

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. _____
QUAD _____
SERIES _____
NEG. NO. _____

WI 20

YOUR NAME: Town of Islip/SPLIA DATE: February 1990

Town Hall, 655 Main St.
YOUR ADDRESS: Islip, L.I., N.Y. 11751 TELEPHONE: 516.224.5450

ORGANIZATION (if any): Dept. of Planning, Housing, and Development

IDENTIFICATION

La Grange Inn

- 1. BUILDING NAME(S): _____
- 2. COUNTY: Suffolk TOWN/CITY: Islip VILLAGE: West Islip
- 3. STREET LOCATION: South Country Rd., north side, corner Higbie Ln.
- 4. OWNERSHIP: a. public b. private 497 MONTAUK HIGHWAY
- 5. PRESENT OWNER: Uwe Paulssen ADDRESS: _____
- 6. USE: Original: hotel Present: hotel
- 7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes No
Interior accessible: Explain by app't.

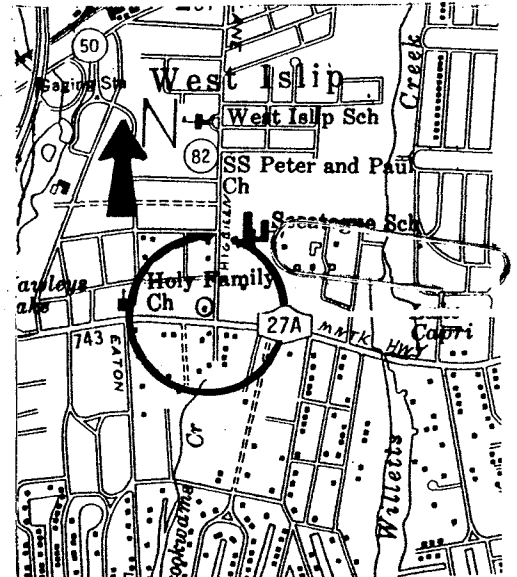
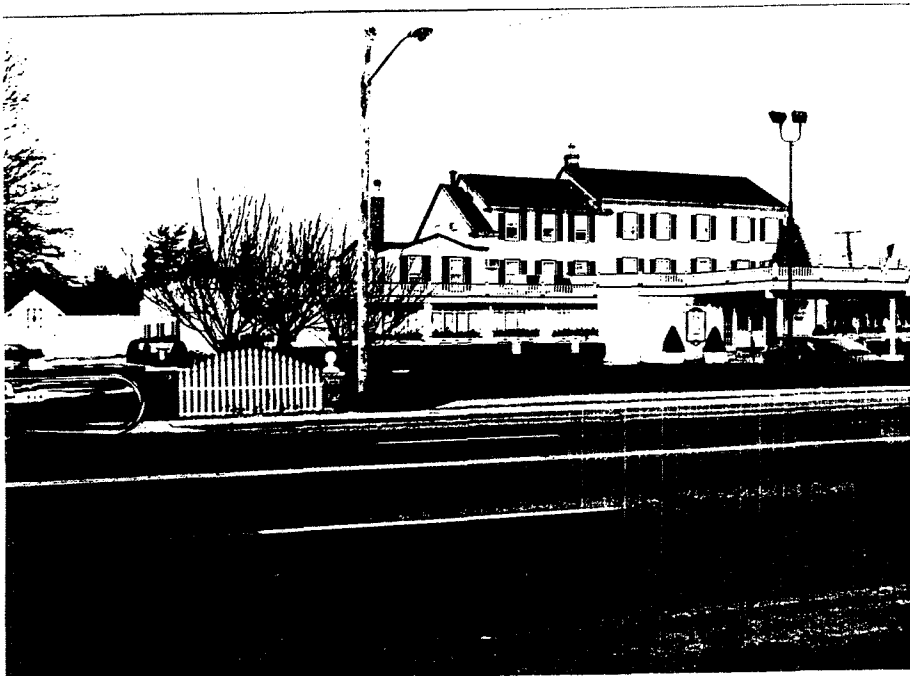
DESCRIPTION

- 8. BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard b. stone c. brick d. board and batten
e. cobblestone f. shingles g. stucco other: modern cladding
- 9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: (if known) a. wood frame with interlocking joints partial
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): _____

Enlarged 19th century.
Additions at ground story.

12. PHOTO: Neg. KK IX-11, fm. S/SW

13. MAP: NYS DOT Bay Shore West Quad



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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: _____

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

Located on the north side of historic South Country Rd., the La Grange Inn is surrounded on the east and west by predominantly commercial buildings of varying age which post-date this building.

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

The La Grange Inn is a large, three story, five bay, rectangular, gable roof building with a three bay, 2½ story, gable roof wing on the west and an additional smaller two bay, gable roof wing on the west. The smaller wing features an Italianate facade gable.

SIGNIFICANCE

19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: mid 18th century

ARCHITECT: _____

BUILDER: _____

20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

It is most remarkable that an 18th century inn has continued in use for such a long period of time and that it continues in such good condition. It was kept so long and so successfully by Richard Higbie and his father, Uncle "Sam" Higbie before him. This is Long Island's oldest continuing hostelry.

21. SOURCES:
Suffolk Life, 9/13/1989.
 Weeks, George Jr. Some of the Town of Islip's Early History, 1955.
 Wilcox, Gerald and Judith. First History of West Islip, 1976.

22. THEME:

La Grange Inn is probably the oldest hostelry now operating in Suffolk county, if not on Long Island. While the exact date of the erection of the first unit of the inn is not definitely known, it has been established that it was in operation shortly after the close of the Revolutionary War. It was until the present management took over, known as the La Grange Inn.

The property on which the inn is located was owned by the Higbie family from the time the original inn was built until about 1918, when it passed onto the hands of a syndicate. During early prohibition days it was sold to the late Eugene Freund who operated it until his death.

Clinton David Higby author of "Edward Higby and His Descendants" the progenitor of the family in America, states that Nehemiah Higbee born August 27, 1753, was the owner and keeper of La Grange Inn and died in Babylon May 23, 1815 and is buried in the Babylon Cemetery.

The Higbies spelled the name differently, some using the "by" others "bee" and still others "bie" in constructing the final syllable. Another proprietor was Samuel Higbie who was born February 29, ¹⁷⁷²~~1772~~, probably at La Grange Inn. The historian Higby says: "It is probable that his grandfather, Samuel A. Higbie, built the inn, as it is said to have been a licensed place as early as 1750."

The next proprietor of La Grange was Nehemiah Higbie's son, Richard Terry Higbie who conducted it until his retirement in 1871. It was then leased for many years by the family until sold as stated. The last Higbie to own the inn was the widow of John Robbins Higbie. Mr. Higbie inherited the property from his uncle, Samuel Althouse Higbie who died in 1915.

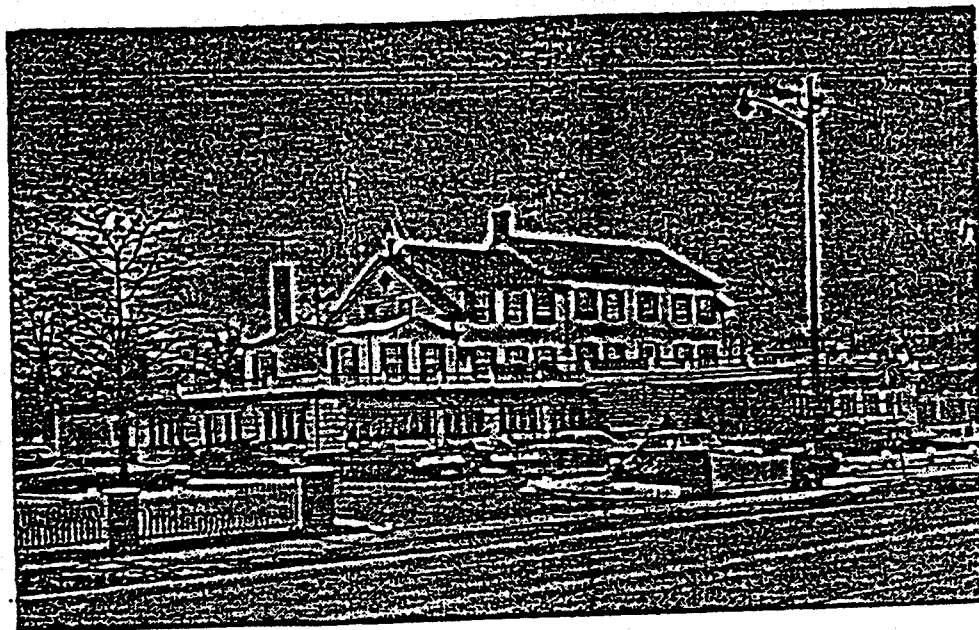
The inn formerly stood closer to Montauk Highway and was a much smaller structure than it is now.

During the period before the main line of the Long Island Railroad was built, Samuel Higbie one of the proprietors of the inn, operated a stagecoach line between Brooklyn and Patchogue and made La Grange a stopover point. Later, when Richard Terry Higbie was conducting the inn and the railroad had been built on the main line as far as Deer

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Park, he ran a stagecoach to Deer Park station, four and a half miles distant.

The La Grange was named in honor of General Lafayette's home in France, and although some people claim the General visited the inn in 1824, when he came back to America, there is no positive proof of this. (In an interview with George L. Weeks, Jr., he said "An educated guess would be that he did visit the inn".)



La Grange (Higbie Inn) 1750

Wilcox, 1976.

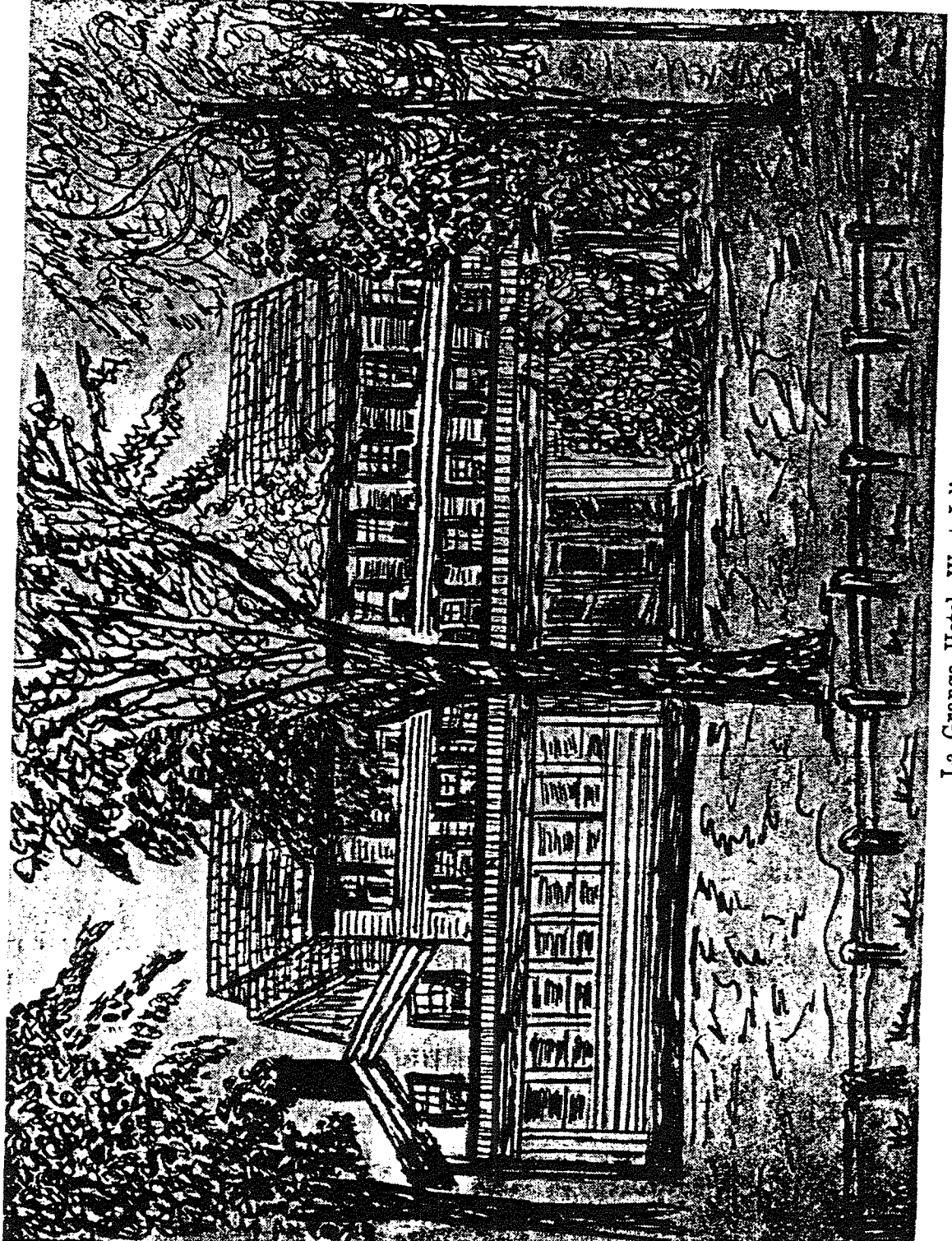
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La Grange Hotel, West Islip.

Weeks, 1955.

Some at 1000 1/2 St. Paul, N.Y.C.

1955