

Grants will help power town buildings

◆ **Canterbury Center:**
Solar power systems will be featured.

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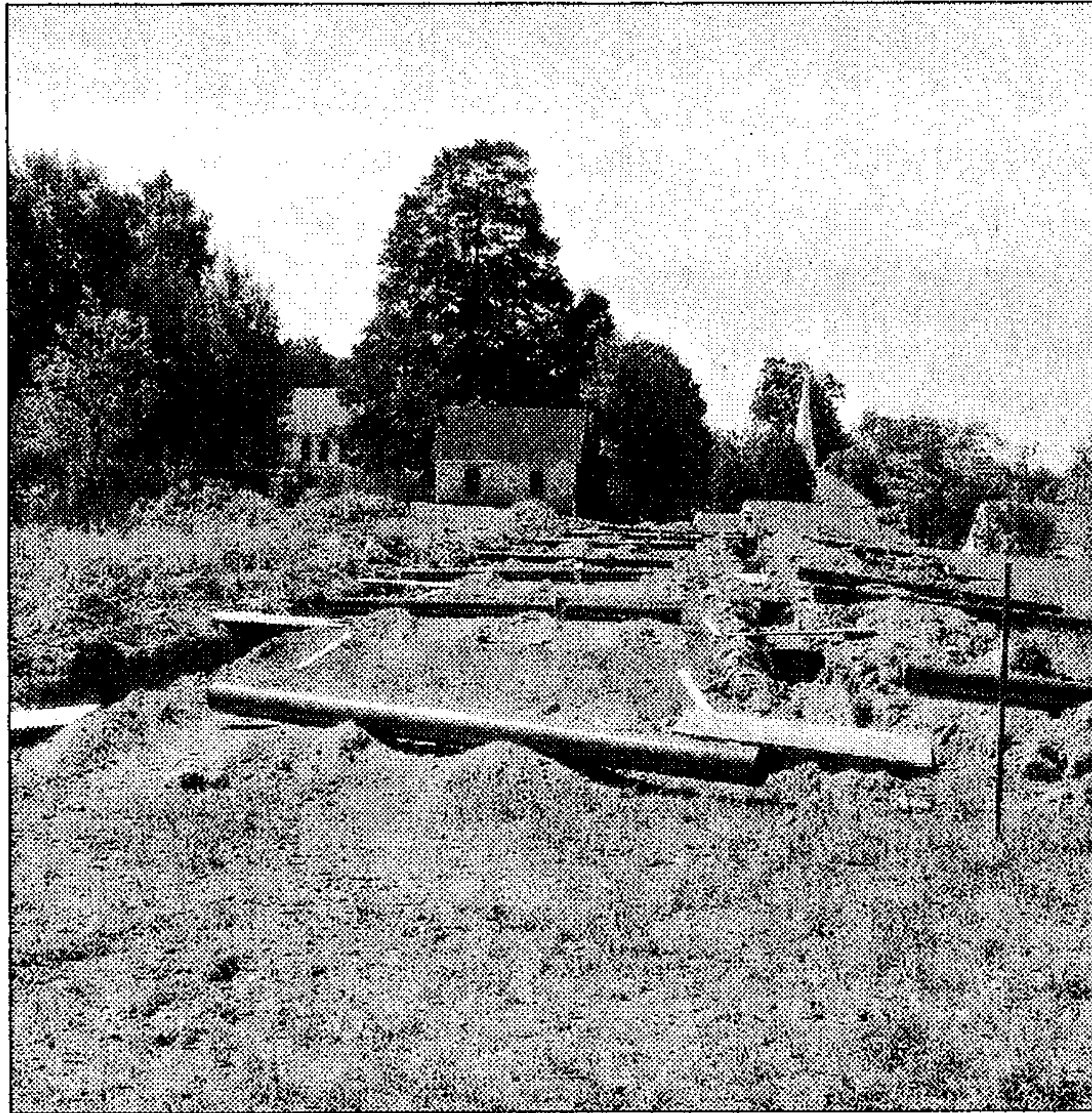
CANTERBURY — Work is under way on installing solar power systems that will provide almost half of the electricity for three of the town's buildings in Canterbury Center.

The systems are being installed at the Sam Lake House, which houses town offices, the nearby Elkins Library and the town's municipal building, which houses the town's police, fire and highway department.

The \$241,500 project is being funded through the federal Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program, which is administered through the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning, and is the first in the state to start construction through the program.

"We're thrilled to be starting this historic project for our town," said Selectman Bob Steenson, who credited Tyson Miller, vice chairman of the town's planning board, with identifying the grant opportunity and working to create the town's successful application for funding.

Steenson said the annual



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savings on energy costs are estimated to be \$8,000 in the first year and that those savings will increase each year as electric utility rates increase.

He said the system will provide about 35 kilowatts of electricity at peak production and can be expanded easily should the town choose to.

"While saving money for Canterbury in the long term is an important part of the project," said Miller, "this project is part of an important national

movement to bring alternative energy technology into the mainstream and reduce the use of non-renewable resources and the amount of air we pollute."

Bob Drew, a local electrical contractor, and Scott Ruesswick, who recently launched his Solar Installation Solutions business, are installing the systems.

Roger Becker, town administrator, said the grant program was started under the Bush ad-

ministration in 2007 to provide local government with funds to reduce fossil fuel emissions, reduce total energy use, and improve energy efficiency. The program only recently received its first funding allocation through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) which was enacted in 2009.

Becker said one challenge the project faces is to install the relatively compact solar arrays without disturbing the classic old New England facade of the historic town center.

He says the elevation of the back field in relation to the town center, combined with the careful placement of landscaping features such as a hedge row and trees, will protect the center's historic heritage.

The town also collaborated with the Shaker Regional School District for a fourth grant of \$44,270. It will fund 16 energy conservation measures, including the replacement of an inefficient interior lighting system at Canterbury Elementary School.

Savings at the elementary school are estimated at \$23,000 a year.

The school district is putting \$24,000 into that project, which will also see energy conservation improvements made at Shaker Regional High School in Belmont. That school received a \$274,270 grant through the town.