

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

FILE W/ PHOTOS

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. Joseph County Infirmary

other names/site number Portage Manor

2. Location

street & number 3016 Portage Avenue N/A ☐ not for publication

city or town South Bend N/A ☐ vicinity

state Indiana code IN county St. Joseph code 141 zip code 46628

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 36CFR 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

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

State or 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:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

- ☐ 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:) _____

Name of Property

County and State

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
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	1	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)

HEALTH CARE: Sanitarium
AGRICULTURE/SUBSIST Agricultural Outbuilding

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

HEALTH CARE: Sanitarium

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

19th & 20th c. REVIVALS: Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: Limestone

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other STONE: Limestone

Narrative Description

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1906-1948

Significant Dates

1906

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Freyermuth and Maurer

9. Major Bibliographic 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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

St. Joseph County Infirmary
Name of Property

St. Joseph IN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 113.8

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

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5	6	0	4	0	0
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4	6	1	8	9	8	0
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3

1	6
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5	5	9	6	2	0
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4	6	1	8	4	2	0
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2

1	6
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5	6	0	3	8	0
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4	6	1	8	2	8	0
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4

1	6
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5	5	9	3	6	0
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4	6	1	8	9	8	0
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☐ 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 Glory-June Greiff, Consultant
organization Historic Preservation Commission of S. Bend and St. Joseph Co. date 05-18-98
street & number 1753 South Talbott telephone (317)637-6163
city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46225

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 Portage Manor (St. Joseph County)
street & number 3016 Portage Avenue telephone (219)272-9100
city or town South Bend state IN zip code 46628

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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

St. Joseph County Infirmary

St. Joseph County, IN

Narrative Description

The St. Joseph County Infirmary, known today as Portage Manor, lies on over one hundred acres of land near the St. Joseph River on the northwest side of South Bend, on the east of Portage Avenue beyond the Riverview Cemetery. A ravine forms much of the south boundary of the property, which extends north to the Indiana Toll Road and east to the city's sewage treatment plant. Large trees and a spacious front lawn (photo 1) create a park-like setting along Portage Avenue. A drive leads past the entrance of the main building. Another drive to the south leads around the main building to the remaining outbuildings in the rear. There is a small parking lot northwest of the main building. North, east, and south of the infirmary are cultivated fields (see photos 2,3). Today, the tillable land, amounting to seventy acres, is rented to a local farmer, but until 1989 it was used to raise the various crops that kept the infirmary self-supporting.

Constructed in 1906, the two-story main building is red brick with quoins of tan brick, and trimmed with limestone. The Classical Revival building has a gable roof and is fronted on the west with a large two-story pedimented portico (photo 4) supported by four Ionic columns. Two wings angle back, or eastward, from the center portion of the building, forming a wide "Y" shape. Each wing on its main westward facade has two pedimented pavilions, each three bays wide. The two most outward projections have entrances that are sheltered by modest balustraded balconies (photo 2). Between the pediments are gabled dormers. There are two gabled dormers flanking either side of the entrance portico as well, and a total of six such dormers facing the rear of the building. The gable ends are pedimented. Most of the windows are twelve-over-one, double-hung sash; the openings are flat-arched and feature a prominent keystone comprised of tan bricks.

There are numerous projections and additions off the rear (east) of the building (photo 5), all flat-roofed and of lower elevation than the main part. They contain various service functions: laundry, kitchen, food storage, and the like. Easternmost is the boiler house, which features a hipped roof and soaring squared smokestack. Contiguous is a large reinforced concrete silo.

The interior of the building has been much remodeled but still exhibits the original outer and inner double doors of oak (photo 6), much of the original oak trim, and decorative tile floors in the lobby area (photo 7). Most of the interior spaces are intact albeit housing some different functions than in the past. The central area contains administrative offices and a nursing station; residents are housed on both floors of the wings, men on the north women on the south, in rooms of varying sizes. Former hospital wards today are used for living and recreational space. The basement now contains offices, counseling and break rooms. The service area retains some original or early features such as the huge walk-in cooler and even some of the barred cells once used to hold violent mental patients (now used for canned good storage).

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Section 7 Page 2

St. Joseph County Infirmary

St. Joseph County, IN

Behind the main building were numerous abandoned farm outbuildings that were demolished since this nomination was submitted. On a brick smokehouse (photo 8), with a gable roof and vertical wood siding in the gable ends, remains, along with a recently built pole barn for machinery storage that stands southwest of it.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 3

St. Joseph County Infirmary

St. Joseph County, IN

Statement of Significance

The St. Joseph County Infirmary is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of social history for its important role in the public welfare of St. Joseph County and as an example of the type of facility - the modern county infirmary - that was being erected after the late nineteenth century. The St. Joseph County Infirmary is also eligible under Criterion C as a fine example of Classical Revival architecture designed by the well known local architectural firm of Freyermuth and Mauer. Unlike many of the remaining county homes in Indiana from the early twentieth century and before, the St. Joseph county Infirmary remains remarkably intact.

In 1905 South Bend architects Freyermuth and Mauer prepared plans for a new county infirmary that would replace a smaller earlier facility in a different location. The firm, organized in 1898, was responsible for a large number of South Bend residences and several public and institutional buildings including the Citizens National Bank on Jefferson Street and the North Pumping Station (listed in the National Register of Historic Places 1-2-97). While R. Vernon Mauer (1874-1963) was a trained architect, educated at the Chicago Athenaeum and the Art Institute of Chicago, George W. Freyermuth (1869 [some sources give 1868] -1958) was initially a contractor and was self-taught.

The St. Joseph county Infirmary, built in 1906, was the last of a series of care facilities established by the county for the elderly and incapacitated indigent. From the start, St. Joseph County had set up a means of caring for "the poor and unfortunate who were unable to care for themselves." initially by paying private citizens to provide accommodations - a common practice in the first half of the nineteenth century. But as early as 1838 the county purchased a tract for a "poor farm" - 240 acres on Portage Prairie - so that the facilities could be self-sufficient and also provide useful employment for the residents who were able. This initial effort fell through, but in 1846 the county established a permanent asylum (called White Hall) near the now-defunct village of Nutwood. Ten years later, a 120-acre farm straddling Penn and Portage townships was purchased on the north side of the St. Joseph River, and the county constructed additional buildings on the site and later acquired more land.

By the turn of the century, the St. Joseph County Asylum or poor farm, as it was still commonly known, had long since ceased to serve the needs of its residents. Inspectors from the State Board of Charities sharply criticized the facility and its "antiquated and inadequate buildings." Besides, as both South Bend and Mishawaka grew, this property, located between the cities, had become much more valuable and might be better used for other purposes (the tract was located northwest of present-day River Park, north of Mishawaka Avenue. Some of the Asylum property became Potawatomie Park.)

The mission of these county institutions in general had begun to change in the 1890s, and while far from enlightened by today's standards, poor farms and asylums (the terms are essentially interchangeable) were attempting to become something other than dumping places for society's unwanted. The degree to which they succeeded over the next several decades is questionable;

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St. Joseph County Infirmary

St. Joseph County, IN

admission records from the mid-nineteenth century through the first few decades of the twentieth do not suggest a great deal of change regarding whom the institutions accepted. Initially poor farms provided minimal refuge for an astonishing variety of indigents including those who were elderly, chronically ill, convalescent, mentally ill, disabled, injured, unwed mothers, or simply homeless. Ages ranged from infants (when in the company of a needy parent; orphans went elsewhere) to people in their nineties. Those who could usually were expected to work, and there was little if any effort to distinguish among them to meet their needs. The common denominator was poverty. As other public institutions geared toward specific needs were established by local and state governments, some previously likely inmates were either sent to these other types of facilities or went there initially. In the early twentieth century, for example, many epileptics were sent to the state's Epileptic Village near New Castle. Nevertheless, many who might have been better served elsewhere still ended up in the county asylum, especially those diagnosed as insane. State facilities were too crowded to accommodate them all.

In 1905 the St. Joseph County Board of Commissioners bought the farm of Rezeau Brown northwest of South Bend, just past the Riverview Cemetery on Portage Avenue. The property included several farm buildings, a wooded area, and land that was largely level and proven quite suitable for general farming. Little time, then, need be wasted in establishing the new poor farm's self-sufficiency. Over the next few decades old buildings were remodeled and additional farm structures were erected such as the recently demolished hay barn, large hog shed, and a small building nearby for butchering.

The St. Joseph county Infirmary - its name reflecting the Progressive Era changes in the theory, if not the fact, of the facility's mission - opened with great fanfare as a "model poor farm" in February 1907. The new asylum was to house "those who {were} so unfortunate as to be left alone in the world without money and without friends or who are afflicted with the ravages of disease and who are unable to procure the necessary hospital service without money."

Records indicate that indeed, among others, anyone from abandoned pregnant women to severely injured laborers to those of any age who were "feeble-minded," found temporary or permanent refuge within the county infirmary.

Certainly the new facility was vastly superior to the previous poor asylum, but life at the St. Joseph County Infirmary was no bed of roses. Apart from the fact that anyone who was capable was required to work (although the records imply this was not always the case), rules were extremely strict, and occasionally residents were "dismissed for disobedience." A few even ran away. Men and women were segregated; those diagnosed as "insane" were locked in metal cages in the area termed the "insane ward" near the boiler house part of the original accommodations offered at the new "model" facility. Conditions grew so crowded in the 1930s that beds were crowded nearly head to foot in the cells to house inmates who were often, at worst, merely "feeble-minded." In the 1950s patients diagnosed with severe mental illness were transferred to the new Beaty Hospital in Westville. The cells, however, remained in use through the 1970s for inmates who tended to wander and sometimes for residents who broke the still-rigid rules. (For example, talking was not allowed during meals.)

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St. Joseph County Infirmary

St. Joseph County, IN

In 1947, by act of the Indiana General Assembly, the name of the facility became the St. Joseph County Home, again reflecting changes in care and management philosophy. The average population of the county infirmaries had grown older and less able-bodied; this, along with the fact that mechanized farming was rapidly replacing earlier, more labor-intensive practices, suggested that "productive employment of residents is futile" and should be performed only on a voluntary basis. As early as the mid-1930s the idea of discontinuing farming at the county infirmary was considered, but still it remained in place for several more decades, until the late 1980s. (The land today is leased to a local farmer.)

The new idea of the county home was to be just what the name implied: "a congenial place of abode," a safe haven. Once again, the mission remained more theory than fact for some decades although conditions overall had improved greatly since shortly after the turn of the century, when the facility first opened. By the early 1970s the name had changed once again, to Portage Manor. In the late 1980s Portage Manor became a state-licensed health care center and underwent a major renovation that preserved much of the building's historic character while creating a cheery home-like interior - the mission fulfilled at last.

There are only around thirty historic county homes in Indiana still in use as such; of these, many have suffered considerable loss of integrity. Dozens of homes have been closed and demolished; those still standing are often abandoned. Like so many public institutions of an earlier day, county homes have become endangered resources. The St. Joseph County Infirmary is among the best of Indiana's surviving county homes and retains a high degree of integrity. It stands as a three-dimensional document of the history of social welfare in St. Joseph County.

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St. Joseph County Infirmary

St. Joseph County, IN

Selected Bibliography

Admission Records, 1835-1930, St. Joseph County Infirmary, housed at Portage Manor, South Bend, Indiana.

Brown, John A. "The Changing Philosophy on County Homes." Public Welfare in Indiana 58, May 1948.

Historical Files, Portage Manor, South Bend, Indiana.

Higgins, Belden and Company, comp. An Illustrated Historical Atlas of St. Joseph County, Indiana. Chicago, 1875.

Howard, Timothy Edward. History of St. Joseph County, Indiana. Chicago, 1907.

Interviews. Louann Becker-Pruett, Director, Portage Manor. 23 March and 13 May 1998.

Ogle, George A. and Company, comp. Standard Atlas of St. Joseph County, Indiana. Chicago, 1895.

Robertson, Lynn, et. al. Indiana County Homes and Their Adaptation to Present Conditions. Lafayette, 1948.

"St. Joseph County Infirmary," Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory. South Bend, 1992.

Smith, Bruce. "Poor Relief at the St. Joseph County Poor Asylum, 1877-1891." Indiana Magazine of History 86 (June 1990). 178-196.

Stoll, John B. ed. An Account of St. Joseph County from Its Organization. Dayton, 1923.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 7

St. Joseph County Infirmary

St. Joseph County, IN

Verbal Boundary Description

113,8 acres Northeast quarter of Portage Avenue, Section 27-38-2E.

Boundary Justification

The property being nominated essentially represents the historic boundaries of St. Joseph County Infirmary.

3

CULTIVATED FIELDS

GATE

RAVINE

BLE
BARN

SMOKEHOUSE

2

8

5

9

7

6

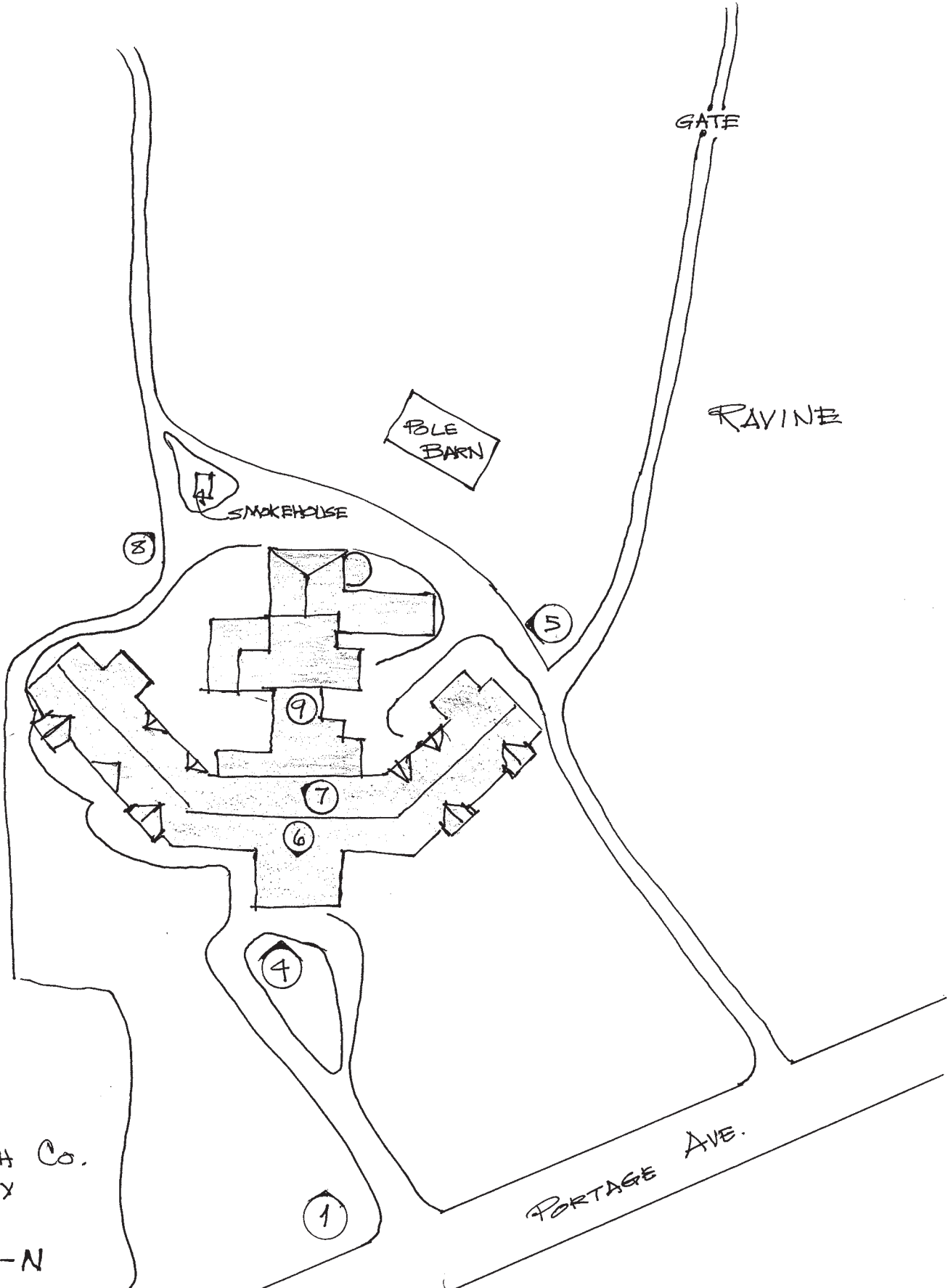
4

1

ST. JOSEPH CO.
INFIRMARY

← N

PORTAGE AVE.





St. Joseph County
Infirmary, St.
Joseph County

Zone 16

E N

560400 4618980

2 560380 4618280

3 559620 4618420

4 559360 4618980

OUTH BEND EAST
3767 11 NW
T. 38 N
T. 37 N