

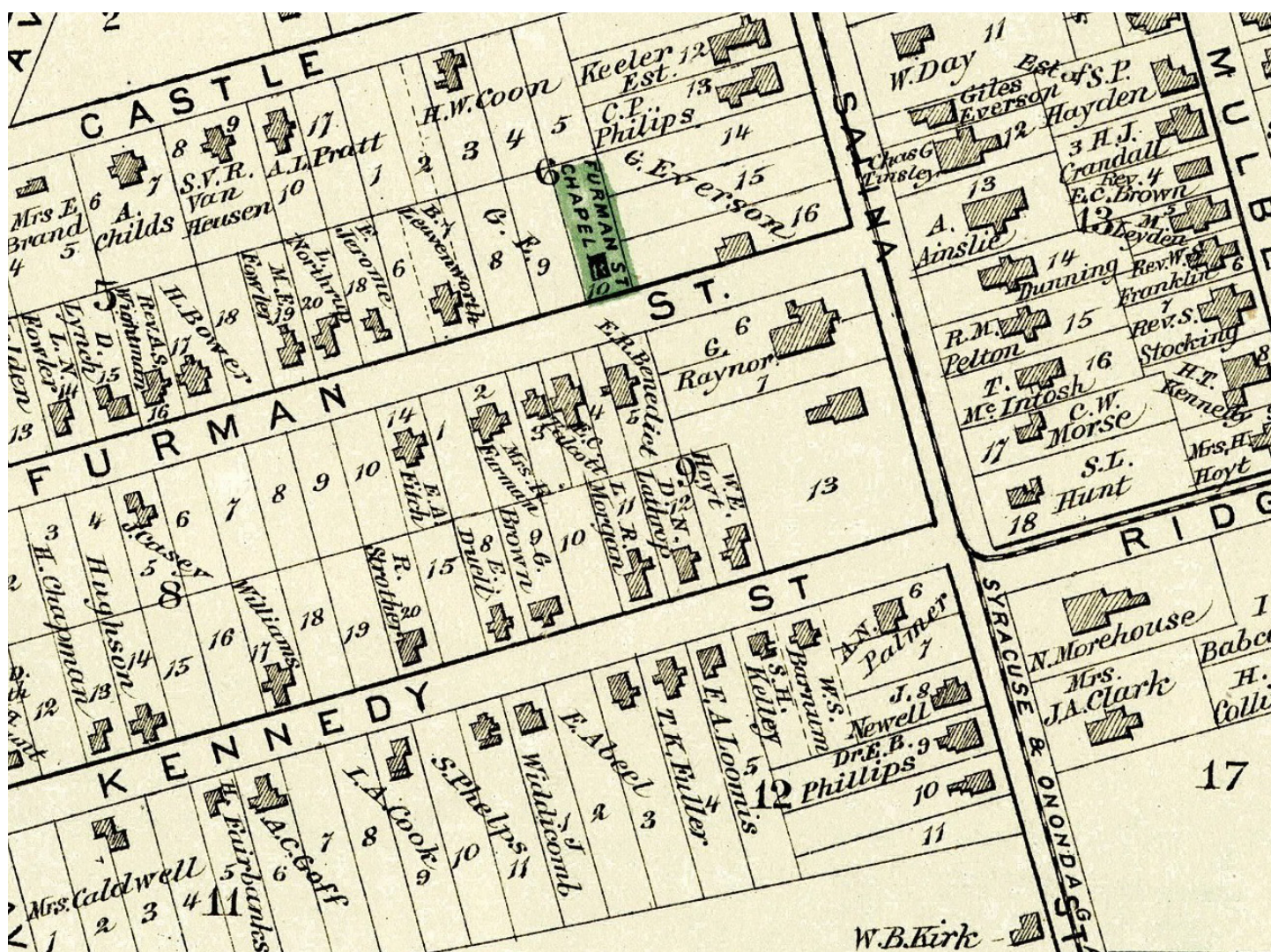
Village of Danforth

— Historic Resource Survey —

Syracuse, New York

DANFORTH

TOWN OF ONONDAGA



Prepared for:



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October 2012

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Purpose and Goals

On behalf of the City of Syracuse Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, **edr** Companies (**edr**) conducted a historic resources reconnaissance survey for the former Village of Danforth, which is now part of the Southside Neighborhood in the City of Syracuse, Onondaga County, New York. The historic resources survey was funded by a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP). The goals of this project included the following:

- To contribute to the identification and recognition of the City's significant historic resources.
- To foster and encourage interest in the history of the City of Syracuse and the Southside Neighborhood.
- To involve neighborhood residents and other community stakeholders in the historic resources survey process to provide community members with tools for grassroots preservation advocacy.
- To contribute to ongoing efforts to revitalize the Southside Neighborhood.

1.2 Historic Resources Study Area

The historic resources survey study area is located in the Southside Neighborhood of the City of Syracuse, in Onondaga County, New York (see Figure 1). The study area is defined by the approximate limits of the former Village of Danforth, and includes an area approximately six-by-seven blocks in size, bounded by Castle Street (on the north), Onondaga Creek (on the west), Beard Avenue (on the south), and Interstate 81 (on the east). This neighborhood was formerly incorporated as the Village of Danforth in 1874, and subsequently annexed by the City of Syracuse in 1887. The Village of Danforth Historic Survey is intended to identify and recognize those buildings that reflect and express the history and character of the neighborhood.

1.3 Project Team and Scope

The historic resources survey was conducted by **edr** planning and cultural resources staff in cooperation with City of Syracuse Certified Local Government (CLG) staff and a Project Advisory Committee (PAC). The key project participants, schedule, and community outreach strategy for the project was detailed in a Public Participation Plan (see Appendix A), which guided outreach activities throughout the project. Key project team members included:

- The City of Syracuse Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (the CLG entity)
- **edr** Companies (project consultant)
- the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
- David Rufus, Southeast Gateway Community Development Corporation

- Luke Dougherty, Office of the Mayor of Syracuse
- Sharon Owens, City of Syracuse Department of Neighborhood and Business Development
- Babette Baker, City of Syracuse Department of Neighborhood and Business (neighborhood resident)
- Councilor Khalid Bey, City of Syracuse Common Council (neighborhood resident)

A scoping meeting was held June 28, 2012 at the Beauchamp Branch Library with CLG personnel, PAC members (which included City staff as well as leaders of community organizations), three staff members from the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and **edr** staff. A morning introductory meeting was held, followed by a preliminary reconnaissance tour of the neighborhood. This was followed by an afternoon meeting which included determining the course of action for the public outreach and historic resources survey portions of the project.

The results of the scoping meeting can be summarized as follows:

- The scoping meeting participants agreed that the public outreach and neighborhood engagement portion of the survey was a priority and discussed methodology and outreach strategies.
- Following the preliminary tour of the survey area, SHPO staff members agreed that due to the architectural integrity of the resources, a neighborhood-wide historic district designation was not warranted.
- SHPO staff recommended narrowing the focus of the survey area to the blocks with the highest degree of architectural integrity, primarily the blocks of Kirk, McLennan, West Borden, and West Beard Avenues closest to the South Salina Street Historic District, as well as other blocks along Furman Street and Cortland Avenue.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Planning Context

The Village of Danforth Historic Resources Survey was conducted in the context of other applicable public and private plans and/or initiatives. A number of these plans and initiative may bear directly on the physical form of the Southside neighborhood that includes the former Village of Danforth, as well as the institutional services that benefit the neighborhood, even if they are not specifically identified therein. A brief summary of applicable plans and initiatives is provided below.

The Preservation Component of the City of Syracuse Comprehensive Plan (2003)

The Preservation Component of the City of Syracuse Comprehensive Plan¹ provides a general historic context for historic preservation efforts in the city over the past several decades, as well as an inventory and analysis of current programs, involved organizations and opportunities for additional preservation work. The built environment, and parks and open space are included in the inventory, as well analysis of land use, zoning, organizational patterns, and the potential for the implementation of preservation economics initiatives throughout the city.

Three goals and accompanying recommendations are included, some of which correspond to the efforts undertaken in the Village of Danforth Historic Resources Survey. The first objective under Goal 1 (Make preservation a priority in Syracuse) is to “Create a strong preservation ethic among the citizenry.” The actions associated with this objective and relevant to efforts under this historic resources survey include to:

- Promote a broad, comprehensive definition for and awareness of preservation
- Promote comprehensive public education and public relations programs for local preservation
- Include non-traditional preservation groups in preservation efforts.

An additional objective under this goal is to “emphasize the importance of community history to community identity and civic pride.” These objectives and actions correspond to the Village of Danforth Historic Resources Survey, specifically those dealing with engaging the public and non-traditional groups in preservation efforts.

Syracuse Comprehensive Plan 2025 (2005)

Syracuse’s current Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2005, provides general guidance for development and regulation throughout the city’s neighborhoods and business community for the subsequent 20 years. The Comprehensive Plan identifies a series of assets and trends shaping the City’s future, which ultimately influence the

¹ SUNY ESF, 2003.

public's vision for the City of Syracuse as a "great place to live, learn, work, and play." The City's neighborhoods, strategic economic areas, and corridors are described in general terms, in terms of both existing and envisioned future conditions.

The Comprehensive Plan envisions Syracuse's neighborhoods as featuring inviting natural amenities, attractive and safe pedestrian facilities, and well-connected public spaces. It advocates for urban mixed-use development, with residential areas supporting neighborhood-scale businesses and local schools. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan encourages active engagement between neighbors in both the public and semi-public realms (e.g. residential porches, high-quality pedestrian environments, etc.) and context-sensitive re-use of vacant properties.

A number of the goals in the Comprehensive Plan include historic preservation in their recommended actions. Emphasis on historic preservation and work with the Syracuse Landmark Preservation Board (SLPB) is recommended for goals related to neighborhood aesthetics, park enhancements. Goal 8, "Preserve, protect and enhance all historic buildings, landmarks, and sites within the City," pertains to identifying and inventorying buildings and sites eligible for listing on local, state, and/or national registers, as well as the economic and development opportunities associated with preservation of these properties, and creating design standards for designated properties.

A Pattern Book for Syracuse Neighborhoods (2009)

The Pattern Book for Syracuse Neighborhoods² is a planning tool providing design guidelines for homeowners, builders and developers, to assist in the plan and design of homes to correspond to the architectural character of existing neighborhoods in the City of Syracuse. Additionally, the Pattern Book identifies the dominant architectural styles and materials in three "pilot" neighborhoods of the City: Southwest/Brighton, Skunk City and Near Northeast. Each neighborhood is examined for its origins, age of housing, architectural styles, and style dominance. Rehabilitation guidelines for suggested materials and construction methods for architectural elements are also provided.

The portion referred to as Brighton contains the former Village of Danforth. While the entire neighborhood is not surveyed, an area bounded by South Salina, Furman and Midland Streets, as well as McLennan Avenue is chosen as a sample area for inventorying the characteristics listed above. A baseline for future historic resources surveys is provided, along with potential guidance for infill housing in the neighborhood.

² Urban Design Center of Syracuse, Inc., 2009.

Syracuse Housing Plan (2010)

The Syracuse Housing Plan,³ adopted in 2010, provides the framework for services and investments related to the City's housing stock. It recommends a number of strategies for improvements to both market-rate and affordable housing. In general, the Housing Plan seeks to preserve and rehabilitate existing buildings, assist and facilitate residential investments, build new housing where necessary and appropriate, and enhance the image of the city as demonstrated throughout its neighborhoods. The former Village of Danforth is included in the Southside Neighborhood Profile of the Housing Plan. The Southside is divided into three areas: Southeast Gateway Corridor, Kings Park Landing, and the Brighton area.

According to the Housing Plan, the housing stock of the Southside (including the Danforth neighborhood) has a median age of 1926, with a 21.4% vacancy rate, and an owner/renter ratio of 35.8% owner to 42.8% renter. Economic development, schools, and greenspace are briefly summarized, with Kirk Park noted as an important recreational space for the area.

Five housing development strategies are provided, including identification and stabilization of vacant structures, and block-by-block housing development. The Housing Plan identifies six potential metrics to measure the success of these recommended efforts in the Southside neighborhood: identification of vacant structures, coordinated block housing development strategy, vibrant commercial corridor, completing existing housing stock rehabilitation, increased home ownership, and increased home improvement.

The Housing Plan also recommends the creation and implementation of a land banking program, which the City of Syracuse has recently established in partnership with Onondaga County. Such a program is recommended to address vacant, abandoned and tax delinquent structures in a more holistic manner than has been done in the past.

Syracuse Land Use & Development Plan 2040 (2011)

The City's Draft Land Use & Development Plan⁴ (hereafter, the Land Use Plan) will be adopted in early 2013, and is one of the principal components of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. As a policy document, the Land Use Plan will serve as a guide for evaluating development proposals for their consistency with the objectives set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. It will also provide a foundation for the forthcoming revision of the City's zoning ordinances.

The Land Use Plan is based on five guiding principles, including:

³ City of Syracuse, 2010b.

⁴ City of Syracuse, 2011b.

- Preserve and build upon Syracuse's existing sustainable, multi-nodal land use patterns;
- Protect the character and unique "sense of place" of Syracuse's neighborhoods
- Ensure high-quality, attractive aesthetic and architectural design throughout the city;
- Promote environmentally sustainable land use patterns, transportation options, site plans, and construction practices; and
- Ensure that development processes and decisions are efficient, predictable, and transparent.

Included within the Land Use Plan is a Future Land Use map, which denotes the extent of form- and design-oriented "character areas" that the city aims to foster.

Four such character areas are shown within the boundaries of Danforth, as follows:

- **Low-Density Residential:** This characterization applies throughout much of the neighborhood between South Salina Street and Onondaga Creek, as well as between South Salina Street and Interstate 81. These areas are described as having shallow setbacks and narrow lots, and they are commonly served by neighborhood-scale commercial establishments. Detached one-to-two-family residences are prevalent and occasional small storefront commercial buildings may also be found.
- **Medium-Density Residential:** This classification occurs in small pockets among the dominant character areas. This characterization is comprised of one-to-multi-unit residential residences, row-houses, apartment buildings, and scattered storefront commercial buildings. Lot sizes vary, and commercial buildings generally have smaller setbacks than residences.
- **Neighborhood Mixed-Use:** The areas immediately adjacent to the South Salina and East and West Castle Street corridors are described as potential Neighborhood Mixed Use character areas. Within these areas, buildings are placed directly adjacent to the sidewalk, and the first stories feature large storefront windows. Detached one-to-multi-unit residences and 2-4 story apartment buildings may also be present. The Land Use Plan advocates for multi-story development within these areas, with parking to be located behind structures.
- **Parks and Open Space:** This character area is shown within the neighborhood along Onondaga Creek where Kirk Park is located.

Chapter 4 contains several Neighborhood-Specific Recommendations for the City's Southside neighborhoods. Among these recommendations are four that could apply specifically to Danforth, including:

- Ensure that new construction and major alterations in these historic neighborhoods conform to the area's architectural context—particularly with regard to setbacks, form and window patterns.
- Prohibit the conversion of empty lots into surface parking (as a primary use) in both residential and commercial areas.
- Encourage higher-density residential uses around commercial corridors to facilitate efficient transit provision and sustain commercial enterprises.
- Ensure that pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and automobiles can all safely use South Salina Street.

The Land Use Plan also includes recommendations for options to regulate infill and major alterations to buildings, in order to ensure that they are consistent with the desired character of their neighborhood. These recommendations are relevant to the Danforth neighborhood, and include:

- Engaging residents in neighborhoods that are eligible for local preservation district designation to participate in defining the characteristics they value and in developing the design guideline that dictate allowable alterations in their district.
- Examine the possibility of designating residential neighborhoods not eligible for local historic preservation district status as conservation districts, where form, roofline, setbacks, porches, window patterns, and site plans of new construction and major alterations would be regulated for general consistency. Conservation districts would be designated at the request of a majority of property owners within the district. Design guidelines dictating allowable alterations would be developed in consultation with property owners.
- Individual properties may be designated local protected sites, and subject to a higher standard of reviews than neighboring non-historic properties.

Syracuse Draft Sustainability Plan (2012)

The Syracuse Draft Sustainability Plan of 2012⁵ is a component of the Syracuse Comprehensive Plan provides guidance on renewable energy and affordable energy for Syracuse residents. Two key sources are identified that comprise 99% of energy use in the City of Syracuse: buildings and vehicles. Three goals of the Sustainability Plan related to these sources are to:

- Reduce energy consumption
- Increase renewable energy capacity
- Reduce the environmental impact of public and private buildings

⁵ City of Syracuse, 2012a.

Recommendations are provided for renters and homeowners regarding air conditioner usage, storm windows, light bulbs, water use, and appliance use. Energy audits, weatherization and reuse of existing materials in renovations are also recommended, though no neighborhood-specific analysis is included in the Plan. Additional sections address education, rain gardens, recycling, and other sustainable practices.

Syracuse Third Annual Action Plan (2012-2013)

The City of Syracuse Department of Neighborhood and Business Development Action Plan⁶ us an annual update to the City's Five-Year Strategic Consolidated Plan, which outlines the approach to providing affordable housing and meeting community development needs of residents and stakeholders in Syracuse. The strategies identified in the Plan reflect five primary goals:

- Provide decent, affordable housing options for owners and renters
- Provide a suitable living environment for all residents
- Expand economic opportunities throughout the City
- Strategically revitalize our neighborhoods to strengthen communities, families, and individuals
- Provide services to individuals that promote or foster self-sufficiency

The Department of Neighborhood and Business Development identifies 32 neighborhoods within the City of Syracuse. Of these, 14 are eligible for resource allocation from Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program funds. The Southside, including the former Village of Danforth, is one of these neighborhoods, and is part of the Southwest Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA). These NRSA's contain low- and moderate-income households most eligible for the City to undertake economic development, house and public service activities with its CDBG funds.

Several CDBG- and HOME Investment Partnership (HOME)-funded neighborhood "housing partners" are identified, with Syracuse Model Neighborhood Corporation (SMNC), Southeast Gateway Development Corporation, Home HeadQuarters, and Housing Visions Unlimited heavily active in the Southside neighborhoods. Four major neighborhood revitalization projects are identified, one of which is the Kings Park Landing Neighborhood Revitalization.

The Kings Park Landing project is collaboration between Home HeadQuarters, SMNC, and Housing Visions to revitalize the neighborhood within the boundaries of the original Village of Danforth: Castle Street to the north, Route

⁶ City of Syracuse, 2012b.

81 to the east, Colvin Street to the south, and Kirk Park and South Avenue on the west. This will be accomplished through a mix of new construction, rehabilitation, demolition, home improvement block blitzes, and homeowner assistance, funded by CDBG and HOME funds as well as Low Income Housing Tax Credits. Housing Visions will target 18 parcels of land within the neighborhood for redevelopment, using rehabilitation, demolition and new construction to create 43 rental housing units affordable to low- and very low-income households.

The former ElJay properties comprise nine large apartment buildings foreclosed upon by HUD, and located throughout Syracuse. One of these properties, the Roosevelt Apartments, is located on South Salina Street and contains 45 units. Once rehabilitated, the units will be rented to low-income households.

Previous Historic Resources Surveys and Preservation Initiatives in the City of Syracuse

Several historic resource surveys, related initiatives and publications have occurred in the past several decades in the City of Syracuse⁷. The City of Syracuse maintains a Historic Properties List for resources either listed on or eligible for the NRHP, as well as properties that are locally protected or eligible for local protection by the Syracuse Landmark Preservation Board (SLPB). This includes several properties in the former Village of Danforth (see Section 2.2). There are two areas located within or adjacent to the study area that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The South Salina Street Historic District is located in the former of Village of Danforth, with Onondaga Park located to the west on the other side of Onondaga Creek, and Oakwood Cemetery located on the eastern border, across Interstate 81. The western portion of Oakwood Cemetery was originally in the Village of Danforth, and the connection to the village was severed by the construction of the interstate.

There are six neighborhood NRHP historic districts in the City of Syracuse: Berkeley Park, Hawley-Green, Onondaga Highlands-Swaneola Heights, Scottholm Tract, Strathmore By the Park Subdivision, and Walnut Park. The Scottholm Tract is the most recently listed neighborhood historic district, for a designed residential subdivision that became a streetcar suburb. The methodology of the historic resources survey that was conducted for the Scottholm neighborhood⁸ could be instructive for future comprehensive neighborhood surveys in the City of Syracuse, such as the former Village of Danforth.

Previous attempts to inventory historic sites in the City of Syracuse include *Syracuse Landmarks: An AIA Guide to Downtown and Historic Neighborhoods*⁹, which describes 13 walking and driving tours with maps. The South Side neighborhood tour includes the South Salina Street Historic District in the former Village of Danforth.

⁷ This review of previous historic resources surveys and preservation efforts in the City is not intended to be comprehensive but rather is intended only to provide a context for the Village of Danforth survey.

⁸ City of Syracuse, 2010a.

⁹ Hardin, 1993.

2.2 Previously Identified Historic Resources in the Study Area

edr reviewed the SPHINX database maintained by NYSOPRHP and the *Syracuse, NY Historic Properties List* maintained by the City of Syracuse Landmark Preservation Board to determine the status of previously identified/evaluated historic buildings and/or districts within the survey area. Historically significant properties are defined by the National Park Service (NPS) to include buildings, districts, objects, structures and/or sites listed, or that have been formally determined eligible for listing, on the State and/or NRHP, or that have been locally designated as historic landmarks. Criteria set forth by the NPS for evaluating historic properties (36 CFR 60.4) state that a historic property is significant (i.e., eligible for listing on the NRHP) if the property conveys:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and

- A. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.¹⁰

Criteria for designation as a City of Syracuse Local Protected Site and/or Local Preservation District states that a site or district must possess one or more of the following characteristics:

- 1. association with persons or events of historic significance to the city, region, state or nation;
- 2. illustrative of historic growth and development of the city, region, state or nation;
- 3. in the case of structures, embodying distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or representing the work of a master, or possessing unique architectural and artistic qualities, or representing a significant and distinguishable entity whose component may lack individual distinction;
- 4. in the case of districts, possessing a unique overall quality of architectural scale, texture, form and visual homogeneity even though certain structures within the district may lack individual distinction;
- 5. in the case of interiors, possessing one (1) or more of the characteristics enumerated in 1, 2 or 3 above and, in addition, embodying distinctive characteristics of architectural scale, form and visual

¹⁰ CFR, 2004; NPS, 1990.

homogeneity, which are an integral part of the character of the structure in which the space is contained.¹¹

In total, there are 1,268 parcels (or properties) in the study area, which include the following historic resources:

- One NRHP-listed historic district (the South Salina Street Historic District), which includes twenty-seven contributing properties.
- Twenty-two properties that NYSOPRHP has previously determined are eligible for listing on the NRHP
- Four properties that the City of Syracuse has designated Local Protected Sites (note that two of these properties are located in the NRHP-listed historic district and one has also been determined NRHP-eligible)
- Eleven properties that the City of Syracuse has determined are eligible for listing as Local Protected Sites.

In addition, 737 properties within the study area have been previously evaluated by NYSORHP and determined *ineligible* for listing on the NRHP. The remaining parcels within the project area have no formal status or determination regarding their historic significance. The locations of all of these properties – NRHP-listed, NRHP-eligible, Local Protected Sites, and sites determined eligible for local protection, and sites determined ineligible for listing on the NRHP – are shown on Figure 2.

¹¹ City of Syracuse, 1993.

3.0 VILLAGE OF DANFORTH HISTORIC CONTEXT

3.1 Historical Research Methods and Sources

edr conducted historical research necessary to prepare a historic context statement (or narrative) for the Village of Danforth, including the identification of periods of significance and the definition of significant property types and/or architectural styles associated with those periods. Research conducted for this task included review of the following archives, collections, and/or sources:

- The NYSOPRHP State Preservation Historical Information Network Exchange (SPHINX) inventory
- The City of Syracuse Landmark Preservation Board inventory of Local Protected Sites and Local Preservation Districts (the *Syracuse, NY Historic Properties List*)
- The Onondaga Historical Association
- The Local History Collection at the Onondaga County Public Library (Main Branch)
- The online archive of the Syracuse Newspapers
- Planning documents on file with the City of Syracuse Bureau of Planning & Sustainability
- *A Memorial History of Syracuse* (Bruce, 1891)
- *Onondaga's Centennial* (Bruce, 1894)
- *History of Onondaga County, New York* (Clayton, 1878)
- *Salt City and Its Black Community* (Stamps and Stamps, 2008)

3.2 Historic Context Narrative

The area known historically as the Village of Danforth is located in the present day City of Syracuse (in Onondaga County, New York), in the area generally bound by Castle Street, Onondaga Creek, Colvin Street, and Interstate 81. Like the rest of the county, the land was originally part of the Iroquois Confederacy, specifically in the territory of the Onondaga Indians. From the first contact between the Onondagas and French priests in 1654 to the late eighteenth century, the region had a contentious history of ownership claims and battles for possession. During this period, the French, British, Onondagas and eventually Americans claimed the land that would eventually become the City of Syracuse, and to the south, the Town of Onondaga. New York State acquired title to lands held by the Onondagas through a 1788 treaty. In 1789-90 the New Military Tract, an approximately 1.5 million-acre tract of land set aside to award to soldiers who served in the Continental army, was surveyed and laid out, including what would become Onondaga County in 1794.¹²

Early Settlement in the Vicinity: ca. 1600-1800

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, white settlers began to trickle into the area, lured by fur trading, as well as the wealth of salt springs, for which the region was already well known. The earliest permanent white settler in the area surrounding Syracuse was Ephraim Webster, a hunter, trapper, scout and interpreter who constructed a

¹² King, 1992; Rivette, 2005.

log cabin along the east bank of Onondaga Creek in 1786. In 1788, Webster encouraged Comfort Tyler and General Asa Danforth (after whom the Village of Danforth would eventually be named) to settle in Onondaga Hollow, in what later became the Town of Onondaga.¹³ General Danforth came from the town of Mayfield in Montgomery County, after a visit by Ephraim Webster and two Onondaga Indians describing the beautiful wilderness from which they had traveled. Danforth requested the consent of the Indians to relocate to their lands, which was given, and he set out with his family to the Onondaga country.

Tyler and Danforth are credited for making the first salt for use by resident white settlers from the salt springs near the mouth of Onondaga Lake. They are recognized in histories of Syracuse and Onondaga County for their pioneering efforts in industry, politics, and in the settlement of this region. By the time of his death in 1818, Asa Danforth had attained the rank of Major in the Army, served one term as a state Senator, been appointed Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, and acted as superintendent of the Salt Springs Reservation and for many years was the head of the county militia organization. His family was also important to the development of this area, as his adult son Asa Danforth Jr. traveled with Comfort Tyler on the first trip to their new home, and became active with his father in local commerce and politics.¹⁴

Speculation and Early Development: ca. 1800-1874

General Thaddeus M. Wood, a war of 1812 veteran and the first resident attorney in Onondaga County, married Asa Danforth's daughter Patty in 1800.¹⁵ In 1824, General Wood, who owned real estate throughout the county, purchased a large land holding from New York State along South Salina Street, which he named after his wife's family. Part of this purchase was a large portion of what would become the Village of Danforth (including the area currently encompassed by the South Salina Historic District). Ownership of the land reverted to the state after Wood fell into arrears, and passed away in 1836. In 1843, William B. Kirk, who made his fortunes in real estate and the New York Central Railroad, purchased the land from the state, and is considered to be one of the founding fathers of the Village of Danforth, which in its early days of development was also known as the Kirk Tract. William Kirk's role in the development of the area is memorialized by the names of Kirk Avenue and Kirk Park. Following his acquisition of this tract, Kirk began to subdivide and sell off land along South Salina Street and McLennan Avenue.¹⁶ He was not the only resident to encourage development this way in Danforth.

In the early years of the City of Syracuse, streetcar lines provided important connections to the neighboring villages of Salina and Geddes, north and west of the city. Following the Civil War and into the late nineteenth century,

¹³ King, 1992; Landscape & Prospect, 1994.

¹⁴ Bruce, 1891.

¹⁵ Bruce, 1894.

¹⁶ National Park Service, 1986.

landowners and developers began to build additional streetcar lines out of the center of the city to the south and east, opening up large tracts of farmland for development. This helped create new urban and suburban neighborhoods along some of the most utilized transit lines. George Raynor was one such landowner with property south of the city, in what would become the Village of Danforth. Raynor, perceiving he could profit from extending the Syracuse & Onondaga Railroad south along his land, became a director of the railroad, and eventually sold his holdings along the path of the rail line. Raynor's speculation paid off as the area population grew considerably in the late 1860s and early 1870s, largely due to easy railroad access.¹⁷

The streetcar line between downtown Syracuse and Oakwood Cemetery opened in July 1864. One of the primary goals in the construction of this line was the further development of the territory south of Castle Street. The belief of the primary landowners along the rail corridor was that once the line was in operation, if land was sold at reasonable prices the tracts would be rapidly developed.¹⁸ Within the next decade, they were proven correct, as the development of the village centered around the streetcar line on South Salina Street, and west of Oakwood Cemetery.

Charles A. Baker was another landowner of a large tract along South Salina Street who contributed to the continued growth of the nascent village. Baker donated seventeen acres for the purpose of public street construction, the first one opening near his residence and named Castle Street, which would later form the northern border of the Village of Danforth. He was also one of the landowners who sold property that contributed to the development of Oakwood Cemetery.¹⁹ Proximity to the cemetery was likely a draw for new residents in this area, as it was the first rural cemetery of its kind in the area, and the largest open space in the city at that time.

An August 1865 *Syracuse Journal* article detailed a small village south of the city in the Town of Onondaga that had sprung into existence over the preceding four or five years, describing the neighborhood as very pleasant, and noting the "fine residences, with their ample, cultivated grounds." The article was discussing the settlement that would become Danforth, then characterized as "the brightest spot in the town of Onondaga."²⁰ The 1860 Sweet map of the Town of Onondaga (Figure 3) shows a cluster of development just south of the Syracuse border, and west of the Syracuse, Binghamton and New York Railroad. A few clusters of houses, a hotel, race course, and fairgrounds appear on the map, with C.A. (Charles) Baker and H. (Henry, brother of George) Raynor noted among the landowners, and the majority of houses located along South Salina Street.²¹

¹⁷ Syracuse Post-Standard, 1979.

¹⁸ Bruce, 1891.

¹⁹ Ebert, et al., 1998.

²⁰ Syracuse Journal, 1865.

²¹ Sweet, 1860.

The 1874 Sweet Atlas map of the Town of Onondaga contains an inset for the village of Danforth, showing that it has grown considerably (Figure 4). Development is primarily located along the streets east of Salina Street, and north and east of the Syracuse and Onondaga Railroad, as well as the Oakwood Railroad branch. The greatest concentration of houses is found on Mulberry, Grape and Ridgeway Streets (now known as South State Street, Oakwood Avenue and East Kennedy Street, respectively). Several houses are located along Castle, Furman and Kennedy Streets, with several lots to the south and west shown as subdivided. In addition, a large park labeled Danforth Park is located south of the Oakwood Railroad and west of the Syracuse, Binghamton and New York Railroad, just across the tracks from Oakwood Cemetery.²² A bird's-eye view map of the City of Syracuse from 1874 also depicts the village of Danforth at the outskirts of the city (Figure 5). The view reflects the settlement pattern shown in the Sweet map, but provides a clearer depiction of the comparatively rural character of the area, when contrasted with the city next to which it was located. Houses are clustered along tree-lined streets, with large, open fields surrounding the neighborhood.²³ Several houses shown on this map are extant in the area today. The concentration of houses along the rail lines, as well as the general open character of the neighborhood, contributes to the claim that Danforth was the first streetcar suburb of the City of Syracuse.²⁴

Establishment and Growth of the Village of Danforth: ca. 1874-1886

The increased density of this settlement in the town of Onondaga began to gain momentum toward becoming a formal entity. A meeting in late January 1874 showed the united support of Danforth residents for incorporation of a village, in part to avoid annexation to the City of Syracuse. The primary reasons for incorporation were to form a school district and secure better streets. A popular reason for incorporation cited by residents, including George Raynor, was to avoid paying additional taxes if Danforth were to become part of the city. Raynor specifically thought annexation should be opposed until the proper time came. Another resident spoke of “rings” of people within the city who were conspiring to “steal the village.” Resolutions were passed stating opposition to annexation, as well as incorporation into a village under the general laws of the State of New York.²⁵

Formal incorporation did not occur until December 1874, and in the interim, residents of Danforth wrote into the *Syracuse Journal* to argue reasons for and against incorporation. The latter arguments focused on the need for up to seventeen village officers, such as a clerk and police force, in place of the road master who handled many such

²² Sweet, 1874.

²³ Bailey, 1874.

²⁴ Connors, 2012.

²⁵ Syracuse Journal, “Danforth,” 1874.

duties. One writer suggested the only benefit would be the power to grade streets. Another point of contention was the need to incorporate in order to form a free school district.²⁶

On December 21, 1874, the residents of Danforth voted for incorporation of the Village of Danforth, with 85 for incorporation, and 52 against it. The boundaries of the village were fixed as follows:

Beginning at a monument at the intersection of the easterly line of Salina street with the south line of the City of Syracuse; thence westerly along said city line to the right bank of the Onondaga Creek; thence northerly across said creek to the left bank; thence up along said left bank of said creek, following its windings and turnings, to a point opposite the center of Colvin street; thence easterly along the center of said street to the center of Salina street to the center of the Day road; thence along the center of said road to the southwest corner of Oakwood; thence northerly along the west line of Oakwood to the south line of the City of Syracuse; and thence westerly along said city line to the place of beginning.²⁷

The first president of the village was Edward Abeel, followed the next year by attorney T.K. Fuller, and then Edward Glass five years later, who served in that position until annexation by the city. The village witnessed almost immediate improvement in the form of a wooden school building, soon replaced by a larger brick school, and numerous new residences. It was written later by historian Dwight Bruce that “the Village of Danforth soon gained a reputation for beauty and healthfulness not excelled by that of any other suburb of Syracuse.”²⁸

Following incorporation, the Village of Danforth continued to grow. A March 1879 *Syracuse Journal* article reported that Syracuse residents were “looking in the direction of this fine flourishing village for desirable homes in the ensuing year,” noting several real estate transactions, and the potential for a new school building in the coming year.²⁹ Over the next several years, columns appeared in Syracuse newspapers with titles like “Danforth Notes” and “Danforth Doings,” detailing the daily lives of residents, from elections, to social gatherings, to acts of violence. An 1879 public school textbook on Onondaga County geography noted that Danforth had grown into prominence and estimated the population at 1,000 people.³⁰

²⁶ *Syracuse Journal*, “Letters from the People,” 1874.

²⁷ Bruce, 1891.

²⁸ Bruce, 1891.

²⁹ *Syracuse Journal*, 1879.

³⁰ Bardeen, 1879; With only 137 residents voting for incorporation in 1874, it is unlikely the village population grew to 1,000 in five years.

The village continued to grow, as did the complications of serving a larger population. A visit to Danforth by a state board of health inspector in 1885 concluded that “already the Village of Danforth has grown so as to be practically a southern extension of Syracuse, and there are some 1,500 people in the village.” The purpose of his visit, however, related to the poor condition of Onondaga Creek, which at that point provided some of the water supply for the City of Syracuse, as well as Danforth. In a report to the board of health he stated that due to the lack of sewers, there was a “constantly increasing danger that the filth and the germs of disease from the Village of Danforth may pass into Onondaga Creek above the intake of the water supply” to Syracuse.³¹

As early as 1884, arguments over annexation had resumed in the editorial pages of Syracuse newspapers. One author proclaimed that there was no surrounding area more connected “in interest, and sympathy with the general prosperity of the city, than Danforth,” noting the acute need for fire protection, a water supply, lighting, paving, sewers, a police force and night watch. Another reason cited for the interest in annexation of Danforth was the desire for the village to join the Syracuse school system. The need for stable municipal services such as water and gas, as well as the pressure for an improved school system, brought the prospect of annexation by the City of Syracuse back to Danforth.³²

While the topic of annexation of Danforth had been discussed for several years, the final movement is reported to have originated with only a few local residents who, inspired by the recent annexation of the Village of Geddes to the City of Syracuse in 1886, began a petition to garner the support of Danforth residents and then secure the support of local Assemblymen for a bill supporting the same action.³³ The petition was drafted for the subsequent annexation of Danforth, and within a day had the signatures of forty residents, including several businessmen and elected officials in the community. While some residents were still opposed on the grounds of increased taxation, the majority of residents were said to have now favored becoming a part of Syracuse. School facilities, described as “in a miserable condition for so wealthy a village,” were a major factor cited by supporters for annexation.³⁴

Annexation by the City of Syracuse: ca. 1886-1920s

Governor David B. Hill signed a bill authorizing the annexation of Danforth by the City of Syracuse on June 15th, 1886. The following morning, a headline in *The Syracuse Standard* proclaimed “Syracuse Wakes Up This Morning Bigger and Healthier Than Ever.” The occasion was marked by a cannon salute at midnight, the firing of which was

³¹ Gardiner, 1885.

³² *Syracuse Standard*, 1884.

³³ *Syracuse Standard*, “Putting Danforth Through,” 1886.

³⁴ *Syracuse Standard*, “And Danforth Also,” 1886.

attended by the mayor of the city.³⁵ The *Syracuse Standard* remarked that “the news (of annexation) was received with great satisfaction, and every loyal Syracusan felt yesterday that he was part and parcel of a goodly town.”³⁶ The Act of the New York Legislature annexing Danforth to the City of Syracuse passed on June 15th, 1886, to take effect on the 3rd Tuesday of February 1887, and included farm lots 92 and 93 in the Town of Onondaga. The territory annexed was bounded as follows:

All that part of the town of Onondaga included in the corporate limits of the Village of Danforth, and so much of Oakwood cemetery as is not already included in the City of Syracuse; and also all that part of the town of Onondaga bounded and described as follows: Beginning at the west bank of Onondaga creek and the south line of Danforth, and running thence southerly up and along the west bank of said creek as it winds and turns to the westward prolongation of the south line of lot number 93 of the Onondaga Reservation; thence easterly along the south line of said lot and its westward prolongation to the east line thereof; thence north along said east line and the east line of lot number 92 of said town to the center of the Day road (so-called) and thence westerly along the center line of said road to the south line of said village to the place of beginning.³⁷

The Boyd’s Directory the City of Syracuse for 1887-88 notes that the new eleventh ward, which had been formed as a result of the annexation of Danforth, was the largest in the city to date, and spoke of its “attractive lawns...pleasant drives, well-kept homes, pure air and congenial society,” and that the “beautiful and commodious school buildings speak for the superior intelligence of the inhabitants.”³⁸ While many were excited about the newly minted annexation of Danforth, some residents were very displeased with the outcome. A poem submitted by a Danforth resident appeared in the *Syracuse Journal* soon after annexation referring the village and its residents as “a swallowed people.”³⁹

Following annexation, building activity remained steady into the 1920s. By 1923, the last subdivided lot along South Salina Street had been developed.⁴⁰

Modern Period: ca. 1920s-present

Modern development has considerably altered the former Village of Danforth, and the surrounding south side neighborhoods of the city. The construction of Interstate 81 parallel and to the east of South Salina Street in the

³⁵ Syracuse Standard, “Danforth Out of the Wet,” 1886.

³⁶ Syracuse Standard, “Putting It In Figures,” 1886.

³⁷ Bruce, 1891.

³⁸ Boyd, 1887.

³⁹ Syracuse Standard, date unknown.

⁴⁰ National Park Service, 1986.

1960s relieved pressure on the latter as the dominant north-south thoroughfare in this area. Additionally, many residents of the former Fifteenth Ward on the city's near east side displaced by the construction of Interstate 81 relocated to the area of Danforth.⁴¹ During subsequent decades, increased outmigration of neighborhood residents to suburban areas increased, while the business district of the City of Syracuse began to encroach on the Danforth neighborhood, primarily along the South Salina Street corridor. This corresponded to a demographic shift in the neighborhood population to predominantly African-American.

Though the overall population of the City of Syracuse has declined since 1950, the population of the African-American community has continued to increase, from a dramatic increase of 144% between 1950 and 1960, to the 11% increase seen from 1990 to 2000. This demographic shift is due in part to increased migration to Syracuse, primarily from the South, but also the movement of a large percentage of the white population to the suburbs. Historically, the black community of Syracuse was confined to specific geographic areas of the city, often due to lack of employment and housing opportunities related to racial segregation.⁴²

In the late nineteenth century, the black community in Syracuse was located primarily along the Erie Canal in the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Wards of the city. By the early twentieth century, African-Americans were essentially restricted to two census tracts: the Ninth Ward, also known as the "Washington-Water strip," a nine-block area along those streets, and "Jewtown," a largely Jewish neighborhood in the Fifteenth Ward of the city, located between downtown and the Syracuse University area. When urban renewal and slum clearance in Syracuse began in 1935, the Washington-Water strip was among its first targets. The resulting housing loss by demolition led to many of the poorer residents moving to the Fifteenth Ward, which became home to eighty percent of the city's African-American population. The subsequent overcrowding led to the relocation by many residents who could afford housing in other areas of the city. The year 1935 also marked the construction of a new low-cost housing project called Pioneer Homes, adjacent to the University area and the Fifteenth Ward. Initially forbidden from residing in this housing project, African-Americans were eventually allowed to move in through the efforts of the Dunbar Center.⁴³ The Dunbar Center was started by an African-American ex-convict to provide recreational opportunities for youths in the Ninth and Fifteenth Wards, and was originally located in various locations on East Fayette, South McBride and Townsend Streets, before relocating to its current building on South State Street in the former Village of Danforth in 1964.⁴⁴ This move coincided with the displacement of a large segment of the African-American community of Syracuse due to the construction of Interstates 81 and 690.

⁴¹ Scoping meeting notes, June 28, 2012.

⁴² Stamps and Stamps, 2008.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Dunbar Association, 2012.

The Housing Acts of 1937 and 1949 had already led to wide scale demolition of neighborhoods that were predominantly African-American, but the Federal Highway Act of 1944 also resulted in the dislocation of over eighty percent of that population as a result of the construction of Interstates 690 and 81. A total of 103 acres of land were cleared in four contiguous census tracts that were largely black and poor. Though a Relocation Office headed by William Childes (the first black man appointed to an administrative position in Syracuse) was started in 1959, securing housing for African Americans in a city with strongly-embedded housing discrimination and limited public housing was a difficult task. While middle-income African-American homeowners generally relocated to the east side of the city, lower-income renting families ended up on the south side, along with many of the recently migrated Southern African-Americans now residing in Syracuse. High poverty and low homeownership rates contributed to the overall decline in the neighborhood. Deterioration of the housing stock and wide spread demolition took its toll on the original village area.⁴⁵

Today, the former Village of Danforth and the surrounding neighborhood is an urban neighborhood featuring a mix of single and multi-family houses, churches, and businesses. Although it remains predominantly African-American, the Southside is increasing in its economic and cultural diversity.

⁴⁵ Stamps and Stamps, 2008.

4.0 HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY

The initial intent of the historic resources survey was to identify and document those buildings (or properties) within the study area that would satisfy NRHP eligibility criteria. However, as a result of initial observations by project team members and SHPO staff during the project scoping meeting, the condition and integrity of buildings within the study area (in general) did not appear to warrant nomination of a new or expanded NRHP historic district. Therefore, the public outreach and participation aspects of the survey became the primary objective for the project. The focus of the historic resources survey shifted from a potential NRHP nomination to a general architectural survey of the neighborhood to document changes over time, to identify resources and areas for potential future intensive survey, and identify connections with other rehabilitation and revitalization activities within the City of Syracuse.

4.1 Public Outreach Methods and Materials

In collaboration with CLG staff and the PAC, **edr** coordinated a public outreach and community engagement process to inform the community about the history of the neighborhood and goals of the project, and recruit volunteers to participate in the historic resources survey. Prior to conducting any outreach events, **edr** developed outreach materials that were reviewed by CLG staff. In addition to promotional materials, such as flyers announcing outreach events, the primary public outreach materials produced for the project included a project-specific *Historic Resource Inventory Form* and an accompanying *Visual Field Guide*. The *Visual Field Guide* is an easy-to-use reference manual that is intended to equip volunteers who have little or no familiarity with architectural history and terminology with the basic concepts and terms necessary to identify architectural elements, materials, and styles within the survey area. The information in the *Visual Field Guide* allowed participants to complete the *Historic Resource Inventory Form*. Copies of the flyers for the outreach events, the *Historic Resource Inventory Form*, and the *Visual Field Guide* are included in Appendix B.

The community outreach events included two types of activities – orientation/training sessions and historic resource survey fieldwork sessions. These events consisted of the following:

- Orientation/Training Sessions: These events served to introduce participants to the project and its goals, and provide them with the skills necessary to assist the project team with the historic resources survey. The event included a presentation by **edr** and City staff that summarized the history of the neighborhood and introduced the methods that would be used to conduct the historic resources survey. The training included an introduction to the *Historic Resource Inventory Form* and *Visual Field Guide*, as well as guidelines for architectural photography. The sessions also included questions and discussion with project participants.

- Historic Resource Survey Fieldwork Sessions: These events consisted of the neighborhood “blitzes”, during which project participants were organized in small groups and assigned designated blocks to survey. Each group or team included one or more **edr** and/or CLG staff to answer questions and help guide the survey process. The volunteers completed *Historic Resource Inventory Forms* and photographed potential historic structures within their assigned survey blocks.

Publicity and marketing for the outreach events included posting flyers in the neighborhood and other key venues (such as the Onondaga Historical Association), attending public events (such as the Mayor’s Summer Meeting in the neighborhood August 9, 2012), advertising in local media (including an article in the *Syracuse Post Standard* on August 11, 2012; see Appendix B), and announcements through electronic social media (such as Facebook and Twitter).

The historic resources survey sessions began at the Beauchamp Branch Library at 2111 South Salina Street (within the study area), and were conducted on the following dates and times:

- Saturday August 11th – 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. (Orientation/Training and Historic Resource Survey Fieldwork)
- Tuesday August 14th – 6:00-8:30 p.m. (Orientation/Training and Historic Resource Survey Fieldwork)
- Tuesday August 21st – 3:00-5:00 and 6:00-8:00 p.m. (Historic Resource Survey Fieldwork only)
- Thursday August 23rd – 3:00-5:00 and 6:00-8:00 p.m. (Historic Resource Survey Fieldwork only)

The survey sessions attracted residents from throughout the city, including volunteers from neighboring towns, such as Camillus. The first survey session featured approximately ten youth volunteers from a local group called 100 Black Men. The second survey session had a turnout of over twenty volunteers, but this survey session was suspended after it began to rain. Two makeup sessions were scheduled, the first resulting in four volunteers from the previous session, and the final survey session had only one volunteer. While many survey forms were completed by volunteers (under **edr** staff supervision), others were completed by **edr** and CLG staff in order to survey a greater number of properties when the number of volunteers was not as significant for a survey session.

4.2 Historic Resources Survey Methods

Documentation of each property included one or more photographs of the building (or property), recording the property name and/or street address, and completing the *Historic Resources Inventory Form* to describe the architectural style, physical characteristics and materials (e.g., number of stories, external siding, type of plan, roof, foundation), alterations, and other noteworthy characteristics. Potential historic resources were photographed and

assessed from public rights of way. No inspections or evaluations requiring access to private property were conducted as part of this survey.

Properties previously listed on the National Register of Historic Places were not surveyed, but those determined eligible for the NRHP, or eligible for local protection were included in the survey to assess current conditions. Buildings that are not sufficiently old (i.e., are less than 50 years in age), that lacked architectural integrity, or otherwise were evaluated by **edr** or CLG staff as lacking historical or architectural significance were *not* included the field survey.

4.3 Historic Resources Survey Results

The locations of all of the properties documented during the historic survey sessions are shown on Figure 6. Photographs of all of the surveyed properties are included in Appendix C. Copies of all of the Historic Resources Inventory Forms completed by project staff and community volunteers are included in Appendix D. The results of the historic resources survey for the former Village of Danforth can be summarized as follows:

- A total of 353 resources were surveyed in five field survey sessions.
- Four of these five survey sessions involved community members, utilizing survey forms and photographs. The fifth session was conducted by **edr** staff strictly for photographic purposes.
- A total of 219 resources were surveyed using forms and photography, and 134 resources were surveyed using photography only. Every resource surveyed was photographed at least one time.
- 16 of 31 streets were surveyed, including the full length of Kirk, McLennan and Cortland Avenues, and Furman and Leon Streets, that occur within the boundaries of the survey area.

The neighborhood is generally characterized by distressed housing and loss of historic fabric throughout the study area, with some streets having a higher concentration of vacant properties. West Kennedy and Furman Streets, and Oakwood Avenue were three streets surveyed with a considerable number of vacant properties. Of the streets surveyed, Kirk, McLennan, and West Borden Avenues displayed the greatest density of intact resources, though all contain abandoned houses and some vacant lots. Vacant lots were most prevalent on the east side of South Salina Street.

The area bordered by Castle Street on the north, Kennedy Street on the south, Midland Avenue on the west, and Interstate 81 on the east has experienced the most dramatic loss of housing stock. The area bounded by Kirk Avenue on the north, Onondaga Creek on the west, Colvin Street on the south, and South Salina Street on the east, displays the highest overall neighborhood density. These streets also contain primarily early twentieth century

housing stock, with older properties found closer to South Salina Street. The streets with the most considerable housing loss also display fewer street trees than those areas with a higher density of housing. There are very few remnants such as carriage steps present in the streetscape, though dated metal manufacturer plaques from the 1920s are found on several sidewalk pavers throughout the neighborhood.

5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Summary of Historic Resources Survey

The general age of housing in the area encompassed by the historic Village of Danforth is from the 1840s to the 1940s, with concentrations of older building stock in and adjacent to the South Salina Historic District, as well as along Midland Avenue. Housing styles in the blocks comprising the former Village of Danforth include Italianate, Queen Anne, Shingle, Colonial Revival, and one notable Gothic Revival residence.

The historic village core along South Salina Street has maintained its integrity, but its largest and most imposing structure, the former Danforth Congregational Church (1641 S. Salina Street), has closed its doors. Its nearest neighbor, the Lynch house, owned by the most recent church congregation, is severely distressed and the source of some local controversy. The Lynch house (ca. 1855), also known as the “Gothic cottage,” is located in the South Salina Historic District at 1631 S. Salina Street. It has been highlighted in local newspapers for several years as it has continued to deteriorate, and disagreements persist over the possibility of its restoration or demolition.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, it is among the last examples of Gothic residential architecture within the city as well as one of the oldest buildings within the area of the historic Village of Danforth.

In addition to the South Salina Historic District being located within its boundaries, the area of Village of Danforth is bordered on the west by Onondaga Park and on the east by Oakwood Cemetery, both of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As described in the boundaries of annexation by the City of Syracuse, the westernmost portion of Oakwood Cemetery was originally part of the Village of Danforth when it was incorporated in 1874. Once accessible via a gate and roadway beneath the railroad, today the connection between the cemetery and the neighborhood is fractured by Interstate 81.

Today the South Salina Street corridor serves as the business district for the area encompassing the historic Village of Danforth, as well as adjacent neighborhoods. Numerous storefront churches are found along this street, as well as in older houses and more recently constructed buildings throughout the neighborhood. A number of large, historic religious buildings are present, though two of the most prominent are currently vacant. Additional businesses are scattered throughout the neighborhood, generally along major thoroughfares such as Castle Street, Midland Avenue and State Street, and are characterized by service stations and convenience stores. The housing stock is in generally good to fair condition, and though density has been comprised on numerous blocks in the area, recent efforts by the City of Syracuse as well as not-for-profit organizations such as Housing Visions have led to the construction of infill housing throughout the neighborhood.

⁴⁶ Syracuse Post-Standard, 2002.

Though the history of the Village of Danforth may not be well known to area residents or visitors, numerous associations can be made with prominent local residents of the past and the extant building stock. Danforth Congregational Church architect Asa Merrick lived just northwest of the Village of Danforth, on Midland Avenue, until his death in 1922.⁴⁷ Merrick was also the architect for another Syracuse building listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Kasson Apartments on James Street.⁴⁸ Numerous buildings throughout the city were designed by Merrick, but few are extant.

Kirk Park has a more direct connection to the Village of Danforth. Named after the early settler William B. Kirk, the park has historically served as a recreational area. The 1860 Clarke map of the Town of Onondaga refers to the spot where Kirk Park is now located as “Fairgrounds,” and it was the site of county fairs, circuses, bicycle races, and fireworks displays in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. A picnic area known as Kirk Woods was located adjacent to the park, and may have been in use during the existence of the Village of Danforth.⁴⁹ Today, Kirk Park is the recreational center of the neighborhood, hosting football games and other sporting events while providing a space for gathering and neighborhood interaction, as it has for over 150 years.

5.2 Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions and recommendations for the historic resources survey of the former Village of Danforth are as follows:

- The South Salina Street Historic District retains its overall architectural integrity and features some of the most impressive architecture in the neighborhood. However, the condition of a number of the properties is deteriorated. The City should work with the property owners within the historic district to access state and Federal programs, such as the New York State Environmental Protection Fund grants (for not-for-profits), and the State Historic Rehabilitation tax credits or other historic preservation funding programs for qualifying income-producing or residential properties. This is particularly important for vacant and stressed buildings such as the Gothic Cottage and the Danforth Congregational Church.
- The portions of Kirk, McLennan, and West Borden Avenues immediately adjacent to the South Salina Street Historic District retain their density and the infill along these blocks is generally in keeping with the setbacks and scale of the early neighborhood. Although the overall architectural integrity of these blocks does not appear to warrant a historic district expansion, there are a number of properties that retain good to excellent architectural integrity. The City should investigate a conservation district designation for these blocks as a means of encouraging the retention of the overall character of the neighborhood.

⁴⁷ Syracuse Herald, 1922.

⁴⁸ Syracuse Post-Standard, 1998.

⁴⁹ Landscape & Prospect, 1994.

- The block of Kirk Avenue immediately adjacent to Kirk Park should also be evaluated for a conservation district, potentially including the park. The park has been previously determined ineligible for the NRHP, but has served a historic recreational purpose in the neighborhood for over 150 years.
- Intensive-level surveys should be considered for the resources within the study area that have been previously determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places to document and/or evaluate their current integrity and condition.
- The reconnaissance-level survey of the remaining portions of the neighborhood (that were not completed during the historic resource survey sessions conducted for the project) should be completed to ensure that all properties in the neighborhood are surveyed in this manner, and to help guide future revitalization efforts in the area.
- Future survey efforts in the neighborhood should draw upon recommendations of City of Syracuse planning documents such as the Housing Plan and Third Annual Action Plan highlighted in the planning context in Section 2.1, which have sections related to the neighborhood or surrounding area.
- Efforts should be made to increase awareness of the history of the former Village of Danforth to better establish a consistent neighborhood boundary and identity. The neighborhood is currently referred to by different names in a variety of planning documents. The boundaries for the Southside neighborhood also vary greatly in the same documents. Consistency in name and boundaries would help with future planning efforts in the neighborhood, as well as provide a historic reference for neighborhood identity and stronger sense of place.
- Future historic resource survey efforts in the neighborhood should build on the successful public outreach of this project and encourage greater neighborhood involvement, either through targeted promotion of survey events, or reaching out to community leaders to engage residents to assist in surveying.
- The public outreach approach and materials that were developed for the project provide a successful, usable model for engaging volunteers to participate in future historic resource survey efforts throughout the City. Future efforts in Syracuse should build upon the process and materials created for the Village of Danforth survey. The use of this model in other neighborhoods would encourage consistency in the approach and results of the historic survey, aid the City in its historic preservation efforts, and promote awareness and understanding of historic resources throughout additional communities and stakeholder groups within the City.

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Figures





Village of Danforth Historic Survey

City of Syracuse, Onondaga County

Figure 2: Previously Identified Historic Resources

October 2012

Notes: Base Map: 1-Foot resolution natural color orthophotography, year 2009; ESRI StreetMap North America, 2008

- NRHP-Eligible
- Not Eligible
- City Landmark
- Historic District
- Survey Area





Village of Danforth Historic Survey

City of Syracuse, Onondaga County

Figure 3: 1860 Sweet Map of the Town of Onondaga

October 2012



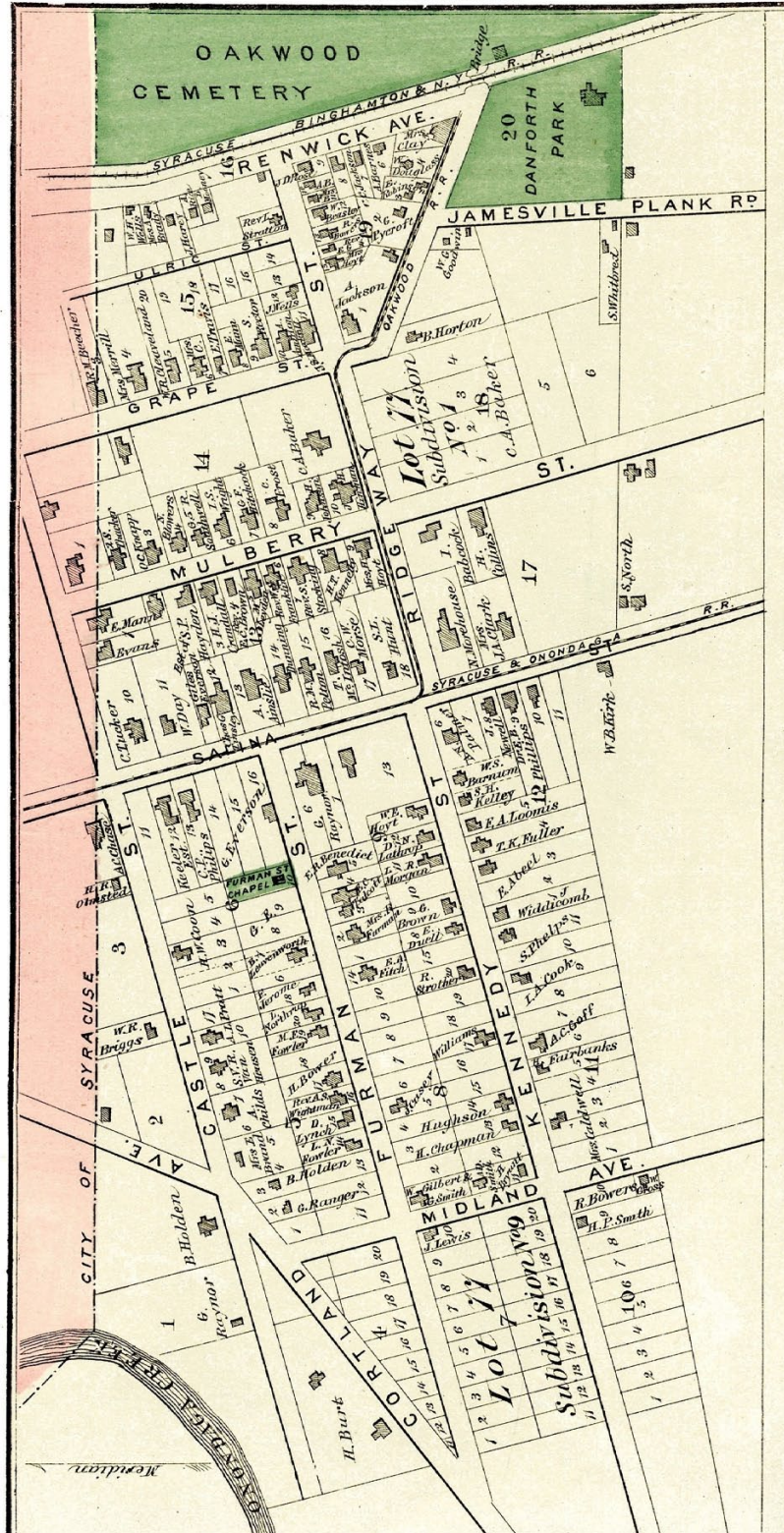
Sheet 1 of 1



DANFORTH

TOWN OF ONONDAGA

Scale 24 Rods to the inch



Village of Danforth Historic Survey

City of Syracuse, Onondaga County

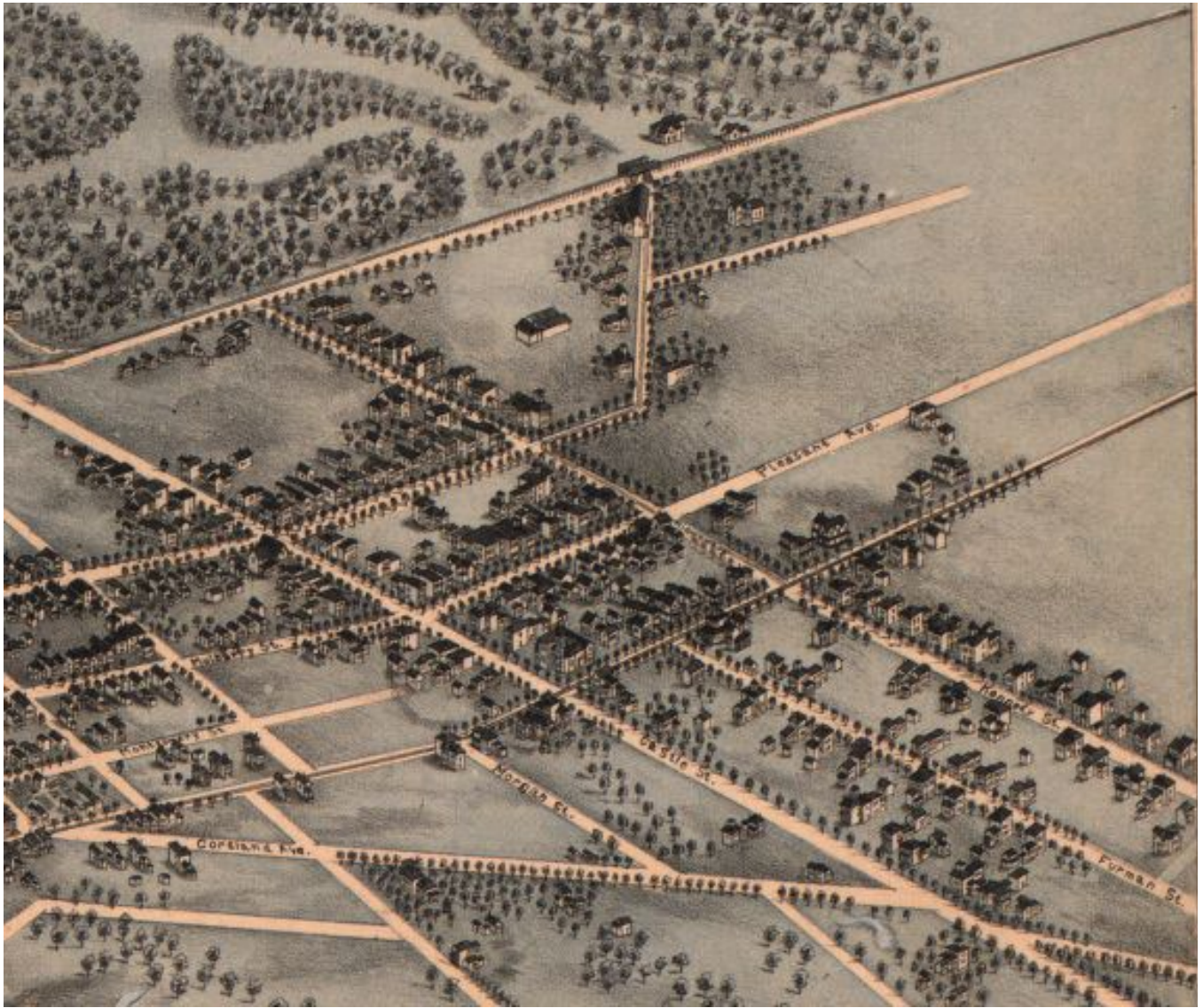
Figure 4: 1874 Sweet Map of the Village of Danforth

October 2012



Sheet 1 of 1





Village of Danforth Historic Survey

City of Syracuse, Onondaga County

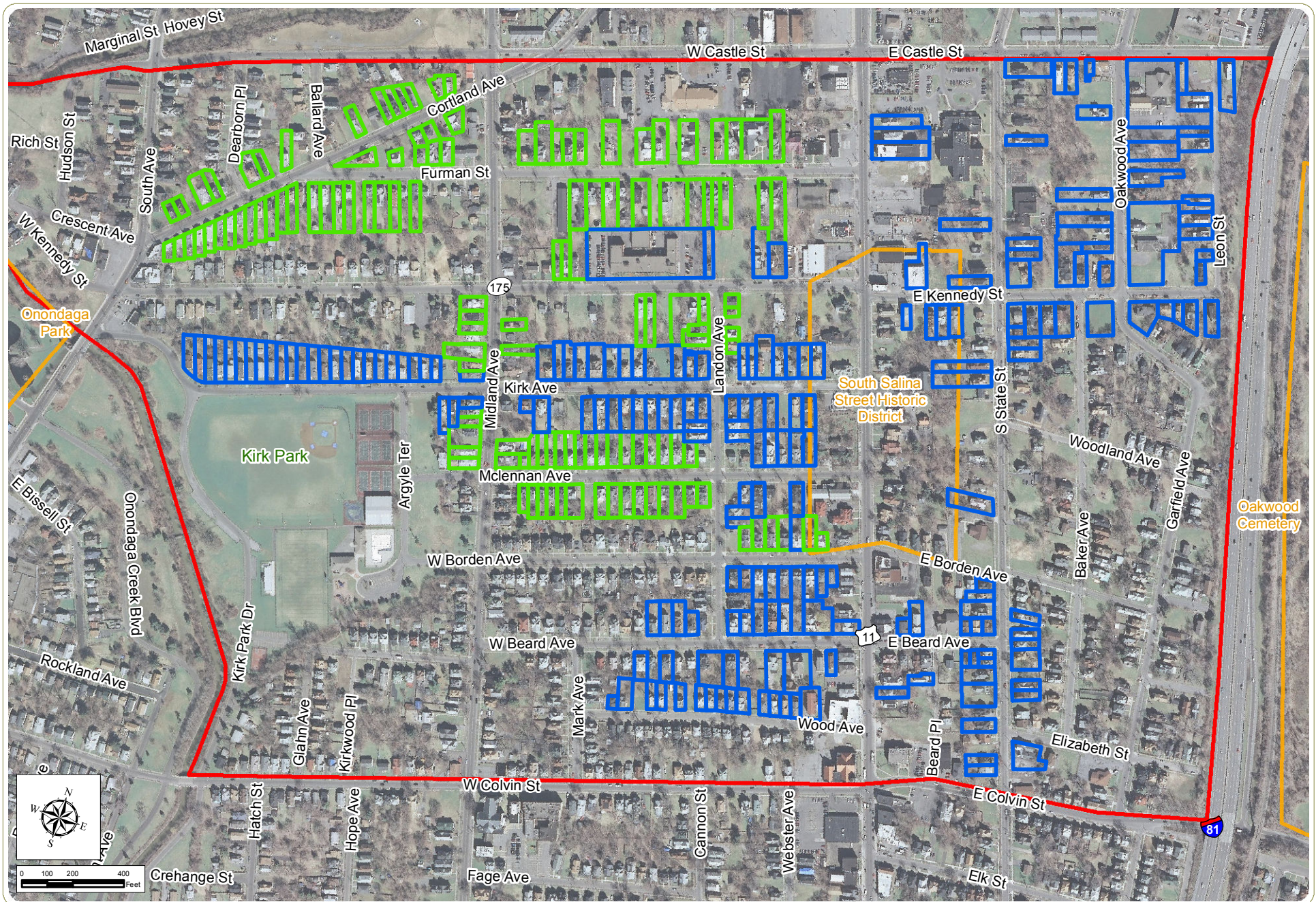
Figure 5: 1874 Bailey Bird's Eye View of Danforth

October 2012



Sheet 1 of 1





Village of Danforth Historic Survey

City of Syracuse, Onondaga County

Figure 6: Historic Resource Survey

October 2012

Notes: Base Map: 1-Foot resolution natural color orthophotography, year 2009; ESRI StreetMap North America, 2008

- Surveyed with Form and Photo
- Surveyed with Photo Only
- Historic District
- Survey Area



Appendices (see enclosed CD):

Appendix A: Public Participation Plan

Appendix B: Public Outreach and Historic Resource Survey Materials

Appendix C: Historic Resource Photographs

Appendix D: Historic Resource Inventory Forms

Appendix E: Survey Status of Properties in Study Area