn, the farm lane is bordered on the east by a line of maples and oaks that appear to mark an old fence line. The stump of a tree along this line appears to date from 1800-1820, and suggests that the road itself may have similar origins.

The "cottage road" extends from the switchback curve of the approach drive to the dock road; a semicircular loop at its north end provides a direct connection to the barn road. Approximately 600 feet in length, the cottage road descends 30 feet in elevation along its length; however, most of that drop occurs within a 200-foot segment just south of the former cottage site. This uncharacteristically steep alignment and other site evidence in the area (old road profiles, exotic ornamental trees, etc.) strongly suggest that this portion of the road was altered in the 20th century. A large Chestnut oak (24" dbh) on the southeast side of the cottage road appears to mark the site of a fork in an old north-south farm lane [HP-1]. Further north near the juncture with the dock road, a line of White pine stumps from the 1820s suggest that the lane they border may have a similar origins.

The "garage road" is a short, north-south service lane that connects the estate's coach house and garage complex with the cottage and dock roads. There is clear evidence of a large, level courtyard directly in front of the two principal buildings, and subtle indications of an abandoned carriage loop (60 feet in diameter) south of the coach house/stable [HP-6, 7 & 8]. There is also convincing site evidence (oak avenue trees, stumps, depressions, land contours) of a "missing road" on the eastern slope of the knoll between the 5-bay garage and the farm cottage site. Relatively level contours on the west side of the knoll may indicate the site of a comparable circulation feature. Site evidence (land contours, avenue tree stumps, depressions) also suggests that these "missing roads" intersected with the estate's approach drive midway between the coach house and the reservoir, with a spur descending the western slope of the river ridge to the "Lewis dock" area. This alignment is still evident today, although partly overgrown with young hardwood saplings.

The "ridge road" is a dirt farm lane that begins along the approach drive at the northern end of the third ridge. Traveling southward for a distance of 700 linear feet, the road gradually ascends the heavily-wooded western slope of the third ridge (a rise of 55 feet in elevation) and, ultimately, crosses the southern boundary line onto the adjoining property. A third of the way up the slope, there is clear evidence (linear mound, boulders in stream bed) of a road spur that crosses a nearby small stream and leads westward toward the river ridge. A curving trail on the rocky, eastern slope of the river ridge appears to be a continuation of this old farm lane.

The term "meadow road" refers to the modern dirt service lane directly south of the Hoyt House. Conspicuously sited along the crest of the river ridge, it connects the estate's approach drive with adjoining portions of Mills-Norrie State Park. An aerial photograph from 1935 [HP-1], however, suggests that the meadow road may follow a portion of the alignment of an old path that once linked the Hoyt property with an estate to the south.

In addition to the "missing" roads noted above, there is also subtle evidence of former farm/service lanes in other portions of the site. Please refer to Figure 2-6 (Site Analysis Map) and Figure 2-10 (Key Map of Circulation Features) for the location of these features.

### *Footpaths*

There is only one obvious footpath at "The Point" today -- a narrow, well-worn trail that extends for more than 2,200 feet along the precipitous bluff bordering the Hudson River. Selected vantage points along this route offer spectacular panoramas of the river and vistas of the distant mountains. Nevertheless, the path is not self-contained within the Hoyt property. It begins at the far north end of the adjoining Mills property, continues along the entire shoreline of the Hoyt estate, and terminates at the southern end of the Mills-Norrie State Park. Although the path traverses natural rock ledges for most of its route, portions across



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steep or eroded areas are built of masonry construction. Although the origin of these features is unknown, it is likely that they were constructed after 1963.

The western slope of the river ridge also contains compelling site evidence of a former path, or quite possibly, an old drive or farm lane. Land contours, tree/stump distribution and anomalous features (mounds, depressions, etc.) appear to reveal the alignment of a path/drive that begins near the Hoyt House at the terminus of the approach drive. It appears to cross the lawn about 40 feet south of a large White oak (48" dbh), and reaches the brink of the river slope between an old Sugar maple (30" dbh) and a large White pine (30" dbh). From this point, the path appears to fork in three directions. The first is a narrow footpath situated just below the brink of the hill. Bordered by hemlock trees and stumps, it runs parallel with land contours at the base of a level terrace that may be an old tennis court. The Hoyt family's pet cemetery is located on this slope. A dense growth of young trees, vines and underbrush, however, make it difficult to ascertain where this path leads south of the terrace.

From the Sugar maple and pine, a second path heads in a westerly direction, descending the slope of the river ridge to the remains of level, stump-lined drive. About 8 feet wide, this circulation feature is located about 100-110 feet west of the brick wall ruins on the terrace. The third path, which forks to the northwest, appears to join the old drive/lane about 100 feet further north. Although site evidence for the southern branch of the road is quite variable, it appears to follow the contours of the hillside, crossing the southern boundary line about 320 feet west of the existing service drive. Near the remains of a robbed stone wall midway along the route of the drive, another old farm lane may run west toward the Hudson River.

The northern branch of the old lane/drive leads to the "Lewis dock," and site evidence of its alignment remains quite clear. As it descends the western slope of the river ridge at an easy grade (a drop of 65 feet over a distance of 800 feet), it traverses the natural contours of the hillside in a relatively straight alignment. Near the landing, it joins the dock road, the bluff trail, and the remains of another drive that once led to the approach drive.

There is also site evidence of a foot path on a rise of land directly south of the Hoyt House. Land contours on the east and south side of this knoll appear to define the alignment of a foot path that was cut into the slope. These features are clearly evident in aerial photographs of the site from 1935 [HP-1], 1956 (Figure 2-1) and 1975 (Figure 2-2). A modern service drive, installed by the NYSOPRHP, crosses this feature at the crest of the ridge.

Other parts of the property also display evidence of former paths or roads. A low, linear mound (5 feet wide) on the eastern slope of the first ridge north of the approach drive appears to be the remains of an old path. Less than 200 feet to the west, another trail is evident on the first ridge, skirting the western edge of a small pond. A narrow opening (42" wide) in the stone boundary wall between the Hoyt and Mills properties contains an iron/wire gate which appears to date from the late-19th or early-20th centuries. A comparable opening in the southern boundary wall between the second and third ridges marks the location of another pedestrian trail. This gateway may date from a different period, however, since it contains the remains of a wooden post with iron gate hinges.

There is also a modern recreational trail along the east side of the second ridge that may follow the alignment of an old farm lane. Situated above the upland marsh, this route may have provided access to the western portion of the site (by crossing the saddle at the middle of the ridge) prior to construction of the boundary diversion. It may have also served as a route to a quarry/sand pit located near the southern end of the ridge.

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### EXTANT BUILDINGS & LANDSCAPE STRUCTURES

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In addition to the Hoyt House, the historic landscape at "The Point" contains 13 existing landscape structures of note. The identity, location, origin and documentation of all the existing buildings and structures are compiled on Figure 2-11, titled Key to Historic Buildings & Structures at "The Point." For ease of reference throughout the report, all extant buildings and structures are identified with a consistent identification number ranging from 1 through 13.

#### *The Country House* [1]

The country house of Lydig and Geraldine Hoyt, designed by architect Calvert Vaux in 1855 and constructed circa 1856, is the most significant structure surviving at "The Point." Its intimate scale, irregular forms and architectural details are highly expressive of the picturesque ideals in rural art, architecture and landscape gardening. It is also intricately crafted of bluestone walls, brownstone trim, elaborate woodwork and polychrome slate that successfully integrate the Hoyt residence with the surrounding landscape. As originally planned and executed, this compact (roughly 54 feet x 56 feet, exclusive of the veranda), 3-story stone residence served as a model for the nation as "Design No. 26" in Vaux's 1857 book, *Villages and Cottages*. (Please consult Figure 3-9 and HP-2, 3 & 4).

Today, however, the historic Hoyt residence stands vacant, boarded-up, and in greatly diminished condition -- no longer a classic example of a mid-nineteenth century Hudson Valley country house. Its deteriorating exterior lacks many of the extraordinary details designed by Vaux -- its decorative wood trim, its spacious veranda, and its ornamental window hoods -- elements that contributed so greatly to its picturesque character. Although a number of the building's architectural elements were removed and placed in storage by the Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, most of its "missing" features were removed by members of the Hoyt family between 1927 and 1963. There are also two accretions of inappropriate design at the northeast corner of the structure: a garage on the basement level, and a kitchen on the first floor. In addition, attempts to stabilize and "mothball" the building over the past 30 years have been inadequate to prevent on-going deterioration from weathering and vandalism.

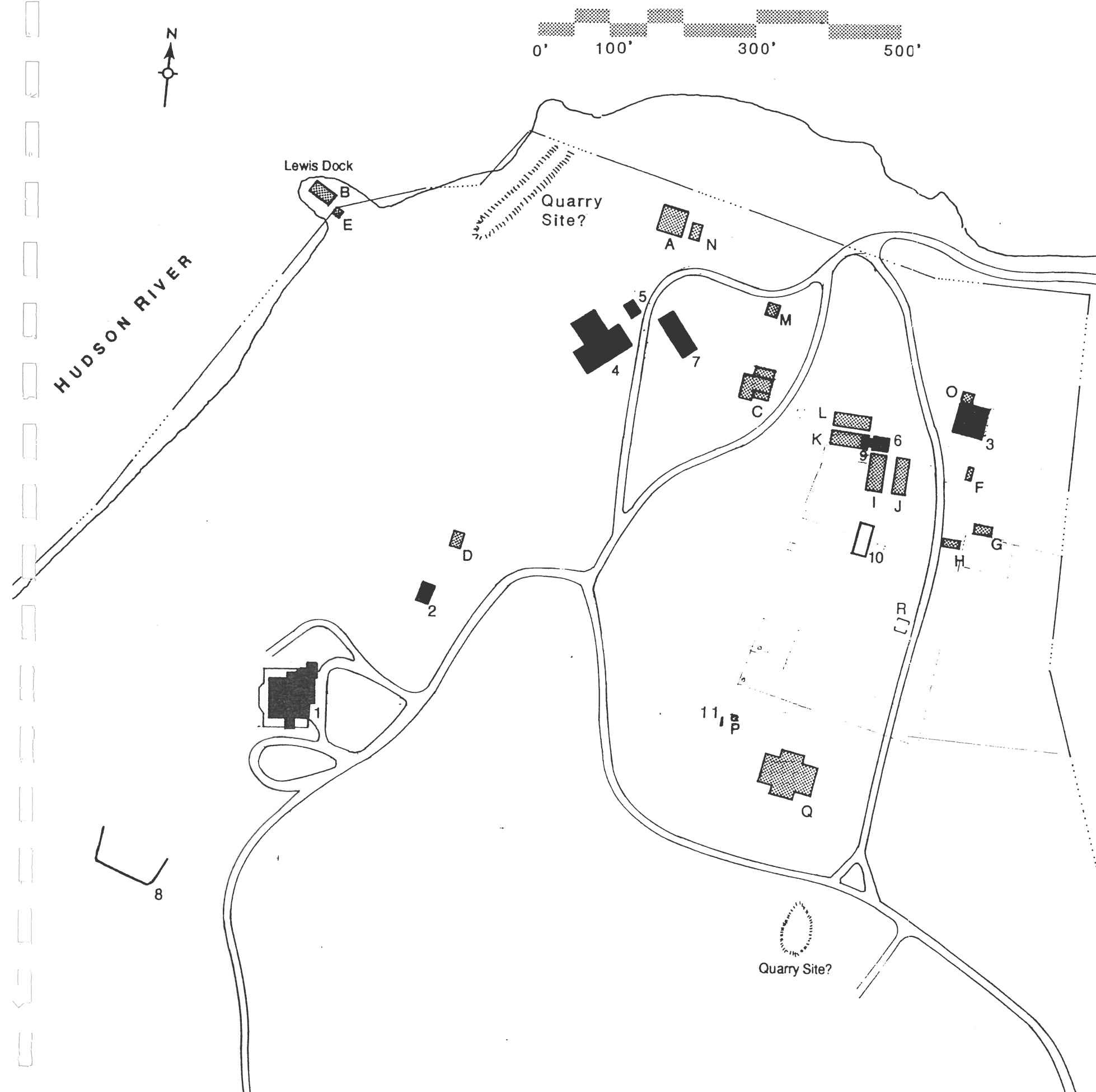
#### *Reservoir* [2]

This mortared stone building, which stands atop a knoll northeast of the Hoyt house, was presumably built in the mid-1850s to store water pumped from the Hudson River for domestic purposes. The walls and roof of the structure appear to be in excellent condition.

#### *The Cow Barn, Coach House & Stable, Auto House and 5-bay Garage* [3, 4, 5, & 7]

These four brick outbuildings were all constructed between 1899 and 1911 by Gerald L. and Mary Appleton Hoyt, the second generation of the Hoyt family to occupy the estate (1897-1927). Many or all of the buildings may be the work of a Staatsburg architect, Robert P. Huntington, who was responsible for remodeling the first floor of the Hoyts' country residence in 1905. Although not designed by Calvert Vaux, these service structures exhibit Tudor-like details and a quality of construction that disguise their mere utility, and render them architecturally compatible with the Hoyt House; however, none are ever seen simultaneously with the residence. Site and archival evidence also indicates that these hill-top structures were much less conspicuous in the past -- concealed within a dense grove or native forest trees and/or covered with clinging vines (Boston-ivy) that helped to integrate the structures with the landscape.

**FIGURE 2-11**  
**KEY TO HISTORIC BUILDINGS & LANDSCAPE STRUCTURES**



**Extant Buildings & Structures**

| Key | Building                   | Origin   | Remarks/Documentation   |
|-----|----------------------------|----------|---|
| 1   | Country House              | 1855     | Designed by architect Calvert Vaux; first floor remodeled in 1905 according to plans of architect Robert P. Huntington.                         |
| 2   | Reservoir                  | 1855?    | Stone building used to store water for Hoyt residence; visible in 1935 aerial photo   |
| 3   | Cow Barn                   | 1899     | Replacement for a large barn destroyed by fire in 1899.   |
| 4   | Coach House & Stable       | 1899     | Built shortly after 1899 fire; expanded in 1903.  |
| 5   | Garage or "Auto House"     | 1903     | One-car garage, also known as the "Mechanics Garage."   |
| 6   | Potting Shed-Heating Plant | 1905     | Probably built in conjunction with the two greenhouses erected in 1905. Remodeled as a bath house circa 1959.                                   |
| 7   | 5-Bay Garage               | 1911     | Two-story brick garage with hipped roof.  |
| 8   | Brick Garden Wall          | pre-1956 | This wall served as a backdrop for a flower garden built on the site of a former tennis court between 1935 and 1956.                            |
| 9   | Greenhouse                 | c. 1959  | 9' x 9' lean-to addition on potting shed-bath house.  |
| 10  | Swimming Pool              | c. 1959  | Built on the site of the estate's former kitchen garden.  |
| 11  | Cistern/Spring Outlet?     | ?        | Mortared stone wall at foot of slope; water source unknown.   |
| 12  | Stone Gateway Piers        | 1855?    | Located at entrance along Post Road. [Not shown on plan.]   |
| 13  | Railroad Bridge            | 1910s?   | Cantilever steel bridge over railroad tracks; probably 20th century replacement for original wooden span built circa 1851. [Not shown on plan.] |

**Missing Buildings and Structures**

| Key | Name                 | Origin    | Loss       | Remarks/Documentation  |
|-----|----------------------|-----------|------------|--|
| A   | Barn                 | pre-1855? | 1899       | Possible site of a "large barn" that was destroyed by fire in July 1899. The barn, which probably served as the Hoyts' stable & coach house until 1899, may have been built by Morgan Lewis or Margaret Livingston long before 1855. |
| B   | Boat House           | pre-1855? | pre-1935   | Site of a Gothic board-and-batten structure; removed prior to 1935.  |
| C   | Farm Cottage         | 1855      | mid-1960s  | Designed by Calvert Vaux "as a residence for men employed on the farm and other operations on Mr. Hoyt's estate" After farming was discontinued in 1928, it housed the estate's caretaker-gardener and his family. Demolished.       |
| D   | Ice House?           | 1855?     | mid-1960s? | 15' x 22' stone foundation approximately 60' north of the Reservoir; visible in 1956 aerial photo.   |
| E   | Pump House?          | 1855?     | mid-1960s  | 10' x 10' stone/concrete foundation; probably housed pump to supply river water to Reservoir.  |
| F   | Farm Shed #1         | 1899?     | mid-1960s  | Livestock shed? Built in conjunction with barn?  |
| G   | Farm Shed #2         | 1899?     | mid-1960s  | 15' x 25' stone foundation; probably a livestock shed built in conjunction with 1899 barn.   |
| H   | Farm Shed #3         | 1899?     | mid-1960s  | 12' x 12' stone foundation; probably a livestock shed built in conjunction with 1899 barn.   |
| I   | Greenhouse #1        | 1905      | pre-1956   | Site of first greenhouse on Hoyt estate [1 of 2].  |
| J   | Greenhouse #2        | 1905      | pre-1956   | Site of first greenhouse on Hoyt estate [2 of 2]   |
| K   | Greenhouse #3        | 1910      | pre-1956   | 20' x 50' brick foundation; site of greenhouse added in 1910.  |
| L   | Mushroom House?      | 1910?     | pre-1956   | Possible site of structure noted in oral accounts?   |
| M   | Cottage Outbuilding? | ?         | pre-1956   | 14' x 14' stone foundation; roof & dormer are visible in post-1911 photo of 5-bay garage [HP-8].   |
| N   | Wood Shed            | pre-1935  | mid-1960s  | visible in 1935 & 1956 aerial photos and documented on 1963 utilities plan; possibly built on or near site of original Hoyt barn.  |
| O   | Barn Shed            | post-1899 | mid-1960s  | 15' x 16' shed with dirt floor; 1963 utilities plan.   |
| P   | Reservoir            | pre-1935  | mid-1960s? | Near cistern; visible in 1935 & 1956 aerial photos and documented on 1963 utilities plan.  |
| Q   | Building Site?       | ?         | post-1935  | Possible site of a 40' x 75' building which appears to be visible in the 1935 aerial photograph.   |
| R   | Rustic Arbor         | c. 1900   | post-1935  | Garden structure visible in historic photographs from 1916 [HP-11] and 1935 [HP-1].  |

The cow barn [3] is a simple, one-and-a-half story brick structure topped with a 3-bay principal (south) façade and a louvered ventilator ornamenting the ridge of its roof. This gable-end also features segmentally arched barn doors which are placed slightly left (west) of center. A pair of small doors on the east façade provide access to the building's lower level via a narrow lane line defined by two stone retaining walls.

The coach house/stable [4] is also a one-and-a-half story brick structure, but with considerably more ornamental qualities than the barn. The T-shaped structure, which is topped with a cupola, is covered with a broad hipped roof (slate) with overhanging eaves and exposed rafter ends. Its main (southeast) façade has a steep central gable with entrance doors, while gabled dormers break the roofline of the structure's narrow ends. A pair of doors (4' and 8' wide) at the northwest corners of the coach house and its rear stable wing provide access to a lower level. [HP-6 & 8]

The estate's former garage [7], a rectangular structure which stands at a 90° angle to the coach house/stable [4], is likewise constructed of brick with a stone foundation. Its broad hipped roof is broken by shed dormers which originally provided light to living quarters on the upper level. The building's primary (southwest) façade features five segmentally-arched garage doors, with three of these clustered under a central gable [HP-7 & 8]. In the angle between the coach house/stable [4] and the garage [7] stands the "auto house" [5], a modest, one-story brick garage with a hipped roof.

With the exception of the cow barn with its deteriorated roof and interior, all of the structures are in excellent condition due to recent restoration and rehabilitation projects. They are capable of being secured and were once used by the OPRHP to house summer programs and special events. Their well maintained condition is effective in deterring vandals.

#### *Potting Shed - Heating Plant - Bath House, Greenhouse and Swimming Pool [6, 9 & 10]*

In 1905, Gerald L. and Mary Appleton Hoyt constructed a pair of greenhouses [I & J] at "The Point" -- the first ever on the property. This small, rectangular brick structure was apparently built at the same time to serve as potting shed (first floor) and heating plant (underground vaulted chamber) for the two glass houses. The estate's last owner, Helen Hoadley Hoyt, installed a concrete swimming pool [10] south of the potting shed in 1959. In conjunction with the pool, she also added a small lean-to greenhouse [9] on the east side of the potting shed, and adapted the structure for use as a bath house and cocktail bar.

The potting shed's low brick walls and overhanging gable roof appear to be in sound condition; however, its wooden roof members, door surrounds and window sashes are deteriorating. Remnant pieces of the old heating system are strewn about the floor of the underground vault, and structural members are all that remain of the lean-to greenhouse [9]. The outlines of swimming pool [10] are still evident despite being overgrown with volunteer trees and shrubs and partially filled with soil for stabilization and public safety purposes.

#### *Brick Garden Wall [8]*

This free-standing brick wall was apparently constructed in the 1940s or 1950s at the south end of a former lawn tennis court near the Hoyt residence. Now badly deteriorated, the wall served as a backdrop for a perennial flower border of the same period. [HP-14 & 15]

*Cistern/Spring Outlet?* [11]

A mortared stone wall at the foot of a slope east of the Hoyt house appears to be a cistern and/or the outlet for a spring. The cistern is filled with clear water, and there are remnant sections of pipe in its immediate vicinity. Both the cistern and pipes may have been associated with a reservoir structure [P] that once stood to the east.

*Stone Gateway Piers & Walls* [12; not shown on plan]

A pair of native bluestone piers flanked by semicircular walls of the same material define the entrance to the property along the Old Post Road. Similar in construction to the Hoyt House, these paired landscape structures are believed to date from the mid-1850s. Although the masonry of both sets of piers and walls is generally in good condition, inappropriate repairs (variations in mortar color and joint profile) are evident throughout. The northern end of the north wall also has a broken, unfinished face; however, it is unclear whether this jagged surface is an original design feature (i.e. where it abutted a dry stone wall, comparable to the south end of the south wall) or has been shortened.

*Railroad Bridge* [13; not shown on plan]

A narrow, steel bridge, measuring approximately 18' x 135', carries the property's approach drive over a double set of railroad tracks along the eastern boundary of the site. Supported by a pair of concrete abutments, the cantilever bridge was elevated in 1991 to accommodate the passage of larger freight cars. This alteration necessitated regrading the approach drive for a distance of roughly 100 linear feet to the east, and 300 linear feet to the west. The existing steel bridge, with its wooden deck, is probably an early-20th century replacement [c. 1915-1917] for a wooden bridge that was installed on this site in 1850 or 1851.

*Approach Drive Tree Wells and Retaining Walls* [not shown on plan]

Portions of the approach drive to either side of the railroad bridge are bordered by a combination of stone retaining walls and trees wells to help raise the grade of the road and protect existing trees. On the west side of the bridge, there are 18 stone tree wells that are capped and faced with concrete; they protect 10 old Sugar maples that line the drive. East of the railroad bridge, there is a stone retaining wall (approximately 100 linear feet) along the south side of the entrance drive, and a combination of tree wells and retaining walls (approximately 100 linear feet) that elevate the grade of the road and protect an old Sugar Maple, two old White pines, and three old hemlocks. Site and archival evidence suggest that many or all of these stone walls and wells date from the construction of the railroad bridge in the early 1850s.

*Stone Tree Wells in the Vicinity of the Hoyt House* [not shown on plan]

An old oak tree approximately 50' from the northwest corner of the Hoyt House is encircled by a stone tree well measuring 7' in diameter and at least 24" deep. Several other old oaks and hickories in the vicinity of the house also show signs of considerable filling at their base, suggesting that they too were once protected by stone tree wells. These wells were undoubtedly constructed in the mid-1850s by Calvert Vaux to protect existing specimen trees from elevated grades necessitated by construction of the house and/or associated roads, paths and lawns.

*Stone Boundary Walls* [not shown on plan]

The southern boundary of the Hoyt property, a nearly straight line extending from the railroad right-of-way to the Hudson River, is defined by a stone fence (approximately 2,200 linear feet) or remnants of a stone fence (800 linear feet) along its entire length except for the upland marsh area. There is also a parallel stone wall (approximately 1,300 linear feet) along the site's northern border with the Mills Mansion property. It extends from the railroad-right-of-way to the boundary diversion around the base of a steep ridge, and the continues for an additional 400 feet to the west. Averaging 3 to 5 feet in height, the walls are in generally good condition with an occasional toppled section resulting from tree damage or deer trails. It is likely that all of these walls were constructed from stone cleared from adjoining fields and woodlands during the late-18th or early-19th centuries.

**RUINS & SITES OF MISSING BUILDINGS & LANDSCAPE STRUCTURES**

The historic landscape at "The Point" contains ruins, remnants or site evidence (mounds, depressions, etc.) of at least 16 missing buildings and landscape structures documented in archival resources. The identity, location, origin and documentation of these "lost" buildings and structures are compiled on Figure 2-11, titled Key to Historic Buildings & Structures at "The Point." For ease of reference throughout the report, these ruins and building sites are identified with a consistent identification letter ranging from A through S.

*Site of Lewis-Livingston-Hoyt Barn?* [A]

This structure, destroyed by fire in 1899, may have served as a coach house and stable during the Hoyt residency and as a barn prior to 1854. Its presumed site -- a large, level area between the road to the "Lewis dock" and the northern property line -- is littered with building and household debris (suggesting its use as a dump site subsequent to the fire) and is covered with a stand of volunteer trees. The barn may have been the vantage point for F. C. Withers' rendering for the Hoyts' "farm cottage" which appears in Calvert Vaux's 1857 book, *Villas and Cottages*. (Please consult Figure 3-10).

*Boat House Ruins* [B]

The site of this board-and-batten structure, which served as a boat house during the nineteenth century, is marked by the ruins of a stone foundation (measuring approximately 18' x 36') on the old "Lewis dock." [HP-9]

*Site of Farm Cottage* [C]

This Vaux-designed structure, which served as a residence for the Hoyts' farmer/gardener, was demolished in the early-1960s. Its site was subsequently graded and filled, leaving only very subtle evidence of its location. Historical photographs [HP-5], together with a floor plan and vignette (please refer to Figure 3-10) which appeared in Calvert Vaux's 1857 book, *Villas and Cottages*., provide excellent documentation for the one-and-one half story clapboard covered structure which had a stone full basement, a wing, and a porch.

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*Ice House Ruins?* [D]

A stone 15' x 22' stone foundation located approximately 60 feet north of the Reservoir [2] may be the ruins of the Hoyts' ice house noted in several newspaper accounts during the period from 1912 through 1916.

*Pump House Ruins?* [E]

A 10' x 10' stone and concrete foundation located at the southern end of the "Lewis dock" may be the ruins of a pump house which supplied water from the Hudson River to the hilltop Reservoir [2] near the Hoyt residence. [HP-9]

*Ruins of Three Farm Sheds?* [F, G & H]

A stone retaining wall south of the Cow Barn [3], and two nearby stone foundations (measuring approximately 15' x 25' and 12' x 12') may be the ruins of three livestock sheds built by the Hoyt family circa 1899.

*Site of Two Greenhouses* [I & J]

A terraced area south of the Potting Shed/Heating Plant [6] appears to be the site of two greenhouses constructed by the Hoyt family in 1905.

*Greenhouse Ruins* [K]

A 20' x 50' brick foundation and free-standing wall west of the Potting Shed-Heating Plant-Bath House [6] may be the ruins of a greenhouse constructed by the Hoyt family in 1910.

*Ruins of a Mushroom House?* [L]

A linear depression and variations in grass texture northwest of the Potting Shed-Heating Plant-Bath House may mark the site of the Hoyt family's "mushroom house" noted in oral accounts of the estate.

*Outbuilding Ruins* [M]

A 14' x 14' stone foundation north of the farm cottage site [C] may be the ruins of a privy, wood shed, stable or tool house originally associated with the cottage. The roof of this structure is visible in a historic photograph [HP-8] of the 5-bay Garage [7].

*Wood Shed Ruins* [N]

Remnants of a stone foundation/retaining wall north of the coach house/garage complex [4] may be the ruins of a shed or outbuilding associated with the Lewis-Livingston-Hoyt barn [A] that was destroyed by fire in 1899.

*Barn Shed Ruins* [O]

A level area adjoining the north side of the Cow barn [3] provides evidence of a 15' x 16' shed that was once attached to this structure.

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*Site of Reservoir [P]*

An area of mounded soil and a volunteer walnut tree just east of a spring/cistern outlet [11] may mark the site of a building that was identified as a "reservoir" in the early 1960s. This pre-1935 structure may have supplied water to an unidentified structure [Q] which stood to the southeast.

*Site of Unidentified Building [Q]*

A terraced area at the south end of the Hoyts' former garden site may mark the site of a 40' x 75' structure visible in a 1935 aerial photograph of the site [HP-1]. A linear mound extending south from this area may be the remnants of a former path to the building from the approach drive.

*Site of Rustic Arbor [R]*

There is no conspicuous site evidence of a rustic arbor that stood at the eastern terminus of a path within the Hoyts' garden during the early-20th century. [HP-11]

*Stone Boundary Wall Remnants*

Straight lines of mature native trees and low mounds of fieldstone that follow the historic border between the old Russell farm and the "Point lot" provide compelling evidence that nearly 2,000 linear feet of stone boundary fence were "robbed" from this location at the time the Hoyt residence was constructed in the mid-1850s. Comparable features along the estate's southern boundary south and west of the residence suggest that approximately 800 linear feet of stone fence were "robbed" from this area as well. Please refer to Figure 2-6 for the location and extent of these "lost" walls.

*Stone Partition Walls*

Straight lines of mature native trees, linear mounds of earth and low mounds of fieldstone throughout the site provide compelling evidence that nearly 4,000 linear feet of stone walls that originally partitioned the Russell farm into a patchwork quilt of fields and woods were "robbed" at the time the Hoyt residence was constructed in the mid-1850s. Please refer to Figure 2-6 for the location and extent of these "lost" walls.

*Locust Posts and Wire Fencing*

Remains of locust posts and wire fencing were discovered along the southern boundary of the site (approximately 400 linear feet) directly south of the Hoyt residence, along a small stream just west of the quarry site, and in areas directly north and northeast of the upland marsh.

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**SITE FURNISHINGS AND OBJECTS**

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*Pedestals*

Two stone garden ornaments, perhaps pedestals for urns, planters or sculptures, were discovered southwest of the swimming pool [10] along the west side of the Hoyts' former garden.



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## WATER FEATURES

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Perhaps the most important character-defining feature at "The Point" today is a water feature -- the magnificent Hudson River. Its broad, reflective surface is not only a source of beauty in its own right, but also the foreground of unobstructed, panoramic vistas across the Hudson Valley. It is, in essence, the *raison d'être* for the property.

The Hudson River is also an important functional component of the historic landscape at "The Point." Since the 91-acre site lies entirely within the Hudson River drainage basin, all of its water features drain directly into the river or one of its tributaries. In addition, the property contains the ruins of several structures and other cultural features that were directly associated with the river. These include: remnants of the Hoyts' deep-water dock and boat house (transportation); a reservoir building and ruins of a pump house (water supply); and the possible remnants of an ice house built to store ice harvested from the river (refrigeration). The shoreline of the river (2,250 linear feet) is also bordered by an old foot path that is now an integral part of the recreational trail system within Mills-Norrie State Park.

There are also a number of smaller water features at "The Point" that contribute to its character. The largest of these is a natural upland marsh located between the first and second ridges. Site and archival evidence (aerial photographs) suggest that this area was once drained by a large central ditch (HP-1 and Figures 2-1 & 2-2). This action was probably undertaken during the late-18th or early-19th centuries to lower water levels and increase the size of adjoining farmlands. When the Hoyts ceased farming the property during the mid-20th century, the ditch was probably allowed to fill with sediment. Consequently, water levels in the marsh today may be at their highest levels since the 1790s.

Three small ponds on the property appear to be the accidental products of poor maintenance. One is located in a small valley on the first ridge just north of the approach drive. Although a culvert under the western ramp to the railroad bridge should accommodate the natural flow of water through this area, it appears that deterioration or obstruction of the pipe has allowed the water to pool. A similar problem is also occurring between the second and third ridges where another culvert crosses the approach drive. A third area of standing water is located near a cluster of large willow trees in a low-lying area west of the lane to the cow barn. This water feature may be associated with a nearby cistern and/or deteriorated underground drainage systems.

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## VIEWS AND SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

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Situated atop a promontory of land that thrusts into the Hudson River, the site for the Hoyt House was undoubtedly chosen to take advantage of exceptional views of the river valley and distant mountains. Although the objects of these views (Esopus Meadows Point, Esopus Meadows Lighthouse, Sturgeon Point, the Catskill Mountains, etc.) remain intact, these scenes are virtually invisible from the vicinity of the Hoyt House. Over the past 40 years, dense successional vegetation has grown up on the surrounding slopes and meadows, effectively isolating the house within a small island of space detached from the larger landscape. Only during the winter months, when the hardwood trees have lost their leaves, does the site regain a small degree of its historic spatial organization. Although spectacular, unobstructed panoramas across the Hudson River are still available at "The Point," they can only be obtained from the water's edge in the immediate vicinity of the "Lewis dock," along the foot path that follows the precipitous river bluff, or from the roof of the house.

Successional growth has also obscured spatial patterns throughout the balance of the Hoyt property. Extensive areas that were meadows as late as 1975 are now covered with stands of young hardwood trees in excess of 40 - 50 feet tall (Figures 2-1 through 2-3). Incrementally and almost imperceptibly, the traditional boundaries between woodlands, wetlands, meadows, fields, yards, lawns and vistas have either blurred or vanished, with a commensurate loss of spatial organization. The largest clearing on the property -- a bowl-shaped hollow between the greenhouse ruins and the approach road -- has only recently been reclaimed from the encroaching vegetation.

The estate's former approach drive, which extends for nearly a mile from the Old Post Road to the Hoyt House, has become the dominant spatial feature on the site. The trunks and canopies of its regularly-spaced avenue trees articulate a well-defined spatial sequence as the road passes around the four rocky, north-south ridge lines which cross the site. Nevertheless, successional vegetation that borders the drive now shades the road and obscures its views. These dense, young hardwoods have effectively blocked the "windows" into the adjoining landscape -- transforming the allée's "cathedral-like" character into that of a dark, gloomy tunnel. Instead of a kaleidoscopic sequence of spacious pastoral landscapes and rugged picturesque vignettes, the drive has become a monotonous panorama of natural woodland scenery.