

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Vincent Villa Historic District

other names/site number The YWCA of Fort Wayne

2. Location

street & number 2000 North Wells Street

n/a not for publication

city or town Fort Wayne

n/a vicinity

state Indiana

code IN

county Allen

code 003

zip code 46808

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____

Date _____

State of Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
9	2	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
10	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

- DOMESTIC/institutional housing
- RELIGION/church school
- RELIGION/church-related residence
- RECREATION/CULTURE
- INDUSTRY/energy facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

- SOCIAL/civic
- RECREATION/CULTURE
- VACANT/NOT IN USE
- COMMERCE/TRADE
- INDUSTRY/energy facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

- Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival
- Romanesque
- bungalow/Craftsman

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation BRICK
- walls BRICK
- Limestone
- roof OTHER:Tile
- other Limestone
- Iron

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation sheets.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

c. 1925-1944

Significant Dates

1932

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Strauss, A.M., Architect

Buesching, Hagerman & Co., Builder

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Ft. Wayne Diocese, Roman Catholic Ch.
Ft. Wayne Chancelry, Cathedral Square,
Ft. Wayne, Indiana

St. Vincent Villa Historic District
Name of Property

Allen County, Indiana
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 22.5 acres, more or less

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	6	6	5	5	7	0	0	4	5	5	0	6	6	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

3

1	6	6	5	6	2	0	0	4	5	5	0	3	8	5
Zone	Easting				Northing									

4

1	6	6	5	5	7	6	0	4	5	5	0	3	7	2
Zone	Easting				Northing									

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Thomas W. Salmon II, and Camille B. Fife

organization The Westerly Group, Inc. date March 10, 1994

street & number RR 1 Box 141 telephone (812) 696-2415

city or town Farmersburg state IN zip code 47850

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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St. Vincent Villa Historic District
Allen County, Indiana

Materials (continued)
foundation Limestone
walls WOOD
roof Shingle
OTHER:
Composition
other Copper
CERAMIC TILE

Narrative Description

Summary

St. Vincent Villa Historic District is a collection of structures, located in a park-like property of more than 22 acres, which is surrounded by a modest, mixed residential and commercial neighborhood, with an active industrial building nearby. On one side, a railroad track, and related activities demark the border, which is also the approximate site of a long-abandoned feeder canal for the Wabash & Erie system. The District is easily identifiable for its striking collection of mid-twentieth century buildings. The site appears as a campus, with structures which are sensitively designed to aesthetically relate to each other. The plan of the site itself also evidences the hand of a planner/designer, as both the landscape plantings and the circulation systems cooperate to enhance the visual appeal and functionality of the buildings. Two small houses have also been included within the district, first, because this inclusion provides a continuity with earlier property lines; second, because they are of a contemporaneous design; and third, because their use was related to that of the main complex.

The historic functions of St. Vincent Villa have changed since the property was purchased in the mid-nineteenth century for a Catholic orphanage. It was operated as such from 1886 until the late 1970s, when it was purchased from the Diocese by the YWCA of Fort Wayne (with the exception of a small parcel containing two residential buildings). However, the new uses of the property are quite similar to the former ones. Many of the same activities are being conducted today, within its buildings, which had enlivened these structures for decades. The St. Vincent Villa Historic District is well-known within its immediate neighborhood and the surrounding community. For more than 100 years, the community has made use of its grounds and buildings for recreation, education, inspiration and relaxation. This tradition continues to grow and expand today.

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The major institutional buildings within the district are of sturdy brick construction, designed in the eclectic early/mid-twentieth century styles of Mission and Romanesque. A modern addition to the main building, containing a gymnasium and fitness center, has recently been constructed on the site. It has been designed with sensitivity to the historic structures. The natural topography has been utilized to provide extensive parking and considerable additional recreational space, without impacting either the historic landscape or streetscape of the complex.

The structures, designed by the local architect, A. M. Strauss, were built over a period of years. They conform, rather closely to a master plan, which was developed prior to 1932, when the construction of the first of the present buildings began. There is a pleasant relatedness to the structures, without the onus of stultifying uniformity. They are maintained with a high degree of care and sensitivity and retain excellent integrity with regard to their location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling. Although the property's ownership has changed, the new use of the complex is so sensitive to many of the former uses, that the integrity of association is quite good. The landscape has suffered slightly, because of the increased need for parking and other facilities, as well as the loss of some trees and other plantings, however, enough remains to assure integrity. The removal of many outdoor religious statues, and some site furniture (birdbaths, etc.) has also affected the landscape, but the distinctive sylvan feeling remains.

Description

The St. Vincent Villa Historic District is situated in the northwest quadrant of Fort Wayne, Allen County, Indiana. It is bounded by Wells street on the west, by West Jacobs Avenue on the north and by a portion of Putnam Street on the South. The rear of the property, on the east is defined by abandoned railroad tracks, beyond which is a large power plant. The overall shape of the 22.5 acre property is nearly rectangular; the curve of the tracks giving it a rhomboidal configuration on the eastern boundary.

Fort Wayne is the county seat of Allen County. The community was a center of trade, commerce and civilization in the northern sector of the Indiana wilderness during the eighteenth century. The fort from which the community derived its name was an eighteenth century trading outpost, built in 1794. It replaced several earlier frontier outposts, established by the French. The site had been a gathering place however,

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for native American tribes for many centuries before. The confluence of three rivers, the St. Joseph, the St. Mary's and the Maumee, made the site a traditional trade center for the Miami, Potawatomi, Wea and other tribes which inhabited the Great Lakes region. These waterways provided access to the Great Lakes and much of Ohio, as well as northern and central Indiana. In addition, a short, 7-8 mile portage between the Maumee and the Wabash River to the west gave access to the Illinois lands and to southern Indiana, as well as to the Ohio River, as it flowed westward to the Mississippi. This extensive natural trade network gave Fort Wayne distinct advantages for commerce and settlement. Before the influx of European settlers, the Indian town of Ke-ki-on-ga was known to have flourished at the site.

The land surrounding Fort Wayne is generally flat, with some marked elevations -- the terrain is the result of glacial deposits from the succession of ice age activities, as well as some alluvial deposition through river action. Fort Wayne is known as "summit city", because it was the summit, or high point in the east-west traverse of the Wabash & Erie canal. From here, the canal flowed eastward toward the Ohio line, with an approximate 35-foot descent and in the opposite direction, it dropped over 40 feet as it reached the western boundary of the county.

The site of St. Vincent Villa Historic District is comparatively flat on its western side. The "crescent" of cottages, which is in the western sector of the property, is backed by a second "register" consisting of the long, narrow Main Building which historically contained a chapel, school and auditorium-gymnasium. The property is graded so that the areas reserved for the buildings and the Wells Street landscaping is largely flat. The rear of the property, on the east, contains what appears to be an old drainage in the northeast corner and an almost perfect mound (dome) towards the south. This latter area is also the probable site of a portion of the feeder canal for the Wabash & Erie. A recently constructed addition to the Main Building (built in two phases, c. 1981/1990) has been nicely incorporated into a gentle slope on the Putnam Street side of the property.

The site has evolved somewhat from its earliest configurations. Purchased in 1867 for a Diocesan orphanage, the property was described as "all that part of the Wells preemption which lies north of the Wabash and Erie Canal feeder, being in township thirty north of Grange Wells, east" ¹ Maps of 1874 and 1880 clearly show this configuration.²

¹ 1867 Deed, in the archives of the Ft. Wayne Diocese.

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However, the Bishop of the Diocese declined to build on the site for many years. A location in Rensaellaer, Indiana was deemed more suitable for the intended use.

The first orphanage building on the present site was constructed in 1886-87, and was called the St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum and primarily served young girls. The cornerstone was laid in 1886. The building was multi-story, of sturdy construction with two front bays and a large rear wing. An 1890 insurance map shows that the property also contained several barns and outbuildings, typical of an agricultural operation (none of which have survived).³ The Sisters of the Poor Handmaidens of Jesus Christ were the teachers and supervisors of the operation.

By 1932, the old building was deemed antiquated, and several new structures (see specific descriptions) were under construction, in part to celebrate the diamond jubilee of the Diocese of Fort Wayne which was to occur in 1933. In that same year, a boys orphanage in Lafayette was closed and the youngsters were moved to St. Vincent's. The buildings which were constructed in 1932 (Buildings No. 2 & 4, called cottages), housed 24 children to each floor. Two other structures were built during this time: The Main Building which contained schoolrooms, the auditorium/gymnasium and chapel; and the Boiler House, providing space for the steam generating facilities and laundry. Two small craftsman houses on West Jacobs Street served variously as priests residences, visitor facilities and overflow room, as needed. They were probably present, along with their garage, when the 1930s construction began, having been built during the mid 1920s.

The nineteenth century building survived at the site until 1950, when it was partly destroyed by fire. Following this, the structure was demolished and the balance of the construction, which had been planned in the 1930s, was completed, adding an administration building (now called Bowker Hall), as well as two more cottages. The nineteenth century building was located approximately where Building No. 3 presently stands. Although this expansion plan can be dated, through a

² de la Camp, John, Map of the City of Fort Wayne, Ind., 1874 and Helm, T. D., History of Fort Wayne, "Map of Fort Wayne & Vicinity", 1880.

³ Sanborn Insurance Map, 1890, in the collection of IU Geography Library.

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planning model, to the 1930s, (See Exhibit H) ⁴ a change was made (possibly because of a change in population) and a total of five, rather than six cottages were built. Further, the site of Building No. 3, which is also different in plan from the other four cottages, was originally shown as an open space.

The Young Women's Christian Association of Fort Wayne purchased the property (except the two houses and their garage) from the diocese in 1978. Today, they maintain ownership and management of all of the institutional buildings, using them for their own programs or renting them to a variety of businesses, organizations and individuals.

The vehicular circulation prior to the last construction episode in 1950-51, was functional and utile, comprised of a single entrance/exit drive leading from the south side of the old building to a parking lot on the northeast. There was also a service road leading from West Jacobs to the Boiler House and continuing south. After this time, the "crescent" configuration of buildings and paths which had been evident from the 1932 model was installed. A new entry was also devised, composed of an entrance and exit drive from Wells Street, midsite to the West facade of Building No. 3 (See Sketch Map), an oblong parking lot and a service road which led from West Jacobs to the rear of the school and the Boiler House. However, as other buildings were built, the two entrance drives were flanked by 60 degree angle parking lots and a road which passed in front of Buildings No. 4 and 5 and then exited the site on Putnam Street. This was widened in order to allow perpendicular parking for those two buildings. The road extension to Putnam Street later was abandoned. When the YWCA additions to the Main Building were built, two large (22,000 square foot) parking lots and a drive from Putnam Street were installed to serve the new facility.

The vernacular landscape, a historic site, can be considered contributing. (See specific descriptions)

⁴ A Photograph of the model was included in the dedication booklet, "Our Orphan Asylum, Souvenir of Dedication of St. Vincent Villa, Diocese of Fort Wayne, Sept. 18, 1932". In the collection of the archives, Ft. Wayne Diocese.

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The site also contains facilities for outdoor recreation, including a large fenced tennis court which was established just west of Building No. 2. A small, fenced tot lot is situated just south of Building No. 4 and can be considered part of the amenities of that structure. Street furniture around the campus includes several picnic tables and benches which have been placed between the main buildings and the school building. A local NPR affiliate station is a tenant in Building No. 1 and the antenna for this activity is located near the building, with a small, solid lathe fence surrounding it. A bus stop on Wells Street, south of the entrance drive, and the YWCA entrance sign comprise the balance of the ephemera which are also contained within the perimeter. The site is partially enclosed by a six foot high chain link fence which, on Wells Street, runs for about 250 feet on either side of the entrance drive, and for sporadic lengths on West Jacobs. It also runs the full length of the south side of the property. There are no vehicular gates.

The neighborhood located within four to five blocks of the site contains a mix of commercial and residential structures, as well as an industrial building, which is a source of employment for many residents. The residential section, located immediately to the west, and bounded by Wells Street, was subdivided at least as early as 1874, and appears on early maps as "Beck's Addition". By 1889, the "Catholic Orphan Asylum" is clearly marked on contemporary maps (although outside the city limits) and a second appellation has been added, that of "Kerr & Dawson's" section of the subdivision. While the area was still rural, and sparsely populated, a number of homes were probably already present. However, all of the St. Vincent property north of Archer Street was outside the city limits and Wells Street, as it passed into the county,

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was known as Lima Plank Road. ⁵

By 1898, the orphanage property was incorporated within the city limits and additional subdivisions within Beck's Addition were noted. By 1918, all of the blocks surrounding the orphanage were incorporated into the city and neat rows of suburban houses can be seen. Jacobs Avenue on the north and Putnam on the south now mark the northern and southern boundaries of the property. It is likely that most of the homes around St. Vincent Villa were constructed between 1889 and 1918, forming a healthful, city suburb of Fort Wayne. It is interesting to note that the Fort Wayne Tire & Rubber Manufacturing Company's factory was located, in 1918, on the north side of Jacobs Avenue. The same building is still active as an industrial facility. ⁶

The buildings on the St. Vincent Villa site comprise approximately 89,000 ground floor square feet, the remainder being devoted to pedestrian and vehicular circulation, paths, roads, parking spaces, tennis courts and trees, grass, shrubs and ground cover.

Building Descriptions

The St. Vincent Villa Historic District is typical of an institutional complex. Of the five structures which form the crescent facing Wells Street, all are similar in style, but none have the same configuration. The Main Building forms a second register and provides a pleasing background for the cottages on the crescent.

All of the seven institutional buildings are, except for some minor additions, in original condition. Basically comprised of a rough-textured yellow/ochre brick, they are richly decorated with limestone detailing, wood windows and trim and, in all cases, red tile roofs. All contain wrought iron work in balconettes, window guards, typical of the Mission Style. The Boiler House deviates somewhat from this, but will be more specifically described below. All of the main buildings also have brick foundations, showing a limestone water table between 12" to

⁵ de la Camp, John, Map of the City of Fort Wayne 1874, and 1889 Atlas Collection of the IU Geography Library.

⁶ Ogle, Geo. A. & Co., Standard Atlas of Allen County, Indiana, 1898 and 1918 Sanborn Map, Collection of the IU Geography Library.

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48" to grade, semi-circular arched or lintel windows and doors, all with limestone sills, wood windows and door frames, standing seam copper awning roofs over service entrances, copper flashings, gutters and downspouts.

The contributing buildings include: Four cottages, numbered 1, 2, 4, and 5. Although all of them were designed in 1932, two were constructed in 1932 (2 & 4) and two in 1951 (1 & 5); the Main Building, which historically served as a chapel, school, and auditorium/gymnasium (1932); and the Boiler House which contained a laundry and a steam generation plant (1932) which served the complex, then and now; additionally, there are two (c. 1925) craftsman bungalows on West Jacobs; and their detached garage (c. 1925) which shares the site. A non-contributing structure, the storage building north of the Main Building is obviously of a much later date than the other structures.

The dormitory cottages share a similarity of design and materials, as they once shared a similarity of function. All are built of brick, detailed with limestone, roofed with Mission Style tiles, and flashed with copper. While the textures and pattern of the brick used on the buildings are the same or similar, the color is subtly different in those cottages built in 1951. Windows and doors are painted wood. Many of the second story patios and windows have wrought iron railings or balconettes. The cottages have brick corbel tables, often elaborate, which provide good foils for the heaviness of the tile roofs. Each has semi-circular arches as window and door heads, although a few of the arches are infilled with a solid color brick in checkerboard coursing.

Other details include: Large chimneys reduced above the roof line with a quarter reversed arch which is further reduced to a miniature pent roof, tile clad. This is surmounted by corbelled brick and a small tile gabled roof with two small ceramic flues projecting through the ridge line.

Effective use is made of small patios (short arcades) at ground level, generally at entrances and as reached by full French doors on the second floor. The latter are either open or capped with a tile pent roof. These patios were comprised of three to four arches. The impostes of these distyles or tetrastyles are supported with round limestone columns with marked entasis. The heads are composite or modified corinthian. The similarities of design between these cottages is readily apparent, for example, the gable ends for cottages 2 and 4 are identical, but reversed.

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1. (C) North Cottage 1951 - Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival Photo #1

Although constructed in 1951, this building was designed in 1932. It exhibits the same motifs and detailing of buildings No. 2 and 4. Serving now as a studio for the local National Public Radio affiliate, book store and other rental uses, it has not been desecrated to any extent.

The south elevation is arranged in three bays. The center, a projecting pavilion, has four semi-circular arched windows, the center two in single brick embrasures. The windows are wood frame, painted yellow 8/over/8 lights, but without transoms in the arch. All ground floor window heads in this elevation are infilled with checker coursed hard fired brick of one color. On the second floor only the pair of windows in the projecting pavilion are arched. These windows also include a narrow wrought iron balconette, painted red, and supported on a limestone deck. The remaining four windows have a four-light transom separated from the window proper by a heavy wood muntin. The attic story contains three small semi-circular arched openings with six lights. The sills on this entire elevation are of limestone.

The remaining elevations are composed of the same window treatments, combinations of semi-circular and flat window heads and corbel tables.

2. (C) First Boys Dormitory - 1932 Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival
Photo #2

Today this building serves as the administration building for the YWCA. Its west elevation is composed of two bays. The ground floor in the projecting pavilion is comprised of a raised panel containing a pair of ten-light, two leaf, wood doors with nine-light arched transoms. The center impost is supported by a single limestone column with a corinthian capital. The arrises are headed by mitred surfaces. The chamfer head is also of limestone. The panel is terminated by a limestone molding shelf or deck which carries a wrought iron scroll design balconette. The remainder of windows in this elevation are either limestone lintel headed or arched.

The second story, north bay, has an open patio or colonnade with four openings on the west and one in the north. The posts supporting the roof are of brick on the center and four extremes and the others are limestone columns with modified corinthian heads. The patio floor is of concrete, but its edges, as exposed on the outside of the building, contain carved limestone nosings. The railings, at each opening are of wrought iron scroll work.

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The south facade of this building is composed of many architectural elements. The entrance is contained within a four bay colonnade. With brick piers at the corner, the three remaining impostes are carried by three limestone columns with modified corinthian capitals. The element has a ceramic tile floor and contains a pair of ten-light wood doors and a window. The remainder of the ground floor windows in the elevation are semi-arched brick, eight/over/eight double hung, with nine light transoms, all of wood with limestone sills.

The ground and second floors are unified with a wide brick chimney. It is reduced, in profile, at the eave line with an inverted one-quarter arch, stepped in one brick to a five brick vertical with a miniature tiled roof, then banded with brick corbelling to a ridged top. There is also tile, which was interrupted at the apex with two tile flues.

Further unification of the two floors is achieved with the elements contained in the western bay. On the ground floor we find the belting course of limestone as a water table. The arrise has a pronounced pilaster of brick, terminated at the second story floor line with a limestone block. Above the two arched ground floor windows, there is a brick corbelled table with seven arches. It is contained by the chimney on the east and by a 14" wide brick, semi-pilaster which originates at approximately the second story floor line to the ridge where it is limestone terminated. East of the chimney we find three arched-head windows, eight light, with the end vertically separated by a heavy wood mullion. Further east is a projecting pavilion similar to the one described in No. 1 (North Cottage.)

The east facade of the administration building recalls the Romanesque front of the chapel (Main Building) in that it has two projections and is composed of three bays. The two flanking bays repeat the continuous banding of the limestone water tables and the limestone window sills. On the ground floor, both of the extreme bays have eight/over/eight-light wood windows painted black and the same treatment is continued in the center bay which has a brick and limestone porch, concrete decked. This porch has two corbelled inner faces. The top portion being one half brick, one half limestone, which separates the large limestone lintel. The belting is of limestone molding and supports two brick and limestone buttresses which are attached to a pedimented double window projection. The flanking windows in the recessed plane are as described above. A single semi-circular brick arched, six light window decorates the attic.

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Allen County, Indiana3. (NC) Administration Building/Bowker Hall - 1951 Mission/Spanish
Colonial Revival Photo #3

This is the simplest of the five buildings of the crescent and does not appear to have been designed in 1932 (see Exhibit H.) Further, it was not sited according to the early plan. Built of multi-colored brick, its central core is comprised of two stories with an attic. The north and south wings are single storied. The west, or entrance facade presents three bays. The wings, or extremities, have a set of three double hung windows with a limestone sill and very heavy heads. A simple brick corbelling frieze is tucked in under the copper leaders. The roofs are semi-flat, with three ridged, tiled surfaces. The center bay, ground floor has a 12" projecting entrance bay. Containing double doors with twelve lights each, this entrance is surrounded by a chaste limestone cyma recta outer molding and a mitred three-recess stepped inner molding. Two bronze and glass lamps flank this entrance. On the lintel of the door the words "BOWKER HALL", in bronze are applied directly to the limestone. This is the second appellation to adorn the building facade. A newspaper photograph taken during the building's dedication in 1952 shows that the name "ST. VINCENT VILLA" was once applied in the same location.⁷ It was originally constructed as the administration building for the complex.

The north and south elevations have three pairs of double hung wood windows with the center pair having limestone head and sill. The outer pairs have limestone sills only. The second story has two pairs of windows at the extremes and three semi-circular windows in the center. The transoms, limestone segmental arches, are infilled with a checkered course of hard fired maroon brick.

The rear or east elevation of Bowker Hall is divided into three bays, as is the front, with a pronounced projecting pavilion in the center bay. All ground floor windows are wood frame, double hung with eight/over/eight lights. The frames are painted black. To the south of the pavilion, there is a concrete airway with a flight of steps to the basement. Directly centered is a double rear door with six lights each and a simple limestone surround. This entrance has a standing seam copper ridged roof with a marked curve to the gutters to achieve a chinoiserie effect. Above, on the second floor, there are a pair of semi-circular arched windows with the checkered, coursed brick infill. Flanking windows are eight/over/eight, wood frame and sash, painted black with limestone sills.

⁷ Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette, October 21, 1952.

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4. (C) First Girls Dormitory 1932 - Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival
Photo #4

This building is, in nearly all respects the same as No. 2, except that the plan is reversed and the arcade along the north side of the building is surmounted by a terrace with brick piers and limestone balustrades, rather than the clay tile roof (in Building No. 2). It also has an additional, exterior iron stair descending from the second floor balconette.

5. (C) South Cottage 1951 - Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival
Photo #5

This building is constructed of the same materials as the other 1951 buildings, and is similar in plan to Building No. 2. Its design and site placement follow the 1932 plan, and it exhibits the same motifs and detailing of buildings No. 2 and 4.

6. (C) Main Building 1932 - Romanesque
Photo #6/Photo #11

This building, which today houses the auditorium/gymnasium, the classrooms, offices, and the reception area, has been designed in the Italian Romanesque style. The facade of the former chapel, which is located in the southern portion of the building, especially its porch, corbel tables and rose windows, is very similar to the Church of Saint Zeno Maggiore, in Verona (c1138.) The entrance to the school, the center entrance and the one to the gymnasium echo the detailing on the facade of the sanctuary. The chapel and the auditorium/gym are visually tied by the extended school building. This long structure has a central gabled entrance and two ancillary entrances at the two terminal ends -- that is, at the chapel and at the auditorium. Each of the sub-divided facades are separated into three bays. On the ground floor, the bays are comprised of recessed, semi-circular arched double hung windows, ten/over/eight lights. The pair of outer bays are of the same treatment but with only a pair of windows and a single limestone capital. The recessed bays are separated by single, double hung eight/over/eight light wood framed windows. They are fitted with limestone heads and sills. The two ancillary entrances have a semi-circular arched transom and a pair of doors with ten lights each.

On the second story, the ancillary entrances have double semi-circular arched windows letting out onto an ornate wrought iron balconette. These windows share a single limestone column. The

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supplemental entries form a classical nave, with the arched passage, the second story trifolium and, in the clerestory, three small single pane arched windows with limestone sills. The tile roofs here break the normal pitch of the central roof with eyebrow roof lines.

The center entrance to this impressive structure is a gabled pavilion having a pent roof on the ground floor porch. The recess is composed of two windows and a door immediately behind the arched porch columns. The pent roof is interrupted, over the central arch with a small limestone balconette whose front is decorated with a stone, self-contained ornament of quarrels, (diagonal grid) and two corner columnettes with flat capitols and anconei. This balconette serves a central semi-circular brick arched pediment which is surmounted by a gabled roof and supported by a pair of brick columns. The pediment is flanked by a pair of simple brick semi-circular arched windows with eight/over/eight lights and stone sills. The corbel table consists of eighteen arches with a central, arch at the roof ridge.

The auditorium/gym entrance echoes somewhat the sanctuary entrance facade. Without a porch, the recessed entry has two semi-circular brick open arched doors, and a single limestone column. The doors are wood frame with ten lights. This entry is flanked by a pair of eight/over/eight light double hung windows in a brick arched opening, limestone sills. In the projecting pavilion above the double entry are three arched, ten/over/eight light, double hung windows with two modified corinthian columns in limestone. Flanking the pavilion are two six light oculi windows. The attic of the entry bay has three simple, six light arched windows. As with the central entrance, the auditorium entrance has a chaste corbel table, the gutter edge of the brick being surmounted by a limestone termination, as is the edge of the pavilion.

The north side of the auditorium/gym is divided into bays by heavy 14" wide pilasters, connected at top and bottom by horizontal moldings, which depend on the limestone water table and which terminate at the gables. The windowless, recessed panels are topped with a decorative corbel table supported by limestone anconei.

The south side of the Chapel is divided into four bays, the westernmost being the apsidal exterior of a former side altar. The last bay on the east contains two small projections which form a side entrance and vestibule. This facade is detailed as is the north side of the auditorium/gym, but has large, twelve light arch-headed windows with limestone sills.

The east facade of the chapel is apsidal-ended, with its curved facade treated as the south facade. This apse steps out at the ground floor. A continuous belting course in limestone links all of this elevation. The few window openings in the east facade are as constructed, although the glass and frames have been replaced.

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A large addition to this building, completed in two phases, the gymnasium/pool in 1981 and the fitness center in 1990, extends to the east and south of the Main Building. The addition is constructed of multi-toned brick, in shades similar to those on the five cottages and of a stretcher bond. The south facade (entrance area) recalls detailing of the other buildings in that it utilizes limestone accents, foundation and belting courses throughout. The window sills and roof copings are also of limestone and the same stone is used to highlight windows and a square detail in the brickwork on the southernmost facade. The main doorway, which rises four flights of stairs from the parking lot level is surrounded by a brick and plaster entry, arched above the opening and with a high-gabled parapet in a contemporary style. The entire facade, which nestles behind the nave and long axis of the Main Building, displays a variety of planes, including, in the forefront, an upright, two-story facade, a curved bay, a long narrow windowed connector, the protruding entrance and a tile-roofed one-story bay. Earth berms alongside the entrance stair further enhance its ties to the landscape.

7. (C) Boiler House, Garage, and Laundry Building 1932 -
Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

Photo #7

This building follows the same general architectural treatment as the previously described buildings, but is quite simple, its design dictated by utility. Two stories high, its ground floor is broken by loading and personnel doors, as well as two one-story extensions. In the second story, are semi-circular arched windows and sixteen-light steel frame factory windows on the north elevation. The building is a combination of a hipped tile roof, with flared eaves on the south half and a flat, built-up composition roof on the north side. The tall chimney which is pronounced on the side of the building is of brick, with deep recesses and corner pilasters. These are stepped back and are capped at each step with limestone. Because of the slimness of this chimney, it resembles a Gothic tower.

8. (C) 209 West Jacobs Avenue - c. 1925 Craftsman cottage

Photo #8

This modest, one-and a half story frame structure has a rough-finished brick foundation, rectangular plan and a medium-high gable roof, gable-end front. The eaves are wide, with a modest fascia and, on the front, or north elevation, five open brackets as supports. The open porch serves as a veranda, extending across the front of the building, with two square piers on each end, supporting a simple flat lintel. The central entry is flanked by two small wood piers and low porch walls of

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clapboard siding. The main entry door (on the north facade) has three upper, vertical lights and is flanked by a tripartite three/over/one light window on the left and a slightly enlarged single, double-hung window on the right. An oriel projects from the west facade, just behind the porch and the entire house is sided in wood, clapboard siding.

9. (C) 207 West Jacobs Avenue - c. 1925 Craftsman Cottage

Photo #9

This house, a mate to the one next door, often served as a residence for the priests who were attached to the orphanage. Like its neighbor, it has a brick foundation and an open, central access front porch (although it contains four short posts as supports.) It's roof is a medium-high gable, however, with gable ends to the east and west and a gabled dormer with brackets, a medium fascia and exposed rafters. It is built on a "T" plan rather than a rectangle. The gable ends have wide eaves and triangular, open brackets. Window and main entry treatments on the north (front) facade are the same as 207 West Jacobs, but the main door is not visible because of new storms. Windows in the dormer and the gable ends have multiple, vertical lights, others are three/over/one, with upper vertical lights, grouped in twos or single. All have simple, medium-wide wood surrounds.

10. (C) Garage behind 207-209 West Jacobs Avenue - c. 1925 Craftsman

This simple, one story structure is immediately behind the two houses previously described and serves both of them. It has a simple, rectangular plan, gabled roof, with exposed rafters and clapboard siding. The entrance is on the east facade. It can be seen in the aerial photograph (Exhibits M & N) and glimpsed in the background of Photo #10.

11. (NC) Storage building north of Main Building - c. 1960

Photo #10

A simple, two bay storage building, with a combination roof, one normal size door and one oversize -- it has been oversided.

12. (C) Site - Landscape

Photo #12

The landscape vegetation includes many tree plantations. Some of these are past maturity, others have died and been felled, however some of the formal trees which defined the Wells Street sidewalks have

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survived. Although some trees obviously date prior to the 1932 construction, by comparing photographic evidence, and the existing vegetation, it appears that most of the distinctive plantings, especially around the buildings, were installed within ten years after the first of the cottages were built. Many Maples, Locusts, Pines, Cedars and a few Larches, Apples, and Ashes survive. The shrubs include: Euonymus, Crab Apple, Privet and Forsythia. There is evidence that, at one time, the shrub and herbaceous flower population was much larger, since beds have been filled in and seeded over.

However, the general appearance of the landscape, its location, its design, and feeling maintain integrity - still demonstrating a unified planting plan. This plan may have been initiated in phases, perhaps, but its design was graceful and had used a very definite palette of plant materials. The trees and shrubs are appropriate to the style of the buildings and the general layout of the landscape is complementary to them.

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Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

St. Vincent Villa Historic District gains significance from its association with trends present in the social history of Fort Wayne and the northern Indiana region, specifically, the development of private, religiously affiliated services to accommodate temporarily or permanently "homeless" children. The need for such institutions became apparent as the population increased following canal and railroad development. During the early settlement of the west, such services as were available were provided by private organizations (often church related), operating under a charter from the State Legislature.

The property demonstrates several interesting "new" ideas about child rearing and care, in an institutional setting, which were being advocated during the early twentieth century; specifically, the notion of home-like cottages, with smaller, more family-like groupings of residents and the importance of recreation and a park-like setting.

It is also significant as the work of a master, the locally known architect, A. M. Strauss, and as an example of the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style in Fort Wayne. While other examples of this style may be found in and around the community, this complex, because of the number of individual buildings which have survived, their arrangement, detailing, and significant landscape setting is unique as an architectural entity.

Statement of Significance

Social History

Roman Catholic influences were felt during the earliest years of settlement in Indiana's northern tier by both the native populations and the sparse collection of traders and settlers who braved the wilderness. It is thought that a mission had been established at Fort St. Joseph (near present South Bend) toward the end of the 17th century. The presence of black-robed Jesuits was remembered well into the 18th and early 19th centuries, after the close of the Indian Wars and the American Revolution. Following this turbulent era, it is probable that

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French, Canadian and other settlers from this fort dispersed throughout the midwest, some to Fort Wayne.⁸

After the War of 1812, the church became interested in reviving the old mission centers of the northwest territory. The visit of Father S. T. Badin, to Fort Wayne, in 1831 was noteworthy enough to warrant mention in a Catholic publication of the day: "During the hunting season the old gentleman [Fr. Badin] visited Fort Wayne, at and near which he found about 100 Canadian Catholics. Having purchased a four-acre lot for the purpose of a church, they are now building one. . . ." The baptismal records preserved at Fort Wayne indicate that many French Canadians formed the foundation of the local Catholic community. As the Erie Canal era dawned, this settlement pattern would change, as immigrants from Germany and Ireland moved in, along with resettlers from the eastern United States -- drawn by these emerging transportation links.⁹

The Catholic missionaries who followed the early traders into the lands around Fort Wayne and the balance of northern Indiana, and those who later helped resettle the land after the Indian Wars brought more than just religious conviction with them. Especially among the Indians, education was a primary concern. Schools were always an early part of a missionary settlement and the Catholic church was also an early leader in developing solutions to the social and community problems of orphaned or homeless children. During the 1830s, in northern Indiana, the notion of an orphanage first was proposed by Father Stephen Badin, to be located on the site of the present Notre Dame in South Bend.¹⁰

Traditions of private charity in the Roman Catholic church can be traced as far back as the Council of Nicea, 325 A.D., which organized hospices, possibly the first Christian agencies to care for destitute children. The long years of European monastic and conventual life established an association between indigent child care and many communal religious orders. In the United States, the first organized care of children, separate from adults was probably conducted by the nuns of the

⁸ McAvoy, Thomas T., The Catholic Church in Indiana, 1789-1834, New York, Columbia Univ. Press, 1940, p. 174

⁹ Quotation from the U.S. Catholic Miscellany, Vol. XI, 1831, p.70 in McAvoy, p. 177-178.

¹⁰ McAvoy, p. 182-183

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Ursuline Convent in New Orleans following a 1729 Indian massacre.¹¹ American Catholic charitable activities for children in the early nineteenth century were reborn with the work of Mother Seton and the Sisters of Charity in Philadelphia. Certainly this effort was well underway by 1817, when New York's Catholics requested Mother Seton to set up an orphanage in their city. These child-saving efforts were undoubtedly in response to the situation which had been prevalent since the 18th century, of homeless waifs being indentured (this had been legal in New York since 1788), forced into "apprenticeships" or merely allowed to roam wild in the streets, subject to the most appalling conditions and treatment.¹²

It is noteworthy that, only a decade and a half after New York had embarked upon a child-saving program, the wilderness missionaries in the wilds of northern Indiana were planning to emulate their enterprise. Certainly the need would have been great. Turbulent wars always exact a toll from the young and helpless. The unwanted or orphaned children of Indians, traders and French settlers must have been numerous in the early nineteenth century. Finally, the great influx of canal work in the mid-to-late 1830s also brought accompanying ravages of disease and death. Fort Wayne, as a center of canal work, was a hub of this activity. The needs of the largely Catholic population did not go unnoticed by the struggling missionaries, who recommended (in addition to an orphanage), the erection of chapels to serve the workers all along the canal line.¹³ By 1836, with a new church under construction, Father Michael Ruff was sent to Fort Wayne. Ordained at St. Louis, he spoke German, English and French, and "was well-trained to serve the new German and Irish population, who now outnumbered the French."¹⁴

Northern Indiana, and Fort Wayne, established an early tradition in the area of social and civic concerns, especially with regard to serving the needs of the immigrant populations. St. Vincent Villa is significant within this long tradition, although the period of its greatest architectural and social significance would not occur for

¹¹ Hopkirk, Howard W., Institutions Serving Children, pp. 2-3.

¹² Jacoby, Geo. Paul, Catholic Child Care in Nineteenth Century New York, p. 23, 89-91.

¹³ McAvoy, p. 190

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 204.

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nearly 100 years. Child care institutions would be established in Fort Wayne and other parts of northern Indiana during the decades leading up to the civil war, but the present site of St. Vincent Villa would not become a part of this activity until 1867, when a large tract was purchased at the present location. However, two other sites, at Rensselaer and Lafayette, Indiana were chosen to house male and female orphans and the Villa site remained unused for 21 years.¹⁵ Finally, in 1886-7, the rural, 923-acre orphanage for girls in Rensselaer was abandoned and a new building was constructed on the Fort Wayne site, presumably at a cost of \$50,000.¹⁶ Although the site was much smaller (probably around 75 acres), it offered many advantages of a suburban setting.

Ideas about care for orphaned and homeless children had undergone many changes since the early decades of the nineteenth century. If youngsters were not indentured or badly treated, they were indiscriminately placed in almshouses and poor farms, alongside adults whose character and concern for their welfare was questionable at best. Nonetheless, the first separate children's homes were located on farms, in remote country areas, the prevailing notion being that indigent and homeless children could and should be prepared to do farm work. Later, it was thought that a location near a city or village would be preferable, allowing for a more "normal" neighborhood environment and providing opportunities for older children to attend local schools.¹⁷

St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum continued to demonstrate enlightened attitudes about child rearing, with its establishment, in 1886, at the very edge of Ft. Wayne, in a burgeoning suburban environment. However, the area was still largely rural and the religious order of the Poor Handmaidens of Jesus Christ, who now came to be in charge of both education and care of the children, operated a dairy, poultry farm, gardens and orchard on the property.¹⁸

¹⁵ Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette, May 23, 1971.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ National Conference on Social Welfare, History of Child-Saving in the United States, (Report of the proceedings) June 1893, Reprinted 1971, pp. 131-33.

¹⁸ Fort Wayne Journal Gazette, May 23, 1971.

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The orphanage in Fort Wayne, however, was only open to young girls. A similar institution in Lafayette, Indiana served young boys. Unfortunately this often meant that, if their parents died or were incapacitated, siblings were separated by long distances, a wrenching and painful situation. But changes were on the horizon, regarding national attitudes and practices. Between 1880 and World War I a fascination with the needs of children grew, and fostered numerous books, laws and institutions. Turn of the century reformers saw in child rescue a "bulwark against bankruptcy and wreck" according to journalist Jacob Riis, who, with Lewis Hine photographed grimy children in factory mills and mines for publication in the popular press.¹⁹

Since the mid-nineteenth century, Indiana had maintained an independent stance with regard to the establishment of publicly-funded orphan homes. Ohio, to her east had led a movement toward county homes, eventually establishing 56. Michigan had pioneered a single, state operated home. Four of the midwestern states (including Indiana) developed homes for orphaned children of soldiers and sailors, during or immediately after the Civil War. But Indiana's flexible system encouraged both public and private, sectarian and non-sectarian efforts for children. Thus, institutions like St. Vincent Villa might board county wards as well.²⁰ In Indiana, the social and civic role of private institutions was enhanced.

As momentum grew regarding concerns about child welfare and reform; the terms "Asylum" and "Orphanage" came into disrepute. In the decade following World War I, emphases shifted from farm and domestic work to school and academic life. New compulsory education laws, the consideration that High School graduation was a normal requirement, the mechanized farm, labor-saving home devices and a reduced peacetime demand for youth labor were just a few of the factors effecting change. In Fort Wayne, a far-sighted cleric, John F. Noll, became Bishop of the Catholic Diocese during the mid-1920s. A driving force, Bishop Noll had founded a national Catholic weekly in 1912, which later reached a circulation of more than 1 million readers. He was later to become the only archbishop in the history of Fort Wayne.²¹

¹⁹ Ashley, LeRoy, Saving the Waifs, pp. 4, 7.

²⁰ Hopkirk, pp. 5-9.

²¹ Ankenbruck, p. 218.

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With the impetus of a strong leader, a new building program was undertaken in 1930. It would mean the beginning of a new era - the peak of its enrollment and life as an institution, according to some of its alumni. Both boys and girls would be welcomed in the new facility, and contact with the community would be encouraged, through local sports leagues and other activities.²² The boys to be transferred from the Lafayette facility were given priority at the Villa, if they had sisters or family in Fort Wayne.

Even the name of the institution was changed, in keeping with the new ideas about institutional child care. The words "Orphan" and "Asylum" were dropped -- even the possessive was eliminated, and the "new" title became: St. Vincent Villa. In 1932, at the dedication of the four new buildings which had been erected, it was stated that the term "Villa" had been selected because it connoted a "second home ... [a] retreat from the cares and labors of the first." ²³

The new program was touted as being "One of the most advanced programs ever adopted for the care of orphans and homeless children..." The planners proclaimed that every recommendation of the recent White House Child Health Conference would be carried out. Indeed, they stated that many had been experimented upon for three years. Everything would be done to create as "normal" an experience as possible.²⁴ Reformers were only beginning to understand how to deinstitutionalize institutions. A publication of 1944 lauded the "modern substitution of cottages for large congregate dormitories ... as a practical move toward making institutions as homelike as possible"²⁵ The Villa was in the vanguard of reforms which would, eventually revolutionize public child care.

The architecture of St. Vincent Villa was integral to the operation of the new program. Smaller, separate buildings, each with its own dining area, and individual "family". Separate lockers and spaces to encourage a sense of "individuality and personality". Informal walks to

²² Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette, May 23, 1971.

²³ Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette, September 18, 1932

²⁴ Ibid. September 13, 1932.

²⁵ Hopkirk, p. 18.

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encourage a more relaxed attitude. Increased contact with the community could be possible -- the auditorium/gymnasium was fitted out with a stage, drop curtain and scenery, to provide for entertainment. In appointments, detailing, and style, the buildings were "magnificent", a far departure from older images of poverty and uniformity. "Villans" as the children would later call themselves, could attend other area parochial schools and the traditional school uniforms were abandoned.²⁶

The building interiors also reflected this new, homelike atmosphere. Warm woods, built-in cabinetry, colorful tile and plaster surrounding fireplaces and foyers created varied, inviting and comfortable spaces. Views of the grounds were enhanced by graceful windows, patios and balconettes, and the variety of incoming light was ever-changing (as it still is today).

The Villa embodied much of the newest and best ideas being formed about institutional care, providing a "happy combination of urban and rural" environments, with "space for gardening, detached cottages, with lawns and flower beds." At the same time, the Boiler House with its connecting tunnels provided the advantages of centralized heating, and piping for electrical, steam and water. The "model group" of buildings was originally planned to contain six similar cottages, three on each side of a central open area (where the old building stood in 1932). These would form "an attractive circular arc", (what we have called "the crescent") according to the architect's model, a photograph of which was published in the souvenir dedication booklet.²⁷

Ironically, the very forces of reform which engendered the St. Vincent Villa building boom, presaged its gradual change in function. As early as 1935, the number of children placed in foster home care as an alternative to institutions was increasing. Nonetheless when the old building burned in 1949, it provided an incentive to complete some of the originally planned structures. Two would be built in 1950-51 on the original plan, but a third would deviate, providing infill at the center of the crescent. However, enthusiasm for the Villa and its services to young people was high, and at the dedication of the new buildings in the fall of 1952, Bishop Noll again presided, welcoming a crowd of 1,000 to the festivities. Ten years later, the services of the institution were concentrating on emotionally disturbed, rather than homeless children,

²⁶ Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette, September 13, 1932

²⁷ Ibid. September 18, 1932.

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as the Catholic Charities, and other, local, civic organizations developed foster care programs. A lay board was named in 1968, but by 1971, the Villa announced it would close, to become an educational center for Fort Wayne's Catholic parishes. Six years later, in 1977, the property was purchased by the YWCA. An estimated 3,650 young people had made the Villa their home, from 1886 to 1971 and a local "alumni" association was active.²⁸

Architecture

As mentioned before, a great deal of the significance of St. Vincent Villa Historic District is derived from its role as an expression of changing values in our social history, especially from 1925 to 1944, the era of its prime significance. However, it is also significant as a representative of the Mission /Spanish Colonial Revival style, one of the many lively eclectic architectural styles which were popular during the 1920s and 30s.

It owes much of its inspiration to the Spanish Mission style, one of the uniquely indigenous expressions, which originated in the west and southwest during the era of early Colonial Spanish settlement. By the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century, the style had a wide range of interpretation, from simple southwestern chapel facades to the over-embellishment of the revival of Spanish Baroque at San Simeon in California.

It was a style which embodied the relaxed, sun-filled tempo of western and southwestern life at the beginning of the twentieth century. Julia Morgan, the San Francisco architect who worked with William Randolph Hearst for over twenty years at San Simeon, was no stranger to the idiom when Hearst attracted her to his grandiose project. She had tempered many of its extravagances and produced some solid institutional and domestic structures beginning just after the great earthquake in the first decade of the new century. Before embarking on the San Simeon project, she was encouraged to visit the eclectic Spanish Renaissance Exposition buildings in San Diego, which had been designed by Bertram Goodhue. This architect, who could pass from one style to another with ease and grace, always favored the Mission style motifs. Many of his projects included bits and pieces of that Mediterranean influence. He

²⁸ Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette, October 21, 1952, November 29, 1968, May 23 & June 15, 1971.

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was an architect, like the Mizner Brothers in Florida, who disseminated the style into many parts of the Eastern seaboard.

While some of the materials traditionally associated with the Mission style were not suited to all climates, thoughtful architects used new technologies and materials to express the style, while maintaining its essentials. Thus, ceramic tile roofs, combined with concrete and steel construction shed rain and snow, while providing a pleasant appearance. The oversized fireplaces and inglenooks were comfortable, while subtle arts and crafts glazes made tile floors and walls appealing.

The general impression conveyed by the Villa is of the Mission style well-tempered by Italian Romanesque touches. The intricate corbelling and brickwork which is present in all of the buildings, but especially on the Main Building, provides evidence of this appellation. The restrained, but graceful combination of these influences with the unmistakable detailing of the Mission style movement gives the complex an unusual architectural stature. Scrolled ironwork on balcony railings, balconettes, patios, flat and pitched roofs, as well as a nicely distributed collection of architectural enrichments, all contribute to this impression. The significance of this group of buildings is also enhanced by the interesting complication of some of the brick work, and its relationship to the use of limestone in quoins, chimney caps, door and window surrounds. Finally, the repetition of the red tile roofs provides the element of romantic vista, which dates and places these buildings in their stylistic context.

As mentioned previously, the siting of the buildings, in a graceful arc, as well as the immediate and wider surrounding landscape, all contribute to the design significance of the district. (It is interesting to note that the guest houses at San Simeon are also sited in an arc, with the Main House as a foil, backing them up.) The sweeping expanses of lawn and vistas, which dominate the outer perimeters of the property are punctuated by stately deciduous shade trees, providing both recreational and contemplative opportunities. This stately landscape is complemented by the plantings closer to the buildings: Nubby pines and lacy, fern-like larches, which along with decorative shrubs, provide a distinctly Mediterranean atmosphere and feeling.

The architect of the complex, Alvin M. Strauss was widely known for his work in the Fort Wayne area. As president of A. M. Strauss &

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Associates, Inc., he was responsible for the design of many prominent local buildings, including the Lincoln Tower, the Indiana Hotel, the Paramount, Clyde and Embassy Theaters, as well as Central Catholic High School. He also designed several buildings on the campus of Indiana University.

Mr. Strauss, the son of immigrant German parents was born in Kendallville in 1895 and graduated from the local high school. Before moving to Fort Wayne in 1915, he served a three-year apprenticeship with a Chicago architectural firm, a typical method of training for designers during this era and later. He opened his own architectural firm in Fort Wayne in 1918 and continued until his death in 1958.²⁹ The firm was maintained by his nephew, Herman Strauss until 1989.

²⁹ Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette, July 7, 1958.

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Aerial photographs, 1949 and 1956, courtesy of the City of Fort Wayne, historic preservation and planning. Also, Sanborn & Co., Insurance Map updated to 1956.

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Verbal Boundary Description - Beginning at the southeast corner of Wells Street and West Jacobs Avenue, follow the south side of West Jacobs eastward, until the abandoned railroad right of way is encountered, thence turning south, along the western side of the railroad right of way to a point directly east of the north curb line of Putnam Street. Turn west and travel in a westerly direction until the north curb line of Putnam Street is met, then continue along the north side of the street to Wells Street, turning north, and continuing along the east side of Wells to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification - The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum and St. Vincent Villa. This includes the Main Building, the buildings of the crescent, secondary and service buildings, as well as open lawns, recreation areas, and park-like areas to the east.

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St. Vincent Villa Historic District
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Contemporary and historic photographs:

The following information is the same for all photographs, unless otherwise noted.

1. St. Vincent Villa Historic District
2. Fort Wayne, Allen County, Indiana
3. Camille Fife and Thomas W. Salmon , The Westerly Group, Inc.
4. November, 1993 - February, 1994.
5. WGI, RR 1 Box 141, Farmersburg, IN 47850

1. North Cottage
6. Image of building No. 1, looking northeast. Antenna, seen over the roofs at right is for a NPR station located in the building.
7. Photo 1 of 17

1. Boys Dormitory (presently the YWCA administration building)
6. Oblique view, looking northeast, of the cottage which was first used as a boys dormitory in 1932.
7. Photo 2 of 17

1. Administration building/Bowker Hall
6. View, looking northeast toward the former Villa administration building. This structure was built on the approximate site of the old orphanage building, destroyed by fire in c. 1950.
7. Photo 3 of 17.

1. Girls Dormitory
6. View, looking northeast. This building is now used as a pre-school. The chain link fence for the tot lot is visible in the right of the photograph.
7. Photo 4 of 17.

1. South Cottage
6. A view toward the south elevation, building No. 5, currently used as offices for several professional consultants. Some of the landscape plantings are visible in the foreground.
7. Photo 5 of 17.

1. Main Building
6. View, showing the west facade of this 1932 building. The front entry to the former chapel is in the right foreground.
7. Photo 6 of 17.

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1. Boiler House, Garage and Laundry

6. A view looking southeast from the corner of the eastern section of the addition to the Main building. This building still produces steam for all of the major buildings on the site. Tunnels to contain steam pipes and other utilities still communicate underground between the structures.

7. Photo 7 of 17.

1. 209 West Jacobs

6. A view looking southeast toward this cottage which, with its neighbor was used as a multi-purpose residence.

7. Photo 8 of 17.

1. 207 West Jacobs

6. A view looking southwest.

7. Photo 9 of 17.

1. Storage building north of Main Building

6. View looking north west toward the entrance to this structure. The roofline of the garage behind 207/209 West Jacobs is barely visible.

7. Photo 10 of 17.

1. Addition to Main Building

6. This view is looking north toward the contemporary addition, which serves the present owners as a natatorium, fitness center and gymnasium.

7. Photo 11 of 17.

1. Landscape

6. An image of the landscape, looking northeast. The line of trees exhibit some of the park-like characteristics of the site.

7. Photo 12 of 17.

Historic Photographs

1. First Boys Dormitory

3. Photographer unknown (possibly the architect, A. M. Strauss)

4. Date: 1932

5. Negative, see above. Copy of a photograph in the Ft. Wayne Diocese archives.

6. View looking northeast, probably taken just after completion of construction.

7. Photo 13 of 17.

1. First Boys Dormitory

3. Photographer unknown

4. Date: c.1945

5. Negative, see above. Copy of a photograph in the Ft. Wayne Diocese archives.

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St. Vincent Villa Historic District
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6. View looking northeast toward the building, demonstrating the growth of landscaping. This photo is obviously earlier than 1951 and shows approximately 5-10 years of growth.

7. Photo 14 of 17.

1. First Girls Dormitory

3. Photographer unknown

4. Date: c.1945

5. Negative, see above. Copy of a photograph in the Ft. Wayne Diocese archives.

6. View looking southeast.

7. Photo 15 of 17.

1. Main Building

3. Photographer unknown, possibly architect, A. M. Strauss

4. Date: c. 1932

5. Negative, see above. Copy of a photograph in the Ft. Wayne Diocese archives.

6. View looking northeast of the west facade of the building, with the chapel entrance in the foreground.

7. Photo 16 of 17.

1. Main Building

3. Photographer unknown.

4. Date: c.1945

5. Negative, see above. Copy of a photograph in the Ft. Wayne Diocese archives.

6. View looking northeast of the west facade of the building. This is nearly the same view as #16 and demonstrates planting, paths, seeded area and landscape furniture, probably during the first decade after planting.

7. Photo 17 of 17.

Historic Maps & Exhibits

Historic Map A - Ft. Wayne, 1880

Historic Map B - Ft. Wayne, 1874

Historic Map C - Ft. Wayne, 1889 Atlas

Historic Map D - Ft. Wayne, 1902 Atlas

Historic Map E - Sanborn, 1918

Historic Map F - Sanborn, 1890

Historic Map G - Sanborn, 1956

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Maps & Exhibits (continued)

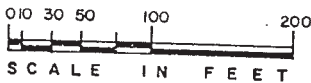
Exhibit H. - Architect's Model

Exhibit J - Interiors from Souvenir Brochure

Exhibit K - Exteriors from Souvenir Brochure

Exhibit L - Additional photos from Souvenir Brochure

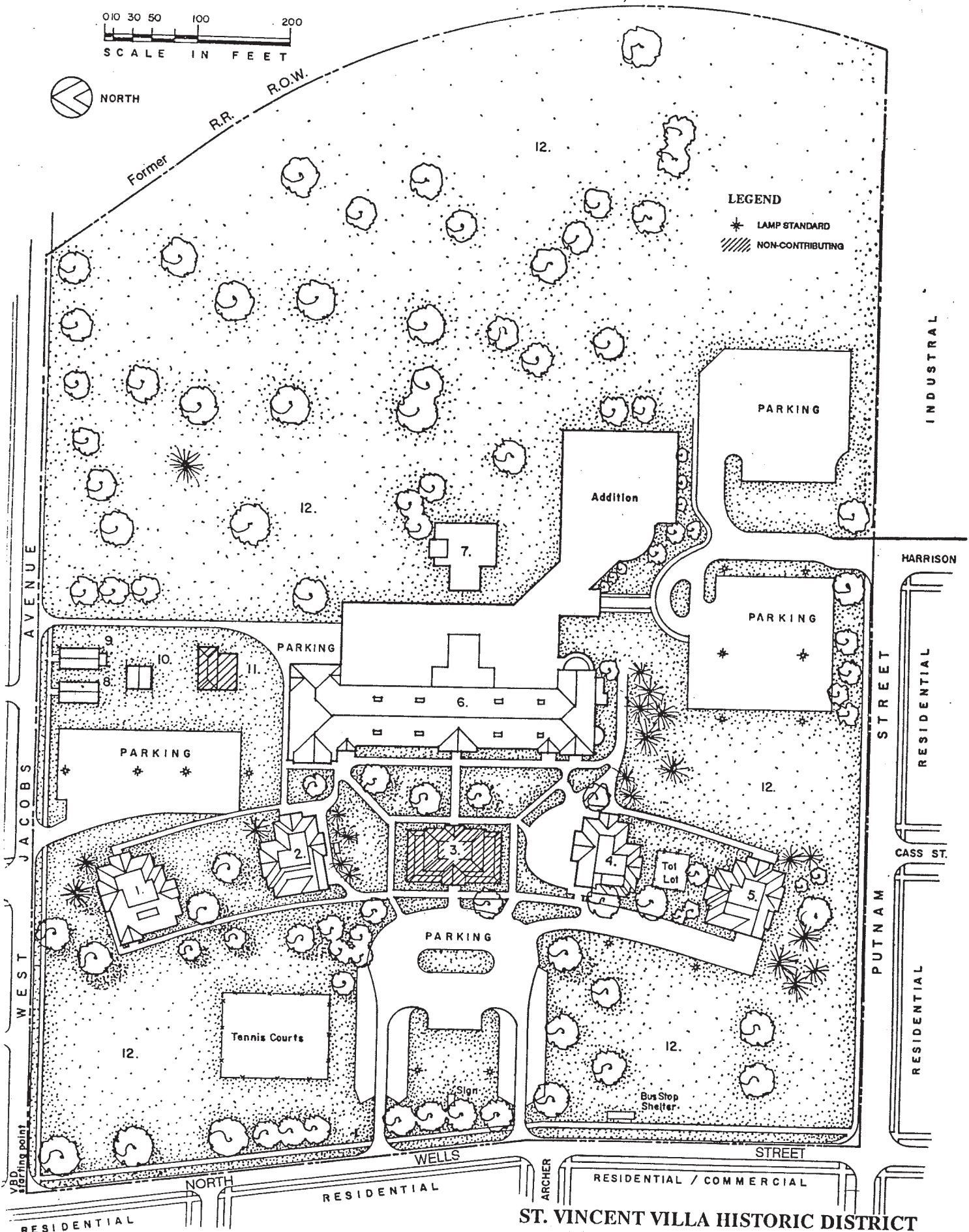
Exhibit M & N - Aerial photos



Former R.R. R.O.W.

LEGEND

- * LAMP STANDARD
- //// NON-CONTRIBUTING



ST. VINCENT VILLA HISTORIC DISTRICT
FORT WAYNE, ALLEN COUNTY, INDIANA
SKETCH MAP