



Memorandum

ABS 046.09

Dated: July 7, 2007
To: Absecon Planning Board, Master Plan Committee
From: Robert L. Reid, AICP, PP, Board Planner
Re: **Proposed Absecon Train Station Area Overlay Ordinance**

Introduction

Like many other urban and suburban business districts through the state, Absecon has suffered over the years from the fate of creeping deterioration as retail activity has become more concentrated in large regional shopping areas and the consequent loss of the economical vitality has made the center of a small town a less attractive for other commercial uses.

The loss of pedestrian traffic from city employees and the Marsh School staff due to the relocation of City Hall and the Marsh School has also had a major impact on our downtown Main Street and Central Business District. Our New Jersey Avenue Central Business District has slowly adapted to the change in the retail market. New Jersey Avenue has evolved into a place where we run more errands than actually do slow paced casual shopping.

The newly constructed six lane divided State Highway Route 30 has changed the character of downtown Absecon forever. Now, residents question how Absecon's downtown will survive in the future, especially in terms of competition brought on by large, regional discount stores.

Presently, Absecon's downtown consists of mostly service-oriented establishments, with only a small percentage of retail establishments along New Jersey Avenue.

A review of the existing conditions shows that the Absecon Station Area has a good potential for revitalization. Community facilities which draw people to the area are an asset, and residential neighborhoods that adjoin the area are sound. There is a need to attract more neighborhood and commuter service shopping facilities to the area in order to create more activity downtown.

Existing historic landmarks like the Pitney House, United Methodist Church, Absecon Presbyterian Church, Odd Fellows Hall and Absecon's Historical Society Museum Howlett Hall should be promoted to encourage a viable downtown.

We need to look for ways to attract more people to our "Main Street" New Jersey Avenue. We need to find ways to attract more retail establishments.

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With the addition of Home Depot and possibly another large discount retailer in Absecon's future, the city must look for vehicles to strengthen our Central Business District by attracting people to our "downtown". A pedestrian friendly enhanced streetscape with brick paved sidewalks and brick paved roadway to act as a traffic calming measure and additional parking should be encouraged.

Age Restricted housing now under construction on the former Marsh School site within walking distance of downtown will help strengthen our small town "downtown" and will add much needed pedestrian activity to downtown which will be a benefit to the community. The proposed development will encourage further investment on New Jersey Avenue which will in turn substantially improve the rent structure for our downtown Central Business District.

The following Absecon Train Station Area Overlay Ordinance is submitted for review and comment. This ordinance was composed based on discussions with the Planning Board Master Plan Committee members, Planning Board members at numerous meetings while preparing the 2005 Reexamination of the Master Plan. At those meetings we discussed components of the Reexamination Report and the Absecon Train Station Area Overlay Ordinance. This proposed ordinance is consistent with and the 2005 Reexamination Report. of the Master Plan.

Upon review and approval by the Planning Board the following Article should be referred to City Council with findings that it is consistent with the Master Plan and recommend it be adopted.

NJSA 40:55D-26a states (in part) that Aprior to the adoption of a development regulation, or amendment thereto, the Planning Board shall make and transmit to the governing body, within 35 days after referral, a report including identifications of any provisions in the proposed development regulation, revision or amendment which are inconsistent with the Master Plan and recommendations concerning these inconsistencies and any other matters as the Board deems appropriate. Because this proposal originated at the Planning Board and the proposal is consistent with the Master Plan and this proposal is being referred to City Council with the statement that it is consistent with the Master Plan, the City Council does not need to refer it back to the Planning Board prior to final adoption.

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**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 224, ABSECON DEVELOPMENTAL
ORDINANCE AND THE ZONING MAP CREATING THE
ABSECON TRAIN STATION AREA OVERLAY DISTRICT (ARTICLE XXXIII)**

WHEREAS, the Absecon City Planning Board adopted a Master Plan Reexamination Report and Master Plan Update on May 23, 2006; and

WHEREAS, the Master Plan Reexamination Report and Master Plan Update recommended creating a Absecon Train Station Area Overlay district in the Central Business Commercial (C 1) District and the Highway Commercial (H C) District along US Highway Route 30 and New Jersey Avenue adjoining the Train Station.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Governing Body for the City of Absecon City, County of Atlantic and State of New Jersey, that Chapter 224, Absecon Developmental Ordinance and the Absecon City Zoning Map is hereby amended as follows:

§ 224-264. SHORT

This Ordinance shall be known and may be cited as: ABSECON TRAIN STATION AREA OVERLAY ORDINANCE

§ 224-265. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Absecon Train Station Area Overlay is to revitalize the area by developing mixed uses, which will add more pedestrian activity, increase trade in the Absecon Central Business District, to encourage pedestrian oriented uses to replace existing vehicle oriented uses, encourage pedestrian links, transit ridership and the development of housing to meet our constitutional obligation to provide for affordable housing. The development of Absecon Train Station Area is intended to create a stronger sense of community in the area, by using the Train Station as a focus; redevelop the old Downtown Central Business District; and connect the Absecon Train Station to New Jersey Avenue.

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§ 224-266. GOALS

The following are goals for the Absecon Train Station Area:

The primary goal of the Absecon Station Area Plan is to increase trade in the Absecon Central Business District, provide for affordable residential units and to restore Absecon's downtown image as a town center.

The strategy to achieve this goal has two main objectives:

(1) to locate more potential customers in the area by adding apartments, retail shops and offices; and

(2) to provide the types of retail and services, as well as the enhanced atmosphere, which will attract additional customers and increase the rent structure downtown.

These two objectives reinforce each other: a larger customer base will draw merchants to the area to provide neighborhood and commuter shopping services and will create the incentive to merchants to improve their stores and the streetscape; conversely, the larger the variety of services provided, and the more pleasant the surroundings, the more likely the area will attract shoppers.

Increase trade in the Central Business District;

Improve public safety by encouraging pedestrian friendly infrastructures;

Encourage the creation of a pedestrian-oriented downtown with a pedestrian bridge link from Absecon 's Main Street " New Jersey Avenue" to the Absecon Train Station platform;

Add affordable housing, commercial and office uses at increased densities within walking distance of the shopping and transit facilities to stimulate pedestrian activity, enliven the Central Business District, reduce auto trips and generate transit riders;

Encourage additional measures to reduce traffic congestion and meet clean air standards;

Encourage pedestrian activity by improving the quality of the pedestrian environment; and

Encourage commuter convenience and service facilities close to the Absecon Train Station.

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§ 224-267. LOCATION OF THE TRAIN STATION AREA OVERLAY

a. The Absecon Train Station Area encompasses an area within a reasonable walking distance the Absecon Train Station on both sides of State Highway Route 30. The boundaries of the area is the railroad right of way to the south, Shore Road to the east, Church Street to the north and School Street and Southwest Street to the west. The core of the Absecon Train Station Area is the 100 block of New Jersey Avenue. Existing community facilities include the Downtown Clock Plaza, Absecon Historical Society Museum "Howlett Hall", municipal parking lots, (one north of State Highway 30 and one south of State Highway 30). The Absecon Train Station Area also includes the recently approved Absecon Senior Project on the former Marsh School site. In Addition the Absecon Public Library and two historic places of worship are within the blocks adjoining the Absecon Train Station Area.

b. The Absecon Train Station Area is divided into two subsections:

- 1) a train station platform area for commuter business south of State Highway Route 30;
- 2) and the New Jersey Avenue area north of State Highway Route 30 for downtown neighborhood commercial uses.

c. The following parcels are included in the Absecon Train Station Area Overlay District:

Block 158, Lots 1.01, 1.02, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

Block 159, Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5.02.

Block 160, Lots 1.01, 1.02, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

Block 161, Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

Block 213, Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.

Block 214, Lots 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17..

Block 215, Lots 1.01, 1.02.

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Block 800, lots 3, 4

(See plan entitled "Absecon City Zoning Map", prepared by Robert L. Reid, AICP, PP, dated May 4, 2007 on file at the City Clerk's Office and Planning Board Office)

§ 224-268. PERMITTED USES

In order to further the purposes of the Absecon Train Station Area, only the uses set forth in the following sections are permitted. A mix of a minimum of 65% residential and maximum of 35% commercial is required as described in Sections 224-268A and 224-268B.

The permitted uses below are also permitted on lands currently owned by NJ Transit, its successors and assigns. The developer is encouraged to include the NJ Transit property in the proposed development. The City may assist with coordination with the NJ Transit and the developer to possibly enter into a joint-venture to construct a shared parking garage, pedestrian access walks and bridges, commercial uses at the platform level and residential units above.

A. Permitted Principal Commercial Uses

The following commercial uses are permitted provided commercial uses do not exceed 35% of the gross floor area of the proposed development not including the floor area for enclosed parking garage providing parking for the development.

- a. Commuter parking facilities and passenger drop-off and pick-up areas;
- b. Retail sales and other uses generating pedestrian activity, serving neighborhood residential and commuters, but excluding sale of building materials, plumbing supplies, motor vehicles, boats or swimming pools, large appliances;
- c. Personal and household services and business services; but excluding vehicle maintenance, repair, auto body, gas stations and similar uses;
- d. Restaurants and similar establishments selling food and / or beverages, but excluding drive-through windows;
- e. Day care centers, including nursery schools;
- f. Public buildings such as municipal offices, police station, library, post office, museum, and similar uses that directly serve the public, but excluding facilities such as public works garage, water treatment plant, electric transformer station, and uses of similar nature;
- g. Banks and savings and loan institutions, but excluding drive-through windows;
- h. Public Parks;

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- i. Train Stations;
- j. General Business Offices, Offices for professionals such as architects, attorneys, doctors, engineers, planners and landscape architects.

B. Permitted Residential Uses

The following residential uses are permitted provided residential uses represent a minimum of 65% of the gross floor area of the proposed development, excluding parking garage area.

a. Residential units in apartment buildings for rent or for sale as condominium units above commercial uses on ground floor and / or enclosed parking garages. The permitted by-right density shall not exceed six (6) dwelling units per acre without the inclusion of affordable housing. The permitted density is unlimited with the inclusion of 25% affordable housing units as described in §224-194 as replaced by Ordinance No. _____ of 2007. With affordable housing, the density, size, location and number of dwelling units to be determined by market conditions, New Jersey Uniform Construction Code (NJUCC) requirements and the development's conformity with use mix set forth in Section 224-268 and the bulk requirements set forth with Section 224-269.

The existing uses within the proposed Absecon Train Station Area Overlay at the time of the adoption of this ordinance will retain their rights to develop / expand their facilities in accordance with the permitted uses and bulk area requirements of the existing underlying zoning districts without seeking relief of the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

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§224-269. AREA, YARD AND BULK REQUIREMENTS.

- A. Minimum Lot Size: 7,500 sq. ft.
- B. Minimum Lot Width: 75'
- C. Maximum Building Coverage: 65% with the inclusion of affordable housing, 50% without affordable housing.
- D. Maximum Impervious Coverage: 80% with the inclusion of affordable housing; 60% without affordable housing
- E. Minimum Front Yard Setback:
 - 1 Open porches, open balconies, open pedestrian walkways (covered or uncovered) 0 feet.
 - 2 Building face: 8 feet
- F. Minimum Side and Rear Yard Setback:
 - 1 Open porches, open balconies, open pedestrian walkways (covered or uncovered): 3 feet.
 - 2 Building face: 10 feet
 - 3 Between Structures on adjoining lots: (including open porches, open balconies, open pedestrian walkways, covered or uncovered) 10 feet
- G. Maximum Building Height:
 - 1 New Jersey Avenue Area: Two (2) stories or 28 feet maximum with commercial units at the ground level, offices and or residential units at the second level without the inclusion of affordable housing units;

Three (3) stories or 35 feet maximum with commercial units at the ground level, offices and or residential units at the second level and residential units at the third level with the inclusion of affordable housing units.
 - 2 Train Station Platform Area: Three (3) stories or 35 feet maximum with ground level commercial units, Train Station platform level (or second level) commercial units and residential units at the third level without the inclusion of affordable housing units;

Four (4) stories or 45 feet maximum with ground level commercial units, Train Station platform level (or second level) commercial units and residential units at the third and fourth levels with the inclusion of affordable housing units.
 - 3 Train Station Platform Area with ground level enclosed parking: Four (4) stories or 45 feet maximum with ground level enclosed parking, commercial units at the Train Station

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Platform Level and residential units at the third and fourth levels without the inclusion of affordable housing units.

Five (5) stories or 55 feet maximum with ground level enclosed parking, commercial units at the Train Station Platform Level and residential units at the third, fourth and fifth levels with the inclusion of affordable housing units;

- 4 For buildings over two stories in height (28' maximum) the top floor shall be a gable roof design with gable roof dormers with windows.
- 5 The minimum slope of the gable roof shall be 6" in height for every 12" of width.
- 6 Roof height shall be measured from the average finish grade around the building to the mean height of the highest gable roof.
- 7 Variable roof heights are required. A minimum 30% of the building must be below the maximum building height.

§224-270. DESIGN STANDARDS

A. Within the Train station platform area, incentives should be provided to attract commuter-serving retail and service stores at the train station platform level with apartments conveniently located above the commercial units.

B. Site and building design and layout will encourage residences, commuters, visitors and other travelers to use the Absecon Train Station with the help of a visible point of identity;

C. Site and building design and layout shall provide for easy access to the transportation; continuous and safe sidewalks and pathways that make pedestrian access easy; bike paths and storage location that encourage bicycle access; safe and comfortable places to wait and meet others;

D. Overall site and building design shall include an environment that is active, human scaled, and visually safe, well lit, attractive areas for parking, drop-off and pick-up; and a sense of safety, security and predictability.

E. In the New Jersey Avenue area, improvements to existing storefronts shall be required as part of any second floor expansion to include apartments or offices above the commercial units at street level.

F. Architectural Requirements:

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1. The traditional / historical character of Absecon shall be maintained. An example would be the early 20th century train station or the Absecon Manor at the corner of Ohio Avenue and Station Avenue. **See Exhibit 224-270-F 1 and Exhibit 224-270 –F 2** on file with the City Clerk's Office.
2. Natural wood siding, (common 2 2/3" height) brick, stone or similar or compatible building materials shall be utilized.
3. Traditional late 19th century to early 20th century architectural design is encouraged for mixed residential / commercial uses new construction. Examples of architectural styles that are encouraged include Georgian, Federal, Creek Revival, and Victorian. **(See attached Appendix 1a-d.)**
4. All new construction, additions, alterations, and/or renovations to structures shall be compatible to the architectural design of the existing structures on-site and on surrounding property.

G. In addition to above standards Design standards shall conform to 224-77 (where applicable).

§224-271 LANDSCAPING AND BUFFERS

Landscaping and buffers shall conform to 224-71, 224-129 and 224-159 (where applicable).

§224-272 PARKING

Parking requirements: The actual parking need shall be determined by the number of employees intended to occupy the facility and the number of residents anticipated to occupy the Units at peak periods. It is the obligation of the applicant to demonstrate to the Board actual need for parking by the presentation of parking generation studies from authorities on the subject of parking generation. The parking generation study shall include all commercial and residential units proposed at the site and what percentage will use public transportation. The parking generation study shall include a time schedule matrix of uses that will share on-site parking. Publications by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) or the American Planners Association (APA) or other professional associations will be considered. If a parking generation study is not provided, the parking requirements in §224-128 will prevail.

The planning board may consider permitting up to a 30% reduction in required parking for a mix use commercial / residential development with affordable housing units proposed in the Train Station Platform Area within the Absecon Train Station Area Overlay provided the

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applicant can demonstrate with a parking generation study that patrons and residents will utilize the public transportation.

The planning board may consider permitting a 20% reduction in required parking provided an area is reserved for expansion in the event the parking is determined to be necessary by the planning board or by the applicant at a future date. If the additional parking is pre-engineered and reviewed by the planning board and planning board's professionals at the time of the original approval is granted, the additional parking can be constructed without returning to the planning board provided the additional parking is completed within five years of the original approval being granted. The construction of the additional parking is permitted provided the applicant informs the City Engineer in writing and posts an inspection escrow prior to actual construction taking place.

The New Jersey Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) parking requirements apply to all proposed residential uses. Parking generation can include a shared parking arrangement for accessory uses. In the case were the applicant demonstrates that a reduction in parking is warranted, the planning board will support an application to NJ DCA for a waiver from the parking RSIS parking requirements.

§224-273 LIGHTING

Lighting shall conform to 224-80 and 224-130, which includes the requirement to design lighting to prevent glare upon surrounding properties.

§224-274 PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice shall be required in accordance with NJSA 40:55D-12.

§224-275 CONSISTENCY

Any Ordinance or part thereof which is inconsistent with the provisions of the Ordinance is hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

§224-276 EFFECTIVE DATE

This Ordinance will take effect upon final passage and publication as required by law.

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the foregoing Ordinance was introduced and passed the first reading at a meeting of the City Council of the City of Absecon City, County of Atlantic and State of New Jersey, held on _____, and said Ordinance will be further considered for final passage and adoption at a public hearing to be held at the Municipal Complex located at 500 Mill Road, Absecon, New Jersey 08201, on _____, at 7:30 p.m. or as soon thereafter as the matter may be reached.

BY ORDER OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ABSECON

Approved: _____
Peter C. Elco, Mayor

Attest: _____
Carie A. Crone, Acting Municipal Clerk

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RLR**AICP****Robert L. Reid, AICP, P.P.****Professional Planner**

366 Upland Avenue, Absecon NJ 08201 609-652-3049

JOB NO.

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PROJECT

Absecon Train Station Area Overlay Ordinance

BY

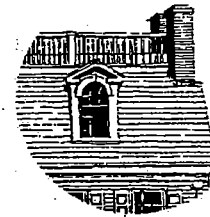
RLR

1/13/2007

SUBJECT

Appendix 1 a - Georgian Architectural Style

CHK'D

**GEORGIAN**

1700 to 1790

Typical Characteristics

- Balanced facade; imposing doorway with pilasters and cornice or pediment.
- Doors panelled with lights in top or in transom above.
- Door sidelights located outside pilaster.
- Large sash windows with small panes. (18 to 24)
- Ridge roof may have flat deck with balustrade.
- High foundation

Late Georgian:

- Balanced facade; doorways flanked by pilasters or engaged columns, doorways with sidelights inside pilasters.
- Fanlight over both door and sidelights.
- Doorway may be surmounted by Palladian window.
- House may have central projecting pavilion with pedimented gable.
- House may have pilasters full height of facade.
- Roof balustrade may be Chinese lattice. (Very late)
- Roof may have cupola.
- Semi-circular dormers occasionally.
- House may have quoins at corners of brick or rusticated wood.

RLR**AICP****Robert L. Reid, AICP, P.P.**
Professional Planner

366 Upland Avenue, Absecon NJ 08201 609-652-3049

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BY

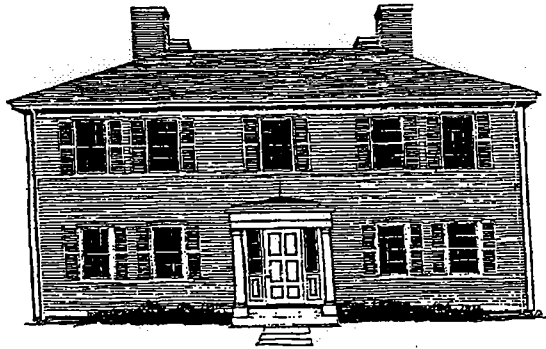
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1/13/2007

SUBJECT

Appendix 1 b - Federal Architectural Style

CHK'D

**FEDERAL**

1790 to 1830

Typical Characteristics

- Quiet, dignified design with delicate decoration, geometric motifs.
- Windows and doors centered and balanced. Openings equal on each side of a center line.
- Large portico, narrow sidelights, with wide elliptical fanlight.
- Low pitched roof.
- Balustrade or parapet located above eaves.

Late Federal

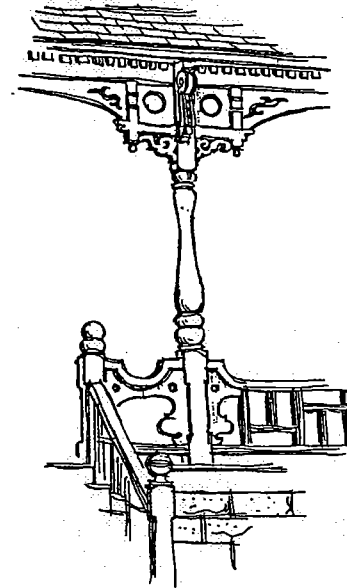
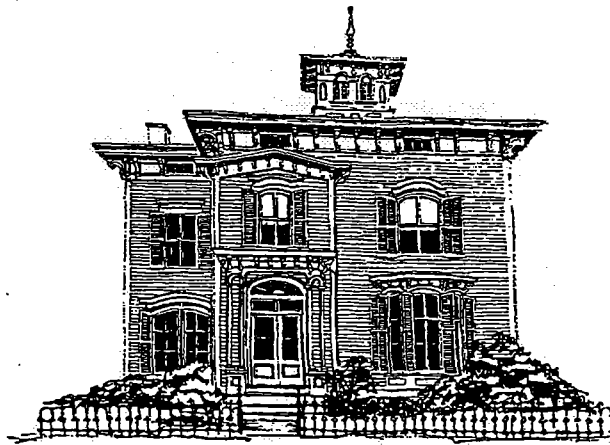
- Influence of Adams Brothers in detail; carved motifs of Adam design used.
- Eagle and other signs of the new republic used in details.

**GREEK REVIVAL** 1830 to 1860Typical Characteristics

- Portico with single or two-story Greek classical columns or heavy square pillars, or fully pedimented gable.
- Doors with sidelights covered by transom, all framed by flat pilasters and architrave.
- Pilastered corners with roof cornice returned to complete order.
- Triglyphs, dentils and modillions in cornice work.



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CHK'D		

PROJECT **Absecon Train Station Area Overlay Ordinance**SUBJECT **Appendix 1 d - Victorian Architectural Style****VICTORIAN** 1845 to 1880Typical Characteristics

- Gothic forms in design, pointed arches, etc.
- Square forms, towers, etc.
- Italian design added, French, Tudor and also Oriental.
- Contains porches, annexes, niches, pinnacles, railings, shutters, verandas, stained glass, etc.
- Arched windows.

Late Victorian

- Mansard roofs.
- Eave bargeboards in "frilly" designs.
- Fret work or "Gingerbread" used extensively.
- Wood shingles used.
- Finials
- Balustrades
- Bay windows
- Brackets

RLR
AICP

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Professional Planner

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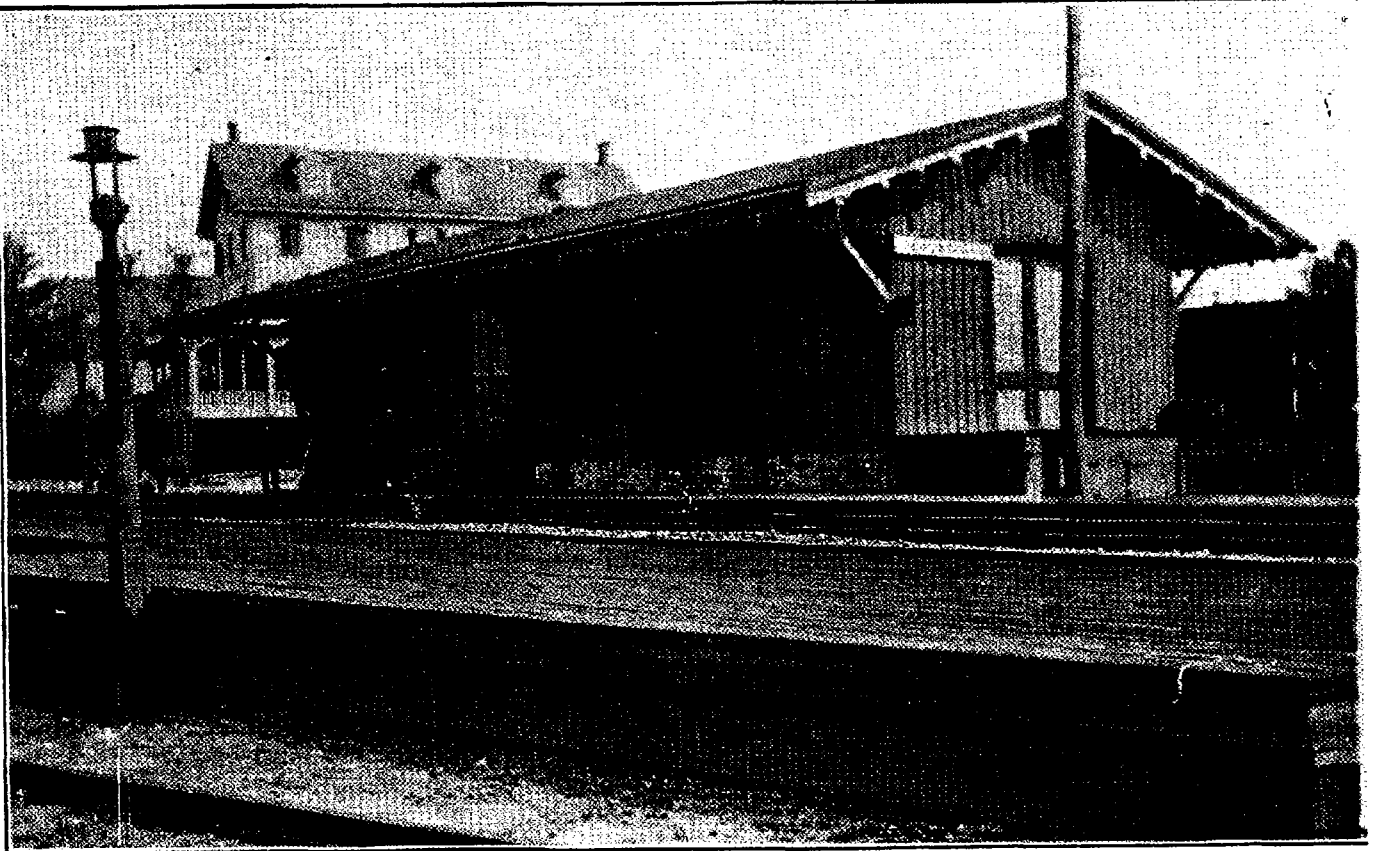
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Exhibit 224-270 - F1 Photograph of Train Station



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Exhibit 224-270 - F 2 Photograph of Absecon Manor

CHK'D

