

*BUILDING MAINTENANCE PLAN*  
*FORT DES MOINES NO. 3*  
*DES MOINES, POLK COUNTY, IOWA*

*Prepared by*

*Barbara Beving Lang*  
*Four Mile Research Company*  
*315 North Elm Street*  
*Cresco, IA 52136*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	2
RECOMMENDATIONS .....	5
Water Problems .....	5
Expert Guidance .....	6
Security .....	6
Assist Potential Buyers .....	6
Maintenance Procedures .....	6
ORGANIZATION .....	9
Treatment Plan .....	9
Building History .....	10
TREATMENT PLAN .....	13
Slate roofs .....	13
Wood Frame Windows .....	15
Masonry .....	17
SUPPLIERS LIST .....	20
FIELD NOTES - STABILIZATION & MAINTENANCE GUIDE .....	21
BUILDING HISTORIES .....	23

*INTRODUCTION*

## INTRODUCTION

This building maintenance plan was created with several audiences in mind: current maintenance personnel at the fort, Army officials charged with administering the site, and those who might be interested in buying the property. Most of the site and properties that are part of this maintenance plan (15 of 23) are to be offered for sale to the public.<sup>1</sup>

Sale of the properties is understood to be a goal of the present owners as part of the Base Closure Act, but the process is a methodical one. In the meantime, the buildings at this National Historic Landmark need continued care and attention. Thus, one of the reasons behind this document is to outline reasonable stabilization and rehabilitation actions for the present owners to consider.

Information in this plan is also intended to provide information to prospective buyers of the fort complex. The document supplies descriptions of the condition of the buildings in 1991 and also mentions preservation and rehabilitation procedures the buildings might require.

The condition of building interiors and especially the acceptable types of future alterations that would be suitable to buildings in a National Historic Landmark district are not dealt with in detail in this document. This is not because interiors and alterations are unimportant, but because of the realities of the situation. Given the limited resources of the Department of the Army to maintain or stabilize the building exteriors, it is unlikely that wholesale interior rehabilitation will occur in buildings that are, after all, slated for sale. Discussions of interiors are therefore limited to possible health, safety or structural problems.

If the buildings are sold to private parties for adaptive reuse, any proposed changes to them will need to be considered carefully and in detail. Possible changes include the construction of additions, replacement of such long absent features as porches, and reconciling modern uses with historic interior detail. It is likely that the interiors of properties sold for adaptive use will need to be modified in some way, even if the site becomes a museum.

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<sup>1</sup>The following buildings will not be sold: Buildings 46, 49, 152, 117, 307 (razed), 138 (contaminated). Buildings 69 and 72 (stable guardhouses) were not listed in the project contract and may or may not be sold. In the interests of completeness they were included in the study; they bring the number studied to 23.

Most of the buildings have seen considerable change over the decades. Some alterations are associated with key events such as the WAAC period and may therefore carry historic significance themselves which merit retention.

This document is not intended to be a series of specifications for specific maintenance and stabilization projects. Rather, it is a guide for beginning the process of making informed decisions. Costs for specific procedures, which would rapidly become outdated, are therefore omitted. Some potential suppliers are listed, but their inclusion should not be interpreted as an endorsement of their products or services.

It may be argued that a document seeking to address the needs of three audiences will satisfy none of them. It is hoped that this is not the case. An effort was made to make the considerable assemblage of data accessible and informative. General comments and general recommendations based on the analysis of building conditions at the fort, a description of the organization of the document, and special definitions for some terms are found below. Readers interested in a summary of the condition of a specific building should check the sections labeled Current Condition and Major Concerns on the form for that particular building.

\* Now about a brief synthesis  
of the organization of report chapters  
what is present in each section - this  
would help the various audiences understand  
how to use this report if you are looking for  
this information, it is available in this section