



Subject: Changes to Historic Site

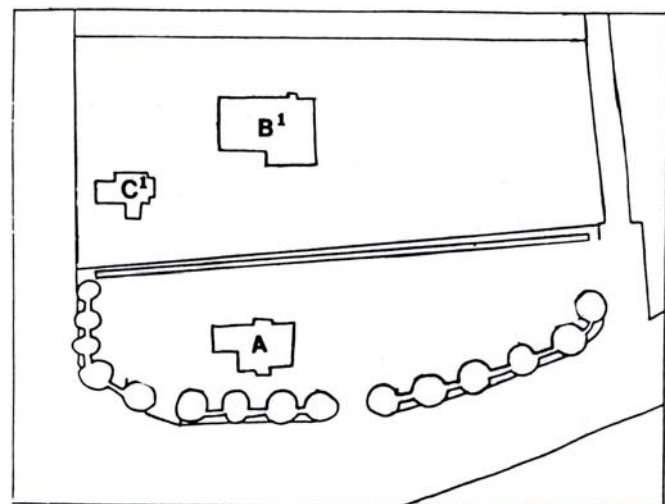
- Applicable Standards:**
1. Compatible Use
 2. Retention of Historic Character

Issue: The site of a historic building is usually an essential feature in defining its historic character. Accordingly, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation require that a rehabilitation involve minimal change to the defining characteristics of a building and its site and environment. The Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings stress that site changes such as locating new parking lots adjacent to historic buildings and other landscape changes can impair the defining characteristics of a property. The Guidelines also note that moving buildings onto the site of a historic building can create a false historical appearance. Such major changes can result in an overall rehabilitation that fails to meet the Secretary's Standards even when work on the historic building itself is not in question.



Application (*Incompatible treatment*): A large, finely detailed Neo-Classical mansion, built in 1900 and representing the wealth of prosperous mill owners, was listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places. Although the large lot on which it stood was overgrown prior to the start of the rehabilitation, the character of the house as an imposing suburban residence on a spacious lot had survived.

To convert the site into an office condominium complex, the owner moved a house from an adjacent lot with a similar setback and orientation, and set it in the front yard of the National Register-listed property. The moved building was turned to face the 1900 building, and a new parking lot was placed between the two structures. A smaller building from the adjacent property was also moved and sited at the rear of the 1900 building.

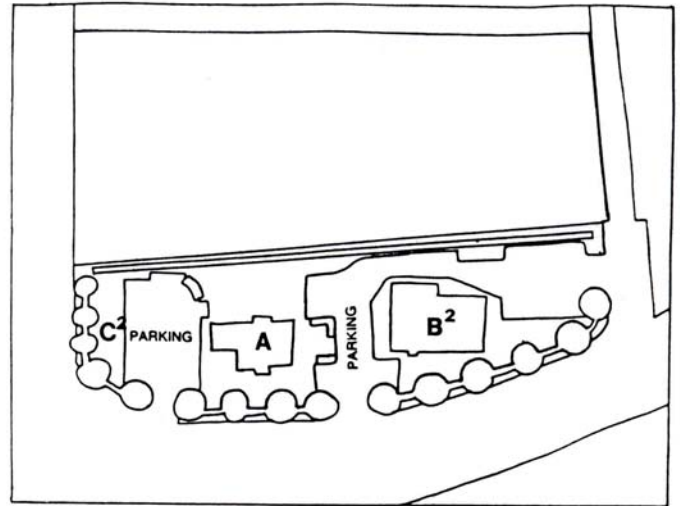


Top: Although the site was overgrown, the character of this 1900 house as a large suburban residence had survived.

Although both of the moved buildings were saved from demolition, their relocation in the manner shown here has greatly altered the historic setting of the listed build-

Bottom: Site plan before rehabilitation. The 1900 house (A) stood alone on its lot. On the adjoining property stood another large house (B1) and a dependent cottage (C1)

ing. The central parking lot, has become a dominant new feature of the site. The historic building now appears as but one element in a new composition bearing little relationship to the historic appearance of the property. As a result, the historic character of the overall property has been greatly diminished, and the project does not meet the Standards.



Site plan after rehabilitation of buildings. The neighboring house was moved and turned around (B2) to face the 1900 building (A) across a new paved parking lot. The cottage associated with the moved house was relocated (C2) behind the 1900 building.



Turned 180 degrees, the moved building (B2) faces the historic one from a distance of 60 feet.



The new parking lot completes the drastic alteration of the setting. The second relocated structure (C2) can be seen through the porte-cochere at left.

Michael J. Auer, Technical Preservation Services, National Park Service

These bulletins are issued to explain preservation project decisions made by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The resulting determinations, based on the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation](#), are not necessarily applicable beyond the unique facts and circumstances of each particular case.