

CHAPTER IV

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Survey Team

The survey team for this report from WJE consisted of Jeffrey Koerber, Project Manager and Architect, and Craig J. Droba, Project Architect. The majority of the field survey was performed by Mr. Droba. Mr. Koerber compiled the survey data and wrote the survey report. This report incorporates information from the previous reports on Homer Township, dated November 2002; Du Page Township, dated November 2001; and Wheatland, Plainfield, and Lockport Townships, dated November 2000.

Background Research

Work on the rural survey of New Lenox Township began in November 2002, with background research performed at the State of Illinois Archives, Springfield, the Joliet Public Library, and New Lenox Public Library. This report incorporates material from the previous two rural survey reports in northwestern Will County, which included research performed at the following institutions:

- State of Illinois Archives, Springfield
- University of Illinois Libraries
- Joliet Public Library
- Des Plaines Valley Library (Lockport)
- Plainfield Public Library
- Lemont Public Library
- Chicago Public Library
- Will County Historical Society
- Joliet Area Historical Society
- Plainfield Historical Society
- Homer Township Public Library
- New Lenox Public Library

Information on the historic houses and farmsteads of New Lenox Township provided by Mr. Mark Batson and Ms. Diane Batson, both with the New Lenox Historical Society, contributed greatly to the understanding of the historical and architectural context of the region.

Field Survey

Field survey of New Lenox Township was performed by Mr. Droba between November 2002 and February 2003, utilizing the survey forms developed during the 1999–2000 rural survey work. On a typical day of survey, drive-through identification of former or current farmsteads and related support structures was performed in a given location (usually about one to three square mile sections in area, depending on farmstead density) before the site-to-site survey. Maps produced using ArcView GIS were used in the field in conjunction with detailed road maps. Approximately five to twelve farmsteads were surveyed in a typical day, for a total of 10 personnel days until completion of the bulk of the field survey work.

Each site was entered by first approaching the house on each property and requesting permission to survey from the property owner or occupant. (Survey teams were in possession of a letter from the Land Use Department that requested that owners allow the survey to be conducted.) If residents were not home, survey was conducted from the main driveway to the site, staying in open view should the resident return. In instances where the property owner or occupant requested that the survey team leave, the survey was conducted from the public right-of-way; this occurred at only a few sites.

Using a minimum age of 50 years as a general limit for structures to be included in the survey, each structure built before 1950 was documented on a printed version of the database input form, with the most detailed information taken on the farmhouse and primary barn. Each structure was photographed with a 35mm camera with a 28 to 90 mm zoom lens. Kodak Plus-X or Tri-X film was used for all photographs. Many structures dating from approximately 1950 to 1960 were also included in the survey, given that this would allow the data to be used for several years following the completion of this report. Very few

structures less than 40 years old were documented – one of the exceptions was Harvestore silos, which were included because their construction demonstrated the continued vitality of the farm economy in the post-World War II era. During each day of field survey, the taxpayer identification numbers (referred to as “PIN”) were looked up at the Will County Office Building in Joliet.

Presentations

A presentation of the survey finding was given to the Historic Preservation Commission at its monthly meeting in May 2003. WJE received verbal comments that were subsequently reviewed and included in this report.

Database and Base Map Preparation

Mr. Koerber was responsible for entering the field data into the Microsoft Access database. At the time of data entry, details such as house style and barn type were re-examined based on the photographic documentation. Enlarged contact sheets were made of each roll of film, resulting in black and white prints approximately 2-1/4 inches by 3-1/2 inches. Concurrent with the field survey, the base map for the survey region was prepared using ArcView GIS Version 8.2. (GIS stands for Geographical Information System.) Base map information was downloaded from the website of the Illinois Natural Resources Geospatial Data Clearinghouse at www.isgs.uiuc.edu/nsdihome/ISGSindex.html.

Survey Sheets

Two original copies of the survey sheets and five xerographic copies are being provided to the Land Use Department under separate cover. The survey sheets were generated from Microsoft Access with each structure (or site in the case of elements such as baseball fields or cemeteries) having one page. General information for the site was provided on each page, including address or street intersection, PIN number, property name, site plan sketch, and survey date. The database was set up assuming that each site had one farmhouse, one main barn, and up to five additional structures. For most sites, this was sufficient. However, when a site had numerous additional structures, another line of data in the database was entered and the PIN and other identifying information repeated.

Information on the survey sheets included building type, features, and condition. The general condition of the exterior walls, trim, porches, and roofs was noted as good, fair, or poor. Condition was determined based solely on brief visual examination and does not consider comprehensive structural or material condition.