

FINAL REPORT

NORTHFIELD'S HISTORIC CONTEXTS

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for the

**Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission
Northfield, MN**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Chapter I	
Geographical and Historical Background	
Geographical Setting	5
Pre-Europeans, Exploration, and Earliest Settlement	6
The Original Town Plan	7
Early Population Characteristics	9
Patterns of Labor and Housing	10
Chapter II	
Historic Contexts	
Industry and Agriculture	14
Commerce	20
The Northfield Colleges	25
Religion	28
Private Institutions	31
Public Institutions and Improvements	33
Landscape and Urban Design	36
Chapter III	
Preservation Planning in Northfield: A Brief History and	
Recommendations for the Future	39
Bibliography	41
Maps	
Original Town Plat Boundaries	46
Nineteenth-Century Place Names	47
Northfield's Early Churches	48
Early Parks, Cemeteries, and Squares	49

INTRODUCTION

This study was sponsored by the City of Northfield, the Minnesota Historical Society Office of Historic Preservation, and the National Park Service. The Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission and Community Development Department administered the project. Carole Zellie of Landscape Research, St. Paul, MN, served as consultant and prepared the final report.

Historic Contexts

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation Planning organize preservation activities into identification, evaluation, registration and treatment steps. The Standards also provide for the development of historic contexts.

As defined by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, contexts provide frames of reference that establish the relative significance of cultural resources, and provide a framework for making management decisions about the resources. Contexts are the organizational format that groups information about related cultural properties, based upon a common theme, a defined geographical area, and a specific and defined chronological period. It is a flexible concept and a particular context may stress one of these aspects, or treat them equally.

This study of historic contexts will serve as a component of Northfield's future preservation planning efforts. In particular, it establishes a framework for future cultural resources inventory work, particularly a city-wide architectural survey. It is expected that the information contained in the contextual survey might be revised as

further research on the city's development and historic sites is completed.

The State Historic Preservation Office also uses contexts in its statewide planning efforts. To date, broad regional contexts have been identified. "Early Agriculture and River Settlement" and "Agricultural Development and Railroad Construction" are two that most closely overlap with Northfield's pattern of settlement and development.

The contexts in this report describe Northfield's broadest patterns of development. Some buildings or sites can be included in more than one context. Each context is organized around a narrative that is based on the information gathered in the research phase of the contextual survey. The narrative describes the general history and characteristics of the context. Second, a list of property types that link ideas from the narrative to historic properties in Northfield is provided. Comments about the condition of local property types and general suggestions about further treatment and preservation goals conclude each historic context. More specific goals can be developed after additional research on Northfield's historic and cultural resources is completed.

The historic contexts describe what is both typical and unique about Northfield. The time frames begin in the mid-1850s, immediately after the platting of the city, and extend to the mid-1940s, to an important period of post-war change in the city and region. They have been identified as Industry and Agriculture, Commerce, Religion, the Northfield Colleges, Private Institutions, Public Institutions and Improvements, and Landscape and Urban Design. As will be evident in the following sections, the Commerce and College contexts are the most character-defining themes of the community.

This report also contains descriptions of the city's geographical setting, town plan characteristics, patterns of labor and housing, and current preservation planning efforts. These sections provide a background for Northfield's pattern of development as it is described in the historic contexts.

Research Methods and Sources

The research began with a review of published and unpublished material on the landscape, settlement, and development of Northfield and surrounding Rice County. State, county and local histories, land use and other historic maps, and historic photographs and engraved views were the primary types of material consulted. County and city directories, newspapers, promotional brochures, and a variety of published and unpublished essays by local historians were also of use. Photo collections at the Minnesota Historical Society and the

Northfield Historical Society provided an excellent visual record of the development of the city.

The Northfield History Collection at the Northfield Public Library is an excellent resource for most of this material, particularly for scrapbooks, locally-published materials, and a variety of miscellany. Of particular use to a future architectural survey is a card file, compiled from local newspapers, that contains references for several hundred local buildings. Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century directories, and a comprehensive set of maps and atlases for Rice County and Northfield are items that should be acquired for the local history collection.

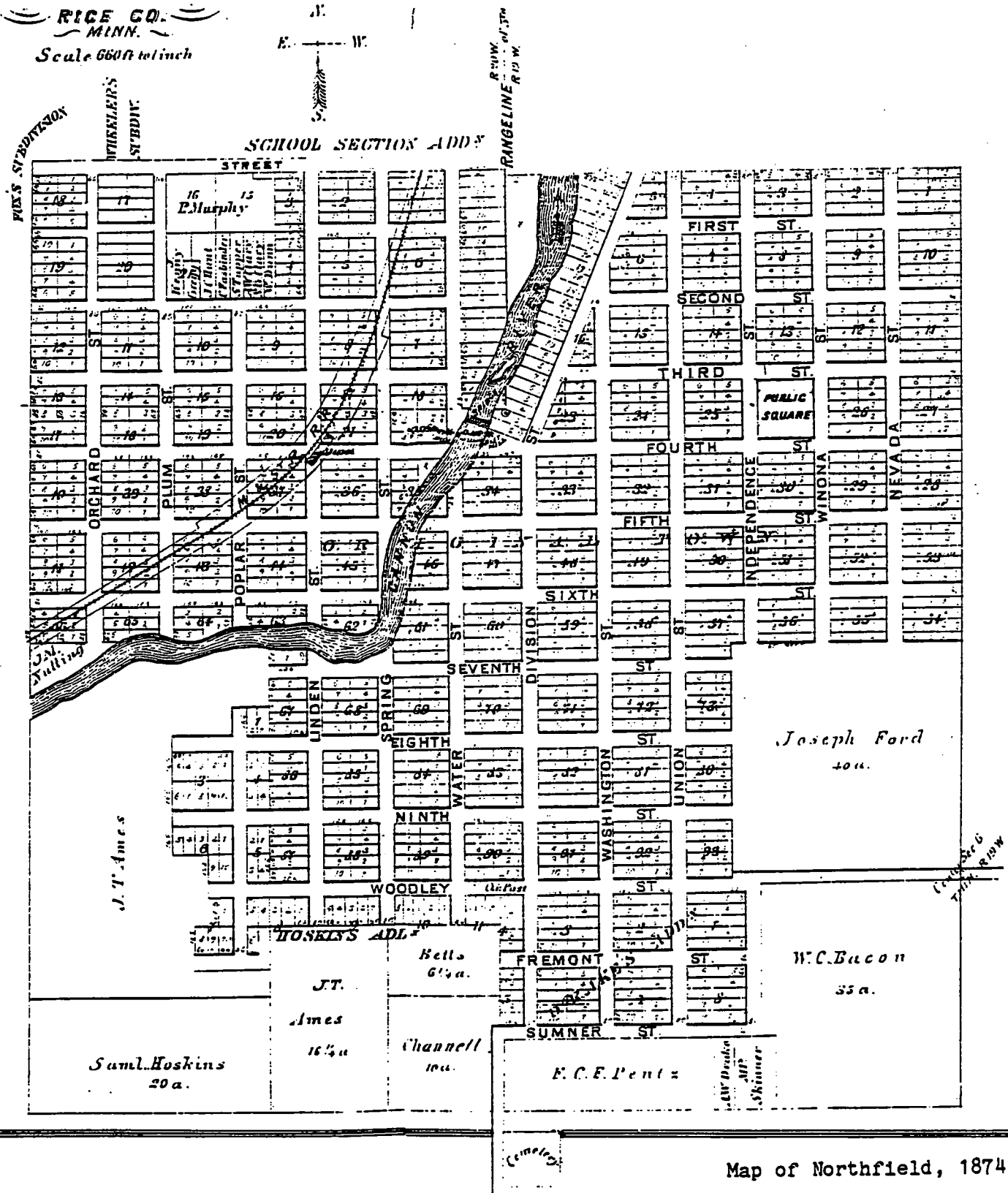
There are a variety of published accounts of Northfield's development. While Edward D. Neill and Curtiss-Wedge provide good overviews of the nineteenth-century development of the city and its institutions, Continuum: Threads in the Community Fabric of Northfield, MN (1976) and the Northfield Downtown Guidebook: Heritage Preservation in the Historic District (1982) are more recent publications also useful to this study. The first takes a broad look at the physical and social development of the community and the second presents detailed information on the historic and architectural importance of properties in the Historic District. It also explains the ordinance which provides for review of design or exterior alterations in the District.

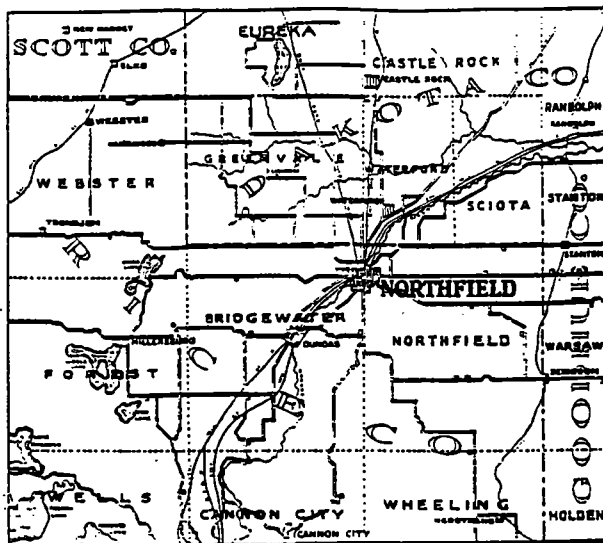
For this contextual survey, existing architectural and historical resources were first studied by reviewing survey data (ca. 1977-present) at the State Historic Preservation Office as well as the files of the Heritage Preservation Commission. In 1977, 120 sites were identified in a preliminary survey by the State Historic Preservation Office. A reconnaissance of the city's commercial and residential areas provided more familiarity with the variety of architectural styles and building types. At this point, historic maps, engraved views, and photos were useful in understanding the development of the city, and in reconstructing areas that have changed significantly.

The property type description and property type list included in each context were developed out of the review of existing architectural resources as well as the survey of research material. The property type lists presented in the State Historic Preservation Office's Historic Context Outlines: the Post-Contact Period Contexts (1985) and in Faribault's Historic Contexts Final Report (1986) were of use in developing the property type lists for Northfield. Finally, the recommendations for future preservation activities relating to each context were based on an analysis of existing conditions, as well as discussions with Heritage Preservation Commission members and Community Development Department staff.

CHAPTER I

GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND





GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

Northfield is situated 40 miles south of Minneapolis in northeastern Rice County. Since settlement, it has maintained its rank as the county's second-largest city. In size of population and value of manufactured goods, it has always been outranked by Faribault, the county seat 15 miles to the south.

The Cannon River bisects the town plat, entering the city limits at the southwest and flowing diagonally to the northeast. Spring Creek, a small tributary stream, flows from the Cannon to the southeast. The winding Cannon River rises in lakes northwest of Faribault and has a broad valley. It joins the Mississippi River at the head of Lake Pepin. At settlement the river demarcated the edge of the Big Woods, a dense regional forest belt that covered about two-thirds of Rice County, from prairieland.

The prairie was situated to the east and south, and a low, flat scrubland to the north. Today, only very small portions of the Big Woods and prairie landscapes survive in the Northfield vicinity.

Northfield and the surrounding area owe their topographical characteristics to glacial activity over one million years ago. The soils of the area are overlain on Prairie du Chien Dolomite, which is overlain by St. Peter Sandstone. In various locations younger layers of Glenwood Shale, Platteville Limestone, Decorah Shale, and Galena Limestone are evident. Quarries in the Northfield area supply building stone, concrete manufacture, agricultural lime, and road gravel.

Glacial drift left by retreating ice sheets created the terminal moraine, eskers and outwash plains as well as the large boulders, or erratics, evident in the Northfield area.

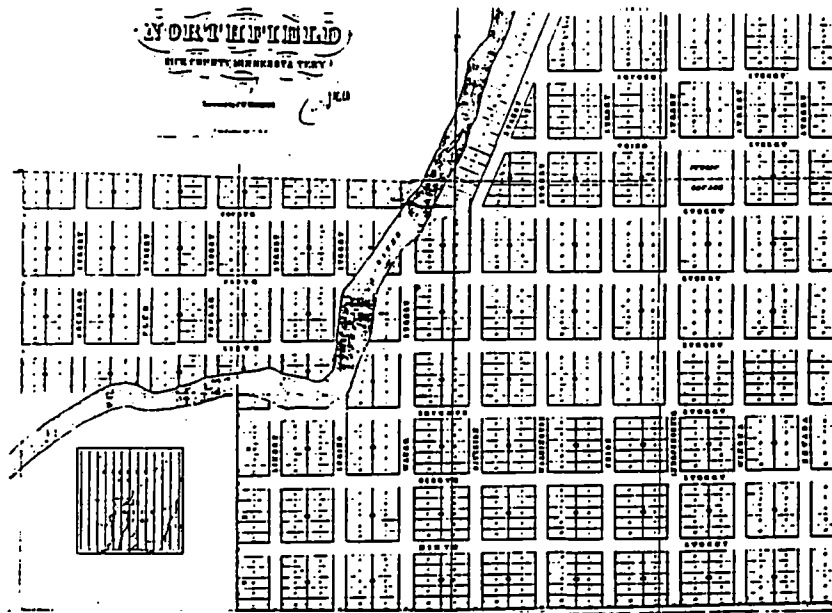
PRE-EUROPEANS, EXPLORATION, AND EARLIEST SETTLEMENT

Burial mounds have been identified near the southern edge of the Northfield City limits. The last group of pre-Europeans in the vicinity of Northfield was the Wapacuta band of Dakotas. They were engaged in fur trade along the Cannon River in the 1700s, and had a large settlement near Faribault on Cannon Lake. Apart from the burial mounds, no other sites have been listed with the state archaeological survey. The "Lowland Mounds" identified by Edward W. Schmidt in the 1930s have not yielded any prehistoric material.

The Cannon River Valley may have been visited by LeSueur in 1700. More certainly, in 1838, the Northfield vicinity was explored by Joseph N. Nicollet. He named the Cannon River Lahontan and his map of 1845 shows the Castle Rock formation north of Northfield.

Beginning in the late 1820s, Alexander Faribault (1806-1882) and his father Jean Baptiste Faribault established trading posts for the American Fur Company in this area. One of Alexander's posts was built in 1835 at the intersection of the Straight and Cannon Rivers, a site within the present-day city of Faribault 15 miles to the south of Northfield. Nute (1930) lists his other trading post sites at Waterville, Morristown, Faribault, and on the northwest shore of Cannon Lake. The latter was established in 1826. Although the fur trade was the basis of the early economy of Faribault, there is no record of fur trading activity in Northfield.

Prior to the creation of the Minnesota Territory in 1849, the completion of government land surveys, the construction of roads and the signing of treaties with the Indians, there were a only handful of farmers settled in the vicinity of Northfield. The first permanent white settlement in Rice County probably occurred about 1853. By 1860, the total county population numbered 7,886, and by 1865, 10,966.



THE ORIGINAL TOWN PLAT

I did not at first contemplate starting a town, much less a city. I only thought of a mill.

John North, 1880. Quoted in Franklyn Curtiss-Wedge, History of Rice and Steele Counties, 1910, p. 445.

The plat of Northfield drawn by Minneapolis surveyor Caleb W. Iddings (1833-?) in 1855 was a rectangular grid situated on the east and west sides of the Cannon River. The primary features of the 96-block plan were a commercial street along the river, a public square, and the suggestion of the present Bridge Square. Bridge Square was created on lot 1 of Division Street, near the two mills and dam shown on the plat. Residential development was to occur on square blocks divided into 10 lots each. The site included sections of high ground at the north and west, and a small lake near Seventh and Union Streets. Like nearly all townsites plans of the nineteenth century, the plat ignored the natural contours of the site. The streets were aligned to the lines established by the government land survey, and therefore oriented to the points of the compass rather than natural features such as the river.

The plat was ordered by John Wesley North (1815-1890), a lawyer, temperance advocate, and townsites developer who would be associated with the city's development for the next 7 years. A native of Utica, New York, North was attracted to the potential of the Cannon River and its millsites. The speculator was among hundreds of individuals who laid out and promoted townsites plans across the midwest before the Civil War. In southeastern Minnesota, over 700 townsites were laid out between 1855 and 1857, and many remained only "paper towns."

Plan of Northfield, 1855. Caleb Iddings, surveyor.

North was probably also encouraged by the progress of settlement along the Mississippi River, particularly at Hastings, 25 miles to the east. The Mississippi was the chief mover of goods and settlers to the Northfield area during the months when navigation was possible. A sparse network of trails and a few roads, including one from Iowa to Faribault and St Anthony (1854) connected the beginnings of the Cannon River mill towns. North noted in 1880 that there was no road when he made the plat of Northfield, but that he had succeeded in getting one laid out from Waterford just to the north, crossing the river just below the mills at Northfield (quoted in Neill, 398). A part of this road is the present-day Township Highway #3, which connects with Faribault to the south and Farmington to the north.

North's plat was made during the period of increased immigration to the Upper Cannon Valley that followed the creation of the Minnesota Territory in 1849 and the signing of the Treaty of the Traverse de Sioux in 1851. Immigration was interrupted by the Panic of 1857 and, a few years later, by the Civil War. Other Cannon River area towns platted at about the same time included Faribault (1855), Cannon City (1855) and Dundas (1857).

Some historians see the New England origins of the first settlers and investors reflected in Northfield's town plat. However, it was a ubiquitous form that owes as much to the rigor of the grid dictated by the federal land survey as the towns of New England. The public square designated by North was not close enough to the commercial district to serve any civic functions except those of a park or school site.

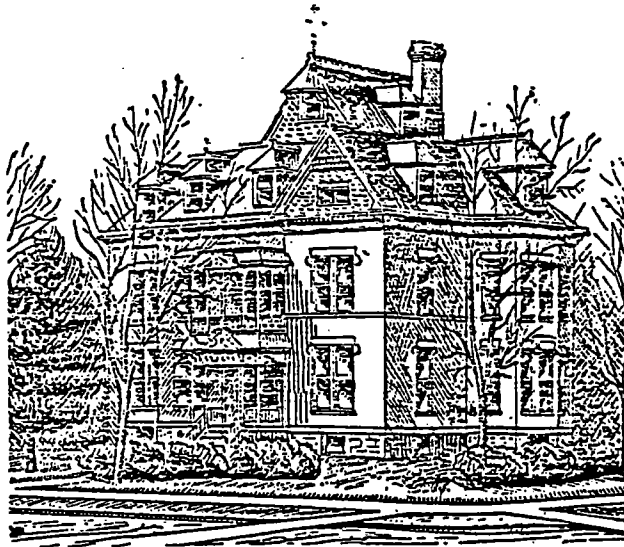
Additions were made to the plat almost immediately, beginning with 30 acres added by J.D. Hoskins in 1857 on the west side of the river. Subsequent additions up to the present time have resulted in the city's current configuration. At the northeast and west sides of the city, large tracts of open space are held by Carleton and St. Olaf Colleges. Today there are modern subdivisions with curvilinear streets located on both east and west sides of the river, at the edges of the original plat.

(See map of original town plat boundaries, page 46).

EARLY POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS OF NORTHFIELD

The initial settlement of Northfield was comprised primarily of native-born Americans from New England and eastern states such as New York and Pennsylvania. The population soon also included Norwegians, Swedes, Germans, Scotch, Irish, Canadians, and French Canadians. Some of the townships surrounding Northfield were characterized by a dominant ethnic group, such as the Irish in Shieldsville, the French in Wheatland, or the Germans in Bridgewater. In A Brief Circular Related to Rice County, Minnesota (1860), 13 merchants present in Northfield in 1860 were listed. New York State, New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont and Connecticut accounted for the previous residence of 12; one was from Racine, Wisconsin.

A study of the 1880 census returns for Northfield showed that 76% of the population of 2,296 were native-born. However, 26% of this group were the children of immigrants. Unlike the pattern in many towns, where an established core of Yankees monopolized positions of power and wealth, all early ethnic groups arrived in Northfield at approximately the same time. The foreign-born were thus "well represented in professions as well as skilled trades and service occupations" (Jeffrey, 1976: quoted in Continuum, p. 16). A survey of business directories from the early 1890s seems to further reinforce this observation.



RESIDENCE OF J. C. NUTTING.

PATTERNS OF LABOR AND HOUSING

Future historic sites survey work in Northfield will develop themes related to the city's architectural styles and building types. Since the following contexts reference a variety of property types but do not particularly describe housing--which makes up most of the city's building stock--this section should be of use in further study.

This chapter provides a broad characterization of housing types and styles between settlement and the present. Northfield's housing stock reflects the city's economic development and, to some degree, its division of labor over a hundred-year period. There are very few multiple family units from the period 1955-1945, suggesting that ownership of a modest home was within the reach of most Northfield workers. Boarding of college students in private residences was very common in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in the years before the colleges constructed large dormitory facilities. There appear to have been only a small number of buildings originally constructed as boarding houses, however.

Dwellings of log construction are mentioned in accounts of Northfield's earliest settlement. Although the first dwellings in Rice County, notably those at Faribault, were constructed of log, sawmills capable of producing framing, shingles, and sash and doors were in operation in the county by the time Northfield was founded. Subsequently, the construction of most dwellings utilized the balloon-frame construction technique, employing lightweight dimensional lumber and machine-cut nails. The first frame dwelling was erected in 1856, with lumber cut at the Northfield sawmill.

Local builders worked from plans and patterns already well-tested in more settled areas from the East coast across the midwest. By the time Northfield was settled, the popular Greek Revival style had nearly run its course in New

England. The style was nearly ubiquitous in the new towns of the midwest in the 1850s, however. The regular plan, boxy silhouette, turned eaves and simple classical detail are evident on early photographs of Northfield housing, but only a few examples survive. A few early houses of brick construction were also erected. Their simple details include stone lintels and sills at the regularly-spaced window openings.

The first houses were generally concentrated on the east side near the river, along Division Street. Mill owners and workers lived in similar houses; there is no record of elaborate houses constructed Northfield before the pre-Civil War period.

After the Civil War until about 1880, there was increased prosperity for industry and business owners, particularly millers and bankers. Some of Northfield's growing class of merchants and tradespeople constructed well-detailed, fashionable houses. The influence of the Gothic Revival and Italianate styles is evident. In most cases these houses were of modest size, had few modern conveniences, and the households did not employ servants.

Despite the variety of nineteenth-century architectural styles that can be seen in the city, the majority of houses are quite simple in design and construction. These vernacular houses are of clapboard-covered, frame construction. They have gable roofs, and often, a prominent central gable. Ornamental details at the roofline, porch, and windows, if present, are very modest. In some cases, several identical houses of this type were built on a single block.

About 1880, some of Northfield's housing stock began to mirror the most ambitious of the new downtown commercial buildings. Bankers, mill owners and a few professors were among the owners of the most conspicuous residences.

The elaborate Queen Anne style, characterized by a complex plan and silhouette and a multiplicity of materials, was used in a variety of dwellings constructed between about 1880 and 1905. The Minneapolis Saturday Evening Spectator used illustrations of some of these designs in its promotional sections about the development of Northfield. The largest Queen Anne houses were equipped with late-nineteenth century conveniences, including filtered running water, dumbwaiters, bathrooms and advanced central heating and ventilation. Although Northfield and surrounding communities had well-stocked lumber yards by the 1880s and 1890s, much interior trim was obtained from Minneapolis. A number of Northfield houses are trimmed with black walnut and butternut. Minneapolis and Northfield architects credited with the design of a number of them included Charles Sedgewick, J.E. Cooke, E.J. Hodgson, and E.P. Bassford. Most of the high-styled Queen

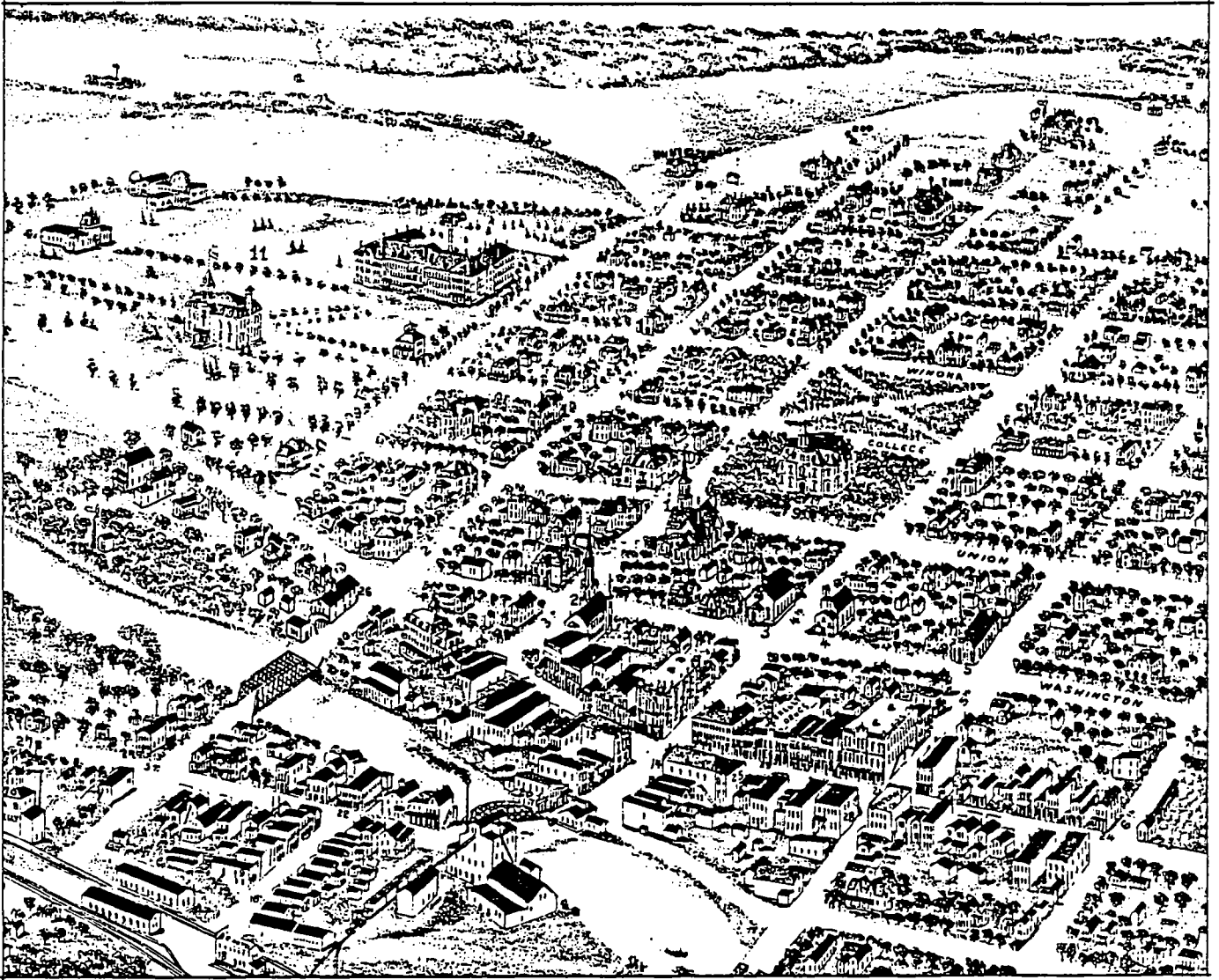
Anne style houses are concentrated on the east side of town, particularly in the northeastern section near Carleton College.

After the turn of the century there was a good deal of building in previously undeveloped sections of the city as well as on empty lots remaining near the center of town. Stylistically, versions of the Craftsman style bungalow and various period revival style single-family houses were the usual choices. A pre-World War building boom accounted for much construction on the west side. Reportedly, 150 houses were constructed in the city in a 4-year period. New construction between World War I and II was slowed by the Depression.

A number of Northfield's nineteenth-century dwellings have been moved one or more times. Another practice was that of dividing up a large house into several separate units, and moving the parts to various locations on the same block.

CHAPTER II

HISTORIC CONTEXTS



View of a portion of the commercial and residential district, 1888.



We Solicit the Patronage

of our home town. We can sell you a "patent" flour, our "Best Fancy," or a "straight" flour, our "Northfield," that equal any other and at a price that will save you money.

We can also supply you with any other mill product or grind your feed for you, guaranteeing satisfaction.

We will buy your best wheat and pay a premium for it. We are here to do business with you. All we ask is a square deal, which we are willing to give.

AMES MILL

NORTHFIELD, MINN.

INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE 1855-1945

The industry and agriculture context includes all enterprises which manufactured, produced, and processed raw materials or other products in Northfield, as well as the transportation and water power improvements that facilitated industrial development. The period of significance extends from the founding of the town and the construction of the first mills in 1855-6 to 1945. All aspects of agriculture are included within this context.

Northfield's early industrial activity was part of a network of similar endeavors along the Cannon River. Although mills for sawing lumber into building products were constructed immediately after Northfield and other nearby townsites were platted, the Cannon River Valley is associated chiefly with Minnesota's earliest attempts at milling flour. Between about 1855 and 1875, 15 mills were built along the 20 river miles between Northfield and Faribault. The mills are associated with important developments in milling technology, notably the middlings purifier (Fossum, 1930: 71-282). The purifier allowed hard spring wheat to be ground into bread flour with a high gluten content. Northfield's early success was in part a product of the advancement of the purifier for hard-wheat milling. The efforts of Nicholas, Edmund, and Joseph LaCroix at Faribault to perfect a purifier were recognized by early Northfield millers such as Jesse Ames.

Northfield's first industrial building was John W. North's sawmill, which combined an upright saw and a siding mill. It was constructed early in 1855, and a water-powered gristmill was built in the next year. The two mills shared the Cannon River dam constructed by North. The gristmill was the first in Rice County; previously farmers had taken their grain as far as Prescott, Wisconsin for grinding. Rice County farms numbered approximately 800 in

1860 and 1200 by 1866, and agriculture shifted away from crops such as corn, tobacco, sorghum and oats to wheat. Wheat would remain the chief crop until about 1880.

A steam-powered mill was constructed by Cox and Fleming in 1857, at the edge of the Northfield plat. In 1869, North's mills were purchased by Jesse Ames (1808-?). Under his direction, the Ames Mills became the most important industry in Northfield, and greatly increased their output of flour after conversion to steam power in 1879 and through the adoption of various improvements in middlings purification. Although the growth of the Minneapolis flour district eclipsed the efforts of the Ames', the firm enjoyed very successful sales of their product in the U.S. and Europe.

Early lumber industries apparently served primarily local needs. Many of the early wood-processing firms that followed North's early sawmill were short-lived. The Pease and Clay sash, door, and blind factory established in 1859 operated only until 1861. Another erected in 1867 by David Wyman burned in 1871. The Big Woods provided an excellent supply of hardwoods that was suitable for specialties such as furniture manufacture, but there was little development of this industry in Northfield.

Other industrial enterprises, all of them small-scale, were based on the agricultural economy of the surrounding area. A foundry, which specialized in repair of farm and mill machinery, opened in 1860. A plow factory, tin and copper shops, wagon and blacksmith shops and a tannery were among other industries established in the 1860s. Locally-grown malt and hops were used in the brewery established near the west side city limits in 1882.

Railroad transportation greatly assisted in the distribution of grain and flour products. The first railway reached Northfield in 1865. This line, originally the Minnesota Railway Company and later the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad, ran its tracks along the Cannon River on the west side, near the Ames Mills. The railroad company immediately erected a grain elevator where local products could be stored for sale to local mills or where they could await shipment.

By 1910, four railroad divisions, three railroad companies, and two depots served the city. The Dan Patch Electric Line was the last line to connect to Northfield; it served the city from 1910 to 1942. Passenger service on other lines ceased in the 1960s, and the decline acknowledged the impact of the growing highway system between Northfield and major markets.

Northfield's historians have noted the local importance of

the Patrons of Husbandry, also known as the Grange, organized in Rice County in the 1870s. Among the targets of the short-lived cooperative farmer's organization were the middlemen distributors of flour. The Grange constructed a cooperative grain mill in Northfield in 1874. Another cooperative, the Farmer's Cooperative Elevator Company, was founded in 1921 for the handling of grain and other commodities.

The shift from wheat to dairy farming in the early 1880s was reflected in Northfield's industrial firms, notably by the appearance of creameries. Among the earliest was the Whittier and Hunt Creamery, established in 1879. The Northfield Creamery was established in 1888, and at least three others by 1910. Local creameries and creamery cooperatives flourished prior to the improvement of the road network that made it possible to collect rural products and quickly transport them to large processing centers such as Minneapolis. The Northfield Milk Products Company, founded in 1917 and later a branch of the Carnation Company, manufactured the popular product known as Northfield Brand Evaporated Milk. The last creamery closed in 1962.

In addition to milk production, Northfield area farmers concentrated on raising purebred cows and horses, particularly Holsteins and Percherons. The first purebred Holsteins were brought to the Northfield area in 1889; in 1893, additional stock was purchased at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition. The slogan "Cows, Colleges, and Contentment," which was used by local promoters to describe Northfield, appears to date from the pre-World War I years. Another area slogan, "The Holstein Capital of the World," was based on the 261 herds of purebred cattle counted in the Northfield vicinity in 1916. Beginning about 1894, two farms maintained stock sale yards within the Northfield city limits, and attracted a nation-wide trade.

The Northfield Knitting Company was established in 1890, and operated for a number of years in the Nutting Block on Division Street. A variety of new industries were founded in the first decades of the twentieth century, just as others were closing. Two firms founded in the 1920s are still in existence today. The Northfield Foundry and Machine Company, established in 1920, builds woodworking machinery. The Malto-Meal Company, founded in 1927, produced a variety of cereal products in the former Ames Mills and in the former Northfield Milk Products Company building. The Northfield Iron Company, a manufacturer of culverts, grain bins, and concrete mixers, was established in 1907 but is no longer in business. Other early twentieth century firms included a hemp plant, two small cigar factories, and the Northfield Seed and Nursery Company.

While early industries were concentrated in a compact area on both sides of the river near Bridge Square, this land use pattern began to change in the pre-World War II period, as industries moved out from the central business district along the river and rail routes.

Property Types

Property types that are associated with this context include Northfield's earliest mill structures, foundries, creameries, and elevators, as well as modern plants of the 1940s. Construction materials include wood, brick, and stone. Depots and other transportation facilities are also represented, as are dwellings built by industry owners or workers. Architecturally, Northfield's industrial buildings were based on utilitarian construction principles, and there is apparently no evidence of innovative technology or equipment still present in any standing structures.

Unfortunately, Northfield's small historic industrial base, founded primarily on milling and agricultural products and equipment, is not well represented today in its standing structures. As noted above, most of the mid- to late nineteenth-century mills, foundries, and other structures were situated along the river or railroad tracks in the vicinity of Bridge Square. A few creameries and elevators were built along Highway 3, both north and south of the city. Both areas have been generally cleared or rebuilt.

Designated Sites

Ames Mill (1865)	HPC Downtown District and NRHP
Soo Line Depot	Local Heritage Site

Recommendations

A historic sites survey should be conducted to identify remaining industrial structures and artifacts. The archaeological potential of industrial sites, particularly those near Bridge Square and the early milling district, should be determined.

One aspect of additional research on this context could focus on the demographic characteristics of the nineteenth-century workforce. More information about the nature of its manufactured goods, particularly those related to flour milling, could be collected and interpreted.

Property Type List

Industrial Buildings
 Factories
 Warehouses
 Storage buildings

Agricultural Products: Collection, Distribution, Marketing

- Grain elevators
- Potato warehouses
- Grain exchanges
- Terminal elevators
- Stockyards
- Grange halls and farmer's clubs

Agricultural Products: Processing

Grain

- Flour mills
- Breweries
- Linseed oil plants

Dairy

- Creameries and cooperatives

Livestock

- Meat packers
- Hide tanning and leather manufacture

Other

- Canning factories
- Cigar factories
- Seed and nursery companies
- Woolen mills

Wood Products

- Sawmills
- Furniture manufactories

Extractive Resources

- Quarries and stoneworks
- Brickyards and kilns

Other Industries

- Foundries and metalworks

Transportation

River

- Boat Landings
- Warehouses
- Bridges

Railroad

- Depots
- Shops, storage buildings and roundhouses
- Tracks

Trucking

- Truck terminals
- Truck stops and motels
- Highways

Dwellings Related to Industry
Industry owners
Industry workers



THE WHITSON FARM

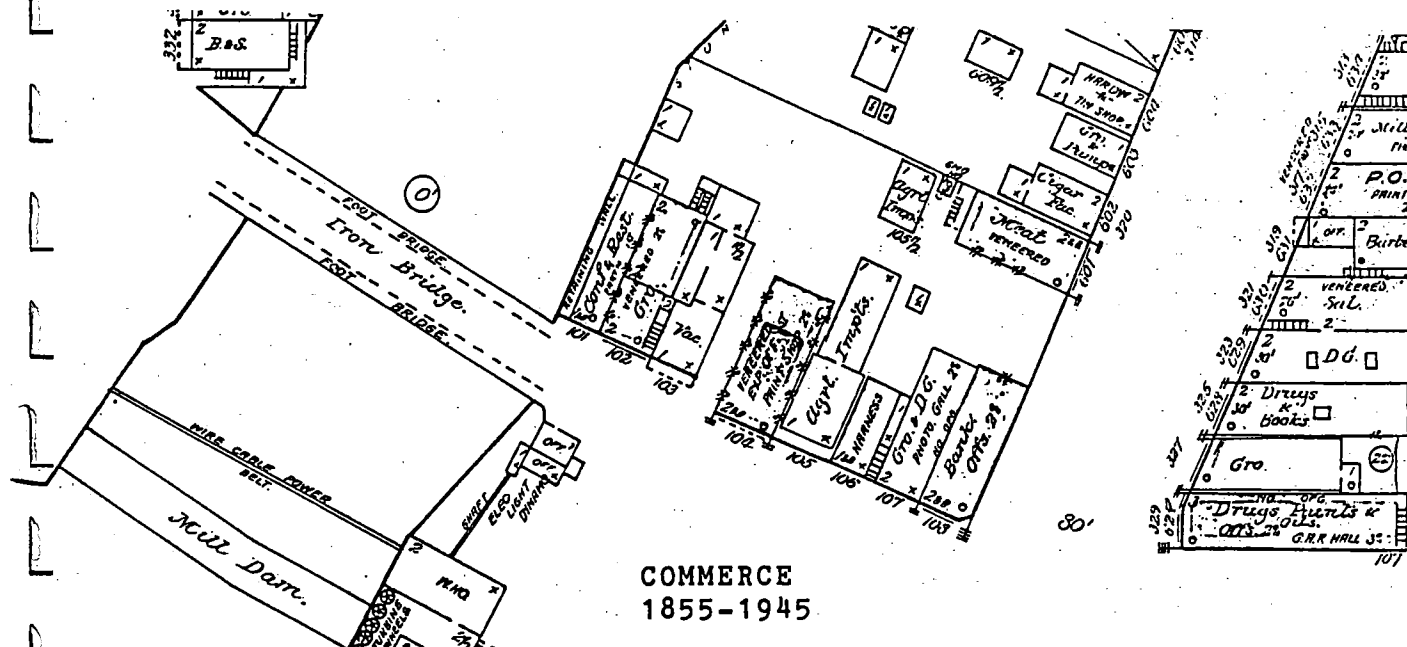
Mrs. IDA M. WATSON, Owner

**Home of the First Herd of Hol-
steins Brought to the North-
field Community**

Herd headed by Johanna Pauline DeKol,
92351, half brother to Spring Brook Bess
Burke 2d, record seven days 38.23 lbs. butter.
Young stock for sale.

C. H. DeWOLFE, Manager
Northfield, Minn.

1916



Retail, wholesale, and distributing firms, financial, banking and insurance companies, and a variety of professional services are included in this context. Nearly all of the Northfield businesses that are not included in the industrial context are described in the commerce context. The period of significance extends from the founding of the town and the construction of the first store in 1856 to 1945.

The process of building Northfield's commercial interests, including its diverse retail, service, financial, and professional firms, replicates the experience of most successful nineteenth-century midwestern settlements in agricultural areas. Although overshadowed by Faribault as a trade and distribution center, Northfield served (and continues to serve) a substantial geographic area. Local and regional changes in transportation technology--from stage and wagon to rail and modern highway transport--are reflected in its offering of products and services.

Despite competition from the regional market and the appearance of national brands and mail order businesses, there was a great diversity of products available in early Northfield. In the late nineteenth century, several organizations were formed to improve the commercial health of the community. The Retail Merchants Association, founded in 1886, and the Northfield Commercial Club, founded in 1900, were organized to encourage and promote the success of local firms.

Northfield's primary commercial district has always been concentrated along Division Street and on the adjacent streets leading to the river. The first store was operated in the spring of 1856 on Bridge Square, with goods brought from Hastings. By 1857, two hotels, a meat shop, and two

Division Street in 1890.
From Sanborn Insurance Atlas.

carriage and blacksmith shops were also in existence. Carpenters, blacksmiths, and two physicians were among early craftsmen and professionals in the community. The first bank organized in Northfield was the First National, founded in 1863. It incorporated two earlier banks. Citizens (1878-1900), Northwestern National (1901) and the State Bank of Northfield (1910) were other prominent financial institutions.

The best-known commercial structure on Division Street is the Scriber Building, which was constructed as a dry goods store in 1868 and was later the First National Bank. In 1876, the bank was raided by the James-Younger gang. The Scriber Building, which now houses the Northfield Historical Society and shops, has been the focus of many commemorative events as well as restoration efforts.

Over ninety years are considered in the timeframe of this context, during which Northfield's merchants and professionals appear to have maintained a successful business community. The 1890-1915 period seems to have seen the start-up of many new stores and shops, as evidenced by listings in business directories. Northfield's business community began this period with diversity. In 1894, for example, there were 4 attorneys, 4 bakeries, 2 banks, 4 barbers, 7 blacksmiths, 6 book and stationery dealers, 6 dry goods dealers, 6 physicians, and 4 farm machinery dealers. A survey of business directories from the 1940s, however, indicates that the city's self-sufficiency was quite altered after the Depression. Most notably, the trade area expanded so that advertisers of goods and services came from a wide region extending to the Twin Cities. Nevertheless, 8 car dealers, 4 clothing stores, 2 creameries, 6 hardware dealers, and 3 feed dealers were among the local core of merchants and tradesmen.

Northfield and Central Place Theory

One model used by geographers to explain the size and distribution of cities such as Northfield is that of "central places." Each central place has a hinterland, or area served by shops and other retail establishments. Some central place theories are based on the minimization of transportation costs. They show that on a flat surface with a uniform population density and no barriers to movement "the ideal settlement distribution would be a nested hierarchy of centers with hexagonal hinterlands" (Johnston, 1982:11).

Northfield is a good example one model, described as follows. Farmers typically brought produce and grain to centers such as Northfield. In some cases, the products were sold to a merchant or at auction, in others for direct shipment to an agreed purchaser. "Here they also bought their machinery, seeds, and other capital requirements,

deposited their profits, raised their loans, transacted other business, obtained local government services, bought the foodstuffs not produced on the farms, and purchased the ever-expanding range of consumer goods they were convinced they needed and could afford. The nearest local center may have provided all the establishments essential to the commercial aspects of the farmer's life. Unless the center was relatively large, however, this prospect was unlikely, and he would have to visit a more distant center for certain transactions. Again, he was likely to choose the nearest" (Johnston, 1982 :75).

Property Types

The commercial district achieved much of its current bulk and appearance in the 1880s and 1890s, with a proliferation of dry goods stores and offices housed in large commercial blocks. The commercial blocks typically contained retail space at the first level with offices, meeting halls, and apartments above. Hotels, auditoriums and theatres are also included in this context.

The one- to three-story commercial buildings of the Division Street area, now incorporated into the Northfield Downtown Historic District, constitute the bulk of the city's commercial structures. The 65 buildings in the Historic District date from 1857 to the 1970s, with 47 constructed before 1900. One dates from the 1850s, 2 from the 1860s, 14 from the 1870s, 14 from the 1880s, and 15 from the 1890s. Despite a variety of alterations, they present an intact, excellent appearance. Wood, red brick, and yellow limestone are the dominant materials, and a variety of architectural styles and decorative treatments are evident.

The Northfield Downtown Historic District

The Historic District was designated after intensive research on the structures within the boundaries. Currently a city ordinance provides for HPC review of building permits and thus has a role in the rehabilitation and restoration of storefronts. Planning for the downtown area has identified this as the main commercial area, and the city has taken steps to ensure that it will be a continuing focus of commercial activity. Signage, circulation, use of empty space, and infill are among elements that have received previous or ongoing study.

Designated Sites

65 commercial buildings (1856-1936)	Northfield Downtown Historic District (NRHP)
Drew Lord House (1881) 201 E. Third Street	NRHP

John C. Nutting House
217 Union Street

NRHP

Recommendations

1. Historic Sites Survey

Although the Historic District is the only intensively surveyed area of the city, and is also listed in its entirety on the National Register of Historic Places, further research and interpretation can still be done. This is best accomplished as part of a city-wide architectural survey. In particular, some architectural descriptions and some historical data on current forms appears to need updating or correction. Additionally, the existence of buildings in this context outside of the Historic District should be determined.

2. Public Education

The Northfield Downtown Guidebook (1981) is an excellent publication describing this area. However, it is quite lengthy and not suited to walking tours and similar activities focusing on the downtown. A guide suitable for self-guided tours would be an appropriate addition.

3. Streetscape Improvements

A directory signage program, possibly organized from a central point in Bridge Square, would be useful in directing visitors through the Historic District, as well as in providing local shoppers with some store or product information. The visual character of the signage should be compatible with the buildings and spaces of the District.

The existing street improvements are quite compatible with the character of the Historic District. However, design standards should be developed for future projects involving lighting, seating, parking, sidewalk and pedestrian design.

Current efforts to work with building owners to conserve and rehabilitate the significant features of historic buildings in the area should continue. Special attention should be given to the character of new infill buildings and those at the edges of the District.

Techniques for preserving important views into the District from across the river, as well as views from the District to the river should be explored. At present, the architecture of Division Street is highly visible from other points, and important views should not be obscured by new construction.

4. Dwellings in the Commerce Context

Many of Northfield's handsome late nineteenth-century residences were built or occupied by persons associated with this context. A future historic sites inventory should identify significant nineteenth- and early twentieth-century houses.

After the findings of the historic sites inventory are available, there should be further evaluation to identify any potential local and National Register Historic Districts in residential areas.

Future public education programs might include informational brochures about Northfield's architectural history, as well as guides about residential building conservation specifically designed for homeowners.

Property Type List

Commercial buildings

- Banks

Retail and wholesale

- Groceries

- Hardware

- Dry goods

- Feed stores

- Lumber yards

- Implement dealers

Service

- Professional offices

- Saloons and restaurants

- Restaurants

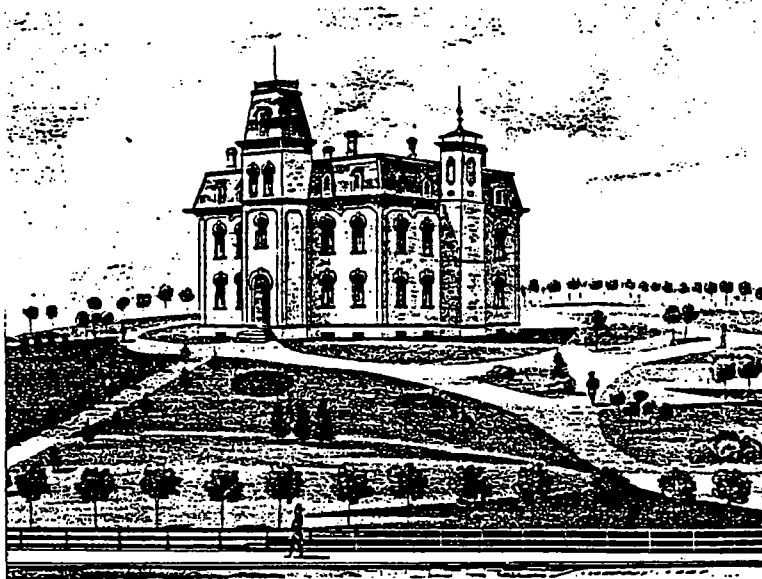
- Blacksmiths

- Livery stables

- Auto service and gas stations

- Entertainment: opera houses, halls, and theatres

Dwellings built or occupied by persons associated with commerce



THE NORTHFIELD COLLEGES
1866-1945

The commercial and industrial functions described in the preceding contexts establish Northfield as a successful trade center in Rice County. Its other significant aspect, however, is as a college town with many ties far beyond its county and regional setting. The long-term presence of two liberal arts institutions has had a significant impact on the city's economy, politics, and landscape, as well as the character of its population.

The founding of the colleges, which occurred in the post-Civil War era when hundreds of colleges were established across the U.S., reflects the Yankee (Congregationalist) and Scandinavian (Lutheran) origins of Northfield's early citizenry. In addition to a supportive local population, the railroad connection to Northfield gave some confidence of success where other fledgling colleges had failed.

For a time after their founding, the two colleges--as well as the Northfield public schools--were in close proximity between Union and Washington Streets on Third Street just to the northeast of the early business district. Within a few years, the colleges had chosen large tracts of land on opposite sides of the Cannon River as campus sites.

Carleton College

Northfield College, as Carleton was first known, was organized by the Minnesota Conference of Congregational Churches in 1866 and opened as a preparatory school in 1867. Its first facilities were in the American House Hotel. A college program was instituted in 1870. The first permanent building, Willis Hall, was completed in 1872. In 1877, Northfield College was renamed after William Carleton of Charlestown, Massachusetts,

who made a large contribution to the school.

Over the next seventy years, a handsome collection of college buildings was added to the 200-plus acre site in the northeastern section of Northfield. Most notable of the early buildings was the Goodsell Observatory (1886), which was ranked among the nation's leading astronomical observatories. By 1916, the college erected eight other major buildings including Laird Hall (1906), Sayles Hall Gymnasium (1910), and the Skinner Memorial Chapel (1916). A program of landscape improvements was also begun after the turn of the century, after plans by Norman Patton of Chicago. Land was filled, an arboretum created, and two small lakes dredged. Other campus plans were made by the Chicago firm of Holmes and Flinn, beginning in 1917.

St. Olaf College

"The early St. Olaf was built for 'boys and girls of small means and humble circumstances'" noted one early article on the school. Its early student body was comprised almost entirely of young Norwegians, and the Norwegian language was spoken and taught in the early curriculum. One early mission of the co-educational school was to educate young men for the ministry.

St. Olaf College was founded in 1874 as St. Olaf's School by the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The first school buildings, former Northfield public school houses, were located at Union and E. Third Streets. In 1876, 30 acres were acquired on the far west side of Northfield, on wooded, high land known as Manitou Heights. The first new campus building, Old Main, was opened in 1877, and a Ladies' Hall in 1879. In 1886, in the midst of a predestination controversy in the Norwegian Synod, a college department and a Divinity School were founded. The preparatory school continued until 1917. The Divinity School operated for only three years until it was moved to Augsburg College. St. Olaf's School became St. Olaf's College in 1890. In 1916, the student body of 600 included 97 in the preparatory school, 71 in the school of music, and 432 in the college.

A number of new buildings were added to the site after 1900, notably Ytterboe Hall (1901), Steensland Library (1902), a gymnasium, and a hospital. A campus plan for an enlarged 138-acre site was drawn up in the 1920s by the Chicago architectural firm of Coolidge and Hodgdon, who firmly established the Norman Gothic style for future buildings. By 1934, 12 substantial buildings comprised the campus.

Property Types

A wide range of campus buildings and structures are included in this context. Some of Northfield's largest and most

architecturally significant buildings are located on the two campuses, representing architectural firms of local, state, and national importance.

Designated Sites

St. Olaf College:

Steensland Library (1902)
Old Main (1876)
O.E. Rolvaag House

NRHP
NRHP
NRHP, National
Historic Landmark

Carleton College:

Willis Hall
Goodsell Observatory
Scoville Memorial Library
Skinner Memorial Chapel

NRHP
NRHP
NRHP
NRHP

Recommendations

As part of a city-wide historic sites survey, the campuses should receive comprehensive study to identify additional Register-eligible buildings and structures. Campus planning is of note in this context, and is also mentioned under the Landscape and Urban Design context.

Property Type List

Institutional buildings
Campus design
Statuary, sculpture, and monuments

Houses of teachers, staff and students associated with this context

Art, Architecture, and Landscape Architecture

Works of significant architects, artists, and planners, landscape architects, and builders
Buildings significant for design, style, or craftsmanship
Buildings representative of local materials and resources
Landscape spaces significant for design, style, or materials



RELIGION 1856-1945

Northfield's nineteenth-century churches reflect the ethnic and cultural background of the city's founders, as well as the ethnic heritage of the surrounding hinterland. Many congregations were organized a decade or more before funds were available to erect a church building, and shared facilities with other congregations or met in halls and homes. Subsequently, most congregations have constructed at least two churches in various locations in Northfield. Most church building has occurred on the east side of the city. The time frame of this context begins with 1856 and the organization of the first churches, and ends with 1945.

The earliest churches were founded by persons of primarily Yankee heritage. Three were organized in 1856. The First Congregational Church held its first services in the public school until a church known as the "Old Brown Meeting House" was erected in 1862. This congregation supported the establishment of Carleton College in 1866, and became closely associated with it. It is now the United Church of Christ. The Methodist Episcopal Church erected a church in 1859. The third congregation to organize in 1856, the First Baptist Church, erected a building ca. 1859.

Episcopalians were active in the Northfield area since the early 1850s, with missions and schools for the Indians established at Faribault. The All Saint's Episcopal Church was organized in Northfield in 1858 and an edifice constructed in 1866.

The German Methodist church also held its first services about 1856, and a church was constructed in 1876. The Moravian church was organized in 1869, and its first church erected in 1873. Services were conducted in German until the early 1900s. Another congregation with a German heritage, the

Trinity (Missouri Synod) Lutheran Church, was not organized until 1929.

The Norwegian community was served by the St. Johannes (St. John's) first Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church, organized about 1869. This congregation was closely associated with St. Olaf's School, later St. Olaf College. The Bethel Lutheran Free Church, a second Norwegian congregation, was organized in 1908 and a building dedicated in 1910. Services were conducted in Norwegian until 1936. Northfield's Danish community organized St. Peter's Lutheran in 1893.

The Irish and Germans organized St. Dominic's Roman Catholic Church about 1860. The first building was begun on the west side in 1866. Many Bohemian families joined the congregation after World War I. St. Dominic's School, originally known as Rosary School, was founded in 1926 and occupied a building constructed in 1926-27.

Property Types

Property types associated with this context include all churches, church buildings, and parochial schools in Northfield. A number of churches retain their original appearance, and are excellent examples of nineteenth century ecclesiastical architecture. The oldest remaining church, All Saints Episcopal, dates from 1866.

Also included in this context are houses built by or for clergy, or those occupied by persons associated with religious life in the city.

Designated Sites

All Saints Episcopal	NRHP
Washington and Fifth Streets	

Recommendations

A future historic sites inventory should include all churches in Northfield from the period 1855-1945.

Property Type List

Religion

Churches and chapels

Rectories and parsonages

Parish halls

Dwellings occupied by persons associated with religion

Parochial Education

School buildings

Dwellings of staff and others associated with parochial
education

Art and Architecture

Works of significant architects, artists and builders
Buildings significant for design, style, or craftsmanship
Buildings representative of local materials and resources

(See map of Northfield's early churches, page 48).



Miss Baker's School

NORTHFIELD, MINN.
Established in 1886

One of the institutions of which Northfield and the Northfield Community may justly feel proud is Miss Baker's School for Backward and Sub-normal Children, in which girls of any age and boys under fourteen years of age are accepted.

In addition to the main building, shown in the accompanying cut, there is a cottage and the two buildings furnish accommodations for thirty pupils. The grounds are ample, including an area of five acres. The school work begins with sense training, Montessori and kindergarten work, taking the children up to, and including eighth grade work. There is a department for the correction of speech-defect and the development of language.

The Industrial Department is in charge of a special instructor and here are taught Torchon lace weaving, sewing, embroidery, knitting, crocheting, basketry, rug weaving and hammock making.

Music, both vocal and instrumental, is taught and the children all receive gymnastic training and are taught to dance. Sunday School is in charge of the regular teachers. Children room two, and in rare instances, three in a room, and the rooms are all airy and homelike.

The school life where pupils and instructors live as one family, dining together, and where, during the leisure hours, the children are under the care of nurses trained for their special duties, gives the touch of real home life to be found in very few institutions of this character. All correspondence should be addressed to

MISS LAURA B. BAKER, NORTHFIELD, MINN.

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS 1856-1945

Northfield reminds one of the stories of New England life and as we view the many white-robed cottages resting so gracefully upon the sloping hillside we can almost imagine ourselves in some hamlet of the Eastern states.

Edward D. Neill, History of Rice County, 1882,
p. 397.

Despite Northfield's pleasant appearance, the original grid town plan is not particularly evocative of a true New England settlement. The Yankee background of Northfield's founders, however, was strongly reflected in the first organization of private institutions, clubs, and churches. The Private Institution context includes the earliest of club and fraternal institution buildings (1857) and extends to 1945.

The earliest, and certainly among the most ambitious of the city's private organizations was the Northfield Lyceum Society, founded in 1856 as a multi-purpose organization that provided for debates, social events, and a library. The stated goal of the organization was the creation of a "taste for literature and a thirst for knowledge." A small meeting hall was constructed in 1857. Later literary clubs included the Pioneer, Monday, Town and Country, and Literary Gleaners. The Women's Christian Temperance Union was organized in 1878 and contributed much to Northfield's long-standing reputation as a dry town.

The first Masonic Lodge was founded in 1864. Subsequently, Northfield's citizens organized a good number of fraternal and service organizations before the turn of the century. Most held their activities in the upper stories of Division Street commercial blocks or at other locations and did not erect separate meeting halls. The Young Men's Christian Association was organized in 1879, as the first outstate chapter in

Minnesota, and a building was constructed in 1885. In 1900, the Rebekah Lodges of Minnesota established an Odd Fellows Orphans' Home on a 120-acre site on the west side of the city.

Miss Baker's School, also known as the Laura Baker School, was opened in 1898 to serve retarded students under the age of 14. Its founder, Laura M. Baker (1859-1960) was an innovator in special education who had served as principal of the State School at Faribault 1884-1896. She was active in the school for over 60 years. The school began in one large house, a former residence, and eventually grew to include a complex of buildings.

Property Types

This context encompasses the variety of buildings erected by private institutions, including fraternal organizations and schools. The St. Olaf and Carleton campuses are described separately under "The Northfield Colleges."

Designated Sites

Lyceum	Downtown Historic District
YMCA (Northfield Arts Guild)	(NRHP)
Laura Baker School	NRHP

Property Type List

- Fraternal and cultural halls
- Other meeting halls
- Ethnic association halls
- Private Schools
- Social centers
- Art and Architecture
 - Works of significant architects, artists and builders
 - Buildings significant for design, style, or craftsmanship
 - Buildings representative of local materials and resources



PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS 1857-1945

Efforts to organize Northfield's government agencies began soon after settlement. A Post Office was opened in 1855. Northfield Township was organized in 1858, a village government for Northfield was organized in 1871, and a city government in 1875. This context begins in 1857 with the first town meetings in the Northfield Lyceum Association building, and extends to 1945.

The Lyceum Association building, privately constructed in 1857, served as Northfield's first City Hall. In 1878 this building and the library it contained were transferred to the city. A combination City Hall and Fire House were erected in 1876. The YMCA building was used as City Offices from about 1917 to 1970, prior to relocation to their current Washington Street site. The once-private library collection begun by members of the Lyceum was incorporated into the Northfield Public Library organized in 1898. The Carnegie Library was opened in 1910.

Northfield's first public school building was opened in 1856 with an enrollment of 25. This building was located at Union and E. Third Streets. A larger frame structure was erected across the street in 1861, and later sold to St. Olaf School for use as a dormitory. After the organization of an Independent School District in 1874, a substantial three-story brick building known as Central School was erected on the block opposite Central Park. In 1886, a four-room school was constructed to serve students on the west side of the river. A new High School was built in 1910 and added to in the 1930s.

Other institutions organized around the turn of the century included the Northfield Hospital, incorporated in 1910 and originally occupying the Schilling Building at Water and 8th Streets. A new hospital was constructed on the west side in 1939. The Armory (1915) and Post Office, a WPA

project dating from 1936, were among other public buildings constructed before 1945.

Northfield's public water supply was installed in the 1880s. The source was an artesian well on the west side. A sewer system was installed in 1895. This early system emptied into the Cannon River below the business district.

Electric lighting was brought to Northfield in 1888 for use at the Ames Mill. The Northfield Electric Light Company, a private firm, erected a plant on N. Division Street in 1891. Power was brought from an installation at Waterford in 1907. Telephone service was first installed in 1909 and managed by several private firms and cooperatives.

Flood control and river improvement measures were periodically undertaken by the City of Northfield, but many river improvement efforts were initiated by the Northfield Improvement Society. A riverfront site locally known as the "Tourist Park" appears to have been a joint venture between the local improvement club and the City of Northfield. The Park provided a variety of picnic and camping facilities, including small cottages and a picnic pavilion. It was located on the west side of the river near St. Olaf Avenue.

Property Types

A wide range of public buildings of constructed of wood, brick, and stone are included in this context. With the commerce context, this group includes some of the city's most high-styled buildings, designed by local firms as well as architects from Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Designated Sites

Old City Hall (Lyceum)
City Hall/Firehouse
Carnegie Library
Post Office

Downtown Historic
District

Recommendations

A historic sites survey should be conducted to identify additional public buildings and sites.

Property Type List

Government

- City halls
- Township halls
- Buildings used by political groups
- Dwellings built or occupied by persons associated with government

City Services

Public schools

Hospitals

Post offices

Libraries

Jails

City utility buildings

Armories

Poor farms or houses

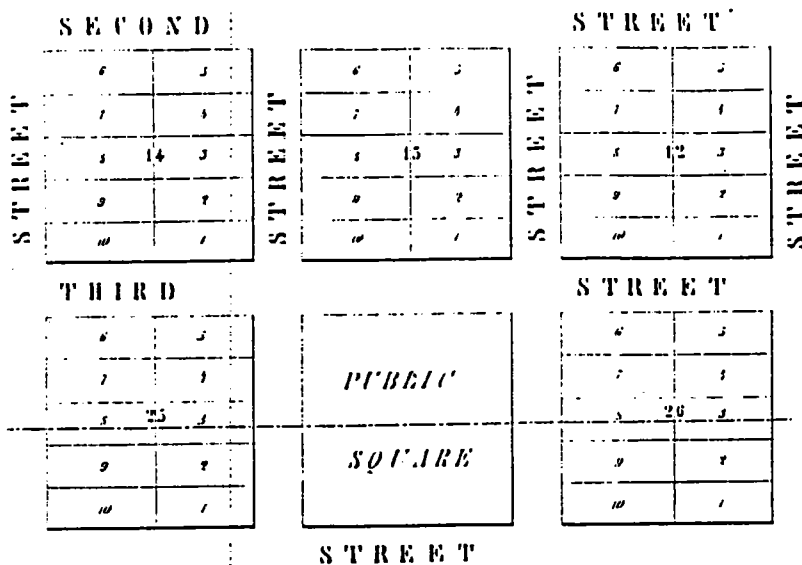
Dwellings built or occupied by persons associated with
city services

Art and Architecture

Works of significant architects, artists and builders

Buildings significant for design, style, or craftsmanship

Buildings representative of local materials and resources



LANDSCAPE AND URBAN DESIGN 1855-1945

This context considers the landscape and urban design development of the city between 1855 and 1945. Properties represent both the public and private realm, but primarily the public.

As the the settlement of Northfield progressed, additions made to the plat respected the orientation and organization of the original grid plan. The commercial district retained its prominence along Division Street on the east side and formed a compact focus for the community. A small industrial district developed near Bridge Square, Water Street, and the the railroad depots and storage buildings.

Residential development has largely been confined to the limits of the original plat and early additions. The east side of town was initially the most densely built, although empty lots remained until infill construction after World War I. Since the post-Civil War period, the two college campuses have defined the northeast and southwest edges of the community development pattern.

The chief landscape amenity provided by the original plat was the "Public Square," known as Northfield Park and later as Central Park. The park appears to have benefited by some early attempt at landscaping, with diagonal walking paths and, according to one report, "native trees." A wooden bandstand was constructed by 1889. Another source reported that a now-destroyed "Victorian fountain" was located here. In 1947, plans to construct a playground and athletic field on the park grounds were abandoned after public outcry.

Beginning in the late ninteteenth century, a prominent private organization championed the cause of the park as well as other public landscape concerns. The Rural

Improvement Society of Northfield was organized in 1884 to "cultivate public spirit, keep the streets neat and clean, keep the weeds along roadsides cut, protect desirable trees and set out others, keep the cemetery in order and help Carleton and Saint Olaf Colleges ornament their grounds." This group became the Northfield Improvement Association in later years, and continued to lobby for various types of urban beautification. The "City Beautiful" ideals encouraged by the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893 helped to fuel the spirit of civic improvement.

River beautification was a project of the Improvement Society, beginning in 1888. During the "Northfield Beautification Movement," ca. 1916, some riverfront land was reclaimed. In the 1930s, (unrealized) plans for fairgrounds along the river were prepared by Charles Cruttenden, a Minneapolis architect. Despite many years of effort to create parks along the Cannon, however, the recreational and aesthetic potential of the river was not realized until comprehensive plans of the 1960s, and 1970s, and 1980s. Other tracts of open space belonging to the City of Northfield have been developed in various locations, and a nine-hole golf course was built on the east side in the 1920s.

Bridge Square, known originally as Mill Square, was created by the vacation of several lots on Division Street at the foot of the city's first bridge. Retail establishments front on it on three sides. Historic photographs show that it was originally a wide, unembellished open space, used primarily for watering animals, for wood and hay markets, and for parking wagons and later, trucks and cars. At an early date it was at a lower grade than the surrounding streets. A Civil War Monument was dedicated in 1927. The present traffic pattern and street improvements, including sculpture, benches and plantings, date from the 1970s.

There are three cemeteries in the city. The Northfield Cemetery dates from the 1850s, Oaklawn from about 1882, and Calvary, the Catholic Cemetery, from ca. 1910(?). Northfield and Calvary Cemeteries are laid out on a grid, while Oaklawn is of a more picturesque plan with curvilinear paths. No surveyors or designers have been identified with these nineteenth-century cemeteries. The cast-iron fence surrounding the Northfield Cemetery was erected in 1886 by the Northfield Rural Improvement Society, which also planted over 200 trees on the site.

Public and private efforts to improve the appearance and function of the downtown business district, including landscaping and street improvements, began in the 1960s with the CoDeP, the Community Development Plan.

Property Types

Sites included in this context include parks, park structures, campus plans, squares and other elements that contribute to the landscape of Northfield. Statuary, fences, monuments and similar elements are also included.

Designated Sites

Bridge Square

Downtown Historic
District

Property Type List

Parks

Cemeteries

Statuary and monuments

Squares and neighborhood spaces

Street lighting and street design

Tree planting

Fairgrounds

Campus plans (see also Northfield College context)

Art, Architecture, and Landscape Architecture

Works of significant landscape architects, planners,
architects, artists, builders, and gardeners

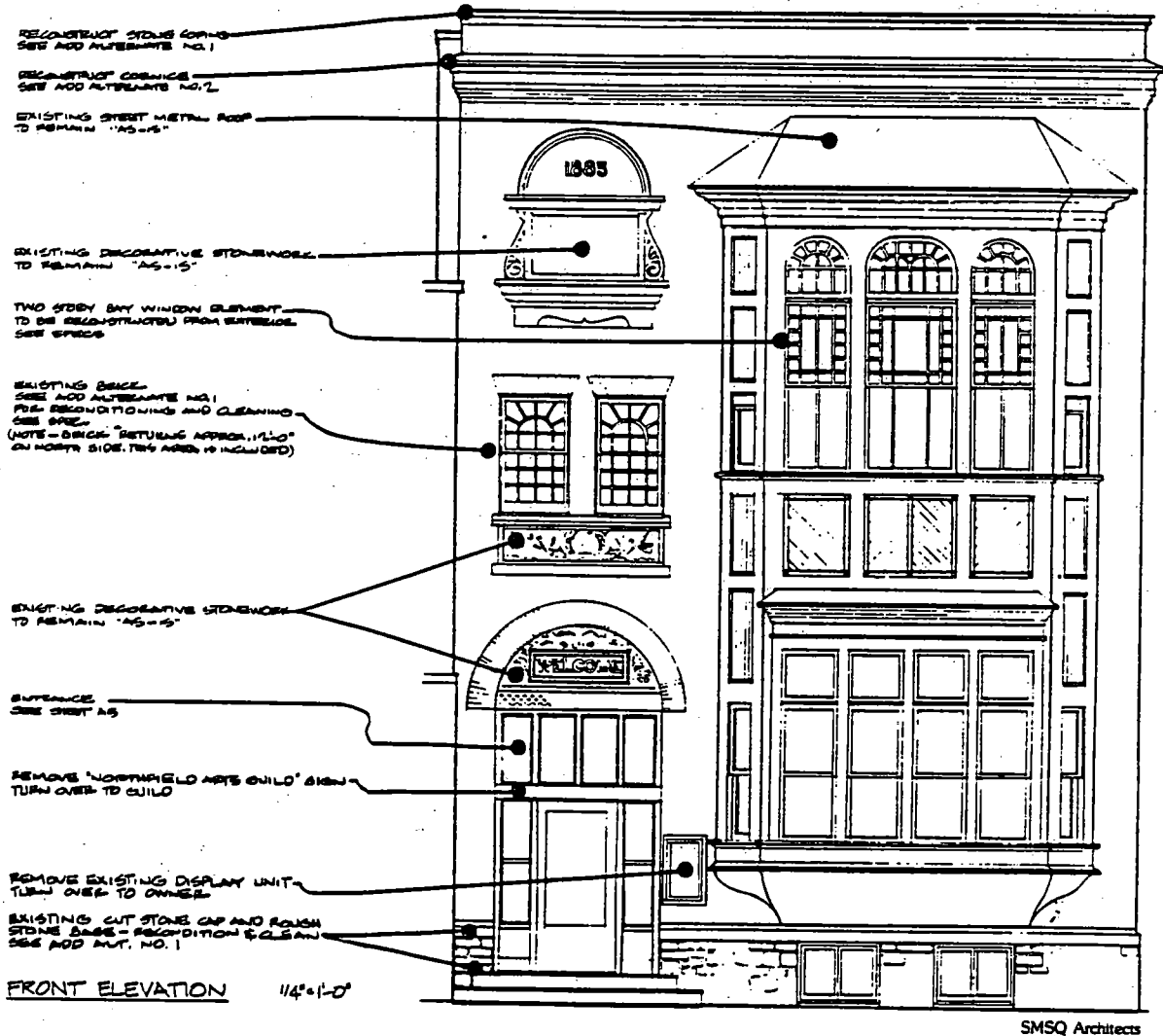
Landscape spaces significant for design, style, or materials

Landscape spaces representative of local plant or
building materials and resources

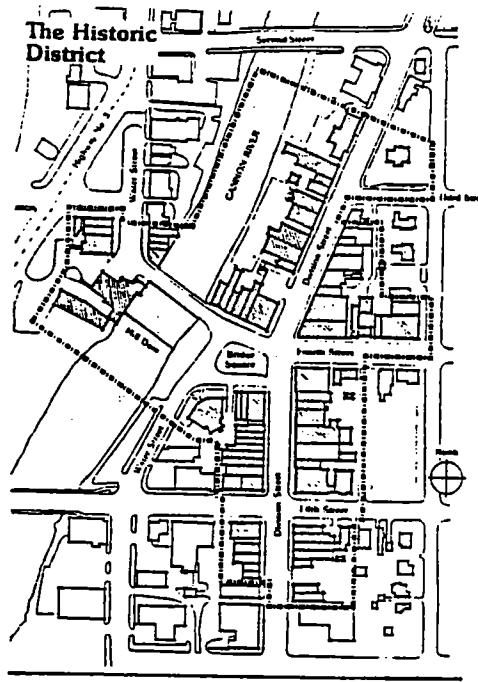
(See map of early parks, cemeteries, and squares, page 49).

CHAPTER III

PRESERVATION PLANNING IN NORTHFIELD: A BRIEF HISTORY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE



Northfield Historic District. From Northfield Downtown
Guidebook, 1981.



PRESERVATION PLANNING IN NORTHFIELD: A BRIEF HISTORY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Northfield appears to have a long tradition of conservation activity, beginning with the organization of the Rural Improvement Society in 1884. The river was the focus of early "beautification" attempts. In the 1960s, efforts to organize riverfront planning were renewed, as was an interest in downtown revitalization. Among accomplishments of the 1960s and 1970s were the creation of a comprehensive city land-use plan and the Community Development Program. The Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC), created in 1979, is among the most recent evidence of interest in the conservation of natural and cultural resources.

The Heritage Preservation Commission worked to create the Northfield Historic District, comprising 65 buildings. The District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and is also designated a local historic district. The Northfield City Council charged the HPC with review of any changes to buildings within or abutting the District. The City of Northfield Ordinance #329 also provides for the HPC's involvement in educational activities for informing the public about historic preservation. The Heritage Preservation Commission appears to receive good support from the staff of the Community Development Department and is a participant in downtown revitalization efforts.

In addition to the 65 sites within Historic District, there are eight additional sites listed on the National Register, and two local Heritage Sites.

The seven historic contexts described in this report include a variety of recommendations for future

preservation activities. The following four recommendations summarize some of those presented in the contexts, and include additional comments and suggestions.

1. The contextual survey should be used as a guide in planning a future historic sites survey of the City of Northfield. It is anticipated that a number of additional National Register-eligible sites will be identified. There is also the possibility of creating additional Historic Districts, particularly in the residential area near Carleton College.
2. The Heritage Preservation Commission should consider if and how it would extend its role from its current review of building alterations in the downtown Historic District to additional sites. Currently, the HPC is effective in working with business owners. A new role involving information and assistance for owners of residential property could also be developed.
3. In general, the Commission should consider expanding its educational role through publications, workshops, tours, and other activities. For example, a guide to Northfield's history and architecture could be addressed to a wide audience, while more specialized material on building conservation directed at home and business owners could also be distributed.
4. As noted in the introduction, Northfield has good research resources available at the Historical Society and Public Library. The public library provides an excellent facility for this material. However, the collection should be reviewed and expanded to include maps, directories, and other reference material. A collection of books on historic preservation, particularly residential rehabilitation, would be a valuable addition and could complement the Heritage Preservation Commission's educational efforts.

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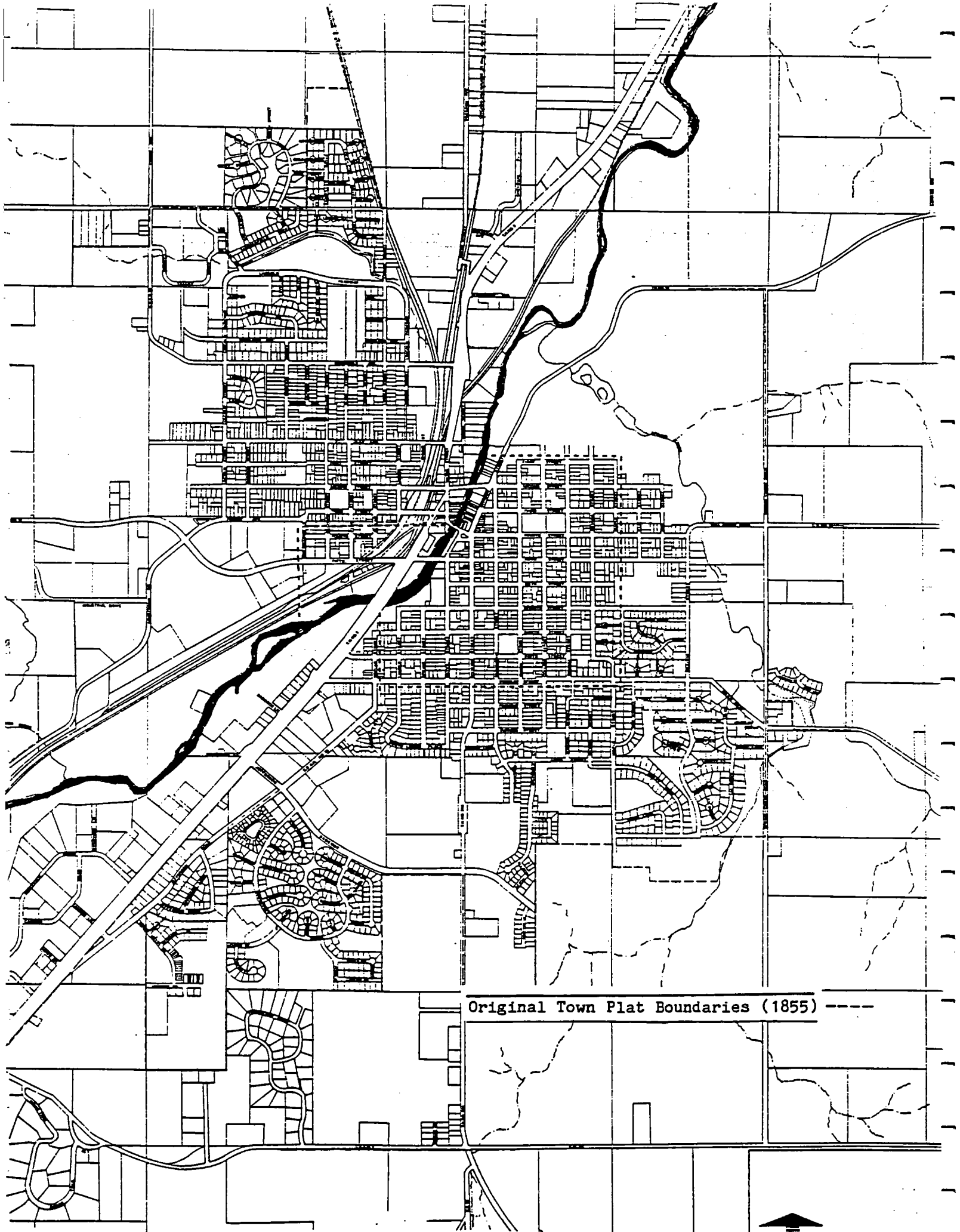
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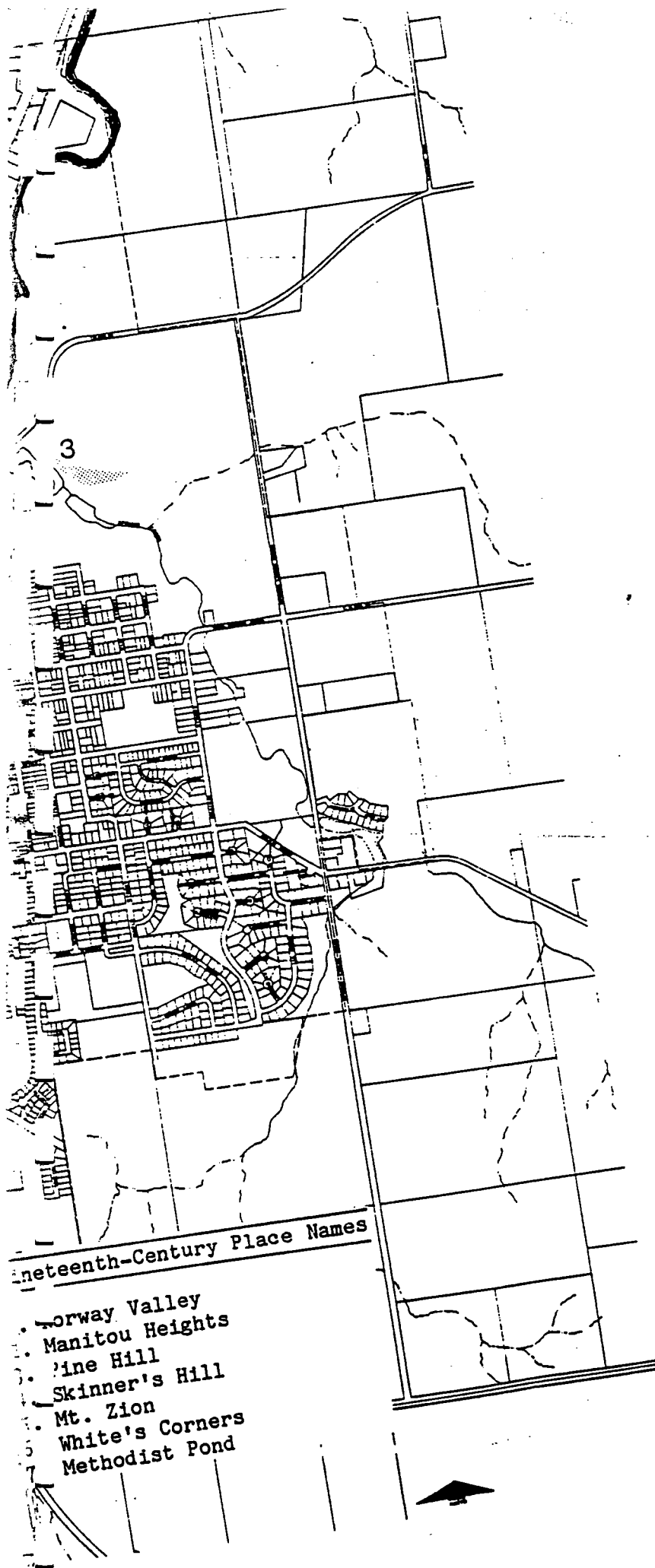
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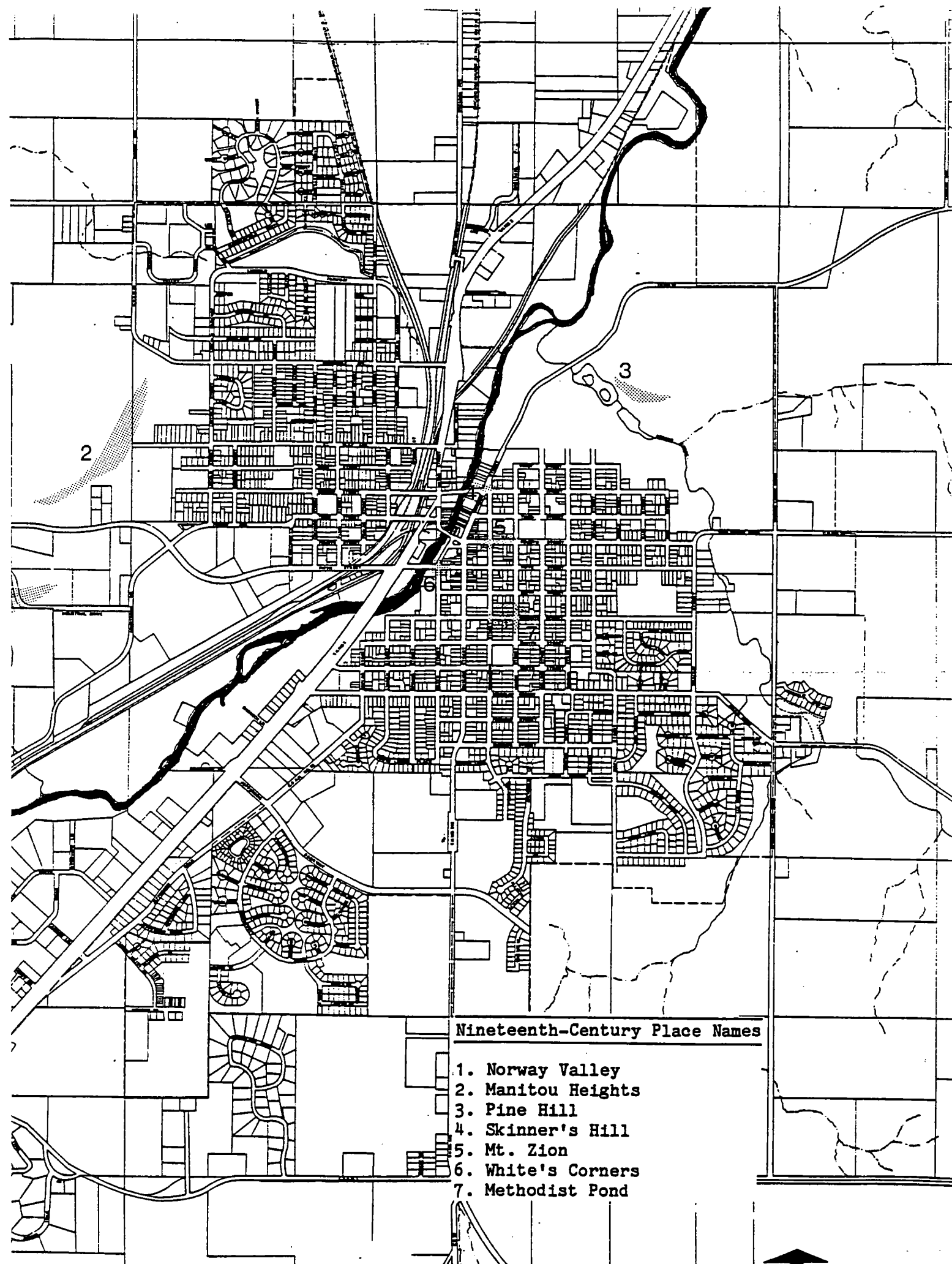
Sanborn Insurance Company Atlases, 1884-94; 1900-1934. (MHS)

MHS: Minnesota Historical Society
NPL: Northfield Public Library



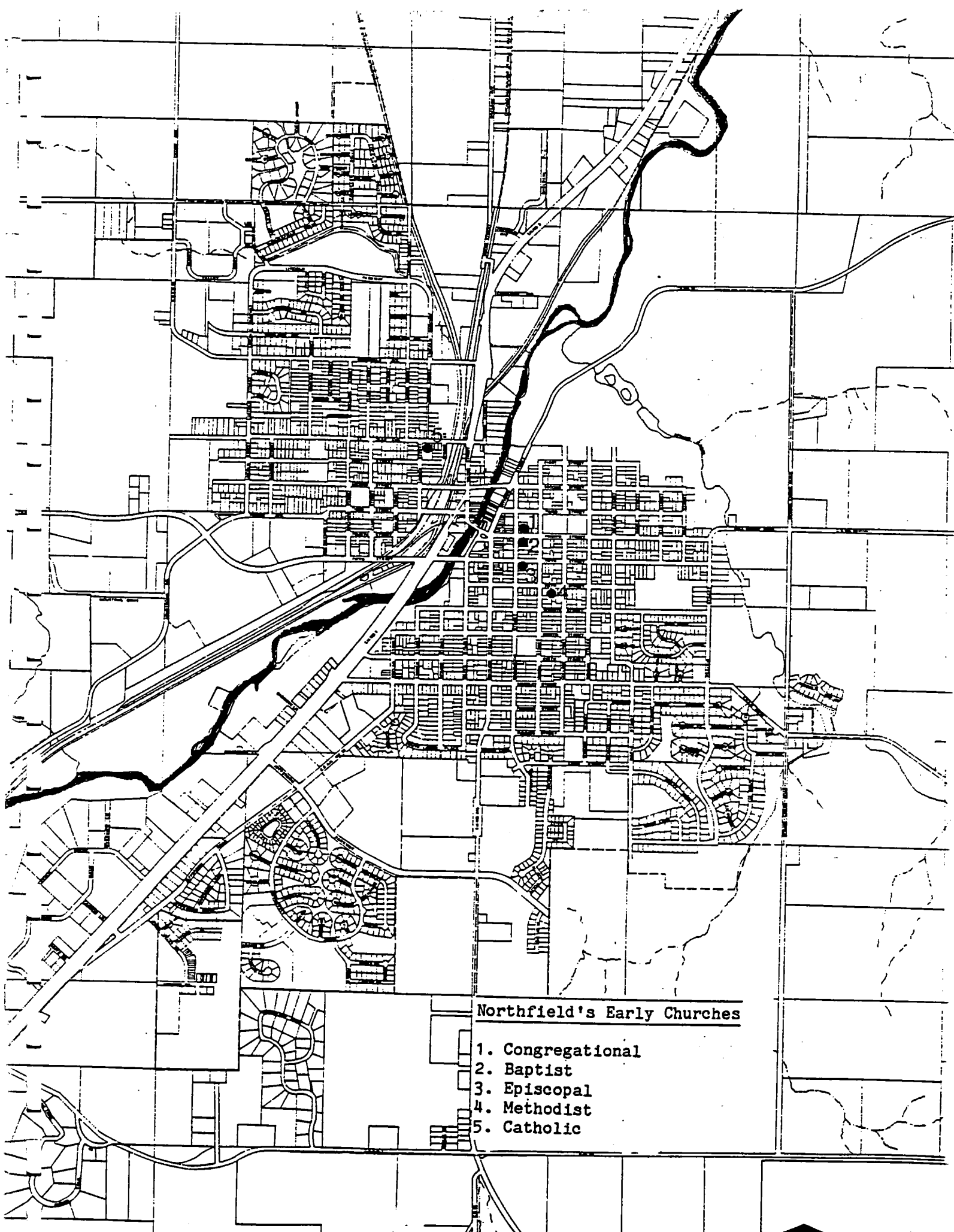
Original Town Plat Boundaries (1855) ----





Nineteenth-Century Place Names

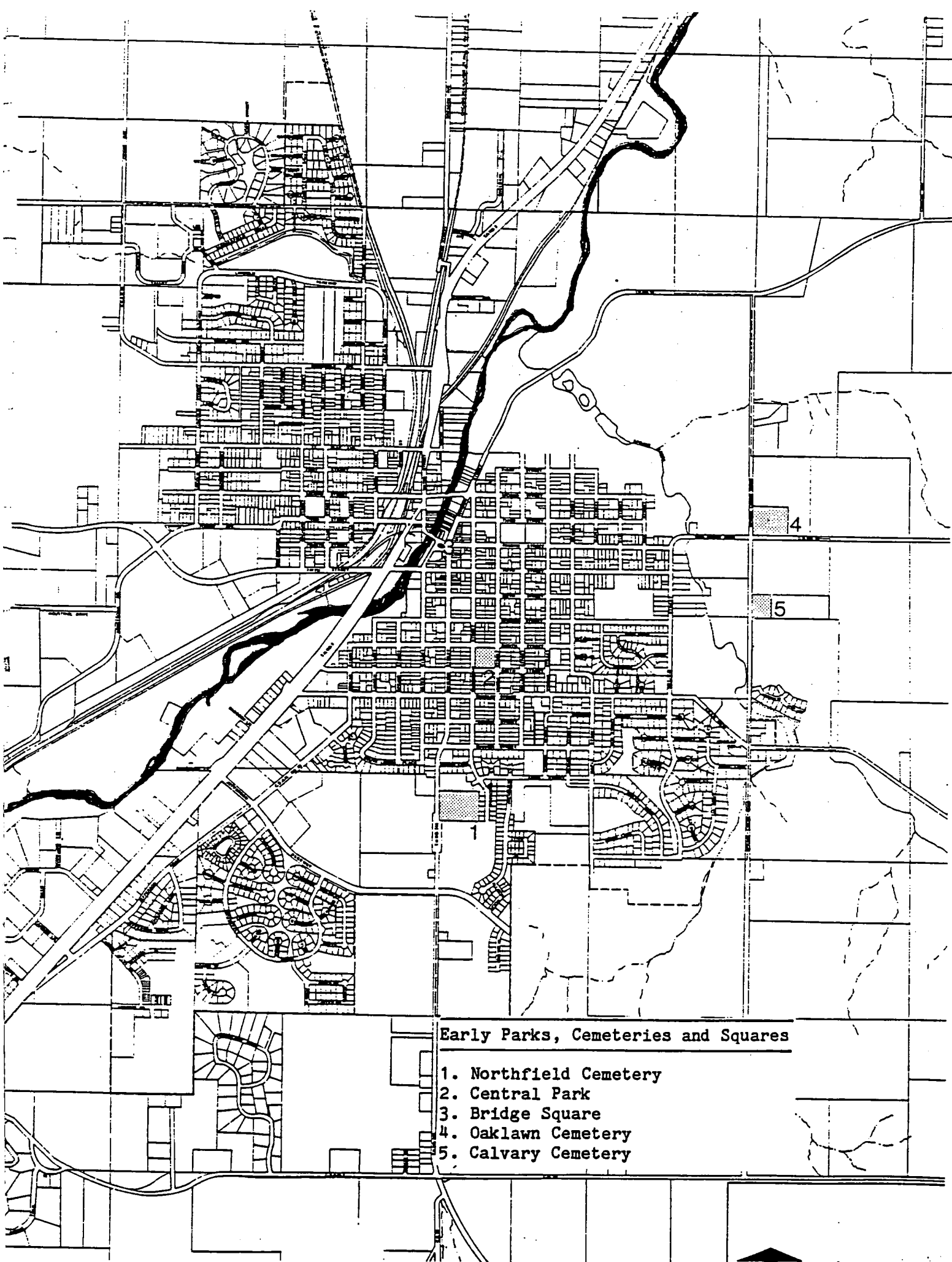
1. Norway Valley
2. Manitou Heights
3. Pine Hill
4. Skinner's Hill
5. Mt. Zion
6. White's Corners
7. Methodist Pond



Northfield's Early Churches

1. Congregational
2. Baptist
3. Episcopal
4. Methodist
5. Catholic





Early Parks, Cemeteries and Squares

1. Northfield Cemetery
2. Central Park
3. Bridge Square
4. Oaklawn Cemetery
5. Calvary Cemetery