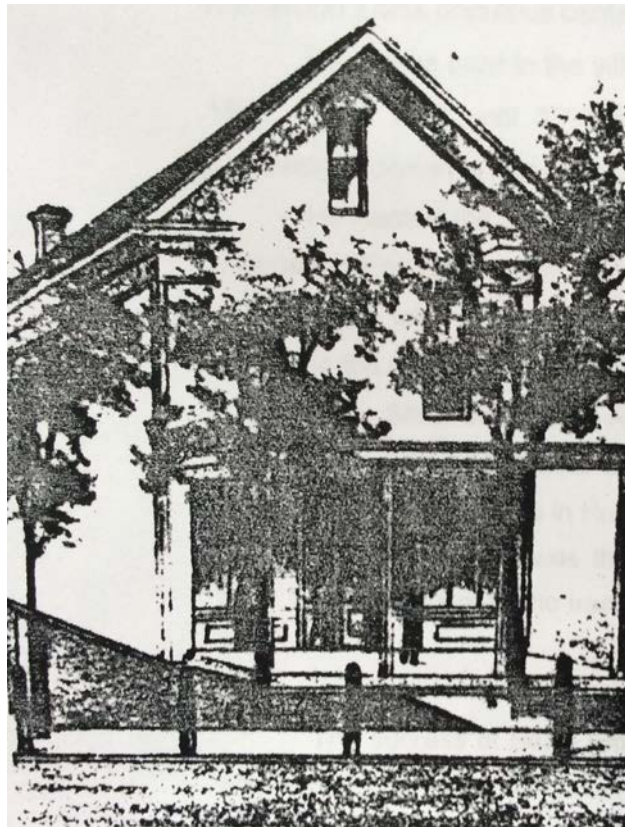


FOX-SEALS GENERAL STORE

**ANNANDALE, CLINTON TOWNSHIP
HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**



HISTORICAL ASSESSMENT REPORT PRESERVATION EASEMENT PROJECT

DENNIS BERTLAND ASSOCIATES APRIL 2016

FOX-SEALS GENERAL STORE

HISTORICAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

April 2016

Prepared for: **Township of Clinton.
1225 Route 31 South, Suite 411
Lebanon, New Jersey 08833**

Prepared by: **Dennis Bertland Associates
P. O. 315
Stockton, New Jersey 088559**

Section 1: Introduction

Project Overview

At the center of community life until recent years, the Fox-Seals General Store, also known as the old municipal building, is a contributing element of the Annandale Historic District, which is listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic. Named for its late 19th and 20th-century owners, the building served as a store for almost a century, before its acquisition by Clinton Township and renovation for municipal offices and other public uses. Over the course of its long history, the original building, erected in the 1880s, has been extensively remodeled and enlarged. The Township designated the property, which is included in the Township's Affordable Housing Plan, as an Area in Need of Redevelopment, and adopted a redevelopment plan that provides for a mix of market-rate and affordable housing. The Township plans to sell the property, which is no longer needed for municipal purposes and has stood vacant for several years, to a private developer who will agree to comply with the township's redevelopment plan for it and to preserve and rehabilitate the original portion of the building.

This study forms part of the investigative planning and related work necessary to secure the protection of the original portion of the Fox-Seals General Store by historic preservation easement. Its purposes are to (1) assess and document the original building's historic fabric, (2) identify features to be protected by easement and (3) identify features requiring rehabilitation or restoration work. The documentation and recommendations will serve as a schedule to the easement document being prepared for the property.

The report includes an architectural description, inventory of protected features, treatment approach, rehabilitation measures and current photographs, as well as historic images and maps. It was prepared under contract to the Township of Clinton, during the spring of 2006.

Project Staff

The historical assessment of the Fox-Seals General Store was conducted by Dennis N. Bertland, Director of Dennis Bertland Associates, who also wrote the report narrative. He was assisted by Janice E. Armstrong, who undertook report production duties.

Acknowledgments

A number of individuals and groups have provided generous support and assistance in this project. The support of the Clinton Township Mayor and Council and the Clinton Township Historic Preservation Commission is greatly appreciated. Special thanks are due to Brian Mullay, Council President, for providing several of the historical images and maps referenced in the report, and to Marvin Joss, Township Administrator, for facilitating access to the building.

Section 2: Architectural Description

Historical Development Overview:

The site of the Fox-Seals General Store evidently was vacant before the construction of the original store building in the early 1880s, and the 1886 “bird’s eye view” of the Annandale documents that the store had been constructed by that year, as well as its small rear wing and a small outbuilding, evidently a two-bay wagon shed, near its northeast corner (cover illustration and figure 1A).¹ The frame, gable-fronted, two-story main block was relatively narrow in width compared to its depth. It featured a central front entry, possibly recessed, with double doors flanked by display windows with paneled aprons and sheltered by a full-width, three-bay, front porch with flat-roof and simple posts, but no railing. Above the porch roof were two second-story windows and a gable window with raked hood. The north side of the building exhibited a regular second-story fenestration pattern with several windows; the first-story north wall was windowless, presumably because of the shelving inside. The overhanging roof eaves were detailed with a box cornice that is carried on the raking eaves, wide frieze and gable-end returns, and a chimney was centered on the roof ridge at or near the east gable.²

By 1892, the store had been enlarged to the south with a two-story, shed-roofed addition and on the east with three one-story appendages, which may have incorporated

¹ F. W. Beers, *County Atlas of Hunterdon, New Jersey*, 1873, page 46; the site of the store is vacant on the Beers’ map of Annandale. T. M. Fowler, *Annandale, New Jersey*, 1886; Historic Beaverbrook Homestead, Inc., *Annandale 1852-2002, The 150th Anniversary Tour*, October 5, 2002, pp. 15-18; Annandale Historic District National Register Nomination, pp. 7-35 & 7-36.

² Fowler, *Annandale, New Jersey*, 1886, vignette of “J. F. Fox’s Store.”

the wagon shed; a porch extended across the full width of the front elevation (figure 1). By 1897, as documented by an insurance map of the village of that date, a porch had been added to the north side of the original store's rear ell, a small frame outbuilding had been erected to the south of the store near the back of the lot (figure 2). Sometime between 1903 and 1912, a bay window was added to the north side of the original store, and a small, frame, two-story dwelling was erected on the south part of the lot with a short set back from West Street (figures 3 and 4). By 1921, two of the original building's rear appendages had acquired second stories, or had been replaced by two-story additions, leaving the north one-story wagon shed intact; by the same year the outbuilding behind the house to the south of the store had been replaced by a one-bay garage at the southeast corner of the lot (figure 5).³ In the 1920s, the front porch was enclosed and enlarged or replaced with the extant parapeted appendage to provide enlarged display windows, and the rear additions were enlarged or replaced with the extant rear addition, work that accommodated the specialization of the business in furniture and household appliances.⁴ No images documenting the building's appearance after these changes occurred have been found.

During the second half of the 20th century, the building was further enlarged and remodeled to accommodate both commercial and public uses. In 1959, a one-story masonry appendage with four garage bays was added on the north side of the rear addition to house the local fire department, and around the same time, the south half of the building became a bank and the northern half to the post office. To accommodate these new uses, a drive-through window and a loading bays were added respectively on the south and north sides, the display windows were replaced by smaller sash windows, and interior renovations made. Upon the departure of the bank a few years later, the building was acquired by Clinton Township for municipal offices, and further renovations were undertaken including the removal of the drive-through window and the installation of fire escapes and synthetic siding, as well as some new doors and windows. The post office relocated in 1982, the township moved its offices in 1993, and more recently the fire department vacated the premises.⁵ Since these departures, the municipally owned building has stood vacant.

Site Description Summary:

The original Fox-Seals General Store and its subsequent additions occupy the northwest corner of an L-shaped, .98-acre lot that is bordered on the west by West Street and on the north by Washington Street. The property's West Street frontage has Belgian block curbing (late 20th century) and a concrete sidewalk (mid 20th century), separated by a grass curb strip, and contemporary concrete sidewalks are present on the west and south sides of the building. Small lawns also are present on those sides. A narrow strip along the north side of the buildings is paved with asphalt and used for parking; a much larger gravel parking area fills the southern portion of the lot.

³ Sanborn Map Company, *Map of Clinton (Annandale)*, 1892, 1897, 1903, 1912 & 1921.

⁴ *Annandale 1852-2002, The 150th Anniversary Tour*, pp. 16 & 17.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 17 & 18.

Building Description Summary:

Enlarged and remodeled over a period of almost one hundred years, the building currently consists of several distinct sections: (1) the original frame, two-story, gable-fronted general store with small rear appendage (c. 1880-86); (2) frame, two-story, shed-roofed addition extending along the south side of the original store (c. 1886-92); (3) three-bay, 2-story store-front appendage with parapet extending across the west elevation of the building (c. 1920s, replacing earlier porch); (4) large, frame, 2-story, gable-roofed rear addition (c. 1920s, replacing or incorporating earlier appendages); and (5) concrete-block, 1-story garage appendage with brick facing and four vehicular bays on its north front (c. 1959).

The frame portions of the building are currently covered with synthetic siding, evidently applied over the early wooden clapboard and trim, and by asphalt shingle roofing. Foundations, where visible, are parged with cement, except for the foundation of the 1920s store-front appendage, which appears to be rusticated concrete block. Fenestration patterns vary considerably, and windows and doors from various phases of the building's evolution are present. The overhanging roof eaves similarly date to different construction phases and are covered with synthetic siding.

Original Store Building Description:

Exterior

The original form of the 1880s store main block and rear ell (including "footprint," height and roof pitch) remains intact and can be readily discerned when viewing the building from its north side (photos 2 and 3). Original exterior finishes also survive on portions of the north, west and east sides of the main block and rear ell, although largely covered by modern finishes, and early finishes and features, or evidence of them, may survive behind the later additions.

- **Roof/eaves.** The extant roof is covered with modern asphalt shingles. Wooden sheathing is visible in the attic. While the original roofing material is unknown, the 1892 Sanborn insurance map (figure 1) indicates that it was a "non combustible" material, probably either slate or metal, both in common use at the time. The main block's original eaves treatment (box cornice carried on the raking eaves, wide frieze and gable-end returns) survives, but has been covered with synthetic siding, as evidenced by the backs of boards forming the cornice soffit and frieze visible in the attic (photos 1, 2, 3, 9 and 10). The cornice's crown molding appears to remain intact on the west gable. While other cornice moldings, if present, likely were removed when synthetic siding was installed, fragments or ghost of moldings may remain. A box cornice also survives on the north side of the rear wing. The main block's chimney, which was centered on the roof ridge at or near the east gable, has been removed.

- **Siding.** Building is now covered with synthetic siding. What evidently is original clapboard siding can be seen in the attic on the main block's west gable (photos 9 and 11), and clapboard siding presumably also survives intact beneath the synthetic siding on the north and east sides of the main block and the north side of the rear ell, as evidenced by the survival of the original fenestration in these areas. Whether or not original siding remains on the other sides of the building behind the later additions is unknown. The original exterior east and south walls of the main block appears to have survived, although modified extensively, and it is possible that some siding may remain.
- **Windows.** The original regular fenestration survives on portions of the main block and rear wing. The west gable window with its raked hood and plain trim (Photo 1 and 2) is an original feature, as documented by the 1886 vignette (cover illustration), and the physical evidence of the interior framing; however, its 1/1 sashes are late 20th century replacements of the 2/2 originals visible in the vignette. Double-hung, 2/2 sash windows with plain trim remain on the north and east sides of the main block and rear wing at the second-story level (interior trim also remains), and are likely to be original, although the sashes might be early replacements (photos 1, 2 and 7). The main block's east gable window may be an early feature. The small 1/1sash windows on the north side of the main block on the first-story level are not original, and probably are contemporary with mid/late 20th century alterations.
- **Doors.** The one remaining early entry is located on the north side of the rear wing, and features a glass-and-panel door with plain trim (photo 5). The door is composed of two vertical glass lights above three recessed panels (the upper one horizontal and lower two vertical) with diagonal bead-board fields. The door is hung on cast iron butt hinges; the door handle appears to be a replacement.
- **Porches/appendages.** The flat-roofed two-bay porch on the north side of the rear wing likely is to be a replacement of the one indicated on the 1897 map (figure 2), although it is possible that roof may date to that era. The 1921 insurance map (figure 5) depicts an open porch at that location, and the concrete foundation, floor deck and partial enclosure are subsequently alterations, most likely dating to the mid 20th century. The enclosed frame loading bay with concrete base that projects from the main block was added c. 1960, and it may have replaced a semi-octagonal bay window indicated on the 1921 insurance map.

Interior

The interior the 1880s store main block and rear ell has been subject to considerable alteration over the years. The framing of the roof and attic floor remains intact (photos 8, 9, 10 and 11), as do presumably the flooring frames of the first and second stories. The original interior floor plan is unknown, although there likely one or more large rooms served to accommodate commercial functions. The first story of the main block currently is divided into a number of rooms, while the second story is one

large room (photo 6). Finishes throughout are mid/late 20th century. The north windows on the second story retain early trim with simple bead moldings typical of the 19th century (photo 7).

Section 3: Protected Features Inventory

Several factors informed the identification of features to be protected by the proposed preservation easement. Protected features should be those physical elements that are essential to the historical architectural character of Fox-Seals General Store. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that certain rehabilitation measures will be necessary to adaptively reuse the property for modern purposes and considerable restoration work will be required to recreate something of the original building's historic appearance. Thus, while including such critical elements as the public view of the Fox-Seals General Store from West and Washington Streets, the easement also should allow the building to be enlarged in a historically sympathetic manner upon the removal of the appendages, and place few, if any, restrictions on the treatment of interior spaces.

The features to be protected by preservation easement are grouped into four categories: exterior building envelope, structural elements, interior features and site.

A. *Exterior building envelope.*

- **Form and massing** of the 1880s main block and small original east wing, including height, depth and roof pitch must be preserved. Upon the removal of any of the later appendages, the building may be enlarged, provided that the addition (or additions) is compatible with the original form and massing, preserves the appearance of the building as viewed from West and Washington Streets and incorporates exterior finishes sympathetic to the historic character of the building.
- **Foundations** Any stone foundation walls, if present, should be preserved, excluding any Portland cement parging or repointing of any early masonry. If cement parging and/or pointing are removed; replacement pointing must be consistent with physical evidence and historical documentation in color, composition and profile.
- **Siding.** Upon the removal of the synthetic siding, all exposed original clapboard siding and trim such as corner boards must be preserved and repaired utilizing techniques that are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Historic Preservation*. Any siding that is too deteriorated to repair may be removed, as necessary, but must be replaced in kind in a manner that is consistent with physical evidence and historical documentation. Similarly, any areas of missing siding and trim must be in-filled to match the existing in accordance with physical evidence and historical documentation.
- **Roof eaves.** Upon the removal of the synthetic siding, the extant historic eaves treatments of the main block and original rear wing must be preserved and

repaired utilizing techniques that are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Historic Preservation*. Any trim that is too deteriorated to repair may be removed, as necessary, but must be replaced in kind in a manner consistent with physical evidence and historical documentation. Similarly, any areas of missing trim must be in-filled to match the existing in accordance with physical evidence, such as ghosts or fragments of moldings, and historical documentation. The work must be designed to accommodate the installation of gutters and downspouts of historically appropriate design.

- **Windows.** The extant original windows on the west, north and east sides of the main block and original east (rear) wing, upon evaluation of their physical condition, should be preserved and repaired utilizing techniques that are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Historic Preservation*. However, any trim or sashes that are evaluated as too deteriorated to repair or unable to meet adaptive reuse energy efficiency goals may be replaced, as necessary, but replacements must match removed elements in appearance and reflect physical evidence, such as any ghosts or fragments of moldings uncovered, and historical documentation. The windows on the west and south sides of the main block (including the two second-story west windows) obscured by, or removed for, the latter additions should be reconstructed with replacement windows that are sympathetic to the historic character of the building and consistent with physical evidence and historical documentation, while accommodating the adaptive reuse program. If modern windows are removed, replacement treatments must be sympathetic to the historic character of the building and consistent with physical evidence and historical documentation, while accommodating the adaptive reuse program. Minor changes to the historic fenestration on the rear and side elevations are permitted, if necessary, to achieve adaptive reuse purposes.
- **Entries/porches.** The original rear entry door and trim on the north side of the original rear wing must be preserved, but maybe rehung to open out, if necessary, to meet code requirements. The non-historic rear wing porch may be removed, if necessary, to achieve adaptive reuse purposes. However, if the porch is retained, its treatment must be sympathetic to the historic character of the building and consistent with physical evidence and historical documentation. Minor changes on the rear and side elevations are permitted, if necessary, for providing access and egress necessary to achieve adaptive reuse purposes. Upon the removal of the front appendage, any physical evidence of the 19th century storefront and porch should be preserved and recorded to help guide reconstruction of these elements.

B. Structural elements.

- **Stone masonry.** Stone main block foundation and stone foundation and walls of east wing; but permitting the repair/replacement of any deteriorated elements, provided work is performed in a historically non-destructive manner.

- **Framing.** Framing members of the main block and wing, but permitting the repair/replacement of any deteriorated elements, provided work is performed in a historically non-destructive manner.

C. *Interior features.*

- **Floors, walls, ceilings and trim.** Modern floor, wall and ceiling treatments may be removed, and the replacement treatments necessary to achieve adaptive reuse purposes should be sympathetic to the historic character of the building. Consideration should be given to the preservation of any extant early fabric, particularly the original window trim of the second-story north windows, if it can be accommodated into proposed adaptive reuse program.

D. *Site.*

- **View** of the store from West and Washington Streets.
- **Building setback** from West and Washington Streets.

Section 4: Treatment Approach and Rehabilitation Measures

Treatment approach:

Formulating a treatment approach or philosophy is an important step in planning for a historic property. It provides the framework to guide physical intervention in the property. A treatment approach should be based on historic information and existing conditions, and must respect the property's historic significance, as well as uses and interpretive goals. An appropriate treatment should maximize retention of historic character, minimize the loss of historic fabric and meet the *Secretary of Interior's Standards* for the treatment of historic properties. The *Standards* identify four basic treatments: preservation, restoration, rehabilitation and reconstruction, although in many cases a hybrid approach is selected. A treatment approach must also define a treatment period, typically the period of time within which the property achieved its historical significance and which best reflects its architectural character and development.

Given the Fox-Seals General store property is to be redevelopment for new uses, rehabilitation is the appropriate treatment, along with selected restoration and reconstruction measures. Physical and historical evidence, most notably the 1886 image (cover illustration), will permit the exterior of the original building to be returned to something of its 19th-century appearance. Indeed, the lack of later pictorial documentation presents a serious limitation to the restoration of the building subsequent to the additions on its west south and east side and informs the decision to focus of the building's first period of construction as the appropriate treatment period. However, if the during the redevelopment project's planning/design phase addition physical and

documentary evidence should come to light, consideration can be given to rehabilitating building's south appendage, and possibly other additions.

All necessary rehabilitation measures are to conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Any rehabilitation measures that would destroy historic fabric or obscure the property's historic appearance are to be avoided.

Rehabilitation Measures:

The following outlines specific measures to accomplish preservation goals for the property:

A. Exterior building envelope.

- Removed later appendages, and carefully inspect exposed facades of the original store for early building fabric and features, or evidence of the same.
- Repair Portland cement parging on foundations, or remove parging and restore original foundation treatment based on physical evidence exposed when later additions are removed, utilizing a parging or pointing treatment that is historically appropriate in color, composition and profile and consistent with physical evidence and historical documentation
- Restore/rehabilitate original clapboard siding and trim; replace missing or severely damaged siding and trim based on physical and historical evidence.
- Restore/rehabilitate original 2/2 sash windows on north and east sides of main block and rear wing, or install replacements that match the originals in accordance with conditions analysis, physical evidence and historic documentation. Install matching 2/2 sashes in west gable window in place of modern sashes. Reconstruct windows on the other elevations, based on physical and documentary evidence, including two second-story front windows. New windows of similar design may be installed in place of inappropriate modern windows on the first-story of the north side of the building or elsewhere on south and east side of the building, as required to accommodate the new use program.
- Rehabilitate/restore rear wing entry on physical and historic evidence; door may be rehung to swing outwards, if necessary, to meet code requirements.
- Rehabilitate/restore rear wing porch, if retained, based on physical and historic evidence rear door may be rehung to swing outwards, if necessary, to meet code requirements.
- Reconstruct original storefront on the west side of the main block based on physical and documentary evidence. If evidence is insufficient to allow an accurate reconstruction, design a new treatment in whole or part that reflects what evidence is known and is sympathetic to the historical character of the building.
- Reconstruct any entries on south and east sides of the building based on physical and documentary evidence, or install new entries of appropriate design on north, east or south sides, as required to accommodate the new use program.
- Repaint exterior based historically appropriate color scheme or one determined by analysis of original finishes.

- Replace asphalt shingle roof in kind or replace with slate and/or metal roofing based on physical and historical evidence.
- Restore deteriorated roof eaves based on physical and historical evidence.
- Replace deteriorated/missing gutters and leaders with half-round gutters and round leaders painted to match the selected trim color.
- Reconstruct east gable end chimney, if needed for the new use program, based on physical and documentary evidence.

B. Structural/utility systems.

- Repair any deteriorated framing members, utilizing epoxy repairs or replacement in kind; floors may be reinforced as necessary to accommodate new use program.
- Repair foundation as required.
- Upgrade/replace insulation, electrical, plumbing and heating systems in manner that minimizes impact on historic fabric.

C. Interior features.

- Remove inappropriate and deteriorated modern finishes, and install new partitions and finishes necessary to accommodate the new use program,
- Retain any historic finishes that can be incorporated into the new use program.

D. Site.

- Design and execute new construction in a manner that historically complements the building and its setting, particularly as regards massing, setbacks and materials.
- Avoid modern construction materials and plantings that would distract from the property's historical character (such as "foundation" plantings around the original building and concrete curbing and paving) in undertaking site improvements.



Photo 1. Fox-Seal General Store, northeast view.



Photo 2. Fox-Seal General Store, southeast view.



Photo 3. Fox-Seal General Store. Original store and rear ell, SE view.



Photo 4. Fox-Seal General Store. Rear store block and firehouse additions, SW view.



Photo 5. Fox-Seal General Store. Rear ell entry, looking south.



Photo 6. Fox-Seal General Store. Original block, second story, looking NE towards early windows



Photo 7. Fox-Seal General Store. Original block, second story, north window detail, looking NE, northeast view.



Photo 8. Fox-Seal General Store. Original block attic, roof framing and south wall detail, looking SE.



Photo 9. Fox-Seal General Store. Original block attic, SE corner, roof and wall framing, revealing original clapboard on west gable.



Photo 10. Fox-Seal General Store. Original block attic, north wall, eaves detail with cornice blocking.



Photo 11. Fox-Seal General Store. Original block attic, west gable detail, revealing original clapboard siding, looking NW.



Figure 1A. T. M. Fowler, *Annandale, New Jersey*, 1886. Detail, southeast view Fox General Store to right of church.

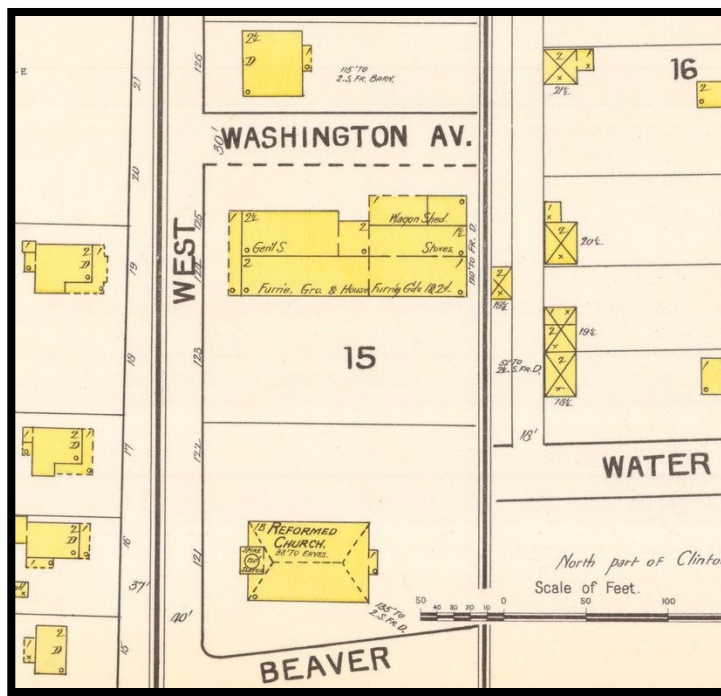


Figure 1. Sanborn Map 1892.

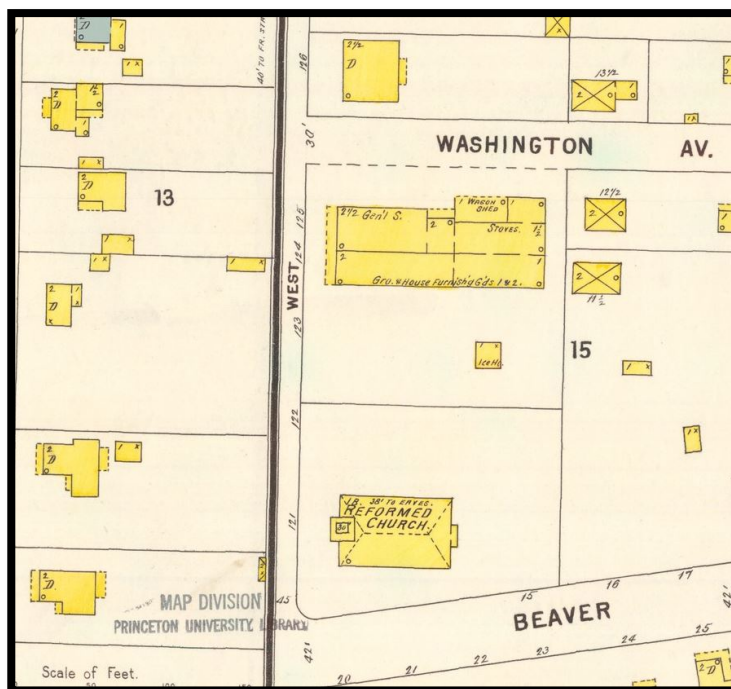


Figure 2. Sanborn Map 1897.

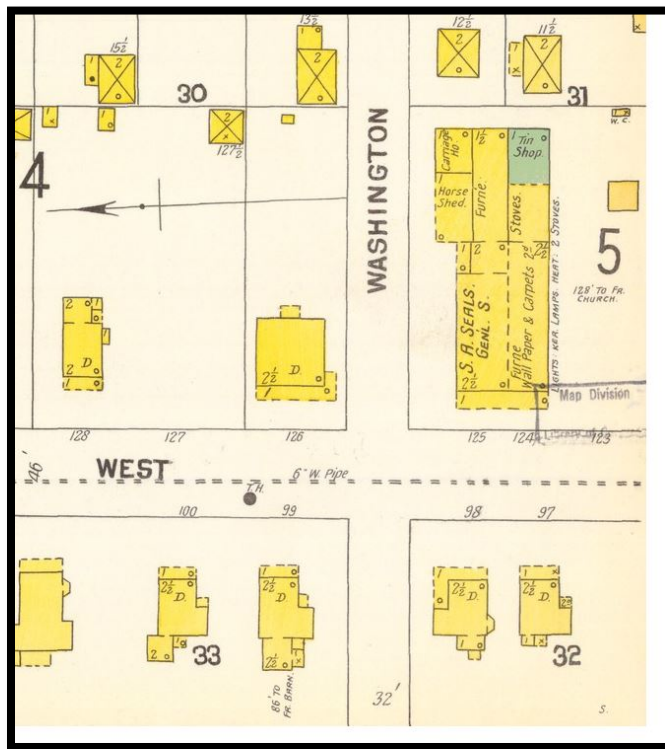


Figure 3. Sanborn Map 1903.

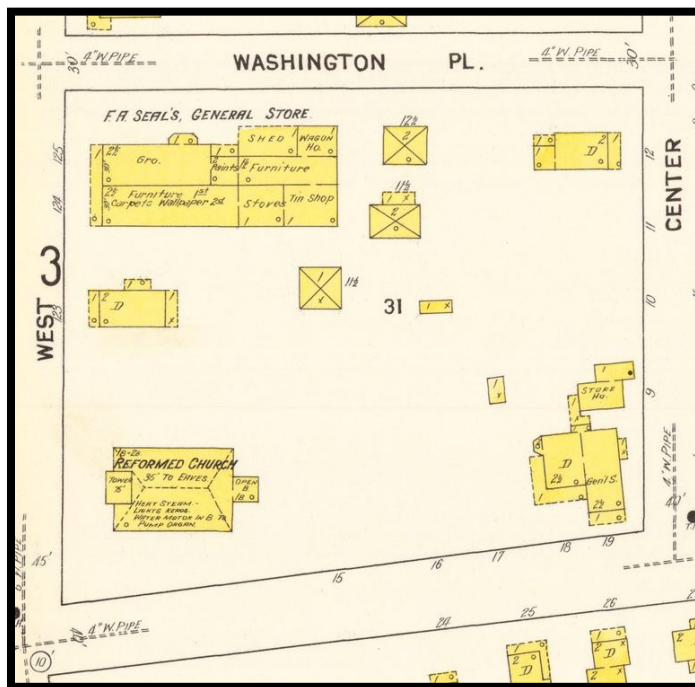


Figure 4. Sanborn Map 1912.

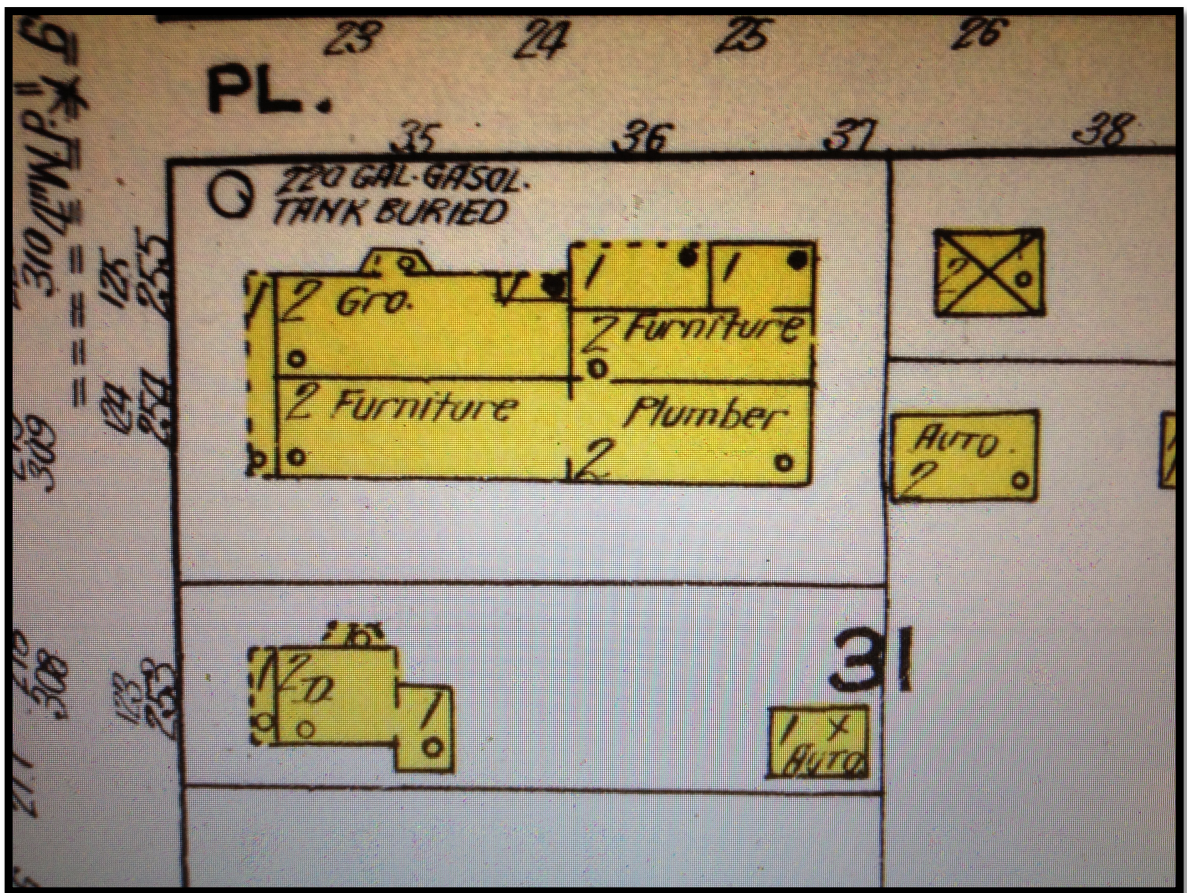


Figure 5. Sanborn Map 1921.