

***EXPEDITED*****MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

<b>Address:</b>	7401 MacArthur Blvd.	<b>Meeting Date:</b>	4/5/17
<b>Resource:</b>	Cabin John Gas House <b>Master Plan Site</b>	<b>Report Date:</b>	3/29/17
<b>Review:</b>	HAWP	<b>Public Notice:</b>	3/22/17
<b>Case Number:</b>	35/23-17A	<b>Tax Credit:</b>	None
<b>Applicant:</b>	MNCPPC – Mont. Co. Parks	<b>Staff:</b>	Dan Bruechert
<b>Proposal:</b>	Hardscape Alterations		

---

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the HPC **approve** the HAWP application.

**PROPERTY DESCRIPTION**

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Individually Listed Master Plan Site  
**STYLE:** Vernacular/Victorian  
**DATE:** c.1895

*From Places from the Past:*

This small brick building is the only remaining structure of the resort complex known as the Cabin John Hotel. The hotel, begun by Joseph and Rosa Bobinger in 1873 and expanded over the years, enjoyed its greatest popularity from the 1890s to 1910. The Bobingers bought land across MacArthur Boulevard from the hotel in 1880, and built the gas house by 1895, when it is known to have been operating. The gas house manufactured carbide gas, supplied to hotel lamps through underground pipes. The front-gable structure has brick cornice returns and segmentally arched door and window openings. With the arrival of electricity in the early 1900s, the gas house ceased operations. According to tradition, Rosa had opened a lunchroom to serve co-workers of her husband, Joseph, a stonemason engaged in building the Cabin John Aqueduct (1853-63). As tourists flocked to see the largest single-span masonry bridge in the world, the Bobingers built a modest hotel. The couple eventually created a 40-bedroom facility with two 100-seat banquet halls, three bars, and numerous smaller halls and shops. The hotel was destroyed by a 1931 fire. The gas house is located in the M-NCPPC Cabin John Local Park.

**PROPOSAL:**

The applicant is proposing to alter the hardscape in a number of places to bring the park into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The changes include:

- Install two asphalt parking spaces near the park entrance (this will service the tennis courts)
- Remove part of a non-historic loop drive near the gas house and replace it with a narrower pedestrian walkway (photo-documentation shows that this loop was installed sometime between 1949 and 1957)
- Widen the north edge of the loop drive by 4' (four feet)

- Widen the existing parking lot along the south to accommodate an additional six parking spaces
- Install an asphalt sidewalk along the south edge of the parking lot to provide access to playing fields
- Remove existing asphalt pad adjacent to shelter and replace it with concrete
- Add a concrete pad adjacent to the basketball court
- Install concrete benches along the playing field.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

**Approval**  
 Approval with conditions.

Approval is based on the following criteria from Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code, Section 8(b): The commission shall instruct the director to issue a permit, or issue a permit subject to such conditions as are found to be necessary to insure conformity with the purposes and requirements of this chapter, if it finds that:

- 1. The proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of an historic site, or historic resource within an historic district; or
- 2. The proposal is compatible in character and nature with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural features of the historic site, or the historic district in which an historic resource is located and would not be detrimental thereto or to the achievement of the purposes of this chapter; or
- 3. The proposal would enhance or aid in the protection, preservation and public or private utilization of the historic site, or historic resource located within an historic district, in a manner compatible with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural value of the historic site or historic district in which an historic resource is located, or
- 4. The proposal is necessary in order that unsafe conditions or health hazards be remedied; or
- 5. The proposal is necessary in order that the owner of the subject property not be deprived of reasonable use of the property or suffer undue hardship; or
- 6. In balancing the interests of the public in preserving the historic site, or historic resource located within an historic district, with the interests of the public from the use and benefit of the alternative proposal, the general public welfare is better served by granting the permit.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
301/563-3400

APPLICATION FOR  
HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

Contact Person: Julie Mueller

Daytime Phone No.: 301-650-4390

Tax Account No.: 428077

Name of Property Owner: MNCWPC Daytime Phone No.: 301-650-4390

Address: 9500 Boronett Ave. Silver Spring MD 20901  
Street Number City Street Zip Code

Contractor: Dept. of Parks Phone No.: 301-650-4390

Contractor Registration No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Agent for Owner: Julie Mueller Daytime Phone No.: 301-650-4390

**LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISE**

House Number: 7401 Street: MacArthur Blvd.

Town/City: Bethesda Nearest Cross Street: \_\_\_\_\_

Lot: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_ Subdivision: 0502

Liber: 562 Folio: 354 Parcel: 395

**PART ONE: TYPE OF PERMIT/ACTION AND USE**

Landscape improvements.

1A. CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:

CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:

- Construct  Extend  Alter/Renovate  A/C  Slab  Room Addition  Porch  Deck  Shed
- Move  Install  Wreck/Place  Solar  Fireplace  Woodburning Stove  Single Family
- Revision  Repair  Revocable  Fence/Wall (complete Section 4)  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

1B. Construction cost estimate: \$ TBD

1C. If this is a revision of a previously approved active permit, see Permit # \_\_\_\_\_

**PART TWO: COMPLETE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND EXTEND/ADDITIONS**

2A. Type of sewage disposal: 01  WSSC 02  Septic 03  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2B. Type of water supply: 01  WSSC 02  Well 03  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**PART THREE: COMPLETE ONLY FOR FENCE/RETAINING WALL**

3A. Height \_\_\_\_\_ feet \_\_\_\_\_ inches

3B. Indicate whether the fence or retaining wall is to be constructed on one of the following locations:

- On party line/property line
- Entirely on land of owner
- On public right of way/easement

I hereby certify that I have the authority to make the foregoing application, that the application is correct, and that the construction will comply with plans approved by all agencies listed and I hereby acknowledge and accept this to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.

Julie Mueller  
Signature of owner or authorized agent

3/13/17  
Date

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ For Chairperson, Historic Preservation Commission

Disapproved: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Application/Permit No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Filed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Issued: \_\_\_\_\_

- Install asphalt sidewalk along south edge of parking lot so that visitors with disabilities can park in lot and access ~~ball field~~ the playing fields.
- Remove existing asphalt pad and replace with a concrete pad adjacent to it to provide better accessibility to the shelter for persons with disabilities, and accommodate portable toilet .
- Add a small concrete pad to improve ADA accessibility to the basketball court
- Install standard concrete players benches along dug outs at playing field.

2. **SITE PLAN:** see attached

3. **PLANS AND ELEVATIONS:** N/A

4. **MATERIAL SPECIFICATIONS:** described above

5. **PHOTOGRAPHS:** see attached

List of Photos:

- Cabin John Gas House Setting
- Front (South) and East Elevations
- Approaching loop drive from the north (rear elevation of gas house)
- Drive to be removed
- Left (west) side of loop drive to be removed
- Upper edge of loop drive to be removed and new parking area in background
- Parking area to be expanded

6. **TREE SURVEY:** N/A (no trees will be removed or affected by the proposed plan)

7. **ADDRESS OF ADJACENT AND CONFRONTING PROPERTY OWNERS**

- Clara Barton Elementary School: 6507 75<sup>th</sup> Street, Cabin John, MD 20818
- 7400 Arden Road, Cabin John, MD 20818
- 7402 Arden Road, Cabin John, MD 20818
- National Park Service (owner of ROW along MacArthur Blvd): C and 18<sup>th</sup> Streets, NW, WDC 20006
- MNCPPC owns remaining adjoining parcels

## 1. WRITTEN DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:

### a. *Description of existing structural and environmental setting, including historic features and significance.*

The proposed project is located in Cabin John Local Park. The environmental setting includes the entire six-acre site which has been developed with basketball and tennis courts, playing fields, picnic shelters, a playground, roads and parking lots. Nestled within this setting is a one-story gas house, the only historic building on the property.

#### *From Places from the Past:*

This small brick building is the only remaining structure of the resort complex known as the Cabin John Hotel. The hotel, begun by Joseph and Rosa Bobinger in 1873 and expanded over the years, enjoyed its greatest popularity from the 1890s to 1910. The Bobingers bought land across MacArthur Boulevard from the hotel in 1880, and built the gas house by 1895, when it is known to have been operating. The gas house manufactured carbide gas, supplied to the hotel lamps through underground pipes. The front-gable brick structure has brick cornice returns and segmentally arched door and window openings. With the arrival of electricity in the early 1900s, the gas house ceased operations.

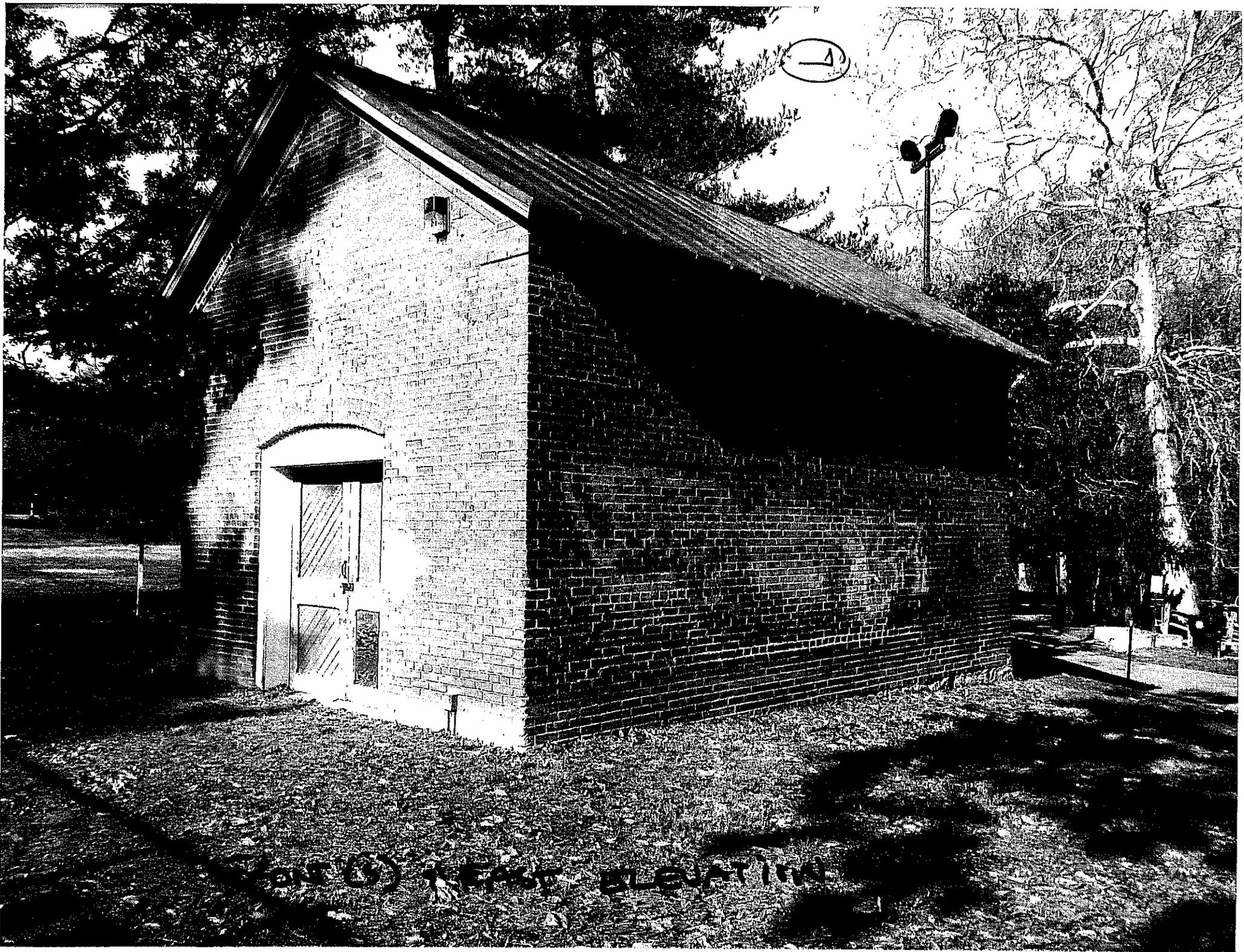
The site is listed in the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation as #35/23.

### b. *General description of project and its effect on the historic resources and environmental setting.*

The proposed project will make landscape infrastructure improvements to the park, some of which are necessary to bring the park into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The improvements are:

- Install two asphalt parking spaces near the park entrance to better serve the tennis courts immediately across the driveway from them.
- Remove part of non-historic loop drive near gas house and replace it with a narrower pedestrian walkway. According to historic aerial photographs, this loop road was laid between 1949 and 1957.
- Widen existing bottom of north edge of loop drive from 18' to 22' to better accommodate Park maintenance vehicles which are causing rutting along the edges of the current drive.
- Widen existing parking lot along south edge to add 6 parking spaces.





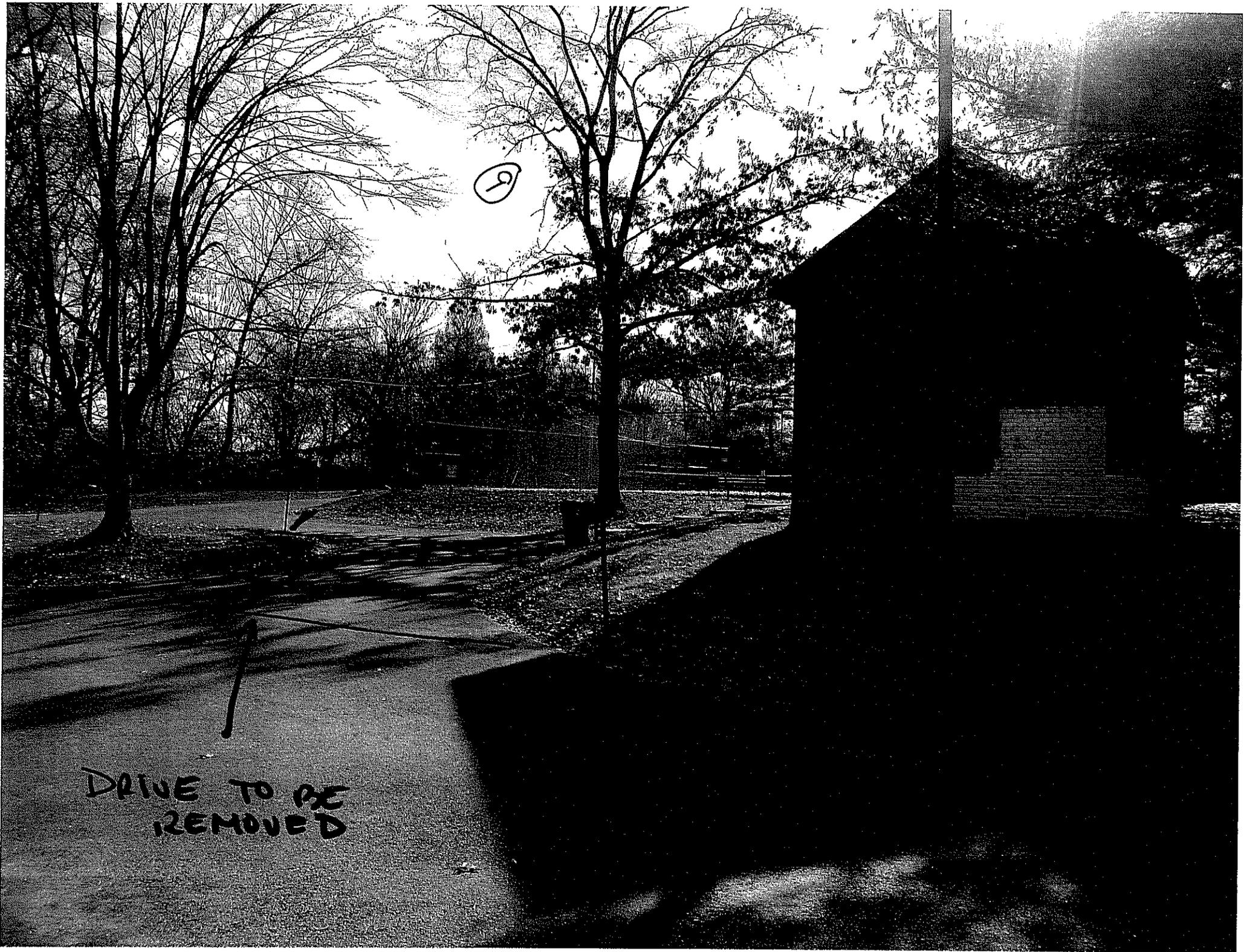
Box (S) - EAST BLEVATINA



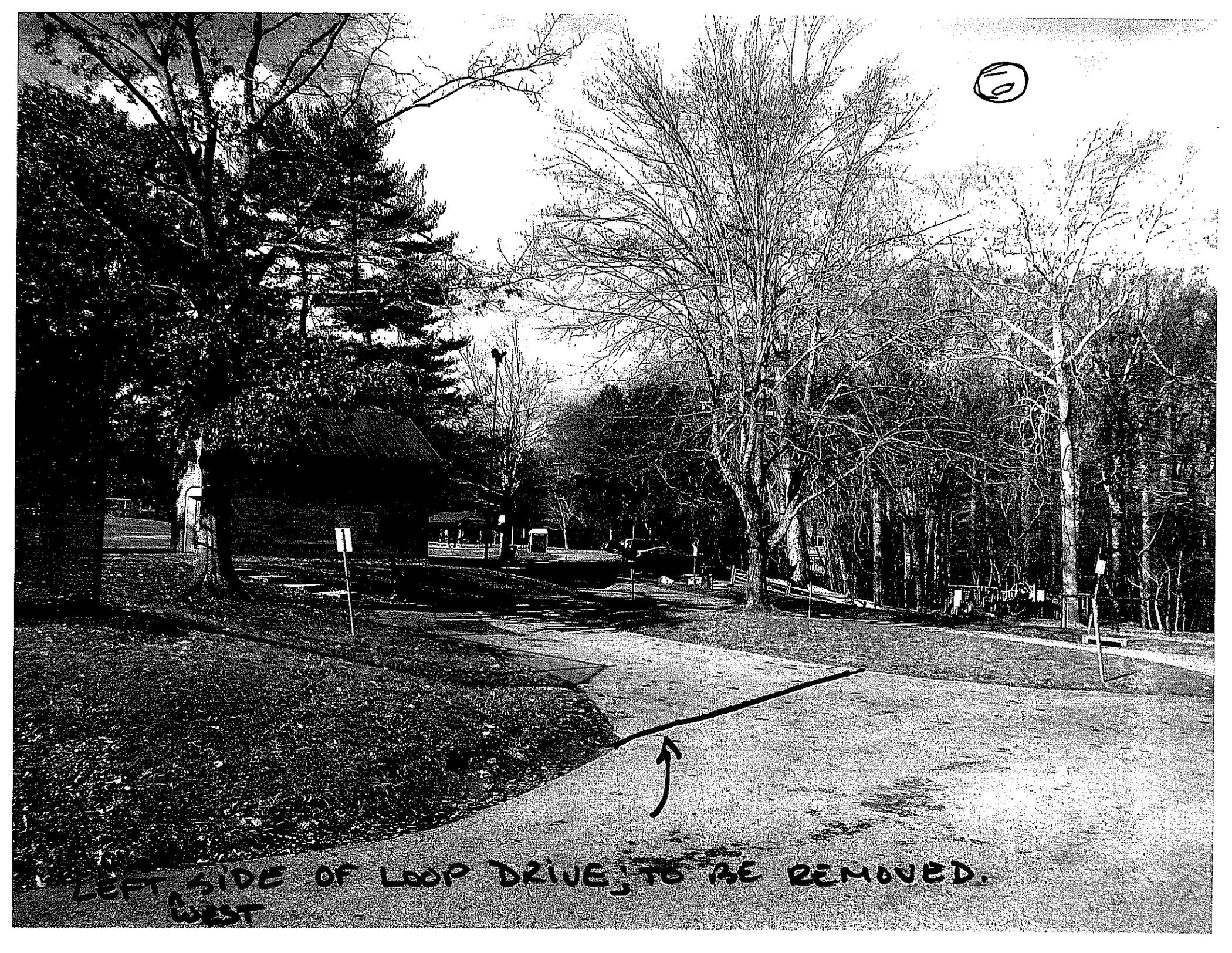
NO SIGNAGE HAS BEEN DONE FROM THE COURSE  
OF THE (SHE)

9

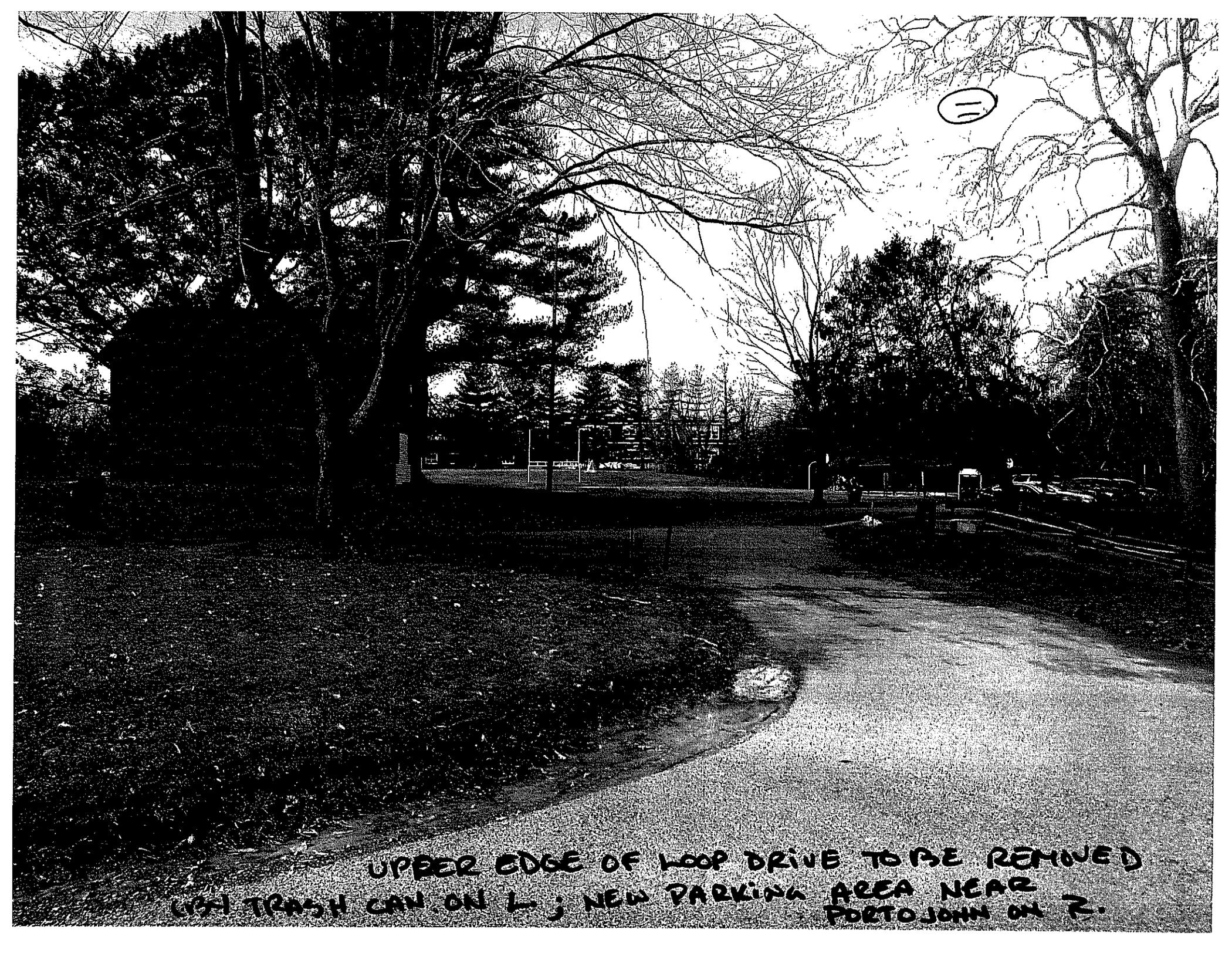
DRIVE TO BE  
REMOVED



6

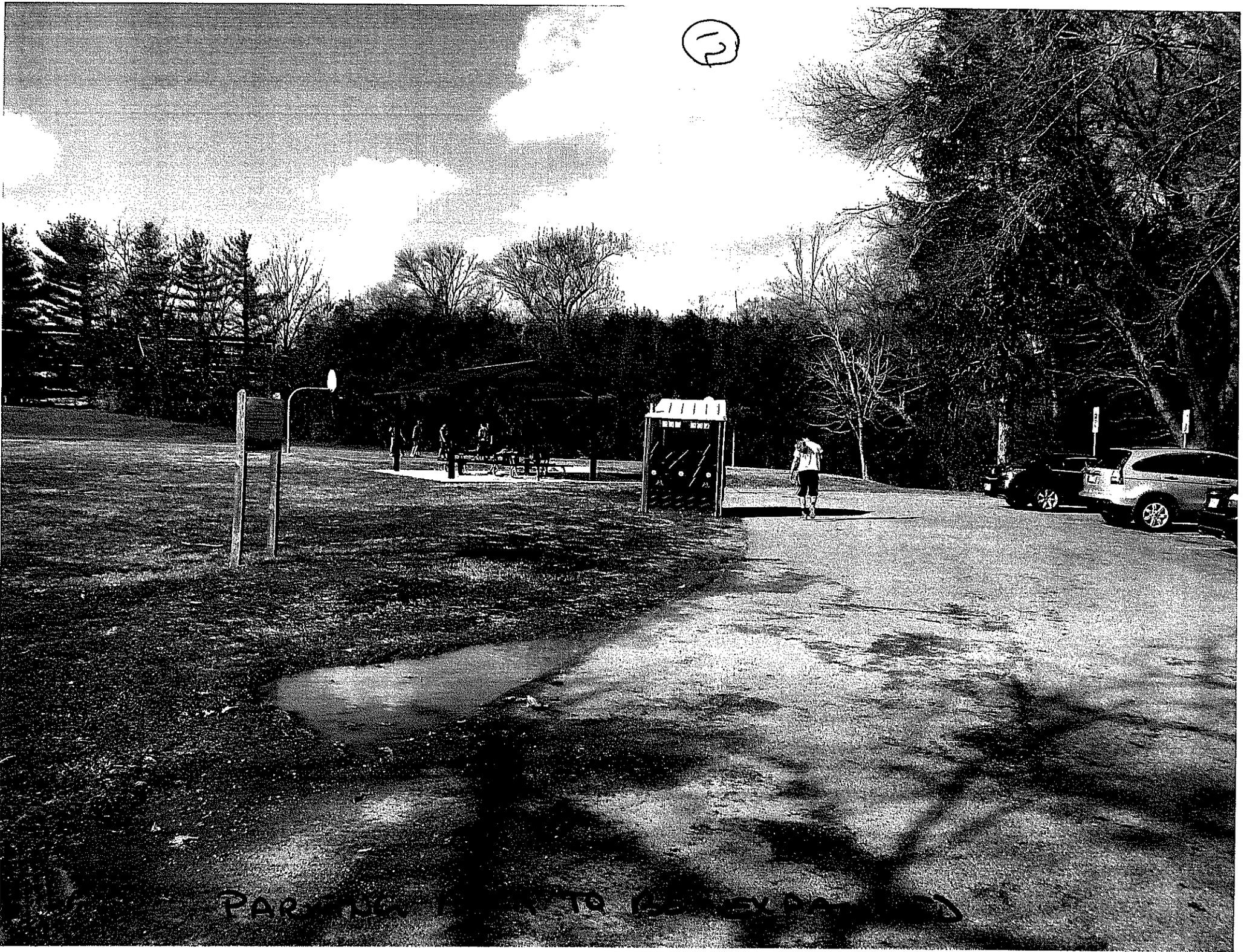


LEFT SIDE OF LOOP DRIVE, TO BE REMOVED.  
WEST



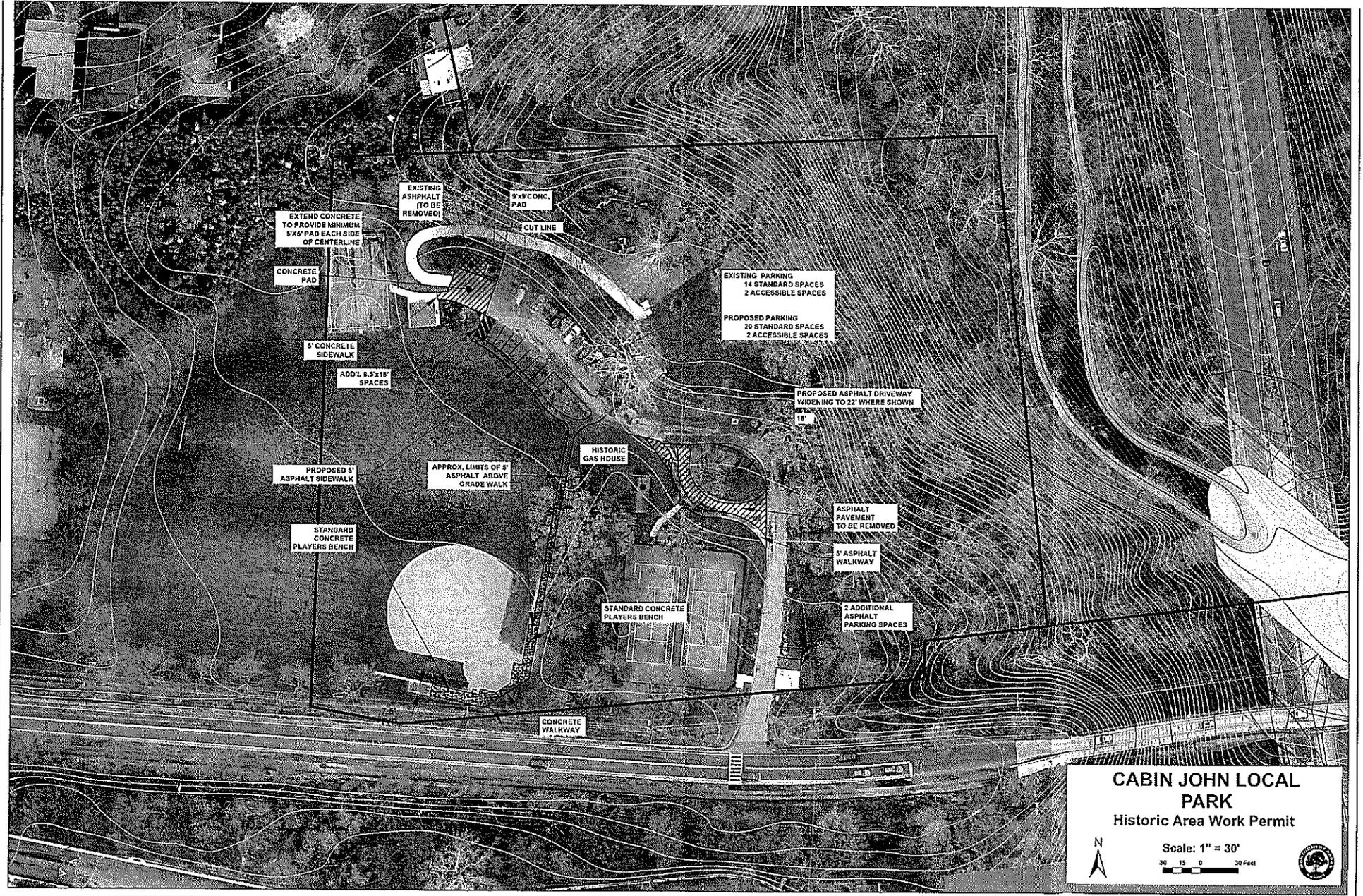
UPPER EDGE OF LOOP DRIVE TO BE REMOVED  
USE TRASH CAN ON L; NEW PARKING AREA NEAR  
PORTOJOHN ON R.

12



PARKING AREA TO BE EXPANDED

13



**CABIN JOHN LOCAL PARK**  
Historic Area Work Permit

Scale: 1" = 30'

30 15 0 30 Feet

