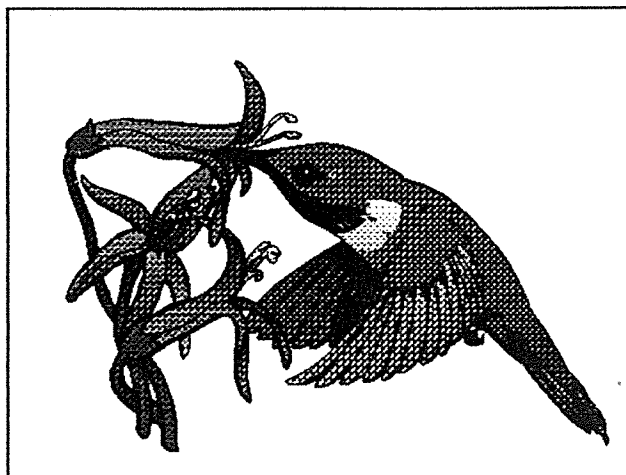


*Mount
Vernon
Motel*



By Tohfa Manji

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Mount Vernon Motel

Owning your own business takes both perseverance and a little perspiration. In the long run, however, it's worth the effort for most people.

My parents own the Mount Vernon Motel in Mount Vernon, Iowa. The motel was built in the mid to late 1950's by Mr. Don G. Horton and his father Boyd Horton.

In 1962 Don Horton sold the motel to Ralph and Charlene Ann Davis. They kept the motel for six years then sold it to Norman and Jane Christensen. In 1969 it was sold to Mrs. Marjorie Lockwood. Thirteen years later, in 1982, the motel was sold to Arvind Shah and Dinesh Shah. Finally in August of 1984 the motel was sold to my parents, Amin and Razia Manji.

The structure of the motel includes 16 rentable motel rooms, an office, and medium sized living quarters (Figure 1). Living quarters include: three bedrooms, two living rooms, two bathrooms, a small kitchen, dining area, and an enclosed porch. There is a narrow porch in front which follows the length of the building. The building is one story with an attic and no basement. There is no evidence of fires of any kind, and the hardware is pretty much plain throughout. We have one garage in the back, which is detached. We have our own well for water and use the city sewer system.

Since the period when the Horton's owned the motel, there have been many additions and remodeling jobs done. The size of our living quarters was nearly tripled by an addition made just before Mrs. Lockwood came into ownership (Figure 2). This addition gave us a living room, two bedrooms, and a bathroom. In addition to the living room, kitchen, dining area, bedroom and bathroom already there.

The next major addition to the motel was made by my family. Half of our concrete patio in the back was enclosed to make a sun porch (Figure 2). This addition was made during the summer of 1993 as a "family project".

During the summer of 1994 we did some remodeling on the motel. Vinyl siding was put on over the old cedar wood siding. New shingles were put on the front half of the roof. We replaced the windows on the entire back side of the motel. New heating/cooling units were put in each motel room, and central air in the house. Presently we are remodeling the motel bathrooms one at a time.

Location has been a big impact on our business. Being positioned right on Highway 30 helps a lot (Figure 3). Both the building and the sign are visible from Highway 30 and Highway 1, which catches the eyes of travelers who are looking for a place to stay. The fact that our motel is the only motel in town helps too. Another thing that helps business is Cornell College. Because we live in a small town with a small college, many alumnis and parents of college students stay with us.

Good Point

Even though Cedar Rapids is a hop, skip and a jump away, some people prefer the quiet countrylike atmosphere that Mount Vernon provides. Our location is perfect for a motel. It's nice and quiet, cozy, yet there are restaurants and businesses nearby. We have lots of land, many trees, even a residential area behind the motel, yet there's a major U.S. highway in front (Figure 3). In my opinion it's the best of both worlds!

It's hard to relax when you live at your place of work and work at your home. There's always something going on at my house. My parents are constantly running around trying to take care of this and do that at the same time. Sometimes I hate the fact that we're always busy. And sometimes I'm so glad we have the motel, because I have learned so much. That's what owning a business is like. It takes perseverance and perspiration.

yes!

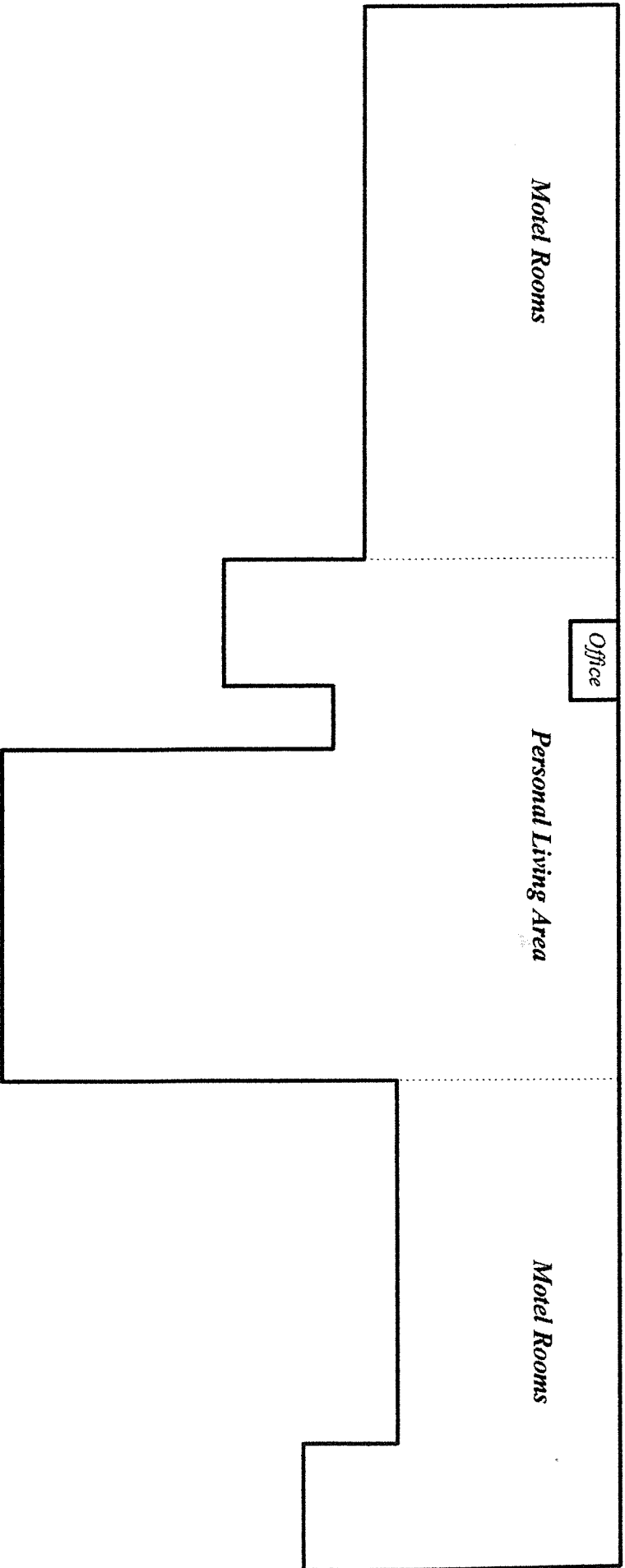


Figure 1

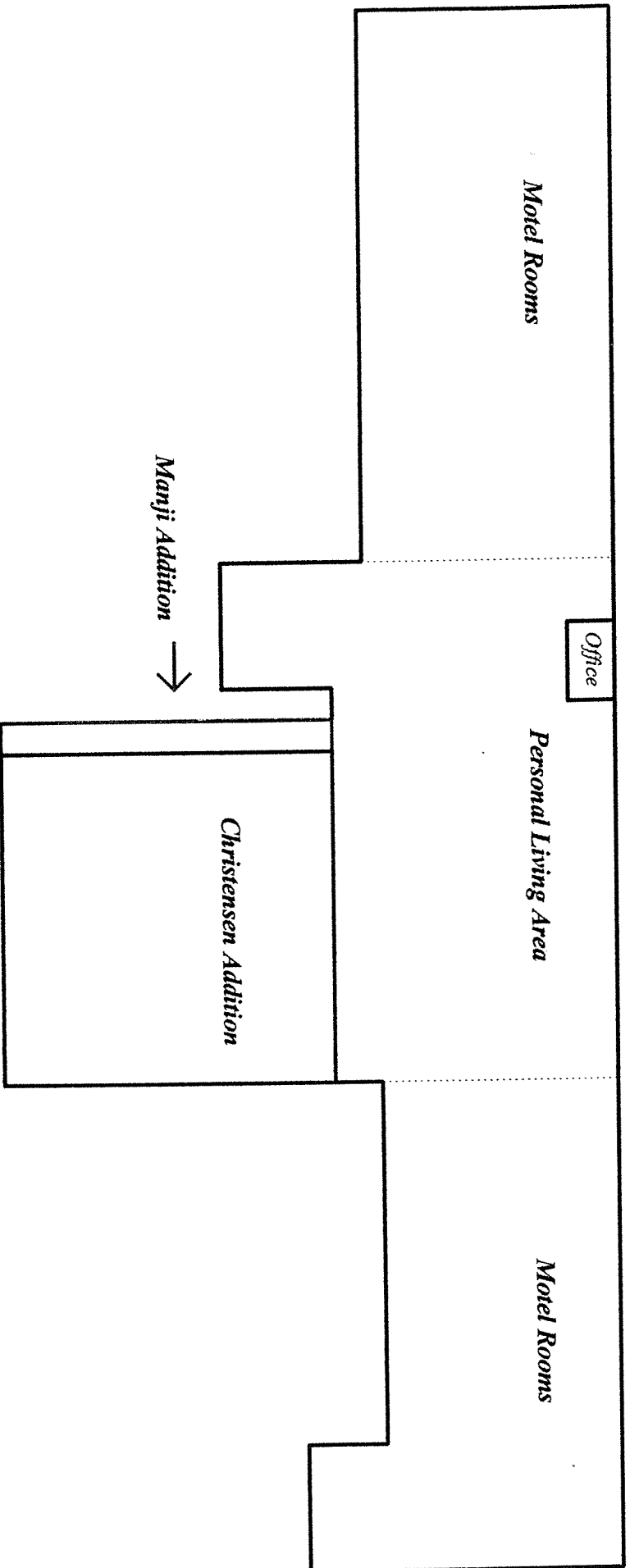


Figure 2

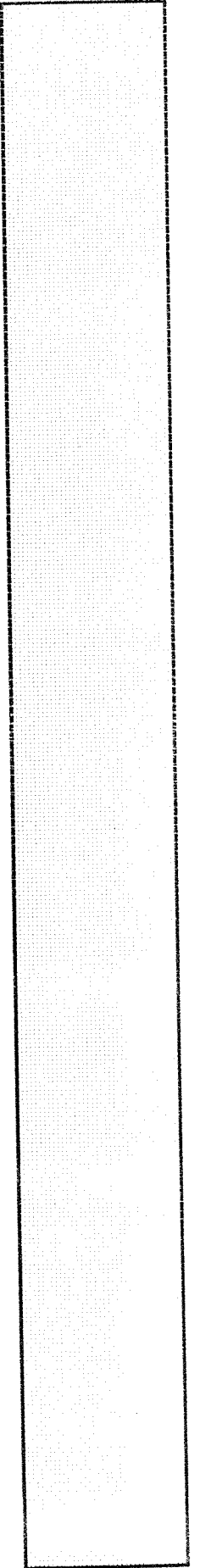
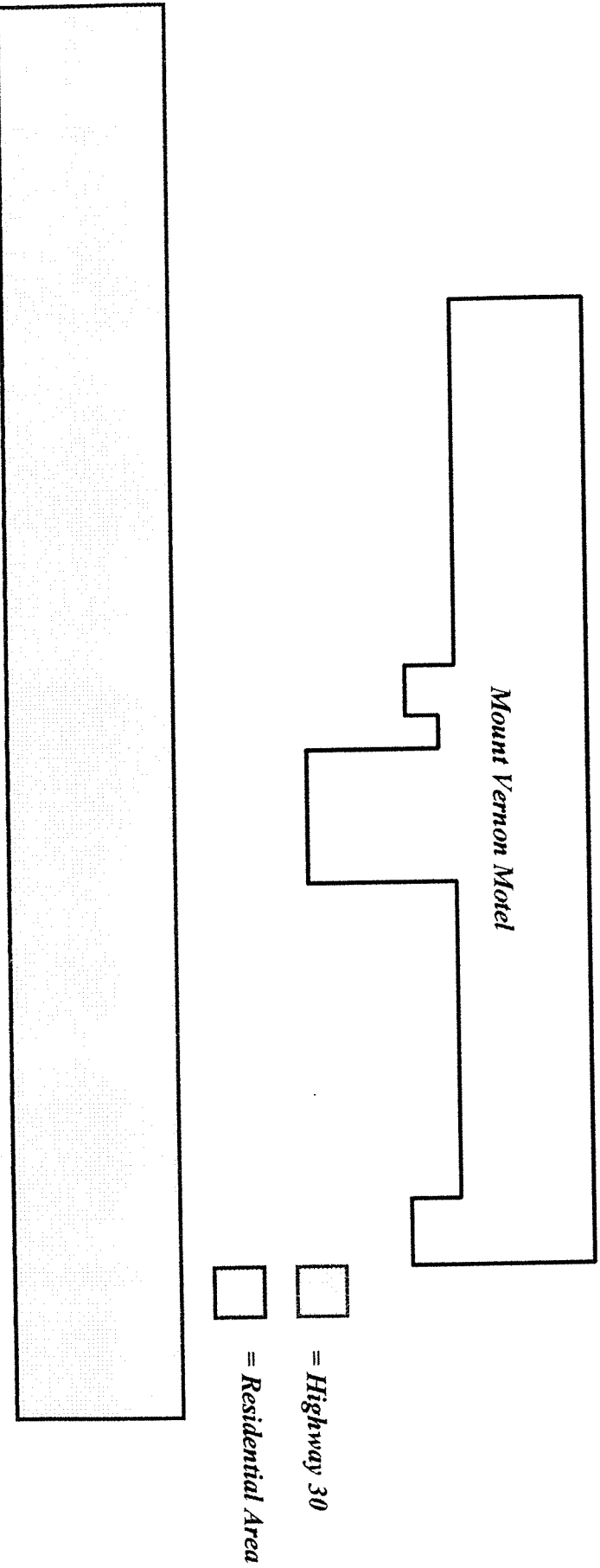


Figure 3





The motel sign is visible from both
Highway 30 and Highway 1.





This is the door to our office. There are two private doors on either side of the office door.





We have a long porch in front
which follows the length of the
building.



This is our enclosed porch in the back.
There are many trees and a residential
area in the back as well.





Lots of land and many trees and bushes make for a countrylike atmosphere.





There is a clear view of Mount
Vernon High School from our
driveway.

The farm next to us is also located
on Highway 30.

