

OPERATIONAL AND LOCATIONAL ASPECTS
OF FUNERAL HOMES IN THE
URBAN COMMUNITY

AN EXAMINATION OF HISTORICAL
DEVELOPMENT, CURRENT ROLES AND
CHARACTERISTICS, PHYSICAL DISTRIBUTIONS,
AND LOCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Thesis for the Degree of M. U. P.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

James Simon Verplanck

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ABSTRACT

OPERATIONAL AND LOCATIONAL ASPECTS OF FUNERAL HOMES IN THE URBAN COMMUNITY

by James Simon Verplanck

The process of formulating physical development plans and programs in an urban area in order to produce a desirable environment depends on the planners' ability to understand and reconcile the needs, desires, and rights of those who own and use land in the community with the goals and objectives of the total community. Funeral homes constitute one of the many land use activities of concern to the planner. The purposes of this study are to isolate and examine the problems created by funeral homes, which are an essential service establishment in every community, and to develop bases to be utilized in formulating "model" funeral home zoning regulations.

There are two major problems involved in this study: 1) the operational characteristics of a funeral home, which results in the second problem, 2) of determining the proper placement of funeral homes in the urban community.

Recognizing these objectives and problems, research has been conducted on the historical and current roles of funeral customs, funeral homes, and funeral directors; the types of funeral homes; typical community attitudes; zoning provisions; court decisions; and existing locational policies of funeral directors. An essential feature of this analytical approach was a case study of funeral homes within several urban communities. Through this examination and analysis, it was revealed that funeral directors, typically, have not developed and utilized definite operational and locational policies. Physical planning and legislation concerning funeral homes vary a great deal in both scope and content, and have failed to include and integrate funeral homes into the urban development pattern in a satisfactory manner. The absence of more comprehensive communication between funeral directors and planners, public officials, and the public has resulted in a lack of adequate knowledge concerning the scope and nature of funeral homes in the urban community. Most of the efforts made by funeral directors and planners to remedy these problems have been isolated and piecemeal in their approach, thus failing to provide adequate solutions.

To overcome this limitation, funeral home operational and locational characteristics within the Detroit and Lansing, Michigan, urbanized areas and fifty other Michigan communities, were examined to provide some basic facts on funeral home operations and their locational implications. This case study reveals that the total number, the probable need for expansion of existing, and construction of new funeral homes warrants careful consideration by planners and public officials.

Additional findings point out relationships which are essential to the determination of model funeral home zoning regulations. Most funeral homes prefer locations on major streets which provide access to several residential neighborhoods. Nearly all funeral homes contain living quarters, and are well maintained, both physically and aesthetically. Population growth and an increase in the number of deaths will create a demand for larger funeral homes on larger sites. Many funeral homes have a service area and will locate in relation to the pattern of church distribution in a community. Funeral homes require a reverent, dignified and quiet atmosphere, but, because of their association with death are not compatible with areas developed

primarily for residential purposes. They are more compatible with the various transitional zones such as those for various professional and office uses and many mixed residential-commercial areas.

Information on existing funeral home to population ratios; locations related to zoning provisions; various site arrangements and sizes; building arrangements and sizes; operating characteristics; visiting hours; funeral processions; funeral services; parking; and funeral home ownership have been provided as factual bases for developing defensible funeral home principles, standards, and policies. When completed, these model regulations can be used to guide funeral homes to appropriate locations in the community development pattern. These locations then will be appropriate to funeral home purposes and will realize community development objectives.

OPERATIONAL AND LOCATIONAL ASPECTS
OF FUNERAL HOMES IN THE URBAN COMMUNITY
An Examination of Historical Development, Current Roles
and Characteristics, Physical Distributions,
and Locational Requirements

By

James Simon Verplanck

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER IN URBAN PLANNING

School of Urban Planning and Landscape Architecture

1966

(5)

PREFACE

Urban planning is now entering a period characterized by the development and application of highly sophisticated techniques for analyzing the components of the urban community. The profession has moved beyond the area of generalized knowledge into one of specific knowledge based on detailed analysis of various problems in a changing urban complex. There are a growing number of studies based on the efforts of analysts, researchers, and statisticians in planning agencies, who utilize such techniques as computer operations. These highly advanced methods of analysis indicate that solutions to complex urban problems can be found without detailed study and analysis.

This study represents the scope and depth which is necessary for effective urban planning. The particular subject of the study was chosen because of the need for detailed examination of the problems of funeral home location, and because little or no useful information concerning the problems of funeral home location and their solutions is readily available.

Mr. Charles W. Barr, Professor of Urban Planning at Michigan State University, served as faculty advisor to the study. His guidance and suggestions were essential to the study, and provided a valuable learning experience which a project of this type entails. Mr. Howard C. Raether, Executive Secretary of the National Funeral Directors Association, and Mr. Jack. D. Jorgensen, Executive Secretary of the Michigan Funeral Directors Association, provided most of the sources of information for Chapter I.

The information on locational and operational factors of funeral homes, which provided insights into various aspects of the case study, was supplied through the cooperation of members of the Michigan Funeral Directors Association. I am deeply grateful to Mr. Jorgensen and his staff for mailing the questionnaires to the funeral directors. The assistance of Mr. Jorgensen and Mr. James Sullivan of the William Sullivan and Son Funeral Home in Royal Oak, Michigan, in arranging for interviews with several funeral directors was most helpful. The time given and information provided by the funeral directors for the interviews was very beneficial to this study. I am grateful for the financial assistance of the Michigan and National Funeral Directors Associations who provided the funds for the completion of this study.

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OPERATIONAL AND LOCATIONAL ASPECTS
OF FUNERAL HOMES IN THE URBAN COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

Community Planning and Funeral Homes

The development of large centers of urban concentration has brought about many changes in the social structure of American communities. Some of the lesser known changes are those of funeral behavior and customs, and the changing role of the funeral director. There has been very little effort on the part of funeral directors, urban planners, and public officials to develop comprehensive criteria for determining funeral home location and site requirements. In this case many funeral directors have been interested in the number of funeral services they conduct annually without regard to the effect of their operation on site and locational factors. Planners and public officials have failed to agree on basic considerations pertaining to funeral home operations and have generally used out-dated thinking and ideas when determining funeral home location.

Most funeral homes have been excluded from all areas of the community except the commercial and industrial zones. This has been done to avoid conflict with residential living patterns, but has failed to consider the needs and desires of funeral directors and their clients. The following statement presented in a 1957 report of the American Society of Planning Officials, Planning Advisory Service Report No. 97, entitled "Funeral Homes," summarizes this situation:

. . . it seems fairly evident that many cities have failed to closely examine and consider the locational requirements of this important service enterprise that needs protection from congested streets and noisy surroundings.¹

There may be a natural inclination for most persons to think about funeral homes in negative terms or fail to consider them at all. It is characteristic of most Americans to avoid thinking about death or anything associated with it. This is evident in the manner to which funerals, funeral homes, and funeral directors are humorously referred to in various articles, books, and entertainment media. The important serious considerations of the needs of an establishment whose services every member of society will require

¹American Society of Planning Officials, "Funeral Homes," Information Report No. 97 (Chicago: Planning Advisory Service, April, 1957), p. 23.

sooner or later are neglected, and the funeral profession is thought of only in terms of dealing with death and the dead. This has proved to be a false premise because most of the problems mentioned in connection with funeral homes have effects on the living. Death, because of its finality removes the problems from the dead. Therefore, these problems can only affect the living and the living are the only means through which these problems can be reduced or eliminated.

The more obvious implications of the appearance and development of facilities for performing funeral services have made themselves known to some extent in most urban areas. Mixing of land uses, changing traffic patterns, increased traffic congestion, increased parking on public streets, and conflicts between funeral directors, local public officials and the community point out the failure of community planning to effectively guide the development of funeral homes in most areas. This failure is a reflection of a widespread lack of knowledge as to what the problems associated with funeral homes actually are and their causes.

Methodology

This study is organized and undertaken to provide adequate information and background to enable formulation of "model" provisions. Since adequate funeral home locational requirements and site standards for use by public officials, planners, and funeral directors have not yet been developed, the purpose of this study is to develop a body of knowledge by isolating and examining funeral home problems, locations, sites, and operations. From this analysis recommendations can be made as to any additional study required and the development of model locational provisions for use in a community planning program. To accomplish these objectives the study has been organized into the following four phases.

- I. An examination of the historical development and existing role of funeral customs and the funeral director.
- II. A brief analysis of the types of urban funeral homes and the attitudes of the community and courts toward funeral homes.
- III. An examination of funeral home locational policies fostered by funeral directors and their significance.
- IV. A case study of funeral homes based on information from several communities to isolate and examine the operational and locational implications within the urban environment.

The use of several Michigan communities is an essential part of this study. The aspects of operational and locational policies, if any, have been observed and documented. A basic element of this analysis is a questionnaire which was mailed to funeral directors throughout the Southern Peninsula of Michigan. This provided information on funeral home sites, operations, and locations, along with viewpoints of funeral directors as to various aspects of funeral home location. This information, along with the physical analysis, will enable recommendations to be made on model funeral home locational policy that may be useful to both funeral directors and planners as a basis for minimizing or eliminating land use problems associated with funeral homes.

Definitions

For the purposes of this study funeral practice is considered the care of the body and the social ceremonies, rituals and usages in connection with the funeral which is in an organized, purposeful, time limited, flexible group centered response to death. An important aspect of such practice is the proper handling of the emotions, dispositions, and needs of the bereaved and in providing the personnel, facilities, and equipment necessary therefor.

A funeral home is that place set aside for the practice of funeral service. The funeral home usually contains a room or rooms for funeral services, reception areas, reposing rooms and preparation areas. The term embraces all buildings designated as a funeral home, mortuary or funeral parlor, storage area for funeral vehicles, parking lots when located on the same site or adjoining sites and living quarters which are accessory to the funeral home operation.

A funeral director, who may also be an embalmer, is that person who may either own, manage or be employed by a funeral firm to serve the public in all aspects of funeral service. He also coordinates activities of all funeral home employees and must be licensed in all but a few states.

An embalmer is that person who by virtue of his education and training is licensed to prepare human remains for the purpose of a funeral and burial. All states require such persons to be licensed before practicing embalming.

Every state has a mortuary science act and mortuary laws among states may be different. Mortuary law is that which governs licensing and regulation of persons who

practice mortuary science. These persons include embalmers, funeral directors, and in some states funeral homes are licensed. This law may also regulate and make periodic checks on resident trainees in mortuary science. One of the main purposes of mortuary law is to prohibit unlawful practice in mortuary science by unqualified persons and/or irresponsible practitioners. Enforcement of mortuary law is accomplished either through a State Board of Mortuary Science or a department within the State Health Department.²

In summary, this study will present the growing importance of funeral homes in the urban community from social, cultural, and physical standpoints. Funeral homes will be analyzed not only in terms of the significance of their services to society, but also in relation to their significant implications on land use. With the importance of these items in mind, this thesis studies and presents operational and locational factors which can be used as the basis for developing model funeral home operational and locational provisions.

²Interview with Mrs. Thelma Whitlock of the Michigan State Board of Mortuary Science, July 14, 1966. Confirmation of material by Jack Jorgensen, Executive Secretary of the Michigan Funeral Directors Association, July 14, 1966.

CHAPTER I
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

I. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

Funeral homes are important for reasons which have far greater impact than their sheer numbers, the number of persons they employ or the amount of money they represent in land, property, and salaries to employees. They serve as an institution which provides a social service to the community. There are very important social implications involved with the funeral home. Rites performed for the dead usually have important effects on the living. A funeral ceremony is personal in its form but is societal in its consequences. The people of every society have a pattern for dealing with the death of one of their fellows and no matter how unprepared an individual may be for the fact of a particular death, the group or society must always have some plan of action in the event of death. Funeral homes, in this context, function as an institution on which the members of society can rely as the vehicle for providing the essential services required when a death occurs.¹

¹David G. Mandelbaum, "Social Uses of Funeral Rites," Death and Identity, ed. Robert Fulton (New York/London/

Functions of the funeral home and services which funeral directors provide the urban community are unknown by many citizens, as well as, by many government officials. This may be particularly true among those who have never been involved in making arrangements for a funeral. Funeral homes must be given much more consideration by the urban planner, not only for social reasons, but because of their number. Statistics recently gathered indicate there are approximately 24,000 funeral homes in the United States.²

The total number of funeral homes has increased slightly in recent years, while the total number of funeral firms has decreased. There are certain funeral firms which have added a second, and occasionally a third funeral home. In some instances funeral firms have gone outside the city to serve suburban families or to extend their operations into nearby and adjacent communities.³

Sidney: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965), p. 338.

²Robert W. Habenstein and William M. Lamers, Funeral Customs the World Over (2nd. Ed.; Milwaukee: Bulfin Printers, inc., 1963), p. 750.

³National Funeral Directors Association, The American Funeral (Milwaukee: National Funeral Directors Association of the United States, Inc., 1963), p. 18.

According to statistics collected and published by the National Funeral Directors Association, the average funeral home represents an investment of \$123,902.⁴ These figures, along with the number of funeral homes, emphasize the fact that they constitute a significant user of land and investment in land and property in American communities. Funeral homes occupy parcels of land of varying sizes and their locations relative to the size of the areas which they serve vary from community to community, although by and large, the distribution of funeral homes reflects the distribution of population.

The current estimated annual number of births in the United States is 4.1 million;⁵ the estimated total population is 196,320,000;⁶ and the current estimated number of deaths per year approximates 1.8 million.⁷ By comparing the total number of funeral homes to the total population there is approximately one funeral home per every 8,180 persons in the United States. A comparison of the total

⁴Funeral Service: "Statistical Data," ed. Robert C. Slater (Milwaukee: National Funeral Directors Association of the United States, Inc., 1964).

⁵U. S., Statistical Abstract, 1956, p. 10.

⁶U. S., Department of Commerce, Business Service Checklist, Vol. 21, No. 3: April 8, 1966.

⁷Statistical Abstract, op. cit., p. 10.

number of funeral homes to the approximate number of deaths per year indicates a ratio of about 75 funerals per funeral home annually.

It has been estimated by some persons that the future number of deaths will increase a great deal over the present number. These estimates are based on population growth trends and related to the past and present number of deaths to population in this country.⁸

From this brief synopsis of the various elements of the funeral complex it can be seen that their impact on our communities is very great. The funeral service has been shifting from an emphasis on the preoccupation with death and the dead to a concern for life and the living. In terms of community development the funeral home is a significant factor. The current number of funeral homes and potential for an increase in this number, because of an expanding population and an increase in the number of deaths, points out the need for consideration of funeral homes in community planning.

⁸In an address to the Michigan Funeral Directors Association, Dr. Robert Fulton estimated that the number of deaths in this country by 1975 will be almost twice the number in 1965. Mr. Raymond Neff of the Michigan State Insurance Bureau said the death rate will not necessarily increase but the number of deaths will increase as the population of the country becomes greater.

American Funeral Customs

Wherever history is recorded, there is an account of ritual and rites that paid honor to the dead. While some cultures had rituals which were elaborate, such as those of the Egyptians, others employed simple rites such as those of certain American Indian tribes. It has been universal that throughout history humanity has practiced the burial of the dead with a certain type of ceremony.

In early America several members of the community assisted in the preparation of the body for burial. Certain of them performed the ritual of washing the body; others undertook the task of making the coffin; and others were responsible for digging the grave. Once this was completed, the entire community participated in the religious service which accompanied the burial. When communities began to grow at faster rates the customs and funeral practices slowly changed. The need for coffin makers required that the cabinet maker specialize in his work and by the same token, others were called upon through greater demand to perform the acts of preparing the body for burial.

In the United States today there are a great number of matters which men view with a common mind. It has been established in the heritage of the United States of America

that every man has a right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Another fundamental of life in this country is that equality before the law is a part of man's natural birthright, that people should be allowed to select their occupations, places of residence, and should be permitted to make most of the decisions which affect their lives. A less popularly expressed assumption which has been taken for granted in this country is that every person, no matter what the circumstance, has the right to a decent burial.⁹

Why has this assumption been expressed? How did this assumption or the expression of it evolve? In the days when this country was expanding and developing many persons died while moving across the frontier to new homes in undeveloped areas. Those who had been traveling with the deceased person would assume the responsibility of burial of the body in what was termed a "fitting or decent manner." This is one of the traditions which helped develop funeral customs.

In a society there are a number of common individual and group beliefs and opinions which become the bases of

⁹ Robert W. Habenstein and William M. Lamers, The History of American Funeral Directing (Revised Ed.; Milwaukee: Bulfin Printers, Inc., 1963), pp. 3-4.

laws, customs, fashions and traditions. In dealing with death in this society, the accumulation and development of these common beliefs became the firm premise upon which the people based their individual judgments and group thinking. They constitute the central or basic tenet upon which the society deals with the disposition of the dead body of one of its members.

The roots of American funeral customs and procedures are derived through Western Civilization, from the early Judaeo-Christian beliefs concerning the nature of God, man, and the hereafter. The underlying conviction of these beliefs maintains that the soul or the spirit is the sacred quality of man and the body is the temple for this spirit during life. This belief that the body is the temple for the soul or spirit of man also follows that this body should be treated with respect and should be disposed of with due ceremony.¹⁰

As a result of a long slow development through the history of Western Civilization, the funeral customs which are prevalent in America today provide that the dead merit professional funeral services. These services include

¹⁰Habenstein and Lamers, Funeral Customs the World Over, op. cit., p. 729.

embalming, preparation of the body for viewing, a period of waiting between the time of death and disposition, the placement of the body in the casket, a ceremonious service honoring the dead with consideration for the bereaved and the burial of the remains in the ground or other disposition which is dignified and not contrary to public health. The ceremonial care of the dead has been held to be a religious matter, or at least the participation of the clergy has been deemed an essential part of the services rendered to the dead and the bereaved. As part of the basic beliefs and customs regarding death in the United States, a set of social usages and amenities has evolved which includes the vocational tasks performed by an occupational group other than the clergy.¹¹ Essentially then, the expressed assumption that every person is entitled to a decent burial is accepted in American thought and life. It is further accepted that the services of a member of an occupational group known as a funeral director are used in the performance of this burial.¹²

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Habenstein and Lamers, The History of American Funeral Directing, op. cit., p. 5.

National traits and traditions based on ethnic origin and background are a strong determining factor of the variations in the type of funeral ceremony which can be found in the United States. In observing the funeral rites performed in this country, there are differences in practices such as those found in Southern California, which would be unknown and unacceptable to the people of New England. It can also be observed that the funeral rites practiced in New Orleans are different from those found in the mid-western states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Ohio.¹³

Development of Funeral Customs

In understanding the reasons for the existence of funeral practices as they are today in America, it would be beneficial to briefly trace some of the developments in funeral behavior from colonial times.

The Colonial Period: In early colonial times, when a person died, he was quietly buried without ceremony and usually without the attendance of the clergy. Although the burial in early America was in the church yard, the people

¹³Edgar N. Jackson, For the Living (Des Moines: Channel Press, 1963), pp. 17-18.

in the colonies were attempting to break away from the ecclesiastical law of the Church of England and were following the Colonial practices which stated that burial should be subject to civil action. This civil action did not include the clergy saying prayers over the dead.¹⁴

The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: In the middle of the eighteenth century, the funeral services were held in the church and a funeral procession was then made to the grave on foot with the body carried by persons known as underbearers. The conduct of the funeral service began to change from stiff formality and gloom to one which demonstrated more informality and beauty. This included the procedure for encasing the body and the use of embalming methods which would temporarily preserve the dead so that relatives located great distances away could return and participate in the funeral service.

The use of embalming was partially a result of the influence of the cultural practices of Europe where the bodies of important persons were allowed to lie in state for long periods of time. It also was the result of the previously mentioned characteristic of the western world

¹⁴Habenstein and Lamers, The History of American Funeral Directing, op. cit., p. 197.

tradition to delay burial until the members of the family and friends who lived great distances away could get to the place of the funeral service.¹⁵

The Twentieth Century: Funeral services in the urbanizing areas of the country began to take on different characteristics than those of the past. Most deaths occurred in the home, but if it occurred outside the home the body was quickly returned there, thus making the home of the deceased the central place of mourning. The funeral services were still held in the home of the deceased or sometimes in the church, and very seldom in the funeral home. These services held in the home were usually quite long and were filled with a great deal of emotion. After the services, the funeral procession would form and nearly everyone attending the funeral would go to the cemetery for the burial.¹⁶

As we move into the second quarter of the twentieth century more funeral services were being held in the funeral home. The funeral director had the specialized equipment for preparation of the body and more of the persons living

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 313-14.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 394.

in urban areas were residing in apartments or homes which were not large enough to accomodate the funeral service. Another important reason for the increasing use of the funeral home, and the decreasing use of the home, was due to the enactment of health laws regarding the embalming of the dead. The embalming had previously been done in the home, but conditions for this work were not all good. Therefore, special rooms known as preparation rooms were added to the funeral home where the necessary equipment could be permanently installed and utilized.¹⁷

American funeral beliefs also experienced changes which were explained as a result of a change in social processes rather than a marked change in the actual customs. Two of the more significant social conditions or processes which are given as causes for the changes are the growth of a mass society and the changing functions and form of the American family. These were changes in the ways groups held together by the traditional ties of blood, ethnic background and religion became dispersed and scattered to other communities throughout the country. This had the effect of weakening community ties and placed many people further

¹⁷Ibid., p. 570.

away from the presence of death unless it occurred among an immediate contemporary group.¹⁸

In small towns, villages, and rural areas death and burial are events which reach many people because each person generally knows every other person living in their community. In contrast to the practice in rural areas, death touches fewer persons in urban America today, unless the deceased was a prominent person.

Funeral directors, florists, monument and casket manufacturers have had a great deal of influence on American funeral customs and burial practices. In some instances the advancement in funeral customs has been related directly to funeral directors and the occupations referred to as "allied industries." All of these occupations, because of their relationships to funerals and disposition of the dead, have an influence on funeral practices, but it is difficult to assess the full extent of their influence. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that these occupational groups have been and are in positions to influence present-day funeral practices.¹⁹

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 561.

¹⁹ Jessica Mitford, The American Way of Death (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), pp. 96-109.

Purpose of the Funeral

The funeral has several major purposes. First and foremost it provides an acceptable method and means for disposing of the body of a person who has died. Another purpose of the funeral is it offers an opportunity for the bereaved to express themselves. This is especially true for those of a religious faith that can help sustain the bereaved.

One of the purposes of the funeral which relates to the community, and which deals with the involvement of various members of the community at one time or another, is that the funeral allows the community an opportunity to recognize the loss of one of its members. Not only does the community recognize the loss by paying respect to the dead, but in so doing they offer support to the relatives of the deceased.²⁰

Not every funeral is the same and some will, because of various circumstances, involve many more people than others. In the funeral which involves very few people there is the officiant who conducts the religious service; the funeral director who handles the arrangements as to the

²⁰Jackson, op. cit., p. 15.

body of the deceased and the funeral ceremony; the medical examiner, coroner or physician who helps fulfill the legal requirements by signing the death certificate necessary for the issuance of a burial or cremation permit; and finally the members of the family, who are responsible, along with the funeral director and clergy, for making the arrangements for the funeral, as well as friends who enter into the funeral activities to some extent, depending upon the circumstances.

The funeral of a person who held a prominent place in the life and activities of the community will usually involve many more people. In these instances it is common for participation in the funeral activities by fraternal organizations or special groups who conduct their own services.²¹

Another vital purpose which is very important to the well-being of a community is the disposal of the dead for the protection of the health of the living. Because death is inevitable, it is necessary to have regulations dealing with the disposition of the body and the funeral director performs this very important function in the community. In this regard he must be qualified to undertake

²¹Ibid., 15-16.

certain procedures which will not jeopardize the living. There are health laws in the various states dealing with the procedures for disposition of the dead. The state health departments have established rules to effect these laws and the funeral director is obligated to follow and abide by these procedures, laws, and rules.²²

The American Funeral

Home funerals are very rare today in the urban community. The typical funeral, originating in an urban funeral home, covers a period of about three days, beginning with the removal of the remains and ending at the grave or crematory. The body is prepared for viewing by a licensed practitioner who has been trained in a school of mortuary science. Once the body is placed in state, relatives and friends may call at the funeral home. Most of the visits to the funeral home are made in the afternoon and evening prior to the funeral service. It is a general practice today in the Eastern, Mid-Western, and Southern areas of the United States that many more friends of the deceased

²²Michigan Funeral Directors Association, Department of Health Rules, A Ready Reference Manual for Funeral Directors (Lansing: Michigan Funeral Directors Association, 1961), B. 2.

come to pay their respects at the funeral home while the body is in state, than attend the funeral services and burial. Exceptions to this can be found in the Mountain States and the Pacific Coast areas where more people attend the funeral services and burial than visit the funeral home while the body reposes in state.²³

It is most likely that the actual funeral service will take place on the third day following death. The funeral custom of today holds that this service will be conducted either in the church, the funeral home, or both. For those who regularly practice Catholicism a church ceremony is required, except in the case of infants. The Jewish have an option of burying their dead from a Synagogue. Most Protestants have the choice of holding the service either in the funeral home or in the church.²⁴

Funeral services were often held on Sunday until a few years ago in most parts of the United States. Today the trend is away from Sunday services and generally speaking, the Catholic services are held in the morning and the

²³Habenstein and Lamers, Funeral Customs the World Over, op. cit., p. 739.

²⁴Habenstein and Lamers, The History of American Funeral Directing, op. cit., p. 571.

Protestant and Jewish funeral services are usually held in the afternoon. Some Protestant funeral services are also held in the morning.²⁵

The committal service at the grave is preceded by the funeral procession. The funeral procession for many is a symbol of expression of esteem for the deceased and may contain a long array of vehicles. The average funeral procession of today contains fewer persons, most of whom ride in privately owned automobiles. When the committal services are concluded the actual funeral service is completed and the grave is filled by cemetery workers after the participants in the ceremony have left.²⁶

While most families require a complete funeral service, there are a few who do not. These families request the minimum service which customarily includes the picking up of the body, casketing, and taking the body directly to the cemetery or crematory without a religious service.²⁷

²⁵National Funeral Directors Association, The American Funeral, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

²⁶Habenstein and Lamers, Funeral Customs the World Over, op. cit., pp. 748-49.

²⁷Interview with Jack Jorgensen, Executive Secretary, Michigan Funeral Directors Association, May 31, 1966.

The Funeral Director

The origins of the present-day funeral director are shrouded in the mysterious legends of ancient times. It is known that even in the Stone Age, earth burial was practiced and prized possessions were interred with the body, with the belief they would be used in whatever hereafter our early ancestors may have envisioned. It was not until the late eighteenth century that cabinet makers began to construct coffins in advance of their need and also offer their services to the public as "undertakers." The subsequent evolution of the funeral director as we know him today has been an adaptation to American civilization. "The funeral director of today is clearly a product of our times and our culture."²⁸

Historical Development of the Occupation

If the meaning of the term "funeral director" is limited to an occupation which: 1) provides a set of tasks for the care and disposal of the dead; 2) embodies the form of a personal service; and 3) operates in a limited

²⁸Assembly of the State of California, Final Report of the Assembly Interim Committee on Public Health Relative to Funeral Directors, Embalmers, Morticians and Funeral Establishments, 1953, p. 14.

form as a business enterprise, then it can be said that modern funeral directing as an occupation was born in the United States during the nineteenth century. Although this may be true, as with most new vocations, the position of funeral director was not created immediately as we know it today. Duties of the funeral director grew slowly through an evolving process of adding specific funeral tasks to his range of services which were previously carried out by other occupations.²⁹

To understand the range of services provided today, a brief description will be given of some of the tradesmen who were involved in various aspects of funeral service at the period when "funeral undertaking," the predecessor of modern funeral directing, was evolving.

Tradesman Undertakers: The first of the persons who came under this category were those who immigrated from England and recorded history indicates very few of these tradesmen existed in America. Most of those who were dedicated to the trade were also associated with the clothing and upholstering trades. Along with this combination was added the trade of cabinet making and some people advertised

²⁹Habenstein and Lamers, The History of American Funeral Directing, op. cit., p. 225.

as "Cabinet Maker, Upholster and Undertaker." As urban communities began to grow and the material resources of the urban dweller increased, the livery stable keeper was faced with an increasing demand of providing carriages for the funeral service. During this period it was also possible to find a person whose trade included pulling teeth, "undertaking," and framing pictures. Although there were various combinations of tradesmen performing the funeral tasks of the time, the dominant combination of trades was that of cabinet making or furniture and "undertaking."

Performers of Personal Service: Long before funeral directors came to be known as a distinct occupation there were those in the community who assumed the task of laying out the dead. Many of these people were friends of the family. The first instance of connecting this informal personal service with a recognized occupation was when the family nurse or nurse-governess began to assume the informal responsibility of preparing the dead for burial. Later there came a group of people who actually were known as "Layers Out of the Dead."

Religious Functionaries: The place of burial in early America was the church yard and the church caretaker, or sexton, has always been associated with the church yard

burial and care of the cemetery. Because law did not define his exact duties and responsibilities, the sexton also began to perform the tasks of digging of the grave, tolling of the bell, laying out the body, being in attendance, directing the funeral procession, and later began to furnish undertakers with funeral supplies and paraphernalia for funerals.

Municipal Officers: History indicates that municipal concern for burial of the dead occurred early in America. In some communities an official of the government was appointed and paid to attend the funerals of community residents. In many cases the funeral services were carried out by a person known as the town undertaker who was charged with the responsibilities concerned with public health and sanitation. He also was given the duties of coroner because of his technical skills and knowledge about death and the disposition of the dead.³⁰

The first half of the nineteenth century is very important in understanding the evolution of the modern funeral director because this era points up all the basic funeral service functions being collected and organized under

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 227-42.

the conventionally named and recognized title known as "funeral undertaker." These organized funeral services basically included the laying out, the coffining, and transporting the body to the grave. Around these major functions certain accompanying functions such as the furnishing of funeral paraphernalia also were included.³¹

In the late nineteenth century the role of the funeral director began to take many new appearances. This was a period in America when large numbers of immigrants were continuing to pour into our cities. The frontier was passing and there were new social movements forming as the way of life in this country began to change from a fundamentally rural and agricultural one to being predominantly industrial and commercial.³²

The funeral director began to act more in an advisory role in the early 1900's and arranged for the death notices as well as casket selection by the family. The emphasis on the casket was becoming more of a function of the funeral director. At this time the family would be given the various catalogs showing the range of caskets

³¹Ibid., p. 249.

³²Ibid., p. 394.

and the funeral director would then have the one which they selected sent to the home from the factory.

Early in the twentieth century, the vocation of funeral directing began to face the problem of becoming institutionalized. Some major advances in the field of funeral directing were schools of mortuary science; the agencies controlling the activities of these schools and setting standards for their conduct; and legislative action and rules which were developed and came to be known as mortuary law.³³

By 1900 there had evolved a distinct vocation, in which an occupational group, aspiring toward professionalism was legally required to possess certain training and other qualifications in order to perform specific tasks which were assigned exclusively to it by both law and custom. These people were not only preserving the dead through embalming,³⁴ but were also taking care of many funeral details

³³ Ibid., p. 508.

³⁴ The brochure "Funeral Service," National Funeral Directors Association (Milwaukee: 1964), notes that in the mid-1800's "Sanitation became the prime concern. Epidemics brought public health consciousness into focus, stressing the need for methods to preserve the dead and thus render them harmless to the living. Thus it became evident that embalming could serve both as a preservation process and an antiseptic one."

and arrangements. An emerging professional consciousness continued to take funeral operations out of the category of trade and business and place it into the category of professional services to people.³⁵

Licensing

All states now require that all embalmers be licensed. Funeral directors are licensed in forty-two states, while seven states issue combination licenses including both embalming and funeral directing. There are certain requirements for licensing such as attendance at a recognized college of embalming for at least twelve months and completion of a one to three year apprenticeship. All applicants must pass examinations given by state boards which issue licenses that can be revoked for cause.³⁶

Licensing legislation has had an effect of setting up standards of competence and performance which are both necessary to the public health and welfare of the community and the funeral profession itself. A majority of state licensing laws specify the physical equipment of the funeral home, with minimum requirements, such as a sanitary

³⁵Funeral Service, "Historical Perspective," op. cit.

³⁶Assembly of the State of California, op. cit.,
p. 14.

preparation room and the necessary instruments.³⁷ Licensing boards are usually made up of funeral directors and embalmers and in some states the director of the state department of health serves as an ex-officio member of these boards.³⁸

Existing Roles and Functions

The role of the funeral director has developed rapidly in the last few decades and will probably continue to expand the social area it controls. The funeral director is called upon to take charge of the full process of disposition of the dead. Basically he is a private entrepreneur who does the ritually unclean and physically distasteful tasks of disposing of the dead.³⁹

In the execution of his duties the funeral director must observe and respect the feelings and sentiments of the bereaved. The nature of his work is such that his relationship to his client cannot be totally defined by contract.

³⁷ Habenstein and Lamers, The History of American Funeral Directing, op. cit., pp. 554-55.

³⁸ Habenstein and Lamers, Funeral Customs The World Over, op. cit., p. 751.

³⁹ W. Lloyd Warner, "The City of the Dead," Death and Identity, ed. Robert Fulton; (New York/ London/ Sidney: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965), pp. 376-77.

He conducts his practice within the context of an individual enterprise for remuneration which is adequate for his support, but he does not have the sanction to deal with the dead as merchandise and with the bereaved as one who is seeking to maximize the value of a purchase.⁴⁰

The customary duties and responsibilities of the present day funeral director begins when, after being selected by a family to serve them, he removes or arranges for the removal of the deceased to the funeral home. He secures information from the family which is required for the death certificate and the obituary notice. The funeral director is responsible for correct completion of the death certificate, filing of the certificate with the proper authorities and securing the burial or transit permit. The funeral director arranges for an appointment with the relatives of the deceased to discuss with them the various phases of the service. Briefly these details include: the place of the service; church or funeral home; time of the service; the clergyman to officiate at the funeral service; selecting the place of interment; music for the service; contacting fraternal officials; notifying casket bearers; selecting

⁴⁰Habenstein and Lamers, The History of American Funeral Directing, op. cit., p. 533.

the clothing necessary; and choosing the casket and outside receptacle. These are preliminary arrangements and usually require subsequent checking and further organizational details. If the body is to be shipped to another city for interment additional arrangements will be required. While the body lies in state the funeral director assumes responsibility for arranging the flowers in the repose room and makes certain that all visitors to the funeral home are properly served.

On the day of the service the funeral director attends to floral arrangements, arranges for the physical facilities, provides automobiles for the family and casket bearers, receives and ushers friends to seats, assists the clergyman, organizes the funeral procession, and makes a vehicle available to transport flowers to the cemetery.⁴¹

The direction and conduct of funerals brings the funeral director into close contact and working associations with members of other service professions and a variety of businessmen. He has frequent contacts with physicians, medical examiners, health officers, and coroners in the legal and medical aspects of death. He also has frequent associations with clergymen of all denominations in planning

⁴¹Funeral Service, "Duties and Responsibilities,"
op. cit.

funeral services. Legal, tax, and business affairs bring him in contact with lawyers, accountants, and newspaper reporters and editors and he must also work closely with cemetery, mausoleum, and crematory officials.

Most funeral directors belong to the state and national funeral directors' professional associations. These professional organizations give him an opportunity to meet with the other members of his vocation and also gain further knowledge and utility from various institutes and service training programs which are made available to him from time to time.⁴²

Occupational Characteristics of Funeral Directing

A fundamental which is basic to zoning is the classification of the various occupations and establishments which operate in the community. In order to adequately determine which zones of the community the funeral home should be allowed, the occupational status of funeral directors should be clarified. One of the most widely debated questions concerning funeral direction is whether it should be considered as a profession, business, or a trade.

⁴²Funeral Service, "Professional and Business Relationships," op. cit.

Funeral directors through the development of: the vocation as a full time occupation; educational programs in mortuary science; formation of professional associations; a strong interest in legislative action regarding their vocation and a code of ethics, definitely consider themselves as members of a profession. There have been other occupational groups and professions which have tended to look upon the funeral director as primarily a business man or strictly as a member of a trade. This has been true when the urban planner has attempted to identify funeral direction for the purpose of establishing operational and locational policies as a basis for zoning regulations. Although there have been a few exceptions, many urban planners through the zoning ordinance mechanism have expressed that the funeral home is not a professional establishment in the true sense of the word "professional."⁴³

The operation and management of funeral homes suggest a combination of three occupational roles. The funeral director is considered by some as a businessman because he deals in merchandise in the form of caskets, and in some

⁴³American Society of Planning Officials, "Funeral Homes," Information Report No. 97 (Chicago: Planning Advisory Service, April, 1957), p. 10.

instances, with clothing for the deceased. It is true that the cost of a funeral service includes the price of the casket. This is a type of merchandise which is purchased only for the burial of the dead and cannot be considered a purchase in the usual business-sense of the word. Caskets are sold to those who want them and cannot be purchased from anyone but a funeral director. A casket is not required by law, but one is required by funeral directors if there is to be a funeral service with the body present. In this case the client is required to purchase a casket.⁴⁴

Funeral homes and funeral directors are listed in the "yellow pages" of telephone directories and, in some cases, their listings have been defined as advertising.⁴⁵ Some funeral homes advertise in newspapers. These items are usually very brief. They may contain a picture of the funeral home, and usually point out the competitive advantages of this funeral home over others in the community.

A second occupational characteristic of the funeral director is that of providing a service. The United States

⁴⁴ Interviews with Howard Raether, Executive Secretary, National Funeral Directors Association and Jack Jorgensen, Executive Secretary, Michigan Funeral Directors Association on April 15, 1966.

⁴⁵ American Society of Planning Officials, op. cit., p. 9.

Department of Commerce classifies the operation of a funeral home as a "service establishment" whose primary activity is the sale of a service and not an establishment dealing in merchandise.⁴⁶

The third and most controversial role is that of a professional. Funeral directing has been making gains toward acceptance as a profession. The Alphabetical Index of Occupations and Industries of the United States Government Census of 1950 lists funeral directors under the category of professional, technical and kindred workers. The Occupational Outlook Handbook of the United States Department of Labor in 1951 includes the funeral director under "Professional, Semi-Professional and Administrative Occupations." The Better Business Bureau considers funeral directors as professional along with lawyers and physicians.⁴⁷

From this brief discussion it can be seen that the funeral director cannot definitely be classified singularly as a businessman, tradesman, or professional. He is, because of his combination of functions and operating characteristics, a composite of all three. For zoning purposes

⁴⁶Habenstein and Lamers, The History of American Funeral Directing, op. cit., p. 594.

⁴⁷Ibid.

funeral directing should be classified as a combination occupation and a funeral home should be located in transitional zoning districts.⁴⁸

Educational Requirements in Mortuary Science

Today, there are several institutions of higher learning which offer education in funeral directing. These curricula are accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education. Six colleges and universities offer a curriculum in funeral service. The six, along with two private colleges are subject to the American Board of Funeral Service Education as well as the regional accrediting association where the college or university is located. There are fourteen other private colleges which offer curricula in funeral service which are subject to the American Board of Funeral Service Education.

The curriculum offered for students in funeral service includes basic health and science which covers anatomy, chemistry, bacteriology, pathology, hygiene, and public health. Additional courses are offered in funeral

⁴⁸This is a conclusion of the author based on the combination of functions and characteristics of the funeral director and the funeral home.

service arts and sciences which include embalming and restorative art and funeral service administration which includes accounting, funeral law, psychology, funeral principles, directing and management. In addition to the educational requirements, one must pass a state board licensing examination and serve a required internship ranging from one to three years with the norm being one year.⁴⁹

Associational Development Among Funeral Directors

During the twentieth century, several national and state funeral directors' organizations were developed and formed.

National Funeral Directors Association: This is a federation of state associations which has a current membership of 14,000. The primary service of the National Association is to its affiliate groups. These services include a Reference Manual containing information on pertinent Federal laws and regulations; transportation rules in various states; public relations suggestions and assistance; lists of colleges of mortuary science; journals covering funeral operations; and information on licensing authorities. They also have had various research studies

⁴⁹Funeral Service, "Educational," op. cit.

conducted for them by various people in the fields of management, psychology, public relations, history, funeral grief therapy, sociology, and now urban planning as related to funeral home location and zoning.

National Selected Morticians: This organization has a membership of about 800 firms and provides a service which is concerned with business management on a direct basis with individual members.

National Funeral Directors and Morticians Association: This organization's memberships come from twenty-three states and the Virgin Islands. They have supported legislation for raising scholastic requirements for admission to embalming schools and have an adopted code of ethics. The group was formerly known as the National Negro Funeral Directors Association.

Jewish Funeral Directors of America: Nearly all of the Jewish funeral directors in America belong to this organization. They also belong to other organizations. Their main purpose include; developing harmony among Jewish funeral directors; upgrading the practices of performance; making available correct principles of business and ethical conduct; and protecting the interests of their membership.

National Foundation of Funeral Service: This is a non-profit educational trust located in Evanston, Illinois. The Foundation provides a library of information related to funeral service, and also carries out research activities and conducts a school of management. All of these facilities are available to members of the funeral procession, students, writers, teachers, public officials, and responsible members of the general public who are interested.⁵⁰

A good example of a state organization of funeral directors is the Michigan Funeral Directors Association. The Michigan Association, founded in 1880, was the first state association and served as a prototype for other state associations, as well as the National Association which was founded in 1882. The current membership of the Michigan Funeral Directors Association is 750.⁵¹

The Constitution and By-Laws of the Michigan Funeral Directors Association state:⁵²

⁵⁰Habenstein and Lamers, The History of American Funeral Directing, op. cit., pp. 534-44.

⁵¹Michigan Funeral Directors Association, First in the Nation, A History: Prepared by the Michigan Funeral Directors Association, Inc. (1960), p. 18.

⁵²Michigan Funeral Directors Association, Constitution and By-Laws, Art. I, sec. 2.

The object of this association is to secure harmony in business, to cultivate a more friendly spirit socially, to elevate and bring to a higher state of perfection our profession, to disseminate correct principles of business management and the best methods of protecting the interest of funeral directors and embalmers in professional practice, as well as those of our patrons; to enlighten and direct public opinion in relation to the advantages of enacting and enforcing proper, just, and uniform laws on funeral directing and embalming in the State of Michigan, and to foster and maintain high professional ideals of public service.

The Michigan Association also conducts seminars for its members and provides a wide range of services which are of special interest to funeral directors. They are currently sponsoring two research projects. The first study on the "Psychology of Funeral Service," and the second being the joint sponsored study with the National Association on zoning and funeral home location.⁵³

Summary

It has been presented that funeral behavior and practices have a great impact and are an important part of present day society. Urban society and funeral directors have had a great effect on the process of change in funeral

⁵³ Michigan Funeral Directors Association, "Report for the MFDA Board of Directors," 87th Annual Convention, (May 3, 1966), pp. 2-3.

customs and procedures. There is a growing awareness that funerals are increasingly for the living and not entirely for the dead.

The funeral profession and the funeral director have come to be important and significant forces in our communities. The funeral home is a use of land which now creates a great deal of activity. This activity was formerly spread among several land uses. Now it is concentrated in respect to performance of personal services, the generation of activity with the visitation of the deceased by family and friends, and the conduct of the funeral service.

Funeral homes will continue to exist in our communities and as the population continues to grow the demand for additional establishments to meet the increasing needs will likewise increase. These funeral homes will be called upon to meet the required "need" for caring and disposition of the dead at even greater rates in the future. The role of the funeral director is still changing and his future education will undoubtedly include a more adequate understanding of the psychological factors involved in dealing with grief and the bereaved.

Funeral homes, as significant users of land and because of the unique characteristics of their operations,

deserve careful consideration by those concerned with community growth and planning. Unless the funeral director and the public solve their mutual problems related to funeral home location, a logical, orderly community development will continue to be a difficult goal to attain.

CHAPTER II

THE FUNERAL HOME AND COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

II.

THE FUNERAL HOME AND COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

Although funeral homes are alike in many respects, there are some differences which are important from the standpoint of their influence on community development. The funeral service is basically similar at all funeral homes and the range of services provided by the various funeral homes is similar. For example, in Michigan the state law requires that all funeral homes have facilities for the provision of the full range of funeral services.¹

Funeral homes are located in different parts of metropolitan areas. There are also differences in the types of funeral home operations. For the purpose of pointing out the important differences among funeral homes it is useful to classify them according to the physical and social characteristics which make them different. To classify these differences the types of funeral home operation, geographic location, branch operations and funeral home ownership will be employed.

¹Interview with Jack Jorgensen, Executive Secretary, Michigan Funeral Directors Association, May 23, 1966.

Types of Funeral Home Operation

In the United States there are two types of funeral homes which are identified by their divergent modes of operation. Each consists of a series of methods of thinking, behaving, and acting which combine to form a type of operation. One type, with its corresponding role for the funeral director, is termed local funeral home, and the other mass mortuary.

The local funeral home is one which serves a definite community or community area. This funeral home is an integral part of the community which it serves, and the funeral director is an agent for the community in other ways than in his caring for the dead. The families in the community know the funeral director personally and in turn each family is known by the funeral director in terms of their community economic and social status. There is a definite family-service orientation in this type of operation. The deceased is not known and identified as a "case," but by a set of social and personal relationships in which kinship attachments are usually primary. The operative motivation for the funeral director is more community service oriented with limited economic goals, rather than one with an emphasis on a "business"

concept. Finally, the funeral director's orientation toward his personnel is one of concern for their position and good will. All personnel are tied together by a sense of personal commitment to the funeral home and to the provision of the best possible funeral service to the community.

The word "local" does not mean that this type of funeral home is only found in small cities. By its very nature, it is just as much a local-community funeral home in the large cities and metropolitan areas as in small ones. The local funeral home is based on the social structure of an area and there is not a definite area of service which can be defined by exact political boundaries. The size of an area of service will vary with the social structure and the number of funeral homes. There may be only one funeral home in a community or there may be several, all serving the same general area which will still be classified as local funeral homes.²

The mass mortuary funeral operation is primarily found in the larger cities on the Pacific Coast of the

²Robert W. Habenstein, Sociology of Occupations: The Case the American Funeral Director, No. 12 of Human Behavior and Social Processes: An Interactionist Approach, ed. Arnold M. Rose; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961, pp. 240-41.

United States as well as a few east coast metropolitan areas. They may employ as many as 40-50 people and conduct as many as 3,000-4,000 funerals per year. The contact with the clientele is diffused through intermediaries. There is not any one person in the firm who is the funeral director and often there are unlicensed and/or absentee owners. A characteristic of this type is a high volume of funerals. Because of this, no one person is able to consistently assume the central role in the conduct of each funeral service. Usually there will be a number of ~~assistants~~ employed by the firm to deal with clientele. Community social structures may be taken into account but the operation of mass principles tend to cause the firm's activities to transcend community controls. The funeral home then operates in terms of a trade area and the personnel of such an establishment have no clear concept of a physical and social community being served.

A mass mortuary operation is not centered on a single community and a majority of clientele are drawn from several communities and cities in a metropolitan area. The unit of operation is the "case" and each case is likely to be void of all social and personal aspects and becomes a business statistic. The bereaved are a

matter of concern only as parties to a contractual agreement obligating them to pay the costs of the funeral.

In contrast to the service orientation of the local funeral home, there is no limitation of economic and business goals and the successful operation of a mass mortuary is directly related to profit. The profit motive is usually represented by conventional merchandising methods including installment purchase and price advertising. The relationship to employees and personnel tends to be bureaucratic. The personnel are considered as functionaries, they may show a lack of loyalty to the funeral establishment and tend to relate to their employer by rational rather than traditional orientations.³

Geographic Location

In a metropolitan area funeral homes can be generally classified according to their geographic location such as downtown, inner-city, and suburban. The downtown funeral homes are usually the long established ones in the area which have been in operation for a number of years. They will usually be located near the downtown churches and office buildings in the downtown area. This

³Ibid.

type of funeral home may also operate a branch in one or more of the suburban communities surrounding the central city, but the downtown location will be considered as the long established "prestige" operation and usually will be well known throughout the metropolitan area. The downtown funeral home will derive a great deal of its business from the members of the churches and the people who work in the central area.

The inner-city funeral homes will generally be located in the older residential areas which were formerly, or still are, inhabited by groups of people who have common religious and ethnic backgrounds and who have lived in these areas for several years. This type of funeral home may be located in a residential setting but they will usually be situated on a major street in a mixed commercial area with the residential development surrounding it. In many of these areas there have been changes and movements of the neighborhood population. The people whose families have lived there for years are slowly moving out and new groups are moving in which are of a different race or nationality background than the original inhabitants. Many of the funeral homes located in these areas are opening branches further out in the suburbs

where the families which they have been serving are now located.

The suburban funeral homes are located in lower density residential communities which surround the central city. For the most part these establishments are of single purpose construction; are newer; and of a more modern architecture than the inner-city or downtown funeral homes. Many of this type will be branches of a firm which still operates a home in another location. A firm which contains one or more sons or partners may establish a branch funeral home in the suburban area because the main operation does not provide enough financial support for all of them.

Many of the suburban type are built before the surrounding area is fully developed or they follow new growth to the surrounding area. They are usually located on major streets with residences, offices, churches, schools, and mixed activity surrounding them.⁴

Branch Operations

As brought out in Chapter I, the number of funeral firms in this country has decreased while the total number

⁴ Interview with Jack Jorgenson, op. cit., May 23, 1966.

of funeral homes has increased slightly. Much of this increase is due to the establishment of branch homes in addition to the main or central funeral homes operated by funeral firms.

The main or central funeral home is the one which is operated by a firm as their only establishment or, as the older and longer established home when they operate one or more branches. The main branch is most likely the establishment where the funeral firm built their business and reputation and the location is one which will continue to be associated with the firm's name even though new branches may be in operation.

The branch funeral homes are those which are established in addition to the main funeral home operation. These branches are established either through purchase of an existing operation, the conversion of another structure to a funeral home, or the construction of a new funeral home.

The reasons for establishing a branch funeral home are varied. The following are the results of a survey contained in the Planning Advisory Service Report No. 97 by the American Society of Planning Officials.⁵

⁵American Society of Planning Officials, "Funeral Homes," Information Report No. 97 (Chicago: Planning Advisory Service, April, 1957), p. 5.

TABLE I

ESTABLISHMENT OF BRANCH FUNERAL HOMES

Reasons for Establishing A Branch Funeral Home	First Reasons	Second Reasons	Third Reasons
Normal Expansion	44.83	3.45	10.34
Definite need in new area	13.80	37.93	3.45
Decrease of calls from original area	6.89	3.45	-
Previously served clients moving	6.89	6.98	6.89
Original place declining in service	3.45	13.80	-
Lack of parking facilities at original place	3.45	-	3.45
To improve location factor	-	3.45	10.34
Other reasons	20.69	13.80	6.89

ute this

From this survey the primary reasons given for establishing a new branch were normal expansion and definite need in a new area. This means that the number of services of the funeral homes who established branches reached a point where expansion was considered the next step in the operation of their funeral firm. This expansion was found to be the most logical into those areas which had a lack of funeral homes and where the funeral director felt that a definite need existed. There are other reasons given which were not as dominant as the above mentioned influences, but all of these reasons were influential at one time or another in

causing a funeral director to establish a branch funeral home.

Types of Funeral Home Ownership

There are three basic legal forms of funeral home ownership and operations existing today. Of the three, the sole proprietorship is most prevalent, followed by partnerships and corporations.⁶ In 1963, forty-six percent of the funeral homes were owned by individuals, twenty-three percent were owned by partnerships, and thirty-one percent were organized and owned by corporations.⁷

Most funeral homes which conduct a small number of funerals per year are sole proprietorships. As the volume of funeral services increases it is difficult to provide a trained funeral director at the funeral home on a twenty-four hour basis. Because of this, many funeral directors establish partnerships in order to provide a competent person in the funeral home at all times. The partnership seems to be a form of organization which is well fitted

⁶ Robert W. Habenstein and William M. Lamers, Funeral Customs the World Over (2nd. Ed.; Milwaukee: Bulfin Printers, Inc., 1963), p. 750.

⁷ Funeral Services: "Statistical Data," ed. Robert C. Slater (Milwaukee: National Funeral Directors Association of the United States, Inc., 1964).

to meet the special demands of the funeral occupation. The corporation form of organization has been a more recent development. A steady increase in corporations since the turn of the century, has been noted as the pressures of business mount. Although the corporation form of ownership is becoming popular in some areas, it is prohibited by law in others.⁸

The size of a funeral home is customarily measured by the number of funeral services conducted per year. In 1963, of all funeral firms in the United States, fifty-six percent conducted under one hundred funerals per year, with the average being sixty services. Thirty percent of the firms conducted between one hundred and two hundred services per year with an average of one hundred thirty-eight. Eight percent of the firms conducted between two hundred and three hundred services per year with an average of two hundred forty-four. Six percent of the firms conducted over three hundred services, the average being five hundred thirty-six.⁹

⁸Robert W. Habenstein and William M. Lamers, The History of American Funeral Directing (Revised Edition; Milwaukee: Bulfin Printers, Inc., 1963), pp. 551-52.

⁹Funeral Service: "Statistical Data," op. cit.

Basis of the Modern Funeral Home

The typical urban funeral home found in American communities today has certain characteristics and an existence which is the result of three basic needs. The first of these is the result of the use of embalming as a method of preparing the dead for burial. Embalming uses a chemical injection process which requires a special preparation room constructed and equipped in a manner similar to clinical facilities.

The second need grew out of the mode of living which has developed in our metropolitan areas, especially in the central cities. Small living units in apartments and other types of residences created a demand for a facility which would be large enough to accommodate the funeral service that formerly had been held in the home of the deceased. The funeral director began to provide the funeral "home" or "parlor" especially designed for the ceremonial disposal of the body.

A third need grew out of the problem related to transporting the dead and living to places of worship in urban communities. Because of this problem, the providing of a large room or rooms in the funeral home became more common. Sometimes called a chapel, this room or rooms can

be used for the religious services which are part of the funeral procedure. Consideration of the above three functional activities gave rise to the present day funeral home.¹⁰

The Modern Funeral Home

Because of the nature of the work performed all funeral homes have basic physical and operational similarity. Persons die at all hours of the day and night making it necessary for someone to be available at all times. If an ambulance service is provided the employees who operate this service must be readily available. Due to the need for immediate availability of someone at all times, the funeral home will usually contain living quarters for either the funeral director or his assistants, or perhaps both. In addition to the living quarters the modern funeral home will usually contain a preparation room for embalming, a room or rooms for the body to be in state and/or for the funeral service, a family room, rest rooms, a lounge, storage area, garage space for funeral home vehicles which may include at least one hearse, ambulance,

¹⁰Habenstein and Lamers, The History of American Funeral Directing, op. cit., pp. 436-39.

limousine and service car, and an area specifically designed for delivery of the body, flowers, caskets, and other items as they are brought to the funeral home. Most funeral homes also have a casket selection room. If the interior arrangement of the funeral home is on more than one floor an elevator or hydraulic lift will usually be used for moving the casket and body between floors.¹¹

One of the most important aspects of the physical facilities provided by the funeral home is that of off-street parking. The type of parking accommodations and the number of parking spaces vary a great deal among different funeral homes. Some of them will have enough space to provide ample parking spaces immediately adjacent to the funeral home on the same property while others will own or lease parking on adjacent property for use by the funeral home clientele.

The motif for the modern funeral home is becoming one of beauty, whether newly built or an older home which is redecorated. In many cases the modern funeral home will be decorated in such a manner as to get away from

¹¹Ibid., p. 578.

the "hominess" atmosphere of the old style funeral "parlor." The use of brighter colors, decorative wall paper, modern furniture and soft lighting is now found in many funeral homes.

Although the interior appearance of a funeral home is important, this importance is a result of the need to provide a proper atmosphere for the funeral service and is aimed at pleasing and impressing the members of the families of the deceased. The exterior appearance of the funeral home is important because it projects the physical appearance image of the funeral home to everyone living in the community. Well landscaped grounds with flower beds, shrubbery, hedges and other landscape features are all used by the funeral home to create favorable public sentiment. Architectural style of the funeral home varies from early colonial and other traditional styles to the functionally modern. Regardless of the size or style of the funeral home most funeral directors attempt to help build and maintain their image in the community through constant maintenance of their buildings and grounds.

Typical Community Attitudes

In recent years there has been an intensification in the criticism of funeral directors and funeral homes.

Many of these criticisms have resulted in funeral reform recommendations in newspapers, national magazines, books, and on television. As a result of the reform recommendations, some state legislatures conducted special studies into the operations and practices of funeral directors and firms. The Association of Better Business Bureaus also conducted inquiries into alleged funeral mis-practices. Both the state inquiries and those of the Better Business Bureau were primarily concerned with retail fees, services provided, and operating costs.¹²

Major criticisms of the past were basically centered on the costs of funerals and did not involve many of the problems which relate to urban development and planning for this development. Controversies and problems which do relate to urban development are primarily concerned with the questions of funeral home location and operational characteristics in the urban community and more specifically, to the problems concerning the permitted location of funeral homes relative to zoning ordinance provisions and the public interest. As brought out in the Planning

¹² Assembly of the State of California, Final Report of the Assembly Interim Committee on Public Health Relative to Funeral Directors, Embalmers, Morticians and Funeral Establishments, 1953, p. 14.

Advisory Services Report No. 97 by the American Society of Planning Officials.¹³

Householders and parents do not want to live next door to a funeral home. Translated into zoning terms this means that the public does not want funeral homes in residence districts. For more than 35 years, courts have backed up the laws that reflect this viewpoint, and it is unlikely that they will reverse their position.

One of the primary purposes of this paper is to isolate and examine the reasons which are behind the thinking of the public, the public officials, and the courts in regard to funeral home location and operations. Along with this are some land use problems presented to the community which are closely associated with these activities. In pointing out and examining these problems, most of the discussion will concentrate on the issues of the presence of death, depreciation of property values, appropriate uses of vacated funeral homes, conversion of other land uses, noise generation, parking, and traffic congestion.

One of the greatest objections to funeral homes is not concerned with their physical appearance, but the psychological and mental issue of the "presence of death."

¹³American Society of Planning Officials, op. cit., p. 21.

The main purpose and function of the funeral home is the care of dead human bodies. Because of this there is a continuous suggestion of death and dead bodies to many community residents when they present their image of a funeral home. This doesn't mean that all residents consider the funeral home as a constant reminder of death, but a significant number have given this as a reason for objecting to certain funeral home locations. As part of the reminder of death is included the presence of a hearse, often an ambulance, casket delivery, dead bodies, coming and going of bereaved persons, and the conduct of the funeral ceremonies, including the funeral procession.¹⁴ Many objections to funeral homes have included statements that obnoxious and disagreeable odors are part of a funeral home operation and would be offensive to anyone living around a funeral home. Of all the objections, this one is most unlikely because of the health laws which require facilities for proper care of the dead, thus prohibiting offensive and obnoxious odors from dead bodies. Also proper ventilation takes care of any odors from the chemicals used.

Closely related to the objections to funeral homes, because of the presence of death, is the complaint from

¹⁴Ibid., p. 12.

property owners that property values would depreciate sharply if a funeral home was located in or near an area where they own property. If the property values were to depreciate because of a funeral home in an area, it would probably be caused by the intrusion of a non-residential land use and the mental objection, rather than by the physical appearance of the funeral home and property. In most cases the exterior appearance of a funeral home is aesthetically pleasing. Some funeral homes are an asset to neighboring properties. Where large landscaped lawns, adequate parking, and architecturally pleasing buildings are provided, properties can appreciate in value due to the proximity of such a funeral home.

A problem which may face those concerned with community development is how many funeral homes go out of business or vacate their present building for another location and to what use can the funeral home be put if it ceases to be used for that purpose. The Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1965,¹⁵ provides information on funeral home failures. For comparative purposes the difference in the number of failures among funeral firms and those of

¹⁵U. S., Statistical Abstract, 1965, Table 701, p. 506.

the next lower enterprises according to number of failures is given.

TABLE II
COMPARISON OF BUSINESS FAILURES

	1952	1955	1960	1963	1964
Undertakers	10	8	7	9	11
Hotels	28	41	82	81	96
Other personal services	75	61	81	103	98
Passenger and freight transportation	178	255	410	326	286
Business and repair services	178	320	535	553	495

There may be reasons other than failure for a funeral home being vacated. When the owner of a funeral home is the sole proprietor and dies there may not be anyone to conduct the business. If the business is not significant enough for another firm to buy it the building ceases to be used as a funeral home. Another instance could arise where the funeral firm moves their total operation to a new location leaving the old one vacant. In the latter case another funeral firm may want to establish in this area. If the reason for the original firm's move is due to an entirely different group of people replacing the

former residents another funeral firm may purchase the vacant funeral home.

In the case of a small funeral firm going out of business the investment is usually too great for another firm to purchase the facilities. If a funeral firm already has an adequate amount of business in the area, the purchase of additional facilities and space would be unnecessary action. Many times these vacated funeral homes will be older residential homes converted for the funeral home operation. Therefore there may be a number of uses for which this land can be utilized. Because these converted properties usually have utility for other purposes, depending on the location, their value as pieces of real estate may be high.¹⁶ For the most part, the land on which a vacated funeral home is located would most likely have a demand for a use which is more "flexible" than that of a funeral home. It may also be a more accepted use to the inhabitants and other property owners in the area where the vacated funeral home is located.

Another related concern in regard to public sentiment and planning is that of the conversion of various

¹⁶ Interview with Jack Jorgensen, op. cit., May 23, 1966.

facilities to funeral homes. Most of these conversions will involve the use of larger homes which are no longer useful to their owners as a residence. The funeral firm will purchase these residential homes and convert them, with interior alterations and possibly with the addition of more space, to a funeral home. In these instances the people living in the surrounding area may object because of the reminder of death which the presence of the funeral home brings to them. From the standpoint of the urban planner this conversion may create problems of over-use and overcrowding of the land by an establishment which needs parking space for its clientele, as well as parking and storage space for the funeral home vehicles. These conversions will usually create new traffic patterns and neighborhood objections which tend to create a feeling among the community leaders that the conversion of existing residential property to a funeral home is not in the best interest of the community's development objectives.

There may be instances where the funeral firm will purchase commercial property such as a store and convert this structure to use as a funeral home. In cases such as these the parking problem may be lessened and usually the instances of adjacent residential property will be fewer.

In the case of some funeral homes an ambulance service will be included as part of the services which are provided to the public. The use of an ambulance usually involves emergency situations where the services are needed immediately and the ambulance may create some noise in leaving on a service call. There are regulations in many cities which now control the speed of ambulances and the use of warning sirens, but there still could be noise involved which is disturbing to neighbors of a funeral home, although every situation and operation may not be identical.

One of the greatest problems of funeral home operation is that of off-street parking and traffic congestion. People visit the funeral home to pay their respects to the deceased in great numbers and most of these people use automobiles in traveling to and from the funeral home. These trips are usually made in the early evening hours and can, in cases of a large number of visitors at one time, create problems of local traffic congestion and overcrowding of parking areas. The same problems could be found as a result of funeral services. There are a wide variety of parking accommodations among funeral homes. Many provide adequate parking, either on the site or on adjoining properties. There are others, however, which do

not have adequate off-street parking facilities causing the parking load to be placed on the public streets. When these occasions arise the danger to the public is increased and usually the people in the surrounding neighborhood will complain about this use of the public streets for parking purposes by funeral home clientele. Parking facilities needed by a funeral home include the parking and storage of vehicles belonging to the funeral firm, parking space for the employees, and visitor parking.

The funeral procession has received some criticism over the years. The characteristics of the funeral procession usually require some amount of traffic control and direction when entering the public street. Once under way the normal procession will travel at speeds of 15 to 20 miles-per-hour in urban areas, which in some instances could create traffic congestion. Today this may be less of a problem than in the past because the trend seems to be toward fewer automobiles traveling in the funeral procession.

There are planning and zoning regulations in this country today which control the use, operations, and location of funeral homes. There have also been several court decisions which reflect the attitude of the courts in in-

interpreting these regulations. In order to completely understand how the various problems related to funeral homes have been dealt with through legislation and court interpretation of this legislation, a few of the more significant zoning ordinance provisions and court decisions are presented.

Typical Zoning Provisions

The establishment of zoning districts is a legislative function; and before the courts will declare a zoning ordinance invalid, it must clearly appear that the ordinance is discriminatory or unreasonable in its operation, or has no substantial relation to the public health, safety or morals, or to the general welfare.¹⁷

In the absence of a zoning ordinance the courts have ruled that the operation of a funeral home in a strictly residential neighborhood does, by its very nature constitute a nuisance. The reasons given for these rulings are based on the theory that the hearse, ambulance and the procession of mourners are reminders of the presence of death, and can bring depression and discomfort to the normal person not used to such conditions.¹⁸

¹⁷Euclid V. Ambler Realty Co., 272 U.S. 365 (Ohio).

¹⁸Kundinger V. Bagnasco, 298 Mich. 15, 298 NW 386, 1941.

In the cases where a zoning ordinance does exist and where a funeral home is located in an area as a permitted use under this zoning ordinance, the courts have not interfered with the use of the funeral home because it is not a nuisance "per se"; but, should the funeral home be operated in such a manner as to "constitute a nuisance by the failure to observe such rules and regulations pertaining to the use of proper equipment for the preservation of public health, a court may well grant injunctive relief to persons in the neighborhood who are suffering or who may suffer by the careless operation of the funeral home."¹⁹

The courts have generally held to the above principles when dealing with the question of the funeral home constituting a nuisance and the question of funeral home operations as a permitted use in zoning districts. Generally, the funeral home has been designated as a commercial use in most zoning ordinances and is allowed as a permitted use in commercial or business zones. In 1945, the National Selected Morticians conducted a survey on zoning practices

¹⁹Habenstein and Lamers, The History of American Funeral Directing, op. cit., p. 532.

and found that:²⁰

Of the 90 individual zoning ordinances studied, 11 of them (12%) permitted funeral homes to be established in residential zones (under special conditions). . . . On the other hand, 76 cities and municipalities, or 84%, permitted (or did not restrict) the establishment of funeral homes and mortuaries in the business or commercial zones. In two California cities, funeral homes were located in special "undertaking districts."

Appendix I contains examples of zoning ordinance provisions which were extracted in part from Planning Advisory Services Report No. 97 by the American Society of Planning Officials.²¹ Other examples are contained in selected zoning ordinances and are included along with the Advisory Services Report examples to illustrate the methods of dealing with funeral homes in various zoning ordinances.

It can be seen from the variety of zoning ordinance provisions contained in Appendix I that some agreement prevails among certain cities as to the location of funeral homes, but there are a wide variety of provisions which differ in many respects. On the whole, the different

²⁰American Society of Planning Officials, op. cit., p. 18.

²¹Ibid., pp. 19-20.

ordinance provisions vary from allowing the funeral homes in residential zones by special permit, prohibiting them from neighborhood and limited commercial districts, allowing them as permitted uses in commercial and business zones of various character and industrial zones. One interesting point is the trend to permit the location of a funeral home in a zone which is designed for office, professional, medical and related services. This is a zone which was mentioned only once in the earlier studies related to funeral homes and zoning.

Legal Decisions

There have been a substantive number of court cases involving zoning regulations which restrict the location of funeral homes. From the early days of zoning the courts have almost always ruled that funeral homes are a commercial use and being a commercial use, do not belong in residential zones.²² Although the majority of court decisions have ruled that a funeral home constitutes a commercial use, some court cases have allowed funeral homes in residential zones. There are various reasons

²² Edward M. Bassett, Zoning: The Laws, Administration, and Court Decisions During the First Twenty Years (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1940), p. 213.

given for allowing the funeral home in the residential zones, but the majority of cases allowed them because the nature of the residential areas were such as to allow the funeral home without creating adverse effects.²³

Funeral homes have been prohibited from residential areas in many instances and the reasoning of the courts in these cases is that the presence of the funeral home would depreciate the value of the residential property;²⁴ that the funeral home is a constant reminder of death;²⁵ but, many court decisions involved cases where variances had been granted to funeral homes in residential areas and the courts ruled that the variances should not have been granted and therefore were illegal.²⁶ In other instances the courts have upheld the granting of an exception to the zoning ordinance provisions. Such is the case in the following:²⁷

²³American Society of Planning Officials, op. cit.
p. 16.

²⁴Saier v. Joy, 198 Mich. 295, 164 NW 507, 1917.

²⁵Kundinger v. Bagnasco, op. cit.

²⁶American Society of Planning Officials, op. cit.,
p. 16.

²⁷"The Law Says," Mortuary Management, December,
1962.

The Zoning Board of Warwick, Rhode Island granted a special exception which permitted the use as a funeral home of a large house in a residential zone in which funeral homes were not a specified permitted use. The Board granted the exception under a section of the zoning ordinance which provided that an exception could be granted for a use that is "reasonably necessary for the convenience and welfare of the public."

Most court decisions do not rest on the finding that funeral homes are physically offensive, but, rather they rest on the premise that the constant suggestion of death tends to destroy the comfort and repose sought in home ownership.²⁸ But, in cases which involved the location of funeral homes in areas which were changing from predominantly residential to commercial or which were a mixture of residential and commercial, the courts have been substantially uniform in holding that the proposed establishment and operation of a funeral home in these areas will be allowed.²⁹

²⁸ Charles M. Haar, Land Use Planning: A Casebook on the Use, Misuse, and Re-Use of Urban Land (Boston . Toronto: Little Brown and Company, 1959), p. 115.

²⁹ John F. Hellebush, Some Practical Aspects of the Zoning Laws as They Pertain to the Operation of Funeral Homes, A Report to the National Funeral Directors Association, October 20, 1965, p. 12.

Because of the number of court cases which have been decided in various ways there is not a definite set of principles which can be established for deciding future cases. These cases involve zoning questions in various areas of the country which may be essentially different, one from the other, therefore, each case should be decided on the facts and merits of its own circumstances and the values of the community.

Through the review and discussion of various zoning provisions and court cases relative to funeral homes an understanding can be gained concerning the basis for these zoning regulations and court cases. With an awareness of the previously discussed problems of funeral homes in urban areas and with the zoning and legal issues in mind, the next chapter will deal with the criteria and considerations utilized by funeral directors in the operation and location of funeral homes.

CHAPTER III

LOCATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUNERAL HOMES

AS EXPRESSED BY FUNERAL DIRECTORS

III.

LOCATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUNERAL HOMES AS EXPRESSED BY FUNERAL DIRECTORS

It was noted previously that a characteristic of funeral directing is to operate under the same family or firm name and to remain located in the same general area or occupy the same site for several generations. There have been changes taking place in metropolitan areas recently which make this less true than in the past. For the most part the permanence of location for a funeral home is still very important. While there are advantages to the permanence of location the changes in metropolitan settlement patterns an expansion of population and an expected increase in the number of deaths have created the need for additional funeral homes in new locations. Funeral directors realize that location is an important factor but there hasn't been a strict set of locational principles adopted which can be adhered to by those seeking to establish a funeral home. Although there is a lack of adopted principles there are several factors which most

funeral directors take into account when considering the location for a funeral home.

There are generally three situations where a funeral director is concerned with the factors of funeral home location. He may wish to: 1) establish a branch in addition to his present funeral home; 2) abandon his present site and relocate on another site; or 3) purchase an established business which is presently under the operation of another firm. The predominant situation today is the establishment of new branch funeral homes since very few funeral firms go out of business and very few new funeral firms are established.¹

Regardless of the specific situation the same general locational considerations are present and are important to many funeral directors. Several of these factors can be grouped into a general category related to the concept of "service area." The particular factors discussed below are all very important aspects which make up and determine the "service area" and the location of a funeral home.

¹Robert W. Habenstein and William M. Lamers, The History of American Funeral Directing (Revised Edition; Milwaukee: Bulfin Printers, Inc., 1963), pp. 574-75.

Population Factors

Because the funeral director depends on people for his business he is concerned with having a location which will give him proximity to a certain population. Formerly the funeral director located to serve primarily one ethnic or religious group and this location was in the particular neighborhood or community where a high proportion of the single homogeneous group lived. This has been changing and today the funeral director does not depend on one single group for his business. He generally serves a cross-section of religious and ethnic groups in one or more neighborhoods or communities. There are two exceptions to this situation. Negro funeral homes are predominantly dependent on an all Negro clientele and, to a lesser degree, Jewish funeral homes specialize in funerals for Jewish clientele.

The funeral director will want to know what the significant and pertinent population movements are and have been in the metropolitan area. He may select a location based, in part, on a movement of people into an area which is not served by many funeral homes. He may find that the clientele from his present locational area have moved out to other areas. He will attempt to determine

where these people have moved and decide that he could move to a new location and retain a great deal of this business potential and obtain new clients. If the funeral director is interested in purchasing an established funeral home he will consider the important question of, "how much clientele has been built up by the present owner, how much does he calculate he can reasonably expect to keep and is there a shift in population away from the "service area?"

For the funeral director not concerned with an established clientele the most promising general location is one in a suburban area not served by many other funeral homes and one which gives accessibility to several rapidly developing communities.² Additionally the average age of those who make up the community is important.

From this discussion it can be seen that the population, its characteristics to a limited extent, and its movements to a great extent, are very important factors in determining the location of a funeral home.

Relationships to Other Funeral Homes

When considering a general location the funeral director is concerned with the location of other funeral

²Ibid.

homes in an area. He wants to know how many other funeral homes exist in the same general "service area" and how much investment will he have to make in order to have comparable facilities with the other funeral homes. A unique characteristic of funeral directing is that it is not subject in the normal manner to the economic law of supply and demand. In this regard supply is the number of funeral homes and demand is the number of deaths.

Since the demand is fixed by the death rate the operation of a funeral home is not subject to demand as much as to supply. Supply can be increased by the establishment of additional funeral homes. Therefore the funeral director is concerned with the supply side of funeral directing when considering a location in relation to other funeral homes in a general area. When considering the location of other funeral homes as well as the number of them, he will relate back to the population of an area and the characteristics of that population, especially to the demand side of funeral directing or the death rate.³

³Assembly of the State of California, Final Report of the Assembly Interim Committee on Public Health Relative to Funeral Directors, Embalmers, Morticians and Funeral Establishments, 1953, p. 8.

Relationships to Other Land Uses

The modern funeral home has been established as an appropriate place for making arrangements for funerals, for the "in state" period, and for conducting the funeral rites in total or in part. The funeral director will attempt to plan his interior building arrangement so as to offer the best possible conditions for carrying out these functions. At the same time he wants a location which will offer a certain type of environment in relation to the surrounding land development.

Because of the nature of his operation the funeral director wants a location which will offer him adequate space for his building, parking area, motor vehicle storage, sufficient open space, and one which offers a quiet and dignified, easily accessible atmosphere for the bereaved. The funeral director will be cautious in selecting a location relative to the surrounding land uses. This means that the types of land uses which are likely to be unpleasant to the senses of sight, sound, and smell would not be compatible with a funeral home.

One use of land which has some association to funeral homes is the church. Funeral services are sometimes held in churches and in the case of certain religious

or ethnic groups the church funeral services are predominant. Therefore, many funeral directors will seek a location which is in close proximity to the churches in an area. There will usually be more churches in a general area than funeral homes and these funeral homes may be located to serve one specific denomination or maybe several denominations will be served by a funeral home. In the latter case a more central location between the several church sites will be desirable.

If church location is a factor in determining funeral home location where would these areas be in the community? In this regard Trombly states: "Consensus seems to indicate that churches should be near centers of community activities. This will place churches on natural community travel patterns where they can regularly be seen by all. They also can double as a buffer between residential and commercial developments."⁴ From this statement on church location it seems that a funeral director interested in locating according to the churches would also want to locate near the center of community activity patterns.

⁴ Donald Duane Trombly, "Locational Aspects of Churches in The Urban Community" (unpublished Master's dissertation, School of Urban Planning and Landscape Architecture, Michigan State University, 1963), p. 57.

There is another use of land which has a somewhat natural relationship with funeral homes. The location of cemeteries is important to the funeral director because of the funeral procession from the funeral home to the cemetery. Although the cemetery is not normally connected with the funeral home from an ownership or management standpoint, some funeral directors may consider the location of a cemetery as being an important factor when seeking a location for the funeral home. As cemeteries are filled up in the center of metropolitan areas new ones are located in the suburbs. This means that the people who need cemetery space will be using the newly located cemeteries. The distance of the new cemeteries from the central city funeral homes will then be increased causing the funeral procession to cover a longer distance and to be more time consuming. If the funeral director finds that this development is a significant factor in his operation he may desire a location which is closer to the newer cemetery sites.

As noted earlier many zoning ordinances only permit funeral homes in business or commercial zones. Due to the possible creation of noise, traffic conflict with shoppers and commercial vehicles, traffic congestion and limited

expansion space, most funeral directors will not seek out the commercial areas because they do not offer the reverent, quiet, and dignified atmosphere the funeral home requires.⁵ Very often the influences of these areas will cause the funeral director to seek a location in a residential area. Because of the nature of the funeral home operations and the association with death which goes with it the residential areas usually haven't been available to funeral homes. Another aspect which may create some conflict with residential areas is the traffic which the funeral home will generate. This can have a disruptive effect on quiet residential streets and to the inhabitants of these neighborhoods. This may or may not be a problem, but for the most part, the funeral director may desire as his first choice a residential location. Even though this may be the first choice of the funeral director, the residents, public officials, and the courts have limited the location of a funeral home in residential areas.⁶ Because of this the next logical choice for the funeral director

⁵American Society of Planning Officials, "Funeral Homes," Information Report No. 97 (Chicago: Planning Advisory Service, April, 1957), p. 21.

⁶Ibid.

may be a location on the perimeter of a business zone next to one or more residential zones. This location will usually offer better access to major streets and will tend to lessen the incidence of disruptive effects on residential neighborhoods.

Relationships to Streets

Various social changes in this country have created the use of the funeral home for all aspects of the funeral rites and the location with respect to the circulation pattern of an area is important to the funeral director and the bereaved. Normally a funeral director will want to locate on or near major traffic arteries. Because most local travel is by automobile such a location will make the funeral home readily and easily accessible to those visiting the deceased and to those attending funeral services. Locations on major traffic arteries may help provide an ease of ingress and egress to the site which other locations might not have available. These locations also provide an easier and more ready access to the churches and cemeteries used by the families served by the funeral home. Many funeral directors also feel that a location along a major street will provide "advertising benefits"

which other sites would not have. Usually death occurs infrequently in a family. When death comes to a relative a person will remember a funeral home from the frequent trips he makes by its location and will call that funeral home. Because of this most funeral directors feel that the funeral home will be noticed more if located on a major street. Also, the location of a funeral home on a major street may be objected to less by others because of the increased activity on such a street.

Specific Site and Building Considerations

In addition to the locational factors which are considerations of "service area," the more specific location of a funeral home is dependent on site availability in relation to building, parking, and open space needs.

The Site. The modern funeral home needs a sizable piece of land. At the present time there are no uniform standards of site size. It has been agreed by many planners though, that some funeral homes are situated on sites of inadequate size. One of the reasons for site inadequacy is the increased need for parking which was not as great a factor a decade ago.

In 1954 the National Selected Morticians conducted a survey which stated: "As a rule of thumb, the parcel should be a minimum of three times the area of the building."⁷ This means that a building with a ground dimension of 100 x 100 feet will require a parcel of at least 30,000 square feet. In this survey it was found that parcels acquired for branch funeral homes had the following dimensions.⁸

TABLE III

FUNERAL HOME SITE DIMENSIONS

Ground area:	Range-----3,000 to 74,700 square feet Average--24,755 square feet
Frontage:	Range-----40 to 275 feet Average-----129.97 feet

There have been a wide range of lot area requirements in various zoning ordinances. Some have allowed a funeral home in certain zones without establishing a site size, while others have established site sizes which range from 7,500 square feet to 40,000 square feet.⁹

⁷ Ibid., p. 6.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Based on a limited survey of zoning ordinances.

Parking. Inadequate parking has been one of the biggest problems in funeral home operations. Many funeral directors recognize this problem and take it into consideration when selecting a site for a funeral home. Adequate off-street parking is essential for visitors to the funeral home and for those attending the funeral service. The majority of funeral directors utilize the off-street parking areas for assembling and lining up automobiles for the funeral procession and attempt to keep this activity off the public street.

The funeral director in considering the feelings of the bereaved desires to provide adequate off-street parking space for them. There are many aged people who visit the funeral home to pay their respects to the deceased or who attend the funeral services. It is very important that parking areas are provided in a convenient manner and in adequate supply so as to avoid the problems and possible danger of these persons having difficulty with parking their cars and walking to the funeral home. Consequently there is a need for enough parking area for a funeral home which will accommodate a maximum number of visitors, attendance at one or more funeral services at

one time, and for lining up the funeral procession in an area which is off the public streets.

In reference to the number of parking spaces which a funeral home should provide the survey by the National Selected Morticians showed that a wide range of parking spaces were provided by new branch funeral homes. The range of parking spaces extended from 0-100 with the average number of spaces per branch funeral home being 25.5.¹⁰

There have been a variety of methods in zoning regulations for determining the number of off-street parking spaces which a funeral home shall be required to provide. Two common methods which have been used in zoning ordinances to state the off-street parking requirements are: 1) one parking space for a certain amount of square feet of floor area of chapels, reposing rooms, or individual funeral service rooms; 2) a certain number of parking spaces per a designated number of seats in the chapel or individual funeral service rooms.

David R. Levin, in a study, Zoning for Parking Facilities makes the following statement:¹¹

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 7.

¹¹ Ibid.

The amount of parking that is generated at a funeral establishment is obviously a function of the number of funerals that can be handled at the same time, or with some overlap, the size of the facilities, the reputation of the funeral home, and the social and economic characteristics of the groups catered to. It is suggested that off-street parking space be required to be provided for all "official" vehicles of mortuaries or funeral homes, plus one space for each family resident on the premises, plus additional spaces equal to 75 per cent of the number of employees (other than residents on the premises), plus such additional space for funeral visitors as shall be determined by the board of zoning adjustment (or other local body vested with appropriate authority) to be desirable, considering the many variables characterizing any particular establishment. The board of zoning adjustment should be governed, however, in such a determination by the general tenor and level of requirements set forth in detail in connection with other property uses.

Open Space. Because the majority of funeral homes have beautifully landscaped and nicely kept yards the funeral director is interested in insuring that adequate open space will be available when considering a potential site. These open areas can be provided in the form of front, side, and rear yard areas around the funeral home. They also can serve the function of "buffer" zones between driveways and parking areas and adjoining properties. Not only will these areas be aesthetically pleasing but they help to reduce the possibility of noise producing activities

disturbing the quiet atmosphere which the funeral home needs.

Special use permits may require funeral homes to have greater front, side, and rear yard dimensions. A funeral home located in most business, commercial, or industrial zones as a permitted use will not be required to provide a great deal of open space. In one case, a funeral home in Baltimore, Maryland, is located in a business zone and the building which is 55 x 85 feet is situated on a corner lot with its walls flush to the sidewalk.¹² It seems that a funeral home which uses its neatly landscaped lawns and well maintained buildings as an essential part of its operation would want to provide more than the minimum yard dimensions which these other zones require. Because of this the modern funeral home may not seek a site in a certain zone or area because of the possible lack of adequate open space.

In many cases the funeral director will be interested in a site which will allow for expansion of the building and parking area. This expansion space can be used for open area and when the time comes for expansion

¹²"Problems Involved in Designing a Mortuary for An Urban Area," American Funeral Director, April, 1963.

of the facilities the open space could be reduced without violating the requirements of the zoning ordinance and reducing the effectiveness of the beautiful grounds.

Buildings. There are various styles in the type of building which a funeral director will select. In many cases the funeral home will be architecturally designed so as to compliment the architecture of the surrounding area. All funeral directors will want a similar type of building arrangement because of the basic physical and operational characteristics of most funeral homes. They will want to include essentially the same functional features, but the proportion and actual internal and external arrangement of these functional areas will vary. The size of a funeral home is measured by the number of services conducted per year. The various functional areas will require a building of a basic size and as the number of services per year increase the funeral home will require more space. Therefore, as the number of services per year increases, the funeral director will plan more space for some of the functional areas to adequately accommodate the additional funeral services over the basic number, which every funeral home must plan for.

Conclusions

Most funeral directors are interested in a location which provides them with a quiet and dignified atmosphere. They are also interested in reducing the problems which exist or have existed with the operation of funeral homes such as the lack of adequate parking and overcrowding of a site. Because of his interest, there are several factors which a funeral director uses when selecting a location for his funeral home. Although these locational factors have not been incorporated into a uniform set of policies and principles to be used by everyone interested in locating a funeral home, they are used by many and are useful considerations.

The establishment of a new funeral home involves a sizable investment of capital on the part of a funeral director and he will take every precaution to insure that all aspects of location will be such as to protect his investment. Among these precautions are the realization that an adequate site size is very important and many funeral directors today are seeking much larger sites than in the past.

There has been an increase in funeral home construction over the past few years and this trend should continue.

Because of this, more funeral directors will be aware of the need to consider the several factors of funeral home location. An awareness on the part of the funeral director and the interest of the urban planner in community development could bring about a cooperation leading to the elimination of many problems of funeral home location, both to the funeral director and to the community.

CHAPTER IV

A STUDY OF FUNERAL HOMES IN URBAN COMMUNITIES

IV.
A STUDY OF FUNERAL HOMES IN
URBAN COMMUNITIES

Introduction

Before suggestions can be formulated as to desirable funeral home locational policies that can be applied in most situations, it is necessary to isolate and examine actual locational and operational factors within an urban environment. Although previous chapters treated these factors within a general context, this chapter presents aspects of funeral home location and operations that have been found in particular urban areas. There will be an attempt to point out the criteria used in selecting a funeral home location and site. The pertinent relationships between interior and exterior functional areas of a funeral home will be pointed out as well as the relationships of these factors to the location of funeral homes and their sites. The various aspects of funeral home operation related to services provided and the funeral service are pointed out so it may be possible to

further understand their position in American communities. This study will be concerned with the physical relationships of funeral homes within urban communities along with the limited relationships of social and economic factors. The latter are included, where necessary, to aid in understanding and describing the physical pattern more completely.

Methodology

A case study of operational characteristics and the locational and site factors of funeral homes, within a variety of urbanized areas, forms a significant part of this study. Data on the operational characteristics and certain aspects of the locational and site factors were gathered from several urbanized areas in Michigan. Some of the more specific locational relationships between funeral homes, to population, and with other land uses are part of a more concentrated study of the Lansing and Detroit, Michigan, urbanized areas.

To obtain an adequate analysis, research has been conducted in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Statistics have been obtained including information on funeral home to population ratios, locational aspects,

operational factors, funerals, funeral home ownership, and site factors. Other information pertaining to locational criteria, choices, and problems was obtained through interviews, field surveys, and an analysis of the distribution pattern of funeral homes as related to other funeral homes, street types, other land uses and population characteristics.

Information on existing funeral homes, which served as the foundation for the above analysis, was obtained from several sources. The Lansing and Detroit area telephone directories and the Michigan Funeral Directors Association Directory of Members provided addresses of the funeral homes. After all funeral homes in the Lansing and Detroit study areas were located, a field check, the Sanborn Atlas, and the Lansing and East Lansing Assessor's Records were used to obtain data on site sizes and layouts.

One of the major sources of information was a questionnaire (See Appendix II) which was mailed to a cross-section of funeral homes in the State of Michigan. The questionnaire requested information on such items as the addresses of the funeral homes, the zoning classification where each funeral home is located, number of years at this location, approximate number of funerals per year,

characteristics of clientele, number of employees, data on funeral customs, various operational factors, site dimensions, building dimensions, number of parking spaces, ownership data, and interior building arrangements. In addition, viewpoints were requested as to whether the funeral director liked his present location and the adequacy or inadequacy of existing sites. Each funeral director was also asked to answer questions designed to provide insight into possible trends in the conduct of funerals and funeral service. The results of the questionnaire proved to be useful, and for the most part, reliable. Sixteen per cent of the questionnaires were returned and, with few exceptions, every question was answered by all respondents. The author is confident the information obtained by use of the questionnaires is both accurate and significant of funeral service.

A great deal of information was obtained through interviews and correspondence with the Executive Secretary, officers, and members of the Michigan Funeral Directors Association, Executive Secretary and President of the National Funeral Directors Association, and others who have conducted research on various phases and aspects of funeral service.

The results of the various research methods utilized in this study provided revealing insights that will make it possible to formulate recommendations on funeral home locational policies.

Study Areas

Due to the limited number of funeral homes found in an individual community larger areas of study were necessary. Therefore, the Lansing urbanized area and the central portion of the Detroit urbanized area were used in studying some of the locational factors. These areas and fifty other Michigan urbanized communities were utilized for gathering operational and locational data

The Lansing urbanized area used for this case study includes the cities of Lansing and East Lansing, Lansing Township, portions of DeWitt and Bath Townships, on the north, Meridian Township on the east, Delhi Township on the south, and Delta Township on the west. Three unincorporated urban concentrations, namely, Okemos and Haslett in Meridian Township and Holt in Delhi Township, are also included in the study area. The study area (see Plate 1) had a population of approximately 180,000 in

1960.¹ The population has been estimated at 190,000 for
1965.²

The Detroit urbanized area used in this case study (see Plate 2) includes all or part of thirty cities and two townships. This area is bounded by Eleven Mile Road on the north, Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River on the east and southeast, Wick Road extended east from Pelham Road to the Detroit River on the south, and Inkster Road on the west. The U. S. Census had a population of 2,570,000 for this area in 1960.³ The estimated population for 1965 is 2,618,000.⁴

The fifty urbanized communities from which questionnaires were submitted are located throughout the Southern Peninsula of Michigan. There is a wide range of

¹Derived from the publication U. S. Censuses of Population and Housing: 1960. Census Tracts, Final Report PHC (1) - 73.

²Estimate made by author based on interpolation of U. S. Census figures and population density map of the Lansing Planning Department.

³Derived from the publication U. S. Censuses of Population and Housing: 1960. Census Tracts, Final Report PHC (1) - 40.

⁴Estimate made by author based on interpolation of U. S. Census figures and 1970-80 Population Allocation by Community of the Detroit Metropolitan Planning Commission.

communities in this sample allowing for a comparison of the characteristics of funeral homes in communities of various size. These communities are varied enough to permit useful correlations to be derived, analysis to be made, and are not too great in number to be beyond the workable limits of this thesis.

The value of using the Lansing area for part of the study is not based on the number of funeral homes found there, but on their characteristics. This area contains examples of most types including the downtown, inner-city, and suburban funeral homes. There are also main and branch operations as well as those which serve primarily persons with similar ethnic and religious backgrounds. **There is** a funeral home which serves only Negro families and there are varied operational characteristics present pertaining to the provision of ambulance service, number of funerals conducted, number of employees, and others. The Detroit area, on the other hand, provides a large number of funeral homes. This allows for a more clear analysis of distribution and locational relationships rather than other characteristics.

Funeral Homes to Population Ratios

Ratio comparisons are one of the useful tools of planning analysis. This ratio is a quantity of something related to a uniform unit of reference. One such ratio used in planning is the density of population shown by a certain number of persons per acre. Another form is a certain quantity of a land use type per 1000 persons. These "tools," when adjusted properly by recognizing future trends and desires, can be used as a standard to gauge the adequacy of existing facilities or to provide a method for determining future requirements.

Using this technique as a basis, knowledge of the ratio of the number of funeral homes per 1000 persons, properly adjusted, may be used in estimating future demand for funeral homes. This can also be shown by giving the number of persons in an area per funeral home.

There are eight funeral homes in the Lansing study area. Acreage computation for the eight funeral homes reveals that 8.7 acres were in funeral home use in 1965. When these figures were related to the estimated 190,000 population of the study area the following ratios were derived:

- (1) 1 funeral home for every 23,750 persons, or
- (2) .04 funeral homes per 1,000 persons, and
- (3) .045 acres of funeral home land per 1,000 persons.

On comparing these values with the data at the State of Michigan, Detroit, and national scales, the Lansing study area has far fewer funeral homes than these other areas.

There are 211 funeral homes in the Detroit study area. When this number was related to the 2,618,000 population of the study area, the following ratios were derived:

- (1) 1 funeral home for every 12,407 persons, or
- (2) .08 funeral homes per 1,000 persons.

On comparing these values with the data at the State and national scale the Detroit area also has fewer funeral homes. In order to better show these relationships, Table IV provides a comparison between the Lansing study area, Detroit study area, State of Michigan, and the United States.⁵

⁵The figure for the United States is based on a population of 196,320,000 and 24,000 funeral homes. The figure for the State of Michigan is based on a population of 8,000,000 and 885 funeral homes.

TABLE IV

COMPARISON OF POPULATION TO FUNERAL HOMES

Study Area	Funeral Homes Per 1000 Persons	Number of Persons Per Funeral Home
Lansing Study Area	.04	23,750
Detroit Study Area	.08	12,407
State of Michigan	.11	9,040
United States	.12	8,180

As can be seen from this comparison, the Michigan ratio is also lower than that for the nation as a whole. The Lansing situation is very unusual and is said to be one of the very few areas of its size to have a ratio this low. The ratio of the Detroit study area is more typical of larger metropolitan areas. In small communities and rural areas the ratio would be higher than the national average. There is usually only one funeral home in these communities or rural areas and the population per funeral home in most cases falls short of the national average. The funeral home questionnaire points out that funeral homes in small urban communities conduct fewer funerals per year than those located in metropolitan areas. This indicates a relationship of fewer people per funeral home in less populated areas and a smaller number of funerals per year for these funeral homes.

Before these ratios can be used as standards for estimating and planning future funeral home requirements, they should be adjusted for expected future trends and desires as well as the above mentioned differences between large metropolitan areas with great number of persons and small communities with fewer persons. One important trend is the expected increase in the number of persons living in urbanized areas. If the total number of funeral homes remains constant and the population increases, the ratio of the number of funeral homes per 1,000 persons would be adjusted downward from the present ratio. On the other hand, new funeral home construction may keep pace with the population increase and cause the ratio to remain at its current level or adjust it upward. One of the important factors to consider in regard to funeral homes and population is the number of deaths. The expected increase in the number of deaths per year may create a need for additional funeral homes and adjust the ratio upward. This will depend on the adequacy of present funeral home sites. The increased death rate may create the need for expansion of present funeral home facilities. On adequate sites the funeral homes could be expanded and not increase the number of new funeral homes. If present sites are inadequate, the

alternative would be to find another site and construct a new funeral home. This would be shown in a desire for new and larger funeral home sites and would adjust the ratio of funeral home land to population upward to accommodate the larger sites.

Trends in operational characteristics and funeral behavior are important factors to be considered when dealing with the number of funeral homes in an area. Trends in funeral attendance, services provided, and certain other operating features may also affect the expected number of funeral homes in the future.

Qualitative Aspects of Funeral Home Location

Several factors other than numerical or quantity considerations are of greater importance to this study. Determinations as to the characteristics of funeral home operations and location are necessary in terms of zoning district classifications, distribution pattern, relationships to other land uses and streets, and the number of years on one site.

Funeral Home Location Related to Zoning Districts

One of the great problems presented to political leaders, planners, the community and funeral directors is

the method of dealing with funeral homes in zoning ordinances. As stated in Chapter II, there are a variety of opinions and ordinance provisions in regard to funeral home location. It was pointed out that many zoning ordinances only permit funeral homes in the business and commercial zones. The variety of ordinance provisions and the restriction of funeral homes to business and commercial zones is brought out in the questionnaire. Table V indicates the various zoning districts where funeral homes are located in several Michigan communities.

TABLE V
FUNERAL HOME LOCATION BY ZONING DISTRICT
(for 69 funeral homes)

Zoning District	Number of Funeral Homes	Percentage of Respondents
Commercial & Business	39	56%
Single-Family Residential	12	17%
Two-Family Residential	3	4%
Multiple-Family Residential	2	3%
Professional & Office	1	2%
Church & Multiple-Family	1	2%
Residential-Commercial	3	4%
Transitional Parking	1	2%
No Zoning Ordinance	7	10%

The foregoing table shows over one-half of the funeral homes in the study sample are located in business

or commercial zones. It is somewhat unusual that 17 per cent of the funeral homes are located in single-family residential zones. The remainder are spread evenly in other zones, with 10 per cent of the respondents located in an area where no zoning ordinance is in effect.

Of the 69 funeral homes responding to the zoning question, 51 or 74 per cent are permitted uses in their respective zoning districts. Table VI indicates which zones allow funeral homes as permitted uses and those which allow them by some other means.

TABLE VI
CONDITIONS FOR FUNERAL HOME LOCATION

Zoning District	Per mitted Use	Special Permit	Non-Con-forming	Total No. of Funer-al Homes
Commercial & Business	37	-	2	39
Single-Family Residential	4	5	3	12
Two-Family Residential	3	-	-	3
Multiple-Family Residential	2	-	-	2
Professional and Office	1	-	-	1
Church & Multiple-Family Residential-Commercial	1	-	-	1
Residential-Commercial	3	-	-	3
Transitional Parking	-	-	1	1
No Zoning Ordinance	-	-	-	7

Of the funeral homes located in the business and commercial zones, 94 per cent are permitted uses. This is

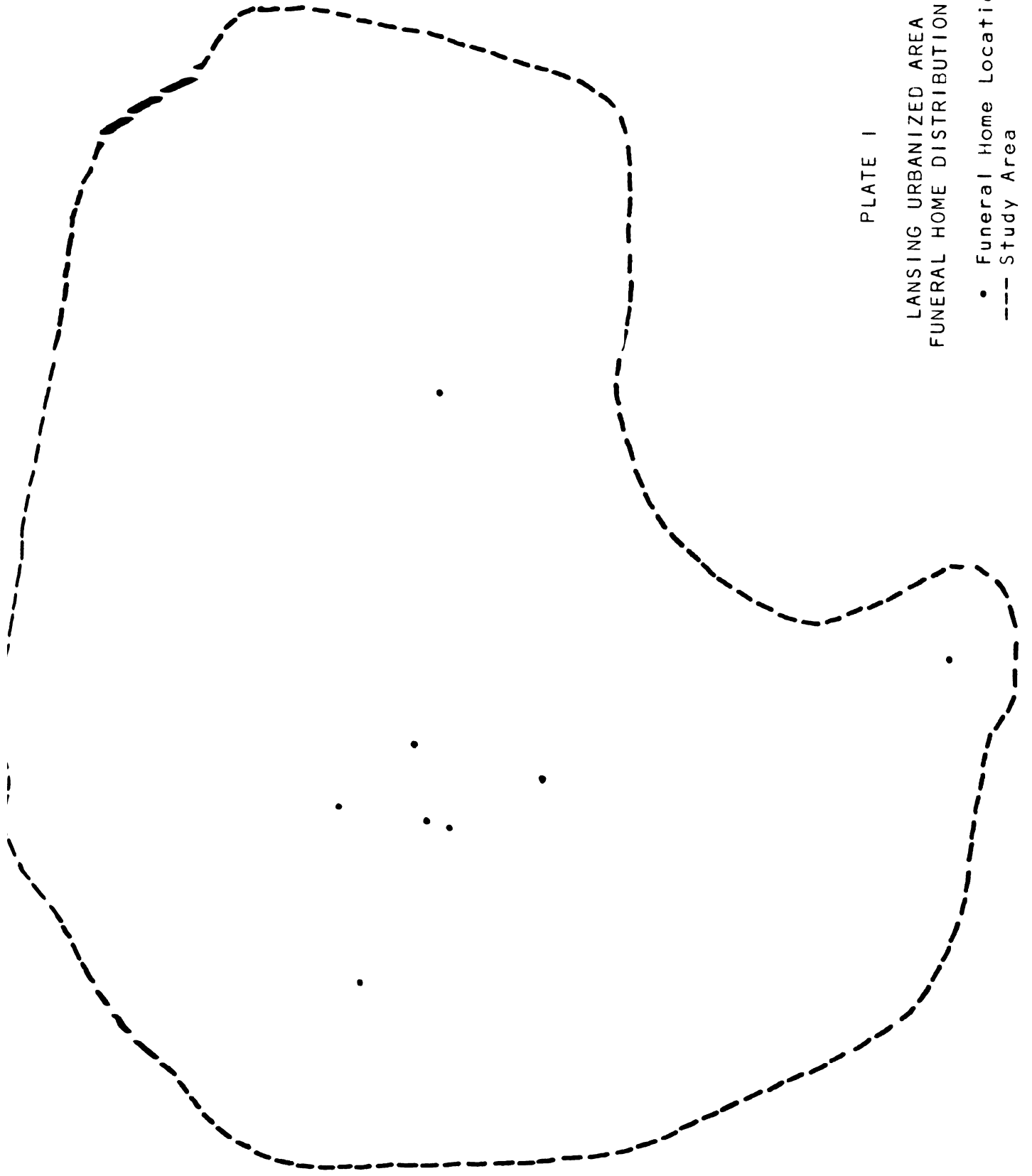


PLATE I

LANSING URBANIZED AREA
FUNERAL HOME DISTRIBUTION

- Funeral Home Location
- Study Area

not true with the single-family residential zone. Of the funeral homes in this zone, 33 per cent are permitted uses, 42 per cent are allowed by special permit, and 25 per cent are non-conforming. In the two-family and multiple-family residential zones funeral homes are permitted uses as they are in the other zones given on the questionnaires. The exception is the transitional parking zone where this funeral home is considered a non-conforming use.

The replies to the question on zoning districts indicate the majority of zoning ordinances in the sample communities permit funeral homes primarily in business and commercial zones while prohibiting them in others. Where residential or residential-commercial zones are indicated, the funeral homes are allowed almost exclusively as permitted uses except in the single-family residential zones. This indicates that higher density residential zones and mixed residential-commercial zones are such as to not be adversely affected by the location of a funeral home, whereas, the single-family areas are a type of zone which, in most cases, would be developed exclusively for residential use. This may be generally true, but one funeral home located adjacent to multiple-family apartments used by college students has experienced many problems such as

noise, debris, and other disruptive effects from these apartment dwellers.⁶

Spatial Distribution

Funeral homes are usually found in most sectors of a metropolitan area. This is generally true with the Lansing area, except there are an unusually low number of them. They are generally scattered throughout the area, although there is a concentration of four funeral homes in or near the central portion of the city. The other four are located in or near the residential communities surrounding the central city. The funeral homes located near the central area are the older ones while those in the outlying areas are newer and have been established in these locations more recently. For the most part these newly established funeral homes are located to serve an expanding population and are located a great distance from other funeral homes.

The Detroit study area provides a much better distribution pattern for analysis purposes. There are 211 funeral homes in this area; they are scattered throughout; and some communities do not have a funeral home within their boundaries. There are concentrations of funeral

⁶ Interview with Dorwin Hoffmeyer of the Gorsline-Runciman Funeral Home, Lansing, Mich., April 18, 1966.

homes in some of the older sections of the study area. These sections have definite, individual, distinguishing characteristics. For example, in the city of Hamtramck there is a concentration of funeral homes. This could be attributed to the characteristics of the people of the community which are primarily of Polish-Catholic background and origin. There are other areas which show a concentration. For the most part these areas contain Parochial High Schools indicating a population of similar religious background. There is also a tendency for funeral homes to be concentrated along major streets. For example, there are nine funeral homes on East Grand Boulevard between Jefferson and Mt. Elliott which is a distance of approximately 2.8 miles.

Characteristics of the population probably have the greatest causal effect on the concentration of funeral homes in certain areas. These areas where funeral homes are concentrated are the older developed ones which contained or still contain a population with similar religious and ethnic backgrounds.

Zoning may also be a determining factor in funeral home concentration. In communities which only permit them in one type of zoning district, the funeral director may

have very few sites available and will locate in proximity of other funeral homes.

Funeral homes become more dispersed as the distance from the central area increases. These funeral homes in outlying areas are more recently established, have followed the expanding population, usually are of a more contemporary architectural style and are located on larger sites.

Based on the results of the funeral home questionnaire, it is evident that service area may have a relationship to funeral home location and distribution. In answer to the question as to whether they had a definable service area, out of 68 respondents, 46 per cent gave an affirmative answer. There were various ranges of service area given, but many described it in radii ranging from 1 to 10 miles. Of those defining the service area in this manner, 3 to 6 miles was most frequently mentioned. In communities which have a large number of funeral homes there is a tendency for each funeral home to have a definable service area. These service areas are usually defined in terms of a section of the community such as the southeast section. In Lansing, where few funeral homes exist, most stated they had no service area and had clients from throughout the entire metropolitan area.



PLATE 2

DETROIT URBANIZED AREA
FUNERAL HOME DISTRIBUTION

- Funeral Home Location
- Study Area

If there are any limiting service areas in Lansing, they are defined by racial, religious, or ethnic characteristics rather than by mileage distances.

In some communities the service area is limited by the distance of the local telephone service. Some funeral directors indicated their funeral home service area corresponded to the local telephone service area. In other cases, the service areas were limited by physical features such as a river or natural boundary. Others stated that service areas were defined by city, township, or county boundaries.

Locations Related to Surrounding Land Uses

There are several factors which determine the location of a funeral home. Many choices usually influence the actual selection of a site such as population characteristics and size, availability of vacant land, zoning, price of real estate, presence of incompatible land uses and other funeral homes in an area. The great number of variants make it difficult to characterize specific land use patterns around all funeral homes.

The Lansing area is used as an example for showing locations related to other land uses. In Lansing, 75 per cent of the funeral homes are located in areas which can

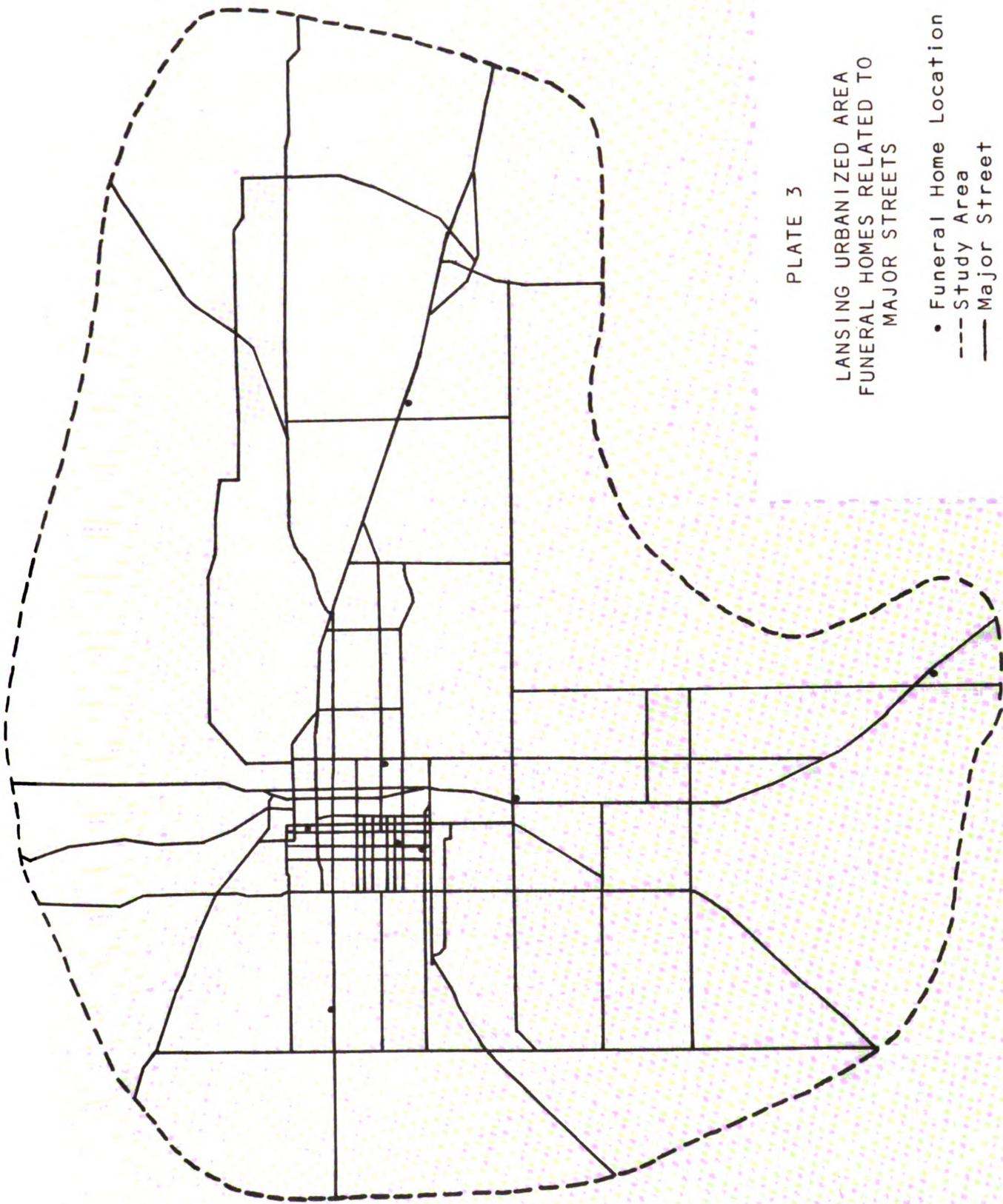


PLATE 3

LANSING URBANIZED AREA
FUNERAL HOMES RELATED TO
MAJOR STREETS

- Funeral Home Location
- Study Area
- Major Street

be generally classified as residential according to the 1960 Lansing Master Plan. None of the funeral homes are located on the interior of residential neighborhoods, but are on major streets at the periphery of one or several residential areas. Most of the funeral sites are in buffer areas between residential land and offices, shopping centers, schools, churches, and strip commercial development.

Funeral homes are related to churches from an operational standpoint. Most funeral services are either held at the funeral home or the church. Those services held at the church require transporting of the body from the funeral home to the church.

Funeral homes also have a relationship to churches from a locational standpoint. This is not universally true, but the questionnaire points out that 11 or 17 per cent of the respondents indicated a meaningful relationship between their funeral home and one or more churches. The relationships most often given were close proximity to a church, central location among several churches, and religious preference of clients. In many cases the people who attend churches in an area will also call upon the funeral home in that area when a death occurs.

The significance of major street location is shown on Plates 3 and 4. Major streets include those which carry around or more than 5,000 vehicles per day, plus state trunklines, regardless of their traffic volumes.⁷ The importance of major streets as desired locations is evident by the fact that all of the Lansing area funeral homes are located directly on a major street. One funeral firm presently considering a location for a branch funeral home, considers the street pattern and the presence of major streets as one of the most important factors in site location.⁸

In the Detroit study area 150 or 71 percent of the funeral homes are located directly on major streets. Many others are located within one block or a few blocks of major streets.

A great factor of major street location is that of visibility from the street. Most funeral directors desire locations on the more frequently traveled streets as an "advertising feature." Not only will this increase

⁷Transportation--An Inventory--January 1962, A Report prepared by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (Lansing: 1962), p. 11.

⁸Interview with Floyd Estes, Estes-Leadley Funeral Home, Lansing, Michigan, June 17, 1966.



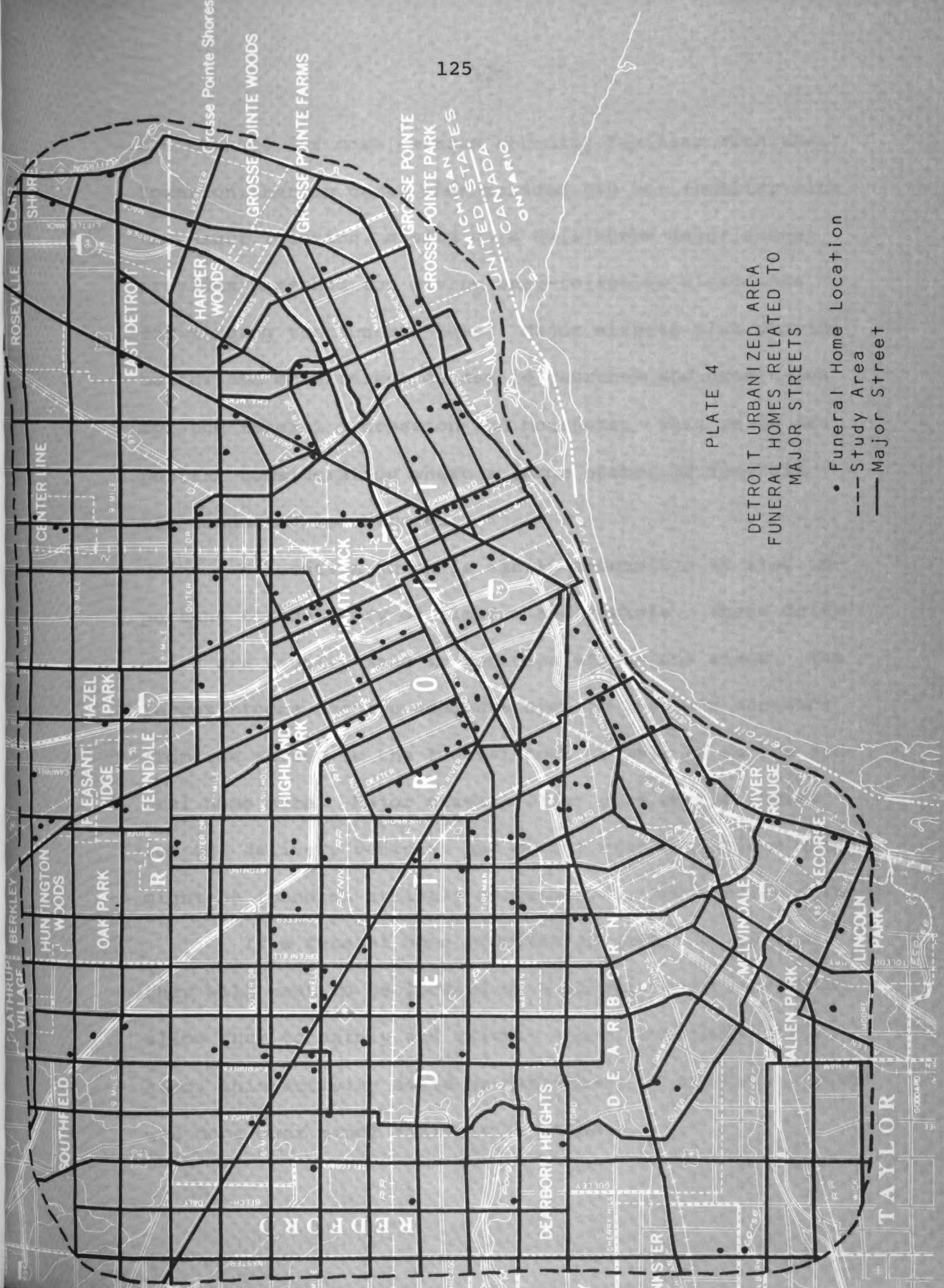


PLATE 4

DETROIT URBANIZED AREA
FUNERAL HOMES RELATED TO
MAJOR STREETS

- Funeral Home Location
- Study Area
- Major Street

the chances for more persons becoming familiar with their location, but in cases when persons are not familiar with the exact location, a site on a well known major street provides a method for giving easy-to-follow directions for finding the funeral home. Major streets also provide better and more direct access to churches and cemetaries for the funeral procession and mourners. This is an important consideration where a large number of funerals are conducted in churches.

A location which is easily accessible is also important for delivery of flowers and caskets. These deliveries are usually made in vehicles of various sizes. The larger trucks require adequate area to turn and maneuver from the street to the funeral home as well as on the funeral home site. Major streets offer good access routes for the delivery vehicles and do not create problems which might be found on strictly neighborhood, residential streets.

If a funeral home provides an ambulance service, they will want to be located on a street or streets which allow them to safely and quickly answer emergency calls. Also, this activity could be disturbing if extensive travel was done over minor residential streets.

The information on funeral home location related to major streets indicates most funeral homes are located on these streets and not in the interior of residential neighborhoods. Major streets are a technique used in planning for the separation of residential neighborhoods and different land uses. This follows that most of the funeral homes in the study areas are located adjacent to one or several residential neighborhoods in mixed land use areas. These funeral homes act as buffers between different land uses.

Length of Time at One Location

An important consideration in planning for funeral homes is the length of time they remain on one site. As brought out earlier, most funeral firms remain in their respective communities for many years and many are operated by the same family for several generations. Of importance to this study, is the length of time a funeral home remains at one site. The range for the respondents to this question was 1 to 99 years. Table VII indicates the length of time related to funeral home location.

This table shows that only 4 per cent of the funeral homes in this sample were located on the same site

for more than 50 years. There were 26 per cent who have been at their present site for 15 years or less. A greater number or 46 per cent have been at the same location from 16 to 30 years, and the remaining 28 per cent have been on the same site for 31 years or more.

TABLE VII
LENGTH OF TIME AT ONE SITE

Number of Years at Present Site	Number of Funeral Homes	Percentage of Respondents
1 to 5 years	7	10%
6 to 10 years	8	12%
11 to 15 years	3	4%
16 to 20 years	14	21%
21 to 25 years	4	6%
26 to 30 years	13	19%
31 to 35 years	5	7%
36 to 40 years	6	9%
41 to 45 years	1	2%
46 to 50 years	4	6%
51 to 99 years	3	4%

The funeral directors were also asked if they liked their present locations and 66 or 94 per cent indicated they were satisfied. Four funeral directors or 6 per cent indicated they were not satisfied with their present location. Of those not liking their present location, 3 are in commercial zones and 1 is in a transitional parking

zone. All 4 of these funeral homes have been at their present locations for 16 years or more. All of them indicated they conduct at least 80 funerals per year with one conducting over 250 annually. This probably indicates they are dissatisfied with their locations for reasons other than a lack of adequate business. The major reason could be the lack of adequate space. Three have sites of less than 20,000 square feet with the fourth not providing the site size.

A vast majority of the respondents stated they liked their present locations indicating they probably will continue to remain there for many years unless something unforeseen occurs. In some cases other funeral homes not in the study sample are required to seek a new site because the area where they are located is scheduled for urban renewal. In these situations the funeral directors are given the prerogative of relocating in the renewed areas, but not on the same sites.

Building and Site Considerations

As noted earlier, funeral homes require large parcels of land. Those with inadequate building space, small front, side, and rear yards, lack of adequate off-street

parking and landscaping create problems. These items are very important when making planning and zoning decisions. Many of these decisions are based on considerations of building and site arrangement and size. Therefore, in determining the proper location for a funeral home it is important to have indications as to the buildings and sites which presently exist.

Building Arrangements and Sizes

Respondents to the funeral home questionnaires all indicated they provide chapels, reposing rooms, preparation rooms, lounges, rest rooms, storage areas, and office space in their funeral homes. A total of 70 respondents answered this question and 90 per cent indicated they provide a casket selection room. The funeral directors who do not provide casket selection rooms accompany their clients to the factories where selections are made from the factory display area. Some of the other interior areas which most funeral directors provide are the family room and a room for use by the clergy. The provision of reposing rooms and chapels is not universal throughout the country. There are some funeral homes which do not contain either a chapel or

reposing rooms.⁹ Another important consideration is space for the storage of funeral home vehicles. These areas are provided by almost all funeral homes, will either be attached directly to the main building or detached and located near the main building.

A characteristic of a funeral service practice is the unpredictability of when people will need the services of a funeral director and how many deceased persons will be at the funeral home at one time. Because of this, most funeral homes have several rooms which can be reduced in size or enlarged to meet particular circumstances. This is sometimes done by use of expanding or sliding sound proof room dividers which enable the funeral director to obtain optimum flexibility in interior functional areas.

One important aspect of funeral homes related to zoning is that of living quarters. These quarters may be provided for the owner, employees, or both. The questionnaire indicates that a great majority of funeral homes do contain living quarters. Of 70 respondents, 63 or 90 per cent indicated that someone resides in their funeral homes

⁹Correspondence from Howard C. Raether, Executive Secretary, National Funeral Directors Association, July 12, 1966.

at all times. Most state that "the need to have someone available on a 24 hour per day basis" is the reason for providing the living quarters. Furthermore, fire insurance rates are considerably lower when the funeral home is "lived in."¹⁰

Building sizes are important in determining the interior arrangements of funeral homes, as well as the total site arrangements. Calculations made from the funeral home questionnaire provide the following building dimensions.

TABLE VIII
BUILDING DIMENSIONS
(for 56 funeral homes)

Building Ground Dimensions:	Range----1,940 to 26,000 sq. ft. Average--5,983 square feet
Building Floor Area:	Range----1,000 to 26,000 sq. ft. Average--7,801 square feet

This information indicates that several funeral homes in the study sample are buildings greater than one story in height. It also points out that most funeral homes are buildings of large size. For examples of typical funeral homes see Plate 5.

¹⁰Ibid.

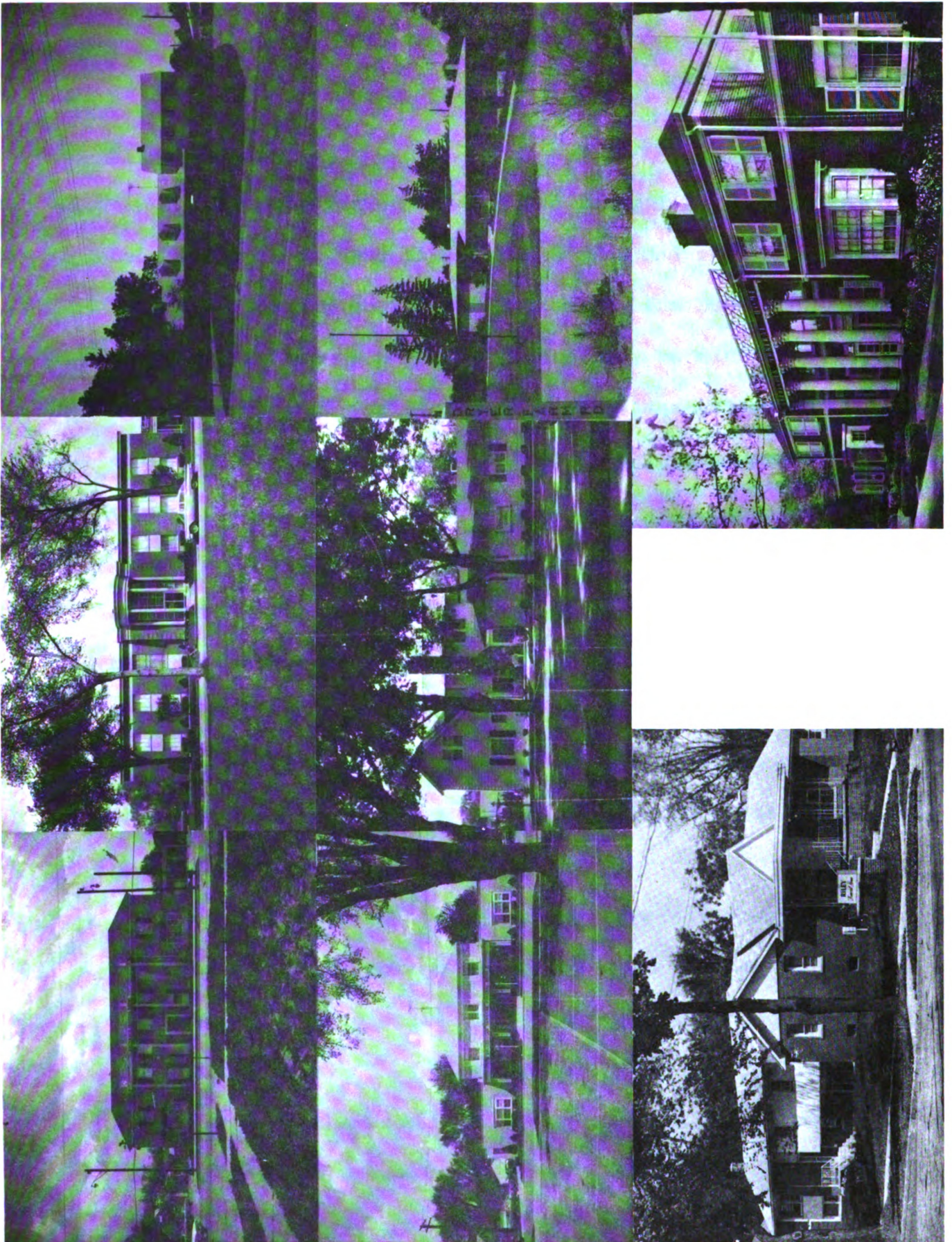


PLATE 5

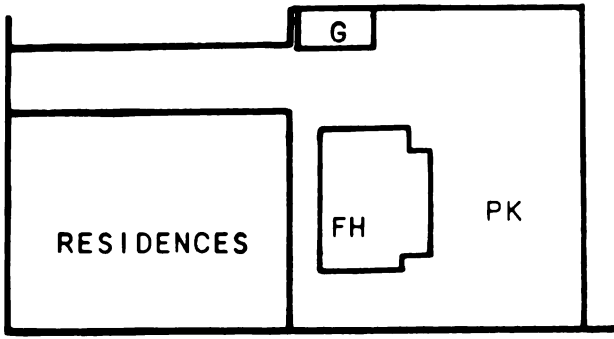
TYPICAL URBAN FUNERAL HOMES

Site Arrangements

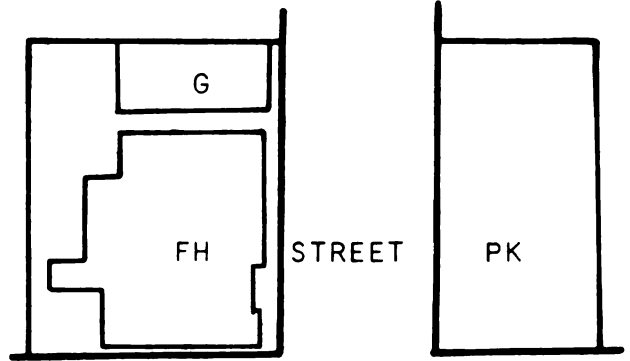
The importance of adequate funeral home sites has been pointed out many times. Site size and shape have an important bearing on the arrangement of the building to parking area and open space. Therefore, as with most land uses, there are a variety of site plans and arrangements existing for funeral homes. Plate 6 indicates some of these typical funeral home site arrangements.

Although varying site arrangements exist, there are certain considerations which most funeral directors make in determining on-site relationships. They are concerned with the proximity of parking to the funeral home. Most prefer parking as close as practicable so as to keep the walk from the parking area to the funeral home as short as possible.

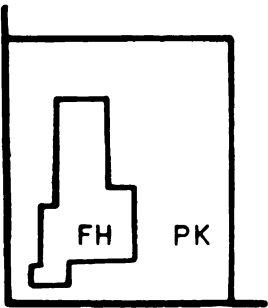
Because there have been many complaints about the reminder of death, most funeral directors attempt to conceal the area where bodies are unloaded when brought to the funeral home. The questionnaire indicates that 52 or 75 per cent of the respondents have facilities inside the funeral home for unloading the deceased from the ambulance. The 18 to 25 per cent who indicated the deceased are unloaded outside, also stated this is usually done at the



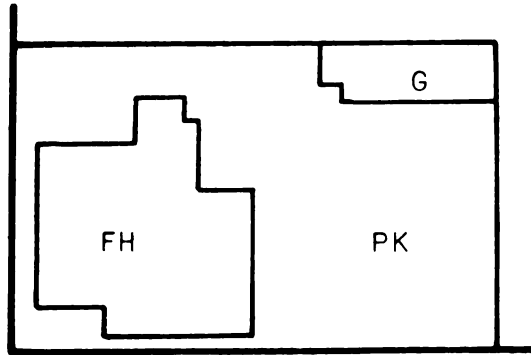
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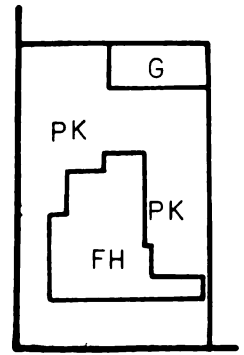
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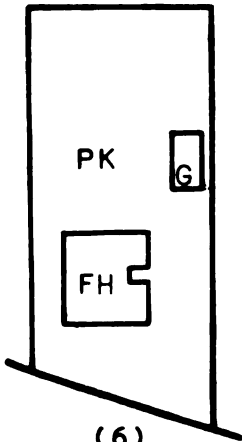
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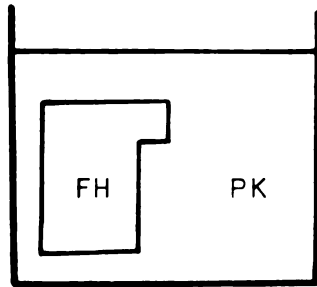
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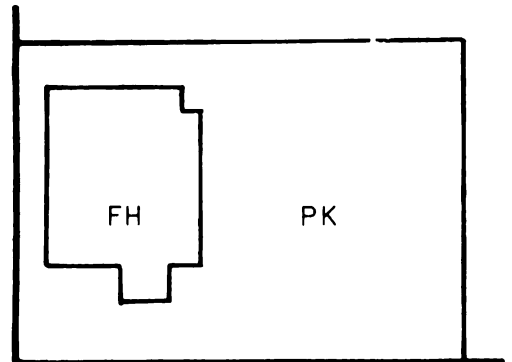
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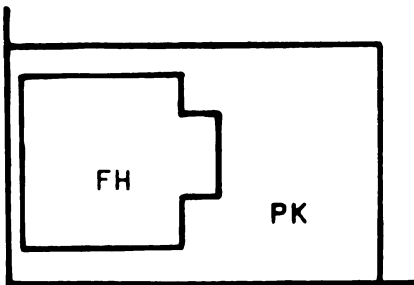
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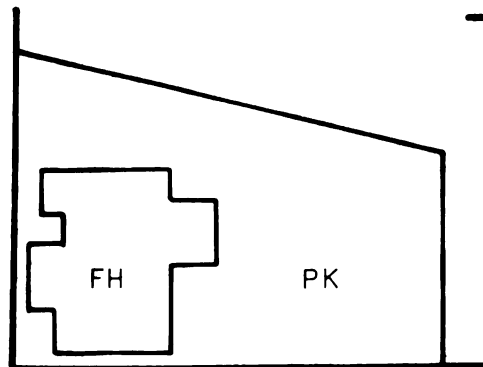
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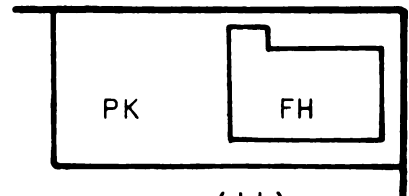
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(11)

LEGEND
 FH Funeral Home
 PK Parking
 G Garage

rear of the building out of view of the public or residents in the surrounding area.

One of the essential features of funeral home operation is providing a direct and convenient access to the funeral cars when removing the body and casket for the journey to the church or cemetery. This is usually done without carrying the casket up or down stairs and without a great deal of lifting on the part of the casket bearers. Therefore, many funeral homes will provide an attached covered area, at the edge of the parking lot or driveway, where the hearse can be parked for loading of the casket. This also offers a convenient method for organizing and lining up the funeral procession behind the hearse, the clergyman and immediate family.

Funeral homes receive a number of other deliveries in addition to bodies of the deceased. Custom provides for sending of flowers by relatives, friends, and acquaintances as an expression of sympathy for a loss through death. This means that various florists will make trips to the funeral home to deliver flowers. These trips will vary with the number of services at a funeral home and the number of flowers for each funeral service.

Because most funeral homes have a casket selection room there will be periodic deliveries of caskets to the funeral home. If they do not have a casket selection room the caskets will be delivered at the time of death. Both the flower and casket deliveries require facilities for receiving these items. Therefore, the funeral director is concerned with a site arrangement which will allow for convenient and easy access for these deliveries.

Site Sizes

A common characteristic of zoning regulations is the establishment of site or lot sizes for various zoning districts. Certain ordinances specifically establish minimum lot sizes for funeral homes as well as other individual land uses, while others establish uniform minimum lot sizes for all uses in a zoning district. Regardless of the specific method employed it is very useful to have an indication of existing lot sizes for use in determining future requirements. The funeral home questionnaire provides a wide range of site sizes as indicated in Table IX. These figures are much greater than those found in the study mentioned in Chapter III where the average site area was 24,755 square feet and the average frontage was 129.97 feet.

TABLE IX

FUNERAL HOME SITE SIZES
(for 68 funeral homes)

Ground Area:	Range-----5,000 to 435,600 square feet
	Average--56,230 square feet
Frontage:	Range-----500 to 660 feet
	Average-----138 feet

A more objective analysis of these sites is a comparison which groups them according to size and gives an indication of their relationship to the average. The results of this breakdown are indicated in Table X.

TABLE X

COMPARISON OF FUNERAL HOME SITES

Square Feet	Approximate Equivalent in Acres	No. of Funeral Homes	Percentage
5,000 to 11,000	.11 to .25	6	9%
11,001 to 22,000	.26 to .50	16	23%
22,001 to 33,000	.51 to .75	17	25%
33,001 to 44,000	.76 to 1.00	7	10%
44,001 to 97,000	1.01 to 2.00	11	16%
97,001 to 132,000	2.01 to 3.00	4	6%
132,001 to 261,000	3.01 to 6.00	6	9%
261,001 and above	6.01 & above	1	2%

These figures show that 32 per cent of the funeral homes are on sites of one half acre or less; that 67 per

cent are on sites of 1 acre or less; and that 83 per cent are on sites of 2 acres or less. The average funeral home site is 56,230 square feet or 1.29 acres. This may be misleading because 67 per cent of the sites are smaller than the average. Table X points out that 48 per cent of the sites are between one quarter to three quarters acre in size. This may be more indicative of existing sites than the average.

Yard Requirements

Relationships of the building or buildings and parking areas to lot lines is another important consideration. Certain factors should be recognized in determining the various yard requirements for funeral homes. Usually the funeral director will locate his funeral home near the front of the lot to take advantage of the view from the street. Parking will be located in the side or rear yards or both. In some cases parking has been provided in front yards, but most zoning provisions usually discourage this practice. Funeral homes may have more than one driveway providing access to the site. Many of these driveways will be located on both sides of the funeral home with one or both used for parking of the funeral cars for the funeral procession.

The location of a garage for storage of funeral home vehicles is another important consideration in dealing with yard requirements. Based on a limited survey these garages will range from 1 to 12 stalls depending on the needs of a particular funeral home and are usually located in the rear yard.

Rear yards usually contain parking which is provided to the lot line. Side yards may also contain parking in many cases and this parking is usually provided to the lot line. Most funeral homes provide either a planting of trees, shrubs, or bushes or some type of fence or wall in the rear and side yards between adjoining properties and the funeral home property. This offers protection for both the funeral home and adjoining property owners.

Front yards are one of the more important considerations to a funeral home. Because most funeral homes are located on major streets they want a front yard which will be sufficient to offer a buffer from the street and traffic noise and yet offer a good view from the street. Again, based on a limited survey, front yards for funeral homes range from 5 to 100 feet.

In order to gain additional insight into funeral home sites and their adequacy funeral directors were asked

to indicate whether they considered their present site to be adequate. Of 70 respondents to this question 58 or 83 per cent indicated their present sites were adequate. The other 12 funeral directors or 17 per cent who indicated their present sites were inadequate had sites of varied sizes. One site was less than 10,000 square feet, 6 ranged from one quarter to one half acre, and 5 were more than one half acre in size. Of these 12 funeral homes, 3 conduct over 250 funerals per year and the others conduct 100 or less. This indicates that something other than lack of adequate space for accomodating visitors and persons attending funeral services is the reason for inadequacy. Only 2 respondents indicated the average attendance at funeral services is high and this probably would be the reason for dissatisfaction with their sites.

Adequacy or inadequacy of a site in the opinion of funeral directors varies a great deal. Apparently all funeral directors do not base this evaluation on the same criteria. This indicates that the probable reasons for inadequacy in this study are not as significant in determining the ideal site size as the fact that 83 per cent of the respondents to the funeral home questionnaire considered their sites adequate for their funeral home.

A controversial part of funeral home operations is that of off-street parking. There are varied opinions on how much parking is needed and how to determine this need. The funeral home questionnaire indicates a range from 0 to 400 off-street parking spaces for employees and clients. The average number of off-street spaces was 56. Table XI indicates the relationship between funeral homes and the number of off-street parking spaces they provide.

TABLE XI

OFF-STREET PARKING SPACES

Number of Parking Spaces	Number of Funeral Homes	Percentage of Total Respondents
0	6	9%
1 to 30	24	37%
31 to 60	17	26%
61 to 100	13	20%
101 to 200	3	5%
201 to 400	2	3%

These figures point out that 9 per cent of the funeral directors do not provide off-street parking. These funeral homes are located in small communities where parking is provided on the street. The inclusion of one funeral home which provides 400 parking spaces raises the average higher than actually would be a more representative number.

Therefore, the percentages in Table XI are more indicative of current off-street parking facilities than the average. Thirty-seven per cent provide between 1 and 30 off-street spaces and 73 per cent provide between 1 and 100 spaces, indicating a clear majority of parking facilities in this range.

There are certain other characteristics of funeral home parking which are important to zoning and planning. These include shared parking, time of day or night used, the funeral procession, and the type of parking lots provided. The funeral home questionnaire indicates that 15 or 23 per cent of the 64 respondents who provide parking also have an arrangement for sharing the parking facilities of someone located near the funeral home. The most frequently named owners of this shared parking were churches, offices or commercial uses. In some cases the funeral director will own parking adjacent to or across the street from the funeral home. He may rent this parking to various offices or businesses during the day and provides the parking for his clients at night. Of those having a shared parking arrangement, 53 per cent use this parking both day and night, 40 per cent use it only at night and the remaining 7 per cent use it only during the day. Those only using

shared parking during the day have an arrangement with operations such as theaters, bowling alleys or some other use which operates primarily at night.

Funeral processions have been subjects of discussion for a number of years. Of importance to public officials is the relationship of funeral processions to streets and traffic. An important question concerning the funeral procession is where the cars are organized and lined up for the trip to the cemetery. The questionnaire indicates that 48 or 69 per cent of the respondents use their parking areas exclusively for lining up the funeral procession; that 18 or 26 per cent use the public streets; and 3 or 5 per cent use both the parking lot and streets. This is when funerals are held at the funeral home. When services are held at churches, they utilize church parking facilities and the public streets for organizing the funeral procession. Some of the funeral homes which attempt to utilize their parking lots exclusively for lining up the funeral procession may have to use the streets for some of the cars at very large funerals.

Another factor concerning funeral processions is the number of cars involved. The respondents to the questionnaire indicated a range from 6 to 80 as the average

number of cars in a funeral procession. This, when computed among all respondents, gives a number of 20 cars in the average funeral procession. Because the funeral procession uses the public streets the method of entering these streets and the speed of travel for the procession are important. Most funeral directors indicated they must have someone direct the funeral procession onto the street from the parking lot. This involves stopping traffic on the street until the procession is under way. The normal speed of travel for a funeral procession ranges from 12 to 25 miles-per-hour in the city and 25 to 45 miles-per-hour outside the city. On the funeral home questionnaire the speed of travel most often given for in-city travel was 20 miles-per-hour.

Parking areas provided by funeral homes are almost always paved and are usually identified by use of a sign. Many of these areas will be screened from view by landscaping, walls, or fences. Some of the parking lots are recessed below ground level in an effort to completely screen the parked cars from public view. All funeral homes have evening visiting hours. Because of this most of the parking areas are lighted for the safety and convenience of visitors. This could, in some cases, create problems of glare on

neighboring properties but most funeral directors indicated this was not a problem with their lighted parking areas.

Operational Characteristics

The location of funeral homes as well as the specific site selected by the funeral director are dependent on several factors other than physical size. These factors are important to the public official who is responsible for determining funeral home location in urban communities. They include the factors of family business, branch funeral homes, number of funerals per year, number of employees, visiting hours, the funeral service, ambulance service, property values and the psychological effects of death.

Family Business and Branch Operations

As mentioned earlier, funeral homes are a type of establishment which remain under the same family ownership for several years. The funeral home questionnaire provides some information on this characteristic. Of 59 respondents, 37 or 63 per cent indicated their funeral home is a family business. This further enforces the fact that many funeral homes remain in the same family for several years and are a stable establishment in the community. It also indicates they will remain on one site for a long time.

The funeral homes in this study sample are primarily proprietorships. Of the total respondents to this question, 38 or 61 per cent are proprietorships; 14 or 23 per cent are partnerships; and 10 or 16 per cent are corporations. The percentage of partnerships is exactly the same as the national percentage, but the percentage of proprietorships is much greater and corporations lower than the national percentages.

A type of organizational innovation which is gaining more popularity with funeral firms is that of branch operations. Many funeral firms are opening up branches for various reasons. There were 11 out of 70 respondents who indicated they have a branch funeral home. This is 16 per cent of those in the study sample. The reasons given for establishing a branch funeral home were as follows:

- (1) To serve new clients in a community where no other funeral homes exist.
- (2) Clients moved to another area, the branch was established to retain this business.
- (3) Protect established business in an outlying area where no other funeral homes exist.
- (4) Other funeral homes moving into an area and the funeral firm felt there was potential for additional funeral homes.

The distance between main funeral homes and branches varied a great deal. The range was from 1-1/2 to 17 miles. There were 5 who had a distance from 1-1/2 to 7 miles, 3 were 9 to 11 miles, and 3 were separated by 14 to 17 miles. This indicates that a funeral firm, when establishing a branch, will locate far enough away so as not to have more than one funeral home in the same community area.

Number of Funeral Services

In the funeral profession, the size of a funeral home is measured by the number of funeral services conducted per year. This measurement indicates the amount of business a funeral home has and is an indirect indication of the size of buildings and sites. Although there is not a direct relationship shown in the funeral home questionnaire, the funeral homes which indicated a greater number of services per year also had larger buildings and sites. A comparison between the number of services and the size of funeral homes and sites indicates that all funeral homes which conduct from 80 to 150 services per year have similar site and building requirements; those who conduct from 300 to 500 have similar requirements; and those who conduct more than 500 services per year require similar

building and site facilities. This is a general comparison and observation and is not a definite ratio comparison to be relied on in determining funeral home site requirements. Nevertheless, it is true as the number of funeral services per year increases the demand for larger buildings, more parking, and larger sites increases.

Funeral Home Employees

Another possible indication of funeral home size is the number of persons employed. Although this may not relate directly to zoning and planning, it does have an effect on the amount of space required for employee parking. The questionnaire points out a range of 0 to 25 full time employees and 0 to 6 part time employees for the funeral homes in the study sample. The average number of employees was 4.6 full time and 2 part time. The majority of respondents employed from 1 to 3 full time and 1 to 3 part time persons.

Funeral Home Visiting Hours

An important consideration in funeral home operations is providing facilities for the family and friends who visit the deceased. In order to better understand the effect of visitors on funeral home operations several items

were included on the questionnaire.

Most funeral homes in the sample have established visiting hours. These hours range from 8:00 A.M. to 11:00 P.M., but the more common visiting hours range from 10:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M. Some funeral homes do not have established visiting hours and most of these are located in small communities.

Of greater importance than the range of visiting hours, are the peak times when visitors are at the funeral homes. The most common peak is from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M., although some respondents also indicated a peak from 4:00 to 5:00 P.M. These afternoon hours may interfere with peak traffic flows of workers going home from work, but the evening hours are after this peak and would not be in conflict with the rush hour traffic. The main concern with these peaks would be the ability to accommodate a large demand for visitors' parking needs if several deceased were reposing in state at one time.

Another factor related to visiting the funeral home is the number of nights the deceased repose in state prior to the funeral service. Out of 70 respondents, 86 per cent indicated the deceased repose in state 2 nights prior to the funeral service on the third day. At the national

level the trend is for one night in state.¹¹

As mentioned earlier, there has been a trend in the mid-western states for more persons to visit the deceased at the funeral home with fewer persons in attendance at the actual funeral service. The questionnaire attempted to substantiate this trend and the results show it to be true. The question was asked separately of Catholic and Protestant funerals. In both cases, the respondents indicated a trend for an increase in attendance at Rosary services and protestants visiting at the funeral home with a decrease in funeral service attendance. In both cases, 75 per cent indicated this trend to be true and 25 per cent indicated no change. If this trend continues it may eventually mean very few people will be attending funeral services and many more will visit the funeral home before the service. This may not have an effect on the total parking requirements for a funeral home but it might affect such factors as shared parking, shifting traffic peaks, and a reduction in problems created by funeral processions.

The Funeral Service

The funeral service is important for several reasons.

¹¹Ibid.

There are different characteristics with various funeral homes depending on the religious and ethnic background of their clients. Catholic funerals are held at the church and are in the morning. Protestant funerals are held primarily in the afternoon and are usually at the funeral home. Jewish funeral services are held in either a synagogue or funeral home, but never on Saturday.

The funeral home questionnaire indicates that 42 or 60 per cent of the respondents had 75 per cent or more of their funerals at the funeral home. Those who indicated more funerals at the church than the funeral home serve primarily Catholic families.

In determining whether any specific days of the week are more prevalent for funeral services the questionnaire results indicated that almost one half of the respondents felt that all days, except Sunday, were about equal. Others indicated Saturday as a day for increased funeral services because relatives, friends, and casket bearers do not have to work on Saturday. Monday is another day which is busier in some areas because of very few Sunday services. This was also given as one of the reasons for increased Saturday services.

Saturday services may decrease in some areas because of a developing trend for cemetaries to charge more for Saturday services or some are closing completely for funerals on Saturday. The extra charge must be paid by the family and, in some areas, it is having an effect on Saturday funerals.

In attempting to determine funeral service attendance, respondents were asked to provide an average attendance figure. The range for this average funeral was 40 to 250 with 75 appearing on 30 per cent of the questionnaires. The respondents indicated a range of 80 to 1000 persons as the maximum number who could be accomodated at a funeral. The average maximum ranged from 200 to 450 persons.

Ambulance Service

Another common complaint concerning a funeral home is the noise created by an ambulance. This is becoming less true in many areas because funeral homes are discontinuing emergency ambulance service. In a survey conducted by the Industrial Relations Staff Services,¹² 52 per cent

¹²Industrial Relations Staff Services, Personnel Practices of Members of Michigan Funeral Directors, A study conducted for the Michigan Funeral Directors (Detroit: Industrial Relations Staff Services, April 1966).

of 342 funeral homes questioned in Michigan do not provide ambulance service. In the funeral home questionnaire for this study, 36 of 69 respondents or 45 per cent provide ambulance service. Of those providing ambulance service 50 per cent indicated they plan to discontinue it in the near future with another 8 per cent undecided. Many of those funeral directors who indicated they plan to continue providing ambulance service also added that it was being done reluctantly. None of the funeral homes in the Detroit Metropolitan Area provide ambulance service. In communities throughout the country funeral homes are discontinuing ambulance service and it is being provided by various other private or public groups.

Property Values

As stated in Chapter II, property owners in residential areas cite the depreciation of property values as a reason for objecting to funeral homes. They claim the values of their properties will decline if a funeral home should locate in their area of the community. In a study completed by Ralph Wenger and Company of

Grand Rapids, Michigan, some interesting findings were derived on this subject.¹³

Mr. Wenger is a real estate appraiser. His study area was in Grosse Pointe, Michigan, around the Verheyden Funeral Home. He conducted this study for use in court because of a complaint from property owners in another community who objected to a funeral home locating in their area. The area in Grosse Pointe was chosen because it offered analysis potential from the real estate market aspect. The area surrounding the funeral home is almost exclusively residential and offered enough homes on the real estate market to be useful for the study.

Mr. Wenger selected homes which were either for sale or had been recently sold. He divided them into two categories: 1) those within view of the funeral home which were classified as having "near proximity" and, 2) those away from the area or "out of view" of the funeral home. He measured the distance to these homes from the funeral home; obtained their market values; their selling prices; and obtained photos and addresses of each property. These

¹³ Ralph Wenger and Company, The Effect of Funeral Home Location on Residential Property Values, A study conducted for the Braun Funeral Home, Adrian, Michigan, (Grand Rapids: Ralph Wenger and Company, December, 1957).

homes were then compared with the housing market and it was found that they were being sold at the same price as comparable homes in areas where no funeral homes existed. In comparing the homes within near proximity to those out of view of the funeral home, there was no conclusive difference in their market prices or sale prices.

There were 14 homes in this analysis. Mr. Wenger found two homes, one in near proximity and one out of view of the funeral home, which were constructed by the same contractor, had identical floor plans, were of the same construction materials, and were sold within two months of one another. The construction costs for these homes were identical, their market values were identical, and they sold for the same price. Because one home was located within view and the other out of view of the funeral home Mr. Wenger felt this was conclusive proof that the presence of a funeral home does not cause property values to depreciate.

In order to enforce the results of this study, Mr. Wenger checked several other areas where new funeral homes were constructed and found that proximity to these new funeral homes did not cause residential property values to depreciate. From his extensive study in Grosse Pointe and

the analyses made in other communities, Mr. Wenger is "satisfied that proximity to a funeral home has little, if any, effect on residential property values."¹⁴

This is only one study based on extensive analysis of one community, with analyses of others, and may not hold true in all areas. The fact that Grosse Pointe is a residential community with above average homes does help to make the study findings more conclusive.

Psychological Effects of Death

One of the greatest problems which funeral directors and funeral homes must cope with concerns the psychological and mental aspects of death. This has been the major reason or basis of many court cases which ruled on the location of funeral homes. These decisions were based on the mental effects which funeral homes have on residents of an area. The constant reminder of death or the presence of death is said to have ill effects on people of the community. Many studies on the sociological and psychological aspects of death have found that Americans are a death denying society and this could be the basis for the number of complaints on funeral homes.¹⁵

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Robert Fulton and Gilbert Geis, Death and Social

In talking with funeral directors who have had problems securing a new location for a funeral home some objections were those of the funeral home creating a continuous reminder of death. Many funeral directors were able to overcome this problem by explaining the complete operation of a funeral home and showing the residents of the area plans for the new funeral home.

As part of this study, limited research was conducted on the aspects of living near a funeral home.¹⁶ Most of the persons interviewed had lived near the funeral home for several years and were accustomed to the funeral home and funerals. They were aware of the operations of a funeral home and had no complaints about living in these areas, except when the streets in front of their homes were used for parking by those attending a funeral service or visiting the funeral home. In other instances people living near funeral homes would move their cars to allow those attending a funeral to park on the street. These cases usually involved large funerals which the residents of the area knew would require some on-street parking.

Values, Part 2 of Death and Identity, ed. Robert Fulton (New York/ London/ Sidney: John Wiley & Sons, 1965), p. 73.

¹⁶Interviews with residents of Detroit, Lansing, Grosse Pointe Woods, and Edmore, Michigan, May 1966.

There have been some complaints about funeral homes locating near elementary schools. There is a funeral home within view of an elementary school in the Lansing study area.¹⁷ An interview with the funeral director indicated he had not received complaints from parents of students, neighbors, nor from the school administration or teachers since building the funeral home. This funeral home located on its present site in 1962 and the proximity to the school was brought up when the location was first considered, but there have been no complaints since the funeral home has been constructed.

In interviewing several teachers at the school they had no knowledge of depressing or other effects on students attending school. The only comments heard by teachers concerned the students seeing the ambulance leave on emergency calls.

Because this is an isolated case it may not be indicative of all instances where funeral homes are located within view of an elementary school. It does point out a relationship in the Lansing study area and the absence of serious effects on children attending the school.

¹⁷Windemere Park School, Waverly Schools, Lansing, Michigan. Interviews with teachers in May 1966.

Summary and Conclusions

This paper has examined funeral homes from the historical perspective; in terms of operational requirements; community attitudes; and through analysis of specific data on actual funeral home locations and operations. From this total analysis two general conclusions of great importance to urban planners, public officials, funeral directors, and the community can be derived:

- (1) Funeral homes can create many problems in the urban community unless their location and development are guided by an effective planning program and controlled by sound and valid land use regulations; and
- (2) In most communities the physical planning and legislation by which planning is effectuated have heretofore failed to include and integrate funeral homes into the urban development pattern in a satisfactory manner.¹⁸

Many of these problems are the result of a complete lack of understanding and knowledge on the part of public

¹⁸American Society of Planning Officials, "Funeral Homes," Information Report No. 97 (Chicago: Planning Advisory Service, April, 1957), pp. 21-23.

officials, planners, and the general public. As with many other components of a community, ignorance of operating and management conditions create misconceptions based on improper information and ideas. These situations exist because most persons fail to "get the facts" or investigate the entire situation. Funeral directors must accept some of the criticism for their lack of initiative in actively informing the public and others about their operations. They are concerned with operating their funeral home, securing and serving clients, but, as with many other entrepreneurs, may fail to properly inform the community. This is especially true when considering a new funeral home location. The funeral director who meets with the planners, public officials and community residents to provide an explanation of his operations and point out examples of his proposed site plans and funeral home will usually obtain much greater cooperation, understanding, and acceptance of his funeral home in the community.

Because of this lack of knowledge among planners, public officials, and the public, this paper has attempted to extensively include the entire range of historical and current operational aspects of funeral homes and funeral directing. It is hoped that this capsule coverage will be

both educational and useful when making future determinations regarding funeral homes in a community.

Funeral homes are an essential establishment in the urban community. They serve as the media through which society disposes of its dead. The funeral director is the agent who assumes the responsibility for carrying out this task according to established and accepted procedures. In addition the funeral director provides a social service to the living. He deals with persons in an emotional situation and must recognize the state of the bereaved and be prepared to assist them in many ways. In performing these tasks the funeral director provides the funeral home for the care of the dead, and in most instances, the place for the funeral services.

The funeral home of today is vastly different from those found previous to this century. The funeral home and the funeral director have gone from a combination business, store front operation to a full time occupation with facilities often resembling large residences located throughout the urban area. The funeral director and the embalmer are licensed and the funeral homes are inspected periodically to insure sanitary conditions and proper management.

Funeral directing and the operation of a funeral home pose difficult problems to those responsible for determining proper funeral home location. The nature of funeral directing is controversial in many communities. Characteristics of limited business, personal service, and a profession are all included within the occupation. This unique composition of activities within one occupation creates varied opinions concerning an occupational definition for funeral directing. It is becoming common to consider the funeral director in the role of one who provides a professional service to families in his community. In this same context, the funeral home is considered as the establishment where these professional services are made available and where the necessary facilities for providing these services are located.

The clientele among funeral homes may differ in many respects. Many funeral homes serve primarily persons of the same race, religion, or nationality. Most funeral homes are now serving a cross-section of persons in the community and do not rely on one group with identical ethnic and religious backgrounds.

The facilities provided by funeral homes are universally similar. All funeral homes usually contain the

same basic facilities, only the size and locational relationships of these facilities will vary in proportion to one another.

Based on several community experiences and a number of court decisions it is evident that most home owners and residents do not wish to live adjacent to a funeral home. This indicates that funeral homes are not a compatible land use in most residential areas. This incompatibility is not based on the residential-like appearance of the funeral home or any possible effect on property values as much as the characteristics associated with its operation. One of the major reasons for this is the association of death and the dead with the presence of a funeral home. Other reasons are the characteristics of funeral home operations which include generation of traffic, concentration of parked cars, presence of funeral home vehicles, delivery of bodies, flowers, and caskets, and the funeral procession. There is a very definite emotional and psychological association with the presence of funeral homes, but their location in residential areas is similar to that of schools, offices, churches, and other non-residential land uses in predominantly residential areas. All of these uses create problems of incompatibility with strictly residential

land use patterns and development. Because of these reasons most zoning ordinances have excluded funeral homes, as a permitted use, from these areas of the community which are primarily designed for residential purposes.

The higher density residential areas have been available to funeral homes. Many of these locations do not offer the quiet atmosphere required by the funeral home. Most of the business and commercial areas are also available, but conditions in many of these zones are such as to cause traffic congestion and conflict, parking problems, overcrowding of sites, and noise which is offensive to the bereaved and the public.

The transitional residential-commercial zones are usually of a type which will not be adversely affected by funeral homes. The funeral home because of its diverse characteristics is a type of land use which can serve as a buffer between residential and commercial areas. There are other transitional zones which include professional persons, offices, medical facilities, churches, and other public and private uses, which could also accommodate funeral homes. These are usually called professional, office, and service zones.

There are approximately 24,000 funeral homes in the United States. This number may increase because of the expanding population and expected increase in the number of deaths in urban communities. These increases will result in a combination of several developments. Many existing funeral homes will assume this increase in their present facilities. If present facilities are inadequate the next move would be to expand these facilities to accommodate the increases. If inadequacy of present sites prohibit expansion, new sites will be sought and new funeral homes will be constructed. These new funeral homes will primarily be owned by existing firms, will locate in areas where very few others exist; will be buildings larger than those which now exist; and will require larger sites. These sites will be close to existing or expected concentrations of population; may be near one or several churches; will be on major streets; and will locate away from those activities which do not provide a quiet, reverent, and dignified atmosphere.

There are certain trends in funeral service which may affect future determinations on funeral homes. Ambulance service, which has received some criticism, is being excluded as part of funeral home operations. In many

metropolitan areas funeral homes have discontinued emergency ambulance service and many others are planning to do so in the near future. Without ambulance service funeral homes create very little, if any, noise which would be a problem to any area of the community.

The trend in increased visiting of the deceased at the funeral home before the funeral and a decrease in funeral attendance may mean that funeral home parking demand will become more evenly spread over the evening hours rather than concentrated in peaks during funeral services. The visiting hour peaks are in the evening, but visiting trends include two nights for each deceased at the funeral home, whereas funeral services create peak demands in greater concentration during the morning through mid-afternoon. Shared parking is also an important consideration and should be provided for in zoning regulations. When considering parking requirements, both the average parking demand and optimum parking, based on maximum funeral attendance and the maximum possible number of visitors at one time, should be acknowledged.

In the past most problems of funeral home location have been treated as isolated issues. There are few, if any, comprehensive criteria available for determining

funeral home locational and site requirements. The lack of knowledge concerning funeral home operations may be the reason for these problems and for the lack of comprehensive funeral home locational regulations. The data presented in this study provides a sound basis for these regulations. In considering this study as a foundation for model provisions certain aspects should be clarified. The ratio of funeral homes to population will vary with different communities. The national and State of Michigan relationships have been pointed out as examples of the more general ratios. These ratios do not differentiate between urban and rural areas. According to Mrs. Thelma Whitlock of the Michigan State Board of Mortuary Science, the situation in the Lansing study area is very unique and will be duplicated in very few, if any, urban areas of its size. There are very few funeral homes compared to the number of persons in this area. In most cities over 75,000 population the ratio of persons per funeral home will be much closer to the national average than the Lansing ratio.¹⁹ The author recommends use of the ratio found in the Detroit study area as being more representative of most large urbanized areas.

¹⁹ Interview with Mrs. Thelma Whitlock of the Michigan State Board of Mortuary Science, July 14, 1966.

This ratio is one which can be relied on, in most cases, for determining the future needs for funeral homes in the urban community. This recommendation is based on community growth trends and the economics of funeral home operations which generally require at least 80 to 100 funeral services annually in order for the funeral home to remain in business in most urban communities.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to attempt to develop and apply principles, standards, and regulations necessary to the solution of problems stemming from funeral homes. There are additional questions, presently unanswered, which prohibit the development of model zoning provisions for funeral homes. Additional research and analysis should be conducted which would relate the substance of this paper to other factors such as a more thorough knowledge of current, existing zoning provisions, possible zoning approaches, legal decisions, existing funeral home yard and height dimensions, accessory uses, density and mobility of population, operational characteristics of funeral homes in areas other than Michigan, and any deficiencies which may be found in the content of this paper.

This will then allow for the formulation of zoning provisions based on factual evidence. Defensible minimum

standards could be developed which relate directly to the public health, safety, and welfare. As part of community land use controls, such standards can foster the proper placement of funeral homes within the urban environment, so that an essential service establishment which has been very controversial may become a more accepted component of the urban community.

APPENDIX I
ZONING ORDINANCE PROVISIONS REGARDING
FUNERAL HOMES

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Funeral Homes Permitted in Residential Zoning Districts

Buffalo, New York (1953) Funeral homes permitted in the R-4 Apartment District and in other districts which are less restrictive than the R-4 Apartment District.¹

Superior, Wisconsin (1953, by amendment) The zoning ordinance was amended to establish a funeral home as a permitted use in the Multiple-Family Zoning District.²

Adrian, Michigan (1957, by amendment) The zoning ordinance was amended by a referendum of the people in the community to allow a funeral home in residential areas as a permitted use.³

¹American Society of Planning Officials, "Funeral Homes," Information Report No. 97 (Chicago: Planning Advisory Service, April, 1957), p. 19.

²Ibid., p. 20.

³Interview with Edward and Richard Braun, The Braun Funeral Home, Adrian, Michigan, May 25, 1966.

Lansing, Michigan (amended to 1966) Funeral homes are a permitted use in the "D" Apartment District. This is the most densely developed apartment district and funeral homes are permitted in every other district which is less restrictive than the "D" Apartment District.⁴

Meridian Township, Michigan (1963) Funeral homes are permitted in any residential district upon approval of the planning commission with some qualifications among which are:⁵

None of the land or structure uses for funeral homes or mortuary activities shall be authorized for construction and/or occupancy that will occupy a parcel of land less than 40,000 square feet in area, nor for the erection and/or occupancy of any building housing such uses closer than 50 feet to any property or street line, EXCEPT that all buildings and structures shall be located in accordance with the setback requirements of the "Master Plan for Streets and Highways, Meridian Charter Township, Ingham County, Michigan" for the type of street upon which any yard abuts.

Funeral Homes Not Permitted in Neighborhood Business Districts

C-Commercial Districts but excluded from Neighborhood Shopping Districts.⁶

⁴City of Lansing (Michigan), Zoning Ordinance (1966).

⁵Charter Township of Meridian (Michigan) Zoning Ordinance (1963).

⁶American Society of Planning Officials, op. cit., p. 19.

Los Angeles, California (amended to 1953) Funeral homes are not permitted in CR and C-1 Limited Business Districts.⁷

Miami, Florida (amended to 1950) Funeral homes prohibited in B-1 Neighborhood Business District.⁸

Raleigh, North Carolina (1954) Funeral homes specifically prohibited from Neighborhood Shopping Districts.⁹

Seattle, Washington (proposed 5th draft, 1955) Funeral homes not permitted in BN Neighborhood Shopping Zone.¹⁰

Funeral Homes Permitted in Business, Commercial, or Industrial Zoning Districts

Anne Arundel County, Maryland (1954) Funeral homes were first permitted in Neighborhood Business Districts.¹¹

District of Columbia (proposed, 1956) Funeral homes first permitted in C-2 Community Business Center.¹²

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 19.

¹² Ibid.

Gainesville, Georgia (1956) Funeral home first permitted
in C-B Central Business District.¹³

Muskegon, Michigan (1952) Funeral homes are permitted in
all commercial and industrial districts.¹⁴

New Orleans, Louisiana (1953) Funeral homes first per-
mitted in Heavy Commercial Districts.¹⁵

Providence, Rhode Island (amended to 1953) Funeral homes
permitted in all business and industrial districts
except local business districts.¹⁶

East Lansing, Michigan (amended to 1966) A funeral home
is a permitted use in the "B-1" Business District
but not in the "B-2" Business District.¹⁷

Ithaca, New York (amended to 1965) Funeral homes are per-
mitted uses in the B-1 Restricted Business District
and all other business and industrial districts.¹⁸

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁷ City of East Lansing (Michigan), Zoning Ordinance
(amended to 1966).

¹⁸ City of Ithaca (New York), Zoning Ordinance
(amended to 1965).

Kent County, Michigan (proposed, 1965) Funeral home is a permitted use in the C-2 General Commercial Zone.¹⁹

Lansing Township, Michigan (proposed, 1966) Funeral homes are permitted uses in the Commercial Zone.²⁰

Mason, Michigan (amended to 1965) Funeral home is a permitted use in "G.B." General Business District.
 "The primary purpose of this district is to provide for the general shopping and merchandising services for the entire community."²¹

Funeral Home Permitted in Professional and Office Districts

Oak Ridge, Tennessee (1956) Funeral home permitted in the O Office District.²²

Knoxville, Tennessee (amended to 1965) A funeral home is a permitted use in the O-1, Office, Medical, and Related Services Districts.²³

¹⁹County of Kent (Michigan), Zoning Ordinance (proposed, 1965).

²⁰Charter Township of Lansing (Michigan), Zoning Ordinance (proposed, 1966).

²¹City of Mason (Michigan), Zoning Ordinance (amended to 1965).

²²American Society of Planning Officials, op. cit., p. 19.

²³City of Knoxville (Tennessee), Zoning Ordinance (amended to 1965).

Lansing, Michigan (proposed, 1966) Funeral home is a permitted use in O-1 Office District subject to special conditions and the approval of the planning commission.²⁴

Livonia, Michigan (1965) Funeral home is permitted as a waiver use in the Professional Service Districts.²⁵

Troy, Michigan (amended, 1965) The zoning ordinance was amended to permit a funeral home in the O-1 Office Building District Zone subject to special conditions.²⁶

²⁴Interview with Ray Guernsey, Director of Planning, City of Lansing, Michigan, June 7, 1966.

²⁵City of Livonia (Michigan), Zoning Ordinance (1965).

²⁶City of Troy (Michigan), Zoning Ordinance (1965).

APPENDIX II
QUESTIONNAIRE

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QUESTIONNAIRE

A. OPERATING CHARACTERISTICS

1. What is the name and address of your funeral home?
2. Approximately how many funeral services do you conduct per year?
3. Is there a definable "service area" from which most of your business comes?
4. If yes, what is it?
5. What are the characteristics of the families you serve?
 - a. religion
 - b. race
 - c. nationality
 - d. approximate income range
 - e. level of education
6. How many persons are employed by your funeral home?
 - a. part time
 - b. full time
7. Does your funeral home have a branch or is there another funeral home in the city which is under your ownership?
8. If yes, what are the major reasons for this branch funeral home?
9. What is the distance between the main and branch funeral home?
10. Do you provide an ambulance service?
11. If yes, what are your future plans regarding this service?

11. continued.

- a. plan to continue c. other
- b. plan to discontinue

12. When bodies are brought to the funeral home are they unloaded outside or inside the building?

13. Is your funeral home a family business? (explain)

14. Is your funeral home? (check one)

- a. proprietorship c. corporation
- b. partnership

B. VISITING THE DECEASED

1. What is the average number of nights the deceased reposes in state before the funeral service?

2. What are the normal or established visiting hours at your funeral home?

A.M. to P.M. none

3. What are the peak visiting hours?

4. Catholic Funerals: Has there been a trend over the past ten years for an increase in the attendance at Rosary Services and a decrease in attendance at the funeral service? (yes or no)

Protestant Funerals: Has there been a trend over the past ten years for an increase in the number of persons visiting the deceased before the day of the funeral and a decrease in the number who attend the funeral service? (yes or no)

C. THE FUNERAL SERVICE

1. Which days of the week are funeral services most prevalent?

2. What has been the trend in Saturday funeral services?

- a. increase b. decrease c. no change

3. If there has been an increase, is it caused by the extra charge being assessed by several of the cemetaries on Saturday?

If no, what is the reason for decrease?

If there is an increase in the number of Saturday funerals, what is the reason for this increase?

4. By percentage, where are funeral services held?
 - a. funeral home
 - b. church
5. What is the average attendance at a funeral service?
6. What is the maximum number of people you can acomodate in attendance at a funeral service?
7. What hours of the day are funeral services held?
8. Where does the funeral procession line up?
 - a. parking lot
 - b. street
9. What are the usual number of cars in a funeral procession?
10. What is the percentage of persons who attend the funeral service who also go to the cemetary in the funeral procession?
11. Are there any problems entering the street with the funeral procession?
12. What is the normal speed of travel for the funeral procession?

D. SITE

1. What is the zoning classification for the area where your funeral home is located?
2.
 - a. Is a funeral home permitted in this zone?
 - b. Is the funeral home located in this zone by the request of a special use permit?

D.2. continued

c. Was the parcel where the funeral home is situated rezoned to allow it to locate there?

d. Other?

3. Do you like your present location? (yes or no)

4. How long at this site?

5. Is there a meaningful relationship between the location of your funeral home and any of the churches in your city?

If yes, what is this relationship?

6. What are the approximate dimensions or the area of the site on which the funeral home is located?

7. Is the site size adequate or inadequate?

8. How many off-street parking spaces are provided for visitors and employees on the property?

9. Do you have a joint arrangement to share parking with another person or business?

10. If yes, with whom?

11. What time of day or night is this parking used by the funeral home?

E. BUILDINGS

1. On which floor(s) are the following located in your funeral home?

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| a. chapel | f. preparation room |
| b. reposing rooms | g. office |
| c. casket display | h. lounge |
| d. storage | i. living quarters |
| e. number of caskets displayed | |

E. continued.

2. If you have living quarters in your funeral home, who lives there?
3. What are the approximate ground dimensions of the funeral home?
4. What is the approximate total number of square feet of floor area within the funeral home?

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