

BUILDING-STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM

DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NEW YORK STATE PARKS AND RECREATION
ALBANY, NEW YORK (518) 474-0479

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
UNIQUE SITE NO.	<u>103-05-0360-DZ 4</u>
QUAD	_____
SERIES	_____
NEG. NO.	_____

0a 3
green
yellow

YOUR NAME: Town of Islip Town Hall DATE: 5/18/79

YOUR ADDRESS: 655 Main Street
Islip, N.Y. TELEPHONE: (516) 224-5450

ORGANIZATION (if any): Department of Planning and Development

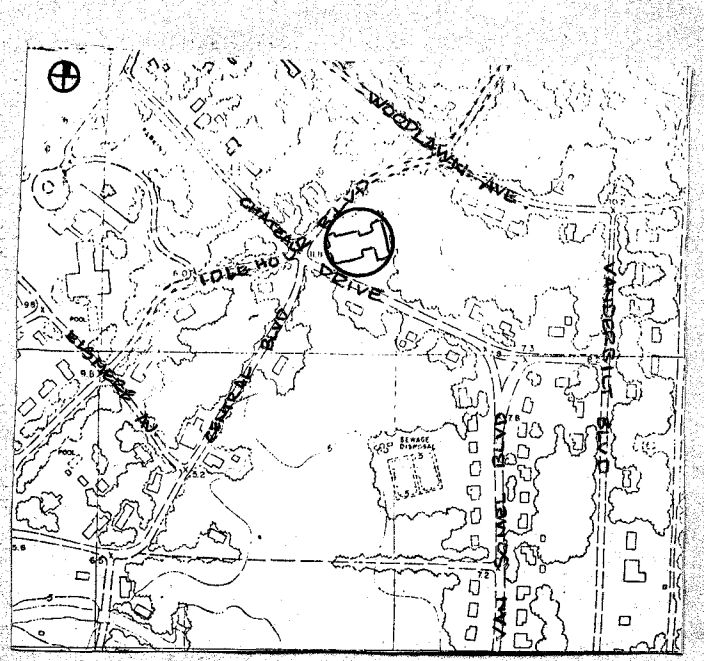
***** *note:* *****

IDENTIFICATION

- 1. BUILDING NAME(S): ~~W. K. Vanderbilt Stables~~ The Coach House, presently (John Astor Hall)
- 2. COUNTY: Suffolk TOWN/CITY: Islip VILLAGE: Oakdale
- 3. STREET LOCATION: NE corner Idlehour Blvd., Chateau, and Central
- 4. OWNERSHIP: a. public b. private
- 5. PRESENT OWNER: Dowling College ADDRESS: _____
- 6. USE: Original: Coach house & stable Present: _____
- 7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes No
Interior accessible: Explain _____

DESCRIPTION

- 8. BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard b. stone c. brick d. board and batten
e. cobblestone f. shingles g. stucco other: _____
- 9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: (if known) a. wood frame with interlocking joints
b. wood frame with light members
c. masonry load bearing walls
d. metal (explain) _____
e. other _____
- 10. CONDITION: a. excellent b. good c. fair d. deteriorated
- 11. INTEGRITY: a. original site b. moved if so, when? _____
c. list major alterations and dates (if known):
some windows replaced with glass block.
Entrance remodded, and clocktower removed (see attachment)
- 12. PHOTO: Neg. 4, west facade
NJM-1
- 13. MAP: Bowe-Albertson
Composite



14. THREATS TO BUILDING: a. none known b. zoning c. roads
 d. developers e. deterioration
 f. other: _____
15. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY:
 a. barn b. carriage house c. garage
 d. privy e. shed f. greenhouse
 g. shop h. gardens
 i. landscape features: _____
 j. other: _____
16. SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING (check more than one if necessary):
 a. open land b. woodland
 c. scattered buildings
 d. densely built-up e. commercial
 f. industrial g. residential
 h. other: College campus

17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:
 (Indicate if building or structure is in an historic district)

Situated at the Northeast corner of the intersection of Idlehour Blvd., Chateau Drive, and Central Blvd., across from the Vanderbilt mansion.

18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE (including interior features if known):

The Coach House is a large 2 story whitewashed brick building building with a huge hipped gambrel roof. It was later a garage for one hundred cars.

SIGNIFICANCE

19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: 1888, brick addition 1889
 ARCHITECT: Richard Morris Hunt
 BUILDER: William Bason and Sons

20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

This building, as part of the Vanderbilt estate, was considered the finest stable in the United States at the time of its construction.

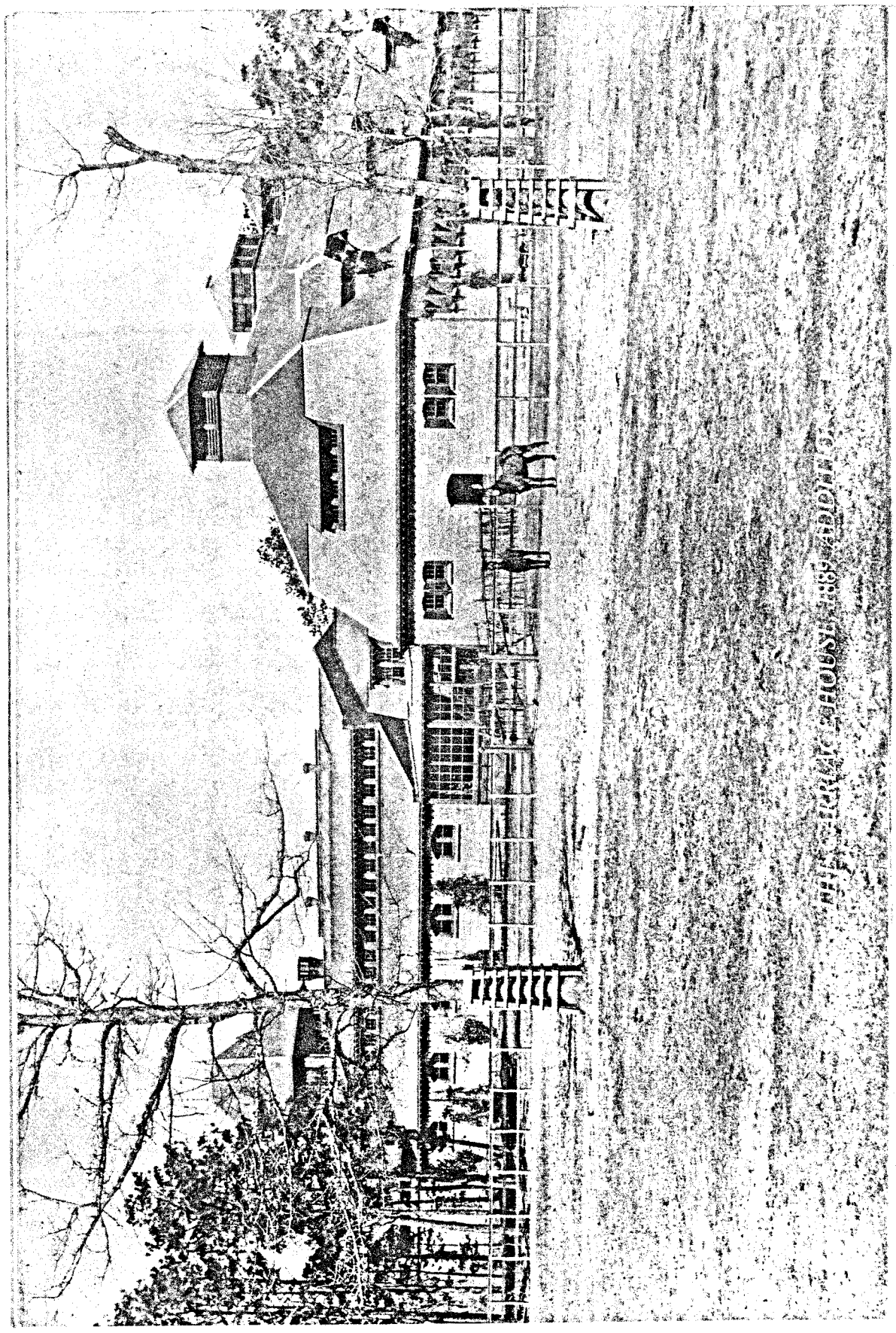
Contrary to another source, the Coach House was reportedly designed by New York Railroad engineers. The Coach House is listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as the "Largest Private Parking Garage."

21. SOURCES: George Lewis Weeks, Jr., Some of Islip's Early History, Consolidated Press, Bay Shore, 1955.

Adelphi Historical Society, Greeting Card, 1970

Norris and Ross McWhirter, Guinness Book of World Records, N.Y.: 1970.

22. THEME:
 Prepared by: Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities
Setauket, New York 11733
Nina Monastero, Research Assistant
May, 1979



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS, CHICAGO, ILL.

Pamphlet, "The Story of Idle Hour, Oakdale, Long Island,"
Dowling College Press.

1970 series

collections W.K.Vanderbilt Historical Society

The William K. Vanderbilt Carriage House

One of the original buildings in "Idle Hour", the Carriage House was first mentioned in the New York Times account of the wedding of Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt's sister Mary to Mr. Yznaga, a South American gentleman.

This building included an indoor tan barking for riding, a stable area for one hundred horses, and an elaborately decorated private room for Mr. Vanderbilt.



on which were painted sporting scenes. Along one wall was a cabinet filled with guns and rifles. Many sport prints adorned the walls as well as photographs of Mr. Vanderbilt and party on their coaching trips to Dr. Seward Webb's and to other places.

This was an ideal retreat for a stag party.

Record Is Kept

A large black board hung on the left side of the entrance where a record was kept of the name of saddle horses used, the groom, the person who rode the horse, and the hours. When a carriage was used, the record noted the person or persons in it, the type of carriage, the groom, the coachman, and the hours used.

The various types of carriages were shown on the blackboard, viz: coach, break, omnibus, fly, wagonette, Rockaway, buckboard 10 seat, buckboard 6 seat, buckboard 4 seat, T cart, duo, buggy, pony cart for madame, pony cart for mademoiselle, hansom, gig, dog cart one seat, dog cart 2 seat. The carriages cost from \$500 to \$2,500 each.

Mme. Vanderbilt was an accomplished horsewoman and Mr. Vanderbilt a good horseman. When they drove out in state there were a coachman and two footmen along.

The monogram W.K.V. appeared 66 times on the stables.

When the stables were completed the horse stock at Idle Hour were Negress, Dumpling, Littleman, Miss, The Ghost, Powder, Paint, Famin, The Cop, Morgan, Acrobat, Autocrat, Aristocrat, Dick, The Gentleman, Red Cloud and Cornercracker.

The superintendent of the stables was James Johnson, a young Englishman who was a very skillful driver. The stable boys were hired in London. The grooms and stable boys wore a gray uniform consisting of sack coat, breeches and leggings.

Every Friday the Vanderbilts came to Oakdale, and they returned to the city on Sunday evening. Sometimes they would make the trip by coach with four in hand. They would exchange horses on the way out, sometimes at the Dominy House in Bay Shore. When the Vanderbilts came out by train they would ride in the regular coach.

The former stables is now the laboratory of the National Research Dairy.

This estate, like many others, disappeared from the Long Island scene. Gone are the high stepping horses, the pony carts and the

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Chapter 14

COUNTRY ESTATES

ANNOUNCEMENT in the newspapers of Dec. 7, 1889 made mention of the fact that a "palace for the millionaire's horses was finished." These were the stables at Idle Hour, the country estate of William K. Vanderbilt.

When a weekend guest alighted from Austin Corbin's vestibuled accommodation trains and gazed at Oakdale and its visible surroundings, little did he realize that he was on the cultivated estate of one of the richest of living Americans of that day. The little wooden station standing in a small clearing of yellow sand served as telegraph office, post office, dwelling house and waiting room. Except for a pleasant lady agent there wasn't a person in sight.

On the platform would be perhaps 50 barrels of Blue Point oysters waiting for the wayfreight to the big city. This was the first impression of the traveler.

To the south was the old country road and just to the west was the entrance to Idle Hour.

Better Than Looks

The fact, however, that William K. Vanderbilt and the Roberts family had bought up most all of the woodland to the south of the railroad would seem to prove that the neighborhood, as a contemporary humorist would say, is better than it looks.

One of the first structures to Idle Hour was the elaborate stables. The building was large enough for a cab station of that era. The structure, complete, cost \$400,000.

The stables were constructed under the supervision of an architect named Hunt of New York. Many of the details were original with Mr. Vanderbilt. The general plan, however, was English. The stable was of brick and the roof of slate and glass. The design was ornamental and the entrance of stone and arched.

The furnishings and adornment of Mr. Vanderbilt's apartment were in strict conformity with English customs. The carpet was old gold in color, the walls were maroon and there was an upper gilt border of wood. Before the grate fire stood an oak-framed fire screen