

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Combs Addition Historic District

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 400 and 500 blocks of Rutledge, Ellsworth, and 500 block of Marshall Streets
between 4th and 6th Avenues

City or town: Gary State: Indiana County: Lake

Not For Publication:

Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B X C ___ D

<p><i>Matthew K. Zoll Deputy SUPO</i></p> <p>Signature of certifying official/Title:</p> <p><u>Indiana DNR-Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology</u></p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p><i>August 1, 2014</i></p> <p>Date</p>
<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>Signature of commenting official:</p>	<p>Date</p>
<p>Title :</p>	<p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- 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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>99</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>99</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival

LATE 19TH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY REVIVALS/Tudor Revival

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OTHER/American Small House

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: WOOD/Weatherboard
BRICK
STUCCO
roof: ASPHALT
other: STONE/Limestone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Combs Addition Historic District is located on both the north and south sides of W. 5th Avenue approximately a mile-and-a-half west of the center of downtown Gary. The topography of the district is flat. There are one-hundred structures located within it and it is a residential district; no commercial structures are located within it. The district consists of houses and apartment buildings and is representative of the design concepts of the Small House Movement as affected by the Great Depression and the Federal Housing Authority. It is a neighborhood of well-built structures with the minimal application of decorative elements; these are sometimes almost abstract in their application. The majority are single-family structures of one to one-and-a-half stories in height built between 1928 and 1959. There are a few two-story examples of which most are multifamily apartment buildings. The district is intact with the majority of the houses being in excellent condition and it is today highly reflective of its era of significance.

Narrative Description

The single-story, three bay houses along the south side of West 4th Avenue are all constructed using the same footprint however, has a slightly different façade. The houses were given an individual appearance by altering the roof style and the minimal decorative elements on the façade. All of these houses were built in 1941 during the second building period within the district.

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Note: The residential history pertaining to the addresses described in the following narratives are taken from available city directories published during the district's period of significance between 1928 and 1959. The lists may not be all inclusive due to the limited amount of these historic resources. The collected information from these limited resources demonstrated that many of the structures had short term residents drawing the conclusion that it was quite possible for many other families and individuals to have resided within the neighborhood and have yet to be revealed.

2507-W. 4th Ave. Colonial Revival Cottage. 1941. Contributing. (1st house from left in photo1)
This small one-story house is centered on the lot and sits above a full basement. The house is constructed using red brick laid in a running bond with three bays symmetrically placed across the façade. The center bay is the main entry into the house, it is accessed by a small, concrete, three-step, open-air stoop. The outer two bays on the façade are double hung, 8/8, wood-framed windows; these do not appear to be original to construction they do however fit into the historic openings. Each window opening is flanked by set of decorative louvered shutters and has a sill constructed of rowlock brick. The wood door, with four raised field panels, is covered by a large modern, metal framed storm door with a single large light. Both the window and door openings rise to meet at a wide, molded fascia board, with a modillion course that extends across the entire width of the façade at the elevation's roofline. The asphalt shingled, steeply pitched hipped roof has virtually no overhanging eave. The landscaping of the yard is minimal with a few small shrubs planted along the foundation line. The lawn is at grade level.

Although built in 1941 the first listing for the house in *Polk's City Directory* is 1945 and is listed as vacant. By 1948 the house is occupied by Russell J. Dittmore and his wife, Virginia. Dittmore was a timekeeper at Inland Steel in Indiana Harbor. The Dittmores lived in the house beyond the district's period of significance.

2513-W. 4th Ave. Colonial Revival Cottage. 1941. Contributing. (2nd house from left in photo1)
This house is identical in construction to the house previously described and 2507 W. 4th Avenue with the exception that it has a front facing cross gable on the west side of the main elevation. The windows of this house are modern, 1/1 replacements that fit into their historic openings. The door opening is flanked on each side by a simple, flat Doric pilaster. The wood door, with four raised panels and a sunburst window, appears to be original to construction. The door opening is also covered by a modern metal screen door. The fascia board of this structure does not have a modillion course. The landscaping is minimal with a few small plants along the foundation line.

Built in 1941 the first listing for the house is in *Polk's 1945 City Directory*. It is occupied by Edwin D. and Etta Williams. Williams worked as an inspector at the National Cash Register Company. They lived in the house until sometime between 1948 and 1955 when Thomas P. Rose and his wife, Jeannette T., lived in the house. Rose listed himself as an agent for the Commonwealth Insurance Company. The Roses lived in the house beyond the district's period of significance.

2519-W. 4th Ave. Colonial Revival Cottage. 1941. Contributing. (3rd house from left in photo1)
This house is identical in construction as the two previously described but has a side-gable roof

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of a similar pitch. This house was constructed using mottled reddish-brown brick. Other modifications to its façade include a simple wood door-surround. It has a front facing wall dormer over the west end of the elevation. It comes forward from the hipped roof that covers the main portion of the house. Its landscaping is also minimal with small shrubs planted along the foundation line.

No listing in directories can be found until 1945, when George Travers and wife, Elinore, were shown as residents of the house. Travers lists himself as a steelworker. By 1948, the Travers are gone and LaVerne W. and his wife Helen I. Huddleston are living at the address, there is no occupation listed for Huddleston. Edward A. Aube, an oiler on the railroad, and his wife, Pauline M., are residing in the house in 1955. The Aubes lived in the house beyond 1959, the end of the district's period of significance.

Along the north and south sides of W. 5th Avenue, between Rutledge and Ellsworth streets, and along the north side of 5th Avenue, between Taft Place and Rutledge, are several two-to-eight flat apartment buildings. These apartment houses continue a tradition of apartment buildings along West 5th Avenue that was started in the formative years of Gary (for additional information see the National Register nomination for the *West Fifth Avenue Apartment Historic District*, #84001076). These apartment buildings are intermixed along the street with single family houses. The structures on the south side of W. 5th Avenue between Taft Place and Rutledge are single family houses as are the structures at 2414, 2500, 2501, and 2511-19 W. 5th Avenue. All of the apartment buildings and houses along Fifth Avenue were built during the last building period starting in 1946.

2533-W. 5th Ave. Colonial Revival. 1946. Contributing. (1st building from right in photo 2) This four flat, two-story apartment building is constructed using red brick laid in a running bond. The apartment house is constructed over a full basement. It has an asphalt shingle covered hipped roof with a wide cross gable centered on the façade. There are five bays evenly spaced across the symmetrical façade; the center bay on the first floor is the main entry into the building. The entry is accessed by a concrete, open air, stoop with two concrete steps that lead up front sidewalk. The original door has two raised field panels in its lower half with a nine light window in its upper half. The door opening is covered by a modern metal storm door. The doorway has a surround constructed of ashlar set in a random cut pattern. The surround consists of two tapered ashlar jambs, one set to each side of the door opening, with a two piece flat arch lintel and keystone. Directly above the entry, at the second floor level, is a small narrow, wood-framed window of one single light, this illuminates the second floor stair landing. Above this, centered near the peak of the gable, is a square vent window set into an oculus. The oculus has a small ashlar keystone set into the brick wall at each of its four compass-points. The fenestration across the façade is symmetrically balanced with the west-side being a mirror image of the east-side. This consists of a wood framed, three part Chicago-style window with a limestone sill (all windows on the structure have limestone sills). Evenly spaced between this window and the corner of the elevation is a single, wood frame, double hung, 1/1 window. The landscaping is at grade level with the only plants covering the foundation line of the building.

The 1948 *Polk's City Directory* shows no listing for the property in 1948, but in 1952, the four apartments in the building were occupied. Leon Kaplan, partner in Kaplan Brothers Tobacco, is

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shown living in one with his wife, Rose. Leon passed while living here and Rose continued living in the apartment beyond 1959. Jack Bernsten, a jeweler at Brock and Marshall Jewelers, lived in one of the apartments; he lived there beyond the district's period of significance. Joseph R. Mack, owner of the Gary Seed Store, and his wife Elizabeth, also lived in the apartment beyond the district's POS. In 1948, the fourth apartment was occupied by Emmanuel Rothschild and wife Adele; he lists no occupation for himself. By 1959, this apartment is shown occupied by Milton A. Goodman, a pharmacist at Hoffman's Drug Store in East Chicago, and his wife Ilene. They lived in the apartment beyond the district's POS.

2508-W. 5th Ave. Colonial Revival. 1947. Contributing. (2nd structure from right in photo 3) This four flat, two-story apartment building was constructed using a mottled tan brick laid in a running bond and sits over a full basement. There are five symmetrically placed bays across the façade on each of the two floors. The balanced symmetry of the façade is typical of the historic Georgian style, from which many elements were applied to this modern Colonial Revival building. The center bay of the first floor is the main entry into the house: it is accessed by a small open-air, concrete stoop with two steps. The entry has a large wood door-surround with pediment and sidelights. The pediment sits on an architrave that is supported by two flat pilasters, one set at each side of the door opening. The door has a large oval, single light window centered in its upper half. Above this centered on second floor level is a small oculus window set into the brick wall, it illuminates the second-floor stair landing. The fenestration on the east and west half of the façade are identical mirror images. They consist of a large, wood framed, three part Chicago-style window; the outer two parts of this window are 1/1, double hung windows with the large center light of the window being fixed. This window, as do all windows on the structure, has a limestone sill. Centered between this window and the corner of the elevation is a single, 1/1, double hung window. The windows of the second floor, with the exception of the round window in the center of the facade, rise to a wide fascia board that extends across the façade at its roofline. The hipped, asphalt shingled roof has very shallow eaves. All the plantings on this lot are along the structure's foundation line, there are no other plantings in the yard.

There are no residential listings for this address in *Polk's 1948 City Directory*. This changed by 1952 when all of the structure's four apartments were occupied. One is occupied by Leslie I. Combs, the building contractor for whom the district is named and the builder of this structure. The Combs lived in the apartment beyond the district's POS. Another apartment is occupied by Ida Cousins, a widow, she also lives there beyond the POS. In 1952, the third apartment is shown occupied by Leslie R. Bain, of Bain and Furse Insurance, and his wife Abigail. Mrs. Bain continued living in the apartment after her husband's death and remained there beyond the district's POS. The fourth apartment is occupied by Margaret Southwick, no status listed, who has vacated by 1959 when the apartment is shown being occupied by Harold G. and Lydia V. Rudd. Rudd lists his occupation as sales manager at the Anderson Company; they lived in the building beyond the district's POS.

2520-W. 5th Ave. Colonial Revival. 1947. Contributing. (3rd structure from right in photo 3) This two-story, four flat apartment building was constructed with red brick and sits over a full basement. Its façade is symmetrical in its presentation. The decorative elements of this Colonial Revival structure are minimal. Its plainness, or the lack of decorative detailing, is reflective of the less detailed Adamesque, or Federalist, approach to the Colonial Revival style. There are five

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bays evenly spaced across the elevation. The center bay of the first floor is the main entry into the structure. The door opening is accessed by a small, open-air, concrete stoop with two steps; the open sides of the stoop are protected by wrought iron handrails. The door opening has a simple door-surround constructed of ashlar. The opening is covered by a modern metal storm door. The fenestration across the façade is identical to those on the previously described apartment building. The east elevation is a mirror image of the west elevation with a large three-part Chicago-style window and a smaller single 1/1, double hung, wood framed window set between the larger window and the corner of the elevation. All windows on the house have limestone sills and the second-story windows rise to a wide fascia board that extends across the entire façade. The structure is covered by side-gabled roof with asphalt shingles.

In 1948, there was no listing for residents here. By 1952, the *Polk's Directory* shows that all four apartments were occupied. Carl Huettner and wife Cassilda occupy one of them. Carl listed his occupation as the tool room man for steel fabricators Presson and Lewis. They reside in the apartment beyond the district's POS. Another apartment in 1952 is occupied by Henry T. Stokes and wife Ruth. Stokes is a supervisor at Universal Atlas Cement. By 1959 the Stokes are gone and Kenneth G. Welsh and wife Katherine are living in the apartment; they own Welsh's Dairy Queen. They continued to live in the apartment beyond the end of the period of significance. The third apartment is occupied by Joseph B. La Posta, an accountant, in 1952/ La Posta lived in the building beyond the district's POS. The fourth apartment is shown being occupied in 1952 by Lawrence W. Owens, occupation unknown. Owens is gone by 1955 when Paul Fissinger, jr. and wife Louise are shown at this address; they lived in the apartment beyond the POS. Paul is assistant superintendent in the United States Steel sheet and tin mill.

The 400 and 500 blocks of Rutledge Street, the 400 block of Ellsworth Street and along the south side of 4th Avenue is where the second building era within the district took place between in 1938 and 1941.

401 Rutledge St. Colonial Revival Cottage. 1941. Contributing. (photo 4) This one-story, three bay house was constructed using dark reddish brown brick. The structure has a one room wing extending off its north elevation; its façade is flush with the main section of the house. The main section of the house has a gable front roof; the roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The eave of the roof is boxed. The lower ends of the bargeboards covering the eaves flare out creating the illusion of a return cornice. Centered on this gable near its apex is a louvered, wood framed, vent. An entry vestibule extends off the main elevation near the center of the façade. The vestibule is covered by another gable front roof set at a lower height than the roof over the main section of the structure. The entry door, centered on the elevation of the vestibule, is accessed by four concrete steps that lead up to a small, open air, concrete stoop; the open sides of the stoop and the steps are lined by a wrought iron railing and handrail. A small, modern, metal covered shed roof covers the stoop. The wood door covering the entrance appears to be the original four panel wood door; it is protected by a modern storm door. On the main façade, immediately to the north of the vestibule, an exterior fireplace chimney rises above the roofline. There are two sets of paired windows on the façade, one set to the north and one to the south of the vestibule. These 6/1, wood framed windows appear to be original to construction; the window openings are each covered by their original wood framed storm windows. The 6/1 windows and the implied cornice on the gables are a minimal application of Colonial Revival decorative elements. Small shrubs

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line the foundation across the front of the house and flank the steps leading up to the stoop. There is a tree planted in the public tree lawn; judging by size it is not contemporary with the house's construction.

The house was occupied in 1941 by Chris H. Heine, a steel worker in East Chicago, and his wife, Rose. They remained in the house beyond the end of the district's period of significance. Their son, Chris, was quarterback for Horace Mann High School football team in 1948. In 1959, Chris, the father, served on the board of the Inland Steel Credit Union.

435 Rutledge St. Colonial Revival Cottage. 1939. Contributing. (photo 5) This small, one-story, three bay house was constructed with dark reddish brown brick laid in a running bond. A hipped roof covers the main section of the house. Extending outwards from the center of the house, and covering almost three-fourths of the width of the structure, is a gabled section; it is covered with a front-gabled roof. Centered on the elevation of this extended room is an external, brick fireplace chimney. About halfway up the elevation the chimney steps in evenly, on both sides, before rising above the roof line. The ledge created where the chimney steps in has been protected with coping of two slanted pieces of limestone. The top of the brick chimney is covered with a limestone coping and is pierced by three, square ceramic flues. On the main elevation to each side of the chimney is a single window; they are evenly spaced between the chimney and each corner of the elevation. The construction of these windows, and whether are not they were original to the house, cannot be determined due to a modern, roll-up security shutter that has been installed. The windows have limestone sills. The main entry into the house sits near the north end of the elevation on the main section of the house. A concrete, open-air stoop with four steps accesses the doorway. These steps are set in a niche created where the north elevation of the room extension rejoins the façade of the main section of the house. The entrance is covered with the original wood, four panel door with a sunburst window located near the top of the door. A modern, metal barred security screen-door covers the opening. A small metal awning extends forward from the façade providing shade and weather protection for the stoop. The sidewalk leading up to the stoop starts near the center of the lot and curves gently across the lot towards the steps. The lot sits at grade level and the landscaping is simple with shrubs planted along the foundation line and a couple of small flowerbeds set in the lawn.

The house was occupied in 1941 by J. William Kroh and his wife, Evelyn. He was employed as a foreman at the Gary Heat, Light and Water Company. By 1945, his occupation has changed and he listed himself as a mechanic at Baker-Townsend Pontiac. Evelyn continued living there after Kroh's death until sometime between 1948 and 1955, when the house was occupied by Edward J. Bonick, a real-estate agent, and his wife Lillian. The Bonicks remained in the house beyond the end of the district's period of significance.

444 Rutledge St. Colonial Revival. 1938. Contributing. (3rd house from left in photo 6) This is one of the few two story houses built in the district. The house was constructed using mottled light and dark red brick laid in a running bond. There are three bays across the structure; the center bay on the first floor is the main entry into the house. The entry has a large, wood door-surround that has a broken pediment with an urn set into the opening. The pediment is denticulated and sits on an architrave that is supported on each side by a single flat, fluted, Doric pilaster. The door covering the entry does not appear original to construction; it is covered by a

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modern, metal, storm door. Mounted directly above the entry door, close to the roofline, is a large, wood framed, octagon shaped window consisting of nine lights set in a hatch pattern. The window opening is surrounded by a frame created using rowlock bricks. The remaining windows on the façade are evenly placed between the center bay and each corner of the elevation; one on each the first and second floors of the structure. These windows are all constructed in the same manner; they are wood framed, with a 1/1 configuration and are double hung. The window openings of the first-floor are each flanked by decorative set of raised field paneled, shutters. The second floor windows are mounted directly above the first floor openings. These windows are set in their own wall-dormer; the dormers extend above the roof line and each is covered by a gabled roof. The roof of the house is side gabled and covered with asphalt shingles. A brick fireplace chimney rises along the center of the south elevation rising to the height of the ridge-line of the roof. The plantings on this lot are much more prevalent and formal than the other houses in the neighborhood. Besides small the shrubs set along the foundation line the properties north and south boundaries are lined with hedgerows. There are also four small evergreens planted evenly spaced across the parkway, between the public sidewalk and street.

This house was occupied by Roy G. Parry and wife, Mildred, from soon after it was built until sometime between 1948 and 1955. Parry was a well-read and honored columnist for the *Gary Post-Tribune*. In 1955, the house is shown being occupied by Andrew and Marion Duff. Andrew listed his occupation as engineer. The Duffs remain in the house beyond the end of the district's POS.

456 Rutledge St. Colonial Revival Cottage. 1941. Contributing. (1st house from left in photo 6) This one-and-a-half, three bay structure is representative of the historic colonial hall-and-parlor house and is often referred to during this era as a Cape Cod cottage. It was constructed using mottled red and tan bricks and sits above a full basement. The center bay of the structure is the main entry into the house. The door opening has a wooden door- surround consisting of two plain, almost abstract, Doric pilasters that support an arched architrave. The surround rises all the way to the roofline of the elevation. The doorway is covered by the original wood, four-panel door with a sunburst light set in the upper portion of the door. This doorway, in turn, is covered by a modern storm door with a large single light. Centered on the façade, between the door and corner of the elevation (one on both the north and south sides of the doorway) is a single 8/1, double hung, wood framed window; these are both original to construction. Each of these windows is flanked by a decorative set of louvered wood shutters. The structure is covered by an asphalt shingled, side-gabled roof. There are two gable front dormers mounted on the front slope of the roof, these sit directly above the window openings of the first floor. These dormers are covered with weather board. A brick, exterior chimney is centered on structures south elevation, and rises above the roof-ridge and is capped with a limestone coping that is pierced by two square, ceramic flues. The house sits at grade level and the only plantings are placed along the foundation line.

There is no listing in the 1941 *Polk's City Directory* for this address and in 1945 it is listed as vacant. Robert J. Danielson and his wife Emma are shown at the address in 1948. Robert is an engineer and the Danielson's remained in the structure beyond the end of the district's period of significance.

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539 Rutledge St. Colonial Revival Cottage. 1940. Contributing. (photo 7) The main section of this small, three bay, one-and-a-half story house is side-gabled. A large front-gabled section, about two-thirds of the width of the façade, extends slightly forward from the north end of the main section of the house. The front facing roof is moderately pitched with uneven eaves, the south, or longer, eave is upswept. The projecting section has two bays. The south bay is the main entry into the house. The doorway has an irregularly set limestone door-surround. To the south of this opening is a large sliding-glass window. This window, as are all windows on the structure, are modern replacements made to fit the historic openings. Flanking each side of this window opening is a decorative, louvered shutter. Centered in the gable, is a narrow rectangular window with a single light. Centered on the elevation, between the front section and the corner of the south end of the façade, is a single 1/1, modern replacement window that fits the historic opening. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

The house was occupied soon after construction by Welford E. and Helen Coats. The Coats would remain in the house beyond the end of the district's period of significance. Welford listed his occupation as general turn shift foreman at United States Steel's sheet and tin mills.

543 Rutledge St. Tudor Revival/Colonial Revival Cottage. 1940. Contributing. (photo 8) This one-and-a-half story, house with three bays, is constructed using a light red and tan mottled brick. The north bay on the façade is the main entry into the house; it sits beneath a cross gable that occupies the northern one-third of the façade. The gable is covered by a roof with uneven eaves. The doorway has a door-surround that is constructed of random cut ashlar blocks; they are set in an irregular quoin pattern. The door covering the entryway is not original to construction. A small, open air, concrete stoop with three steps provides access to the entry. The sides of the stoop and steps are protected by a wrought iron railing. A metal awning covers the entryway and the stoop; this is not original to construction. To the north of the doorway there are two, single, 1/1, double hung windows evenly spaced on the façade. These windows are modern replacements that fit into the historic openings. Each window opening has a limestone sill. The window openings rise to meet the wide fascia board that extends across the façade; it starts at the wall dormer and extends to the south corner of the elevation. The fascia board is set directly beneath the shallow boxed eave of the roof. The side-gabled roof is covered with asphalt shingles. Although much of the landscaping represents modern concepts, the hedges that cover the foundation line are in keeping with the period.

This house was occupied soon after construction by Raymond E. and Edith E. Aldrin. The Aldrin's would remain in the house beyond the end of the district's period of significance. Raymond listed his occupation as a machinist at Continental Roll and Steel's Company. The Aldrin's remained in the house beyond the district's POS.

560 Rutledge St. Colonial Revival Cottage. 1942. Contributing. (photo 9) This three bay, one-and-a-half story house was constructed using a mottling of light and dark bricks. A front-gabled section extends forward towards the street from the north end of the structure's façade. This section of the house has one small, 1/1, double hung window and the entrance door into the house; they are evenly spaced with the door located near the center of the structure. The doorway

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has a simple flat, wood door-surround. The entry is accessed a small, concrete, open-air stoop, the sides of the stoop and its steps are lined with a wrought iron handrail. A small metal awning, placed on the elevation after construction, covers the doorway. To the north of the doorway, centered between the door and the north corner of the elevation, is a small 1/1, double hung window; it is not original to construction but fits the historic opening. This window opening has a sill constructed of rowlock bricks (as do all window openings on the structure). The window opening is flanked by a set of decorative louvered wood shutters. Centered in the gable of the room-dormer is a small, rectangular, wood framed window with a fixed single light; this window is original to construction. The roof over the front-gabled section has no overhang. Centered on the elevation to the south of the projecting section is a single, 1/1, double hung window that is identical in construction to the one just described except that it is larger. It is also flanked by a set of decorative louvered shutters. The window opening rises to a plain finished fascia board that surrounds the structure located at the roof line just below a shallow boxed eave. The moderately pitched roof over the main section of the house is side-gabled and covered in asphalt shingles. The landscaping, although modern, is simple and is placed along the foundation line as would have been the style at the time of the house's construction.

The first listing for this address was in 1945, when it is shown as being occupied by Theodore D. Clifford and wife, Anne. Clifford list his occupation as a steel worker in Chicago. By 1955, the Cliffords are gone and Joseph G. and Anna D. Sherbak are shown living at the address. Joseph is a foreman at American Bridge. The Sherbaks remained in the house beyond the end of the district's POS.

551 Rutledge St. English Cottage. 1947. Contributing. (photo 10) This one-and-a-half story house is constructed of dark red brick. There are three bays across the façade; the north bay is the main entry to the house. Centered between the entry and the south corner of the elevation is an exterior brick fireplace chimney that rises to the height of the roof's ridge. The chimney narrows in width near the roof line of the elevation; it steps in on both sides with the north step-and being slightly higher on the chimney than the south one. Approximately three feet from the summit the chimney shaft splits into two square stacks; each stack is capped with a limestone coping and a square ceramic flue. This elaborate and predominate fireplace chimney is a popular Tudor style attribute that is often used on English Cottage designs. There are two windows, one on either side of the chimney; one evenly spaced between the entry door and the chimney and one between the chimney and the south corner of the elevation. Each opening has a modern two-light, sliding window that set inside of wide wood window frames. Each of the windows is flanked by a pair of wood, louvered shutters and each is covered by its own canvas covered window awning. The entry door sits beneath a small, decorative front facing cross gable, another Tudor style element. The historic wood door is simple in its design with a small, rectangular single light set in its upper right-hand corner; door-way is covered by a modern, decorative metal storm door. The door opening is flanked by full-length, decorative shutters of the same construction as those by each of the windows. An open-air concrete porch extends across the façade from the south side of the door opening to the north corner of elevation. The open sides of the porch and the four concrete steps are lined with wrought iron railings and handrails. A metal awning covers the entire porch and is supported at each of its outer corners by a decorative wrought iron support. The landscaping of this house has been nicely enhanced over the years but is not totally reflective of the structure's era of significance.

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From the time it was built this house was occupied by William L. Jones and his wife, Winifred. Jones was employed as finisher at Inland Steel in East Chicago. The Joneses remained in the house past the end of the district's POS.

430 Ellsworth St. English Cottage. 1939. Contributing. (photo 11) This house was built using mottled red brick. The main section of the house is side-gabled. A front-gabled section projects forward, covering about one-thirds the width of the façade. It extends forward from the south end of the main section of the house about three feet. The roof over this extended section has eaves of uneven height. The slope of the north eave is set the lowest and gently curves as it extends outward, giving the roof the appearance as of sagging under age, a decorative element often used in Tudor style based designs, such as the English cottage. The main entry into the house is set into the elevation of the front-gabled section beneath the lowest end of the upswept eave. The door has a surround created by using irregular cut ashlar stacked in an irregular quoin pattern on each side of the door opening. The wood door covering the opening is original to construction and has two, small, square viewing windows set near the top of the door. The metal storm door is a modern addition. A small, open-air, three-step, concrete stoop provides access to the door. Wrought iron rails protect the open sides of the stoop. Centered between the door and the north corner of the projecting section is a square window filled by four glass-blocks. To the south of the entry, centered between the door and the south corner of the elevation, is a wood-framed window consisting of fifteen lights. This window is original to construction and has a limestone sill. A narrow window is centered in the front gable; it is constructed using square glass blocks to fill the opening. To the south of the extended section of the house, is a wood-framed casement window; it is offset to the south of center on this elevation and is original to construction. At the roofline is a boxed eave with a minimal overhang. The roof over the house is covered with asphalt shingles. The landscaping of this house is simple with a few small plantings along the foundation line and a tree in the parkway.

In the 1939 *Polk's City Directory* this address is listed as #432 and was vacant at that time. The first resident was Thomas J. Halsall, a foreman at American Bridge. Halsall also lived at two different times, prior to and after this residency, on the street at 458 Ellsworth. By 1955 he has moved and Reno P. Walker, occupation unknown, is living in the house, he would stay in it beyond the end of the district's POS.

439 Ellsworth St. 1940. Contributing. (photo 12) This one-and-a-half story, minimal house is covered with rusticated ashlar laid in a random course: it has not been determined if the ashlar was applied at the time of construction but was likely applied before the end of the period of significance. Other than the ashlar the house incorporates no additional application of any specific styling elements. The structure has three bays evenly placed across the façade; the center bay is the main entry into the house. The main section of the house has a large, gable-front section that extends forward about three feet from the south end of its elevation and covers about three quarters of the width of the façade. It has a moderately pitched roof and no overhanging eave. The door covering the entry is not original and it is covered by modern metal storm door. The doorway is accessed by three steps that lead up to a small concrete, open-air stoop. The open sides of the stoop and the steps are protected by wrought iron handrails. The metal awning, the

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same size as the stoop, is attached to the façade directly above the door. A single, 1/1, wood framed, double hung window is located on the elevation of the front section to the north of the doorway; it is covered by modern metal framed storm window and is shaded from the sunlight by large metal sun awning. Centered beneath the peak of the front gable is a small rectangular 1/1 window, also not original to construction and protected by a metal awning. Another single window is centered on the elevation of the main section of the house to the south of the front section; it is identical in construction to the window north of the door. The wall of this elevation rises to a boxed eave with a shallow overhang. The entire roof of the structure is covered in asphalt shingles. The landscaping of the yard is minimal. The lawn is slightly raised with a curving sidewalk leading up to the entrance. There are a few shrubs planted along the foundation line.

No listing for an occupant can be found for this house until 1948 when *Polk's City Directory* listed Ernest V. Allen and wife Laura W. at the address. Allen is a superintendent in Chicago, Illinois. By 1959 the Allens are gone and John and Margery Pennock are listed as residents, he is a steel worker at United States Steel in Gary; they would remain in the house beyond the end of the district's POS.

The three townhouses built between 446/44 and 456-458 Ellsworth Street were the earliest structures built within the district, being constructed in 1928. All three use the same structural design differing only in the application of their decorative elements.

450-452 Ellsworth St. Tudor Revival/Colonial Revival. 1928. Contributing. (photo 13) This two-story, semi-detached house consists of a pair of houses joined by a party wall. The north half of the façade is a mirror image of the south half. The structure was built using light and dark bricks laid an irregular pattern, with some of the bricks extending outward from the elevation. Both halves of the structure are covered by the same asphalt shingle hipped roof. The balanced symmetry of the façade and the roof give the structure an appearance that emulates the historic Georgian house form. There are four bays evenly spaced across the façade. Located at the center of the house, on its first floor level and extending forward about three feet from the main elevation, is an entry vestibule that contains the main entries into both halves of the structure. A pair of doors is centered on the vestibule and each opening has a door-surround constructed of roughhewn timbers. Each entryway is covered by its original wood door with four raised field panels and a rectangular window with six lights. The modern storm door covering the opening is constructed of metal and not original to construction. The vestibule is covered with a shed roof and has a steep front facing gable centered on it; this is located directly over the twin doorways. A wide cornice board lines the gable. An open-air concrete porch extends the full width of the vestibule and is accessed on both the north and south sides by two sets of concrete steps. The open sides of the steps and the porch are lined with wrought iron handrails. There are two, single 6/1, wood framed, double hung windows located on the first floor elevation of the structure, one on both the north and south sides of the vestibule. They are located immediately adjacent to the entry vestibule. These windows have sills constructed using rowlock bricks as do all the window openings on the structure. On the second floor level, directly above each of the first floor windows, is another single window of identical construction. The central three-quarters of the second floor, from outer window to outer window, is treated as a slightly raised shed wall dormer. Centered on the second floor elevation, above the gable over the doorways, are two,

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narrow rectangular casement windows. A large brick chimney comes through the center of the front slope of the roof; is capped with limestone and shared by both addresses. The landscaping is simple with hedgerows planted along the foundation line and along the front of the open-air porch.

At 450 Ellsworth St the 1929 *Polk's City Directory* listed Clarence P. Jessup and his wife, Ruth, as living here; he was a checker at American Bridge. Jessup was gone by 1937 when Harold J. and Stella Miller are listed at the address, he was secretary treasurer of Ideal Grocery and Market, Inc. Leon H. and Eleanor M. Stuenkel are listed at the address in 1941. By 1945, they are gone and George B. Crawley, a crane operator for the E.J & E. Railroad, and his wife Lela were in residence. They left sometime between 1948 and 1955 and the house was occupied by L. Earl Clement and his wife Gladys, they remained in the house beyond the end of the district's POS. Clement also worked for the E.J & E. Railroad as a switchman.

452 Ellsworth St. was occupied soon after construction by Sylvan and Lela Skinner, Sylvan worked as a checker at American Bridge. By 1937, James and Zella Jenner occupy the duplex; he lists himself as a steel worker. In 1941, Carl T. and Marjorie Mueller resided at the address, he was employed in Chicago. They were gone by 1945 when John B. and Helen House were living here. John was manager of the Hub Clothing Store. The 1948 *Polk's Directory* directory lists William P. Coonrod and wife Ellyne as living at the address; he is employed as a steel worker in Chicago. In 1955, Millard E. and Lois Swihart are occupying the townhouse. In 1959, the townhouse is shown being lived in by Anthony F. Riga and his wife Helen. Riga is a pharmacist at Hook Drugs.

456-458 Ellsworth St. Tudor Revival/Colonial Revival. 1928. Contributing. (First structure from left in photo 14) This townhouse is identical in construction as to the one described above with a few small changes. It uses red brick laid in the same irregular bond but has two-wall dormers, each with a front-facing gable, the two second-story windows are set into these. Also the door-surrounds have a smooth finish. The front doors, with their leaded glass, are not original to construction and neither are the single light storm doors that cover them. The open-air porch has a wood railing that has been constructed to resemble a sunburst. Modern brick planters line the foundation in front of the entry vestibule. A large bush grows in front of the porch and may be original though now mature and overgrown.

456 Ellsworth St. in the 1929 *Polk's City Directory* listed Abram Wasser, a carpenter, and his wife, Mabel, as living at the address. By 1937, Harry and Carrie Davies lived in the townhouse. The 1941 *Polk's Directory* listed Walter C. Herrold, a railroad yardmaster, and his wife, Leona, as living in the townhouse. In 1945, the directory listed Herbert Erickson, an architect and engineer, and his wife Grace as living in the house. Erickson had worked in Gary as an architect since 1909. Erickson designed the Swedish Lutheran Church at 6th Avenue and Fillmore Street; the Elk's Building in Gary; the Bank of Whiting as well as many a house throughout early Gary. Erickson was gone by 1948 when Ralph and Lucille Congleton were listed in residence. They were gone by 1955 when Howard H. and Betty J. Gust are shown living in the townhouse. In 1959, a switchman for the E.J. & E. Railroad, James Arehart, and his wife, Erma, were living in the structure.

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458 Ellsworth St. in the 1929 *Polk's City Directory* listed William C. and Hope Briggs as residents for this address; William was a mechanical engineer. Thomas J. Halsall (see 430 Ellsworth) was living in the townhouse in 1937. By 1941, Halsall was living at 430 Ellsworth and John H. and Helen A. Poole live at the address. Poole was the service manager at Grantham Auto in Gary. In 1946, V. Jean and Inez Maggart live in the townhouse, he was a steel worker in Chicago. They remained in the house until sometime between 1958 and 1955, when Thomas Halsall re-occupied the house. He was gone again by 1959 when Michael Lukas was shown living at the address.

The houses along the 500 blocks of both Ellsworth and Marshall Streets are from the last building period within the district and with the exception of 569 Ellsworth were all built in 1946 by Leslie I. Combs and Sons, contractors. It was this gentleman, a prominent contractor in Gary, which the historic district was named after.

547 Ellsworth St. Colonial Revival Cottage. 1946. Contributing. (photo 15) This small, story-and-a-half, three bay house was constructed using dark red brick laid in a running bond. The center bay is the entry into the house. It is accessed by three concrete steps that lead up to an open air stoop in front of the door. The open sides of the stoop and the steps are lined with wrought iron handrails. A metal awning covers the stoop. The solid wood door, with six raised field panels, that covers the entryway, is original to construction. There is a window opening centered on the elevation to the south of the doorway and another to the north. Both window openings are now covered by modern security shutters and the construction or age of the windows was not determinable. Each window opening has a limestone sill and is flanked by a pair of decorative, wood, louvered shutters. At the roof-line, just beneath the shallow boxed eaves, is a wide fascia board that runs the full width of the elevation. The side-gabled roof is covered with asphalt shingles. A curving sidewalk leads up to the entry stoop. The landscaping of the lot is plush with hedges covering the foundation line, two large trees planted in the front yard and small bushes placed on either side of the sidewalk leading up to the stoop where it intersects the public sidewalk.

Occupied by George A. Schmidt and wife, Ruth G., soon after it was completed. Schmidt was an engineer on the E.J. & E. Railroad. The Schmidts lived in the house beyond the end of the district's POS.

565 Ellsworth St. Colonial Revival Cottage. 1946. Contributing. (photo 16) This one story, hipped roof house is constructed using red brick laid in a running bond. An entry vestibule extends forward from the south end of the façade. The main entry into the house is located on the north end of the vestibule with a narrow, fixed light window centered between the door and south corner of the vestibule's elevation. A small, concrete stoop with two steps provides access to the doorway. The entryway is covered with the original wood door. The lower three-fourths of the door is filled with four raised field panels, the upper one-quarter of the door contains three, small lights set horizontally across the door. To the north of the door, centered between the vestibule and the north corner of the elevation, is a large, wood framed picture window, which is not original to construction, with five large single lights; the outer two lights are casement windows. The window opening is flanked by a set of decorative, nonfunctional, wood, board and batten shutters. A wide, plain fascia board extends across the façade at the roof line, just beneath

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a minimal boxed eave. On the north elevation of the house is a large, brick exterior chimney that rises above the roof line to the height of the roof ridge. The landscaping of the yard is minimal with hedges planted along the foundation line.

Alvin and Marjorie Levenberger lived in the house from soon after its completion until after the end of the district's POS. Levenberger worked as a jeweler.

555 Ellsworth St. Colonial Revival / Ranch. Non-contributing. At some point in the 1960s or 1970s, the owner of this house added a substantial, two story addition to the house, clearly visible from the front. The dramatic change in massing makes the house non-contributing.

521 Marshall St. Colonial Revival Cottage. 1946. Contributing. (1st house on left in photo 17) This one story, three bay, small house sits above a full basement and was constructed using red brick laid in a running bond. Located on the north end of the house is a large gabled extension that attaches to the hipped roof for the main section of the house. There are two bays situated in the gabled extension. Centered on the façade of the extension is the main entry into the house. A concrete stoop with two steps provides access to the front door. The wood door covering the entry is original to construction; it has four raised field panels with a semi-circular sunburst window. The metal screen door is a modern application. Evenly spaced on the elevation, both to the north and south of the doorway, is a single, wood framed, 1/1, double hung window; both are original to construction. Each window opening has a sill constructed of rowlock bricks and is flanked by a decorative, wood, board and batten shutter. At the roofline, just beneath the shallow boxed eave, is a fascia board that extends across the entire façade including the eaves of the room-dormer. The roof of the house is covered in asphalt shingles. The landscaping is minimal. A curving sidewalk leads from the public sidewalk to the entry stoop. There are hedges planted along the foundation line and a hedgerow that runs along the north boundary of the lot, separating it from the public alley. There are two small trees located in the front yard and their size indicates that they are not from the era of construction, while the tree in the parkway appears to be.

The first resident for this house was Charles W. Quaid, a chemist in Chicago, who was listed in the 1948 *Polk's City Directory*. Quaid moved sometime between 1948 and 1955 when Casmir and Donna Wroblewski occupied the residence. Casmir was a clerk with the United States Post Office. They remained in the house beyond the end of the district's POS.

531 Marshall St. Colonial Revival Cottage. 1946. Contributing. (1st house on right in photo 17) This one-and-a-half story, three bay, side-gabled house was constructed using dark red bricks laid in a running bond. The center bay of the structure is the main entry into the house. This doorway sits beneath a small, cross gable that is centered on the façade at the roofline. A small, open-air, concrete, two step stoop provides access to the entry; the exposed sides of the stoop and the steps are lined with a wrought iron handrail. The doorway is covered by its original wood door. This door has four, small, square lights set in a vertical line and offset from the center of the door. The entry is covered by a modern, metal, storm door. Mounted directly above the door is a large awning that covers the entry stoop. The other two bays on the façade are windows. There is one centered between the door and the north corner of the elevation and another centered between the door and the south corner of the elevation. These windows are identical and

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are original to construction. They are wood framed, 1/1, double hung each with a sill constructed of rowlock bricks. Each window opening is flanked by a decorative set of wood, louvered shutters and is protected from the sun by a large awning. At the roofline a wide fascia board crosses the entire façade with the exception of where the wall gable extends upward. The eaves of the roof are boxed with very little overhang. The side-gabled roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The landscaping is reflective of the era of construction with most of the plantings placed along the foundation line of the house.

There were no listings for this house in the 1948 *Polk's City Directory*. By 1952 Elbert Elkins, no occupation listed, had occupied the premises. He would remain past the end of the district's POS.

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District Resource List

Address	C or NC	Address	C or NC	Address	C or NC
Rutledge St. 400	C	Rutledge St. 566	C	Marshall St. 521	C
401	C	572	C	525	C
407	C	578	C	531	C
415	C				
421	C	Ellsworth St. 400	C	W. 4th Ave. 2507	C
422	C	406	C	2513	C
426	C	411	C	2519	C
427	C	414	C	2525	C
434	C	420	C	2531	C
435	C	421	C		
440	C	424	C	W. 5th Ave. 2401	C
441	C	429	C	2406	C
444	C	430	C	2409	C
445	C	433	C	2414	C
446	C	438	C	2415	C
453	C	439	C	2424	C
456	C	445	C	2425	C
457	C	446/44	C	2429	C
463	C	451	C	2432	C
518	C	452/50	C	2500	C
519	C	450	C	2501	C
523	C	458/56	C	2508	C
524	C	518	C	2511-19	C
527	C	519	C	2520	C
530	C	525	C	2521	C
531	C	526	C	2532	C
535	C	530	C	2533	C
536	C	531	C		
539	C	535	C		
542	C	536	C		
543	C	542	C		
547	C	545	C		
548	C	547	C		
551	C	555	NC		
554	C	556	C		
555	C	559	C		
559	C	565	C		
560	C	569	C		

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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.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

1928-1959

Significant Dates

Significant Person (last name, first name)

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder (last name, first name)

Combs, Leslie

Period of Significance (justification)

This period was chosen because it represents the time period in which the earliest part of the district was first platted in 1921 and the year in which the last house was built in 1959.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

NA

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Combs Addition Historic District¹ qualifies for placement on the National Register under Criterion A for community planning and development and Criterion C for its architecture. Under Criterion C the architecture in the Combs Addition Historic District reflects an evolutionary change in the development of the search for the perfect small house design that had begun near the turn of the twentieth century. The architecture within the district reflects a minimal approach to the application of decorative elements with a compact yet thoroughly functional interior; a trend that was being promoted at the time by the Federal Housing Act. The district consists of well-built houses that were designed to be less costly to construct than the earlier small house designs of the previous decades. Many were built by one of early Gary's most prolific builders, Leslie I. Combs, for whom the district was named. Under Criterion A the district reflects changes in the planning and development within the residential areas of Gary controlled by the Gary Land Company (GLC). Development began with the GLC requiring that each individual lot sold be individually approved by the GLC, they were a sub-divider. When the federal government, through the National Housing Act, backed home mortgages and U.S. Steel recognized unions, there was no longer a need for the GLC to be actively involved in residential development, a new era of development began in the district. A good deal of the district was completed by a single builder, what is referred to as a community builder in the post-World War II years. This was a significant end to the era of the company town in Gary. The Combs Addition also meets the registration requirements for Historic Residential Suburbs in the U.S., 1830-1960, MDPF.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion C

The Small House movement had its beginnings in the Depression of 1893 and the massive social dislocation that occurred as a result of it and was fueled by the new social concepts that developed during the Progressive Era of the early 1900s.² The economic depression of 1893 made many of those that had been affluent in the years prior to the panic less so and American society began to look at ways to balance this. One of the results of the depression was a re-thinking of the Victorian general social order.³ The Progressive Movement in the United States, from around 1900 into the 1930s, was a political reaction to the problems created from the 1893 depression and many of its concepts, such as simplicity and efficiency, were embraced in the re-

¹ The district consists of parts of two Gary Land Company additions to the City of Gary; the Fifth addition, platted April 25, 1921¹ and the Sixth addition, platted February 18, 1920.¹

² Clifford Edward Clark, jr., The American Family Home, 1800-1960, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 142-153. (Hereafter referred to as Clark.)

³ Clark, p.142

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addressing of the Victorian social values.⁴ One of them was the trend towards a smaller, more economically efficient house that could be operated and maintained with a minimum effort by the occupant/owner, still be aesthetically pleasing, and reflect the occupant's position within society. Modern consumerism was also on the rise and many technological innovations had become available that helped make the operation of a smaller house as comfortable and prestigious as the large, fully staffed Victorian home had been without the overhead cost. It was also during the Progressive Era that the working class began to come into its own respected position in the modern industrial society. The working man benefitted from Progressive concepts and this put extra cash into their hands. The working class used this new wealth to achieve the American dream, owning a home of their own. These concepts would be championed, not only by the public and private sectors, but would also be endorsed by the United States government which helped the trend towards the smaller home by promoting the private home. The homes of the working class prior to this era were basically non-descript, often vernacular structures, with very little thought put into the functioning of the layout let alone to its aesthetic design. As the working class became more affluent their desire to own their own home increased. They wanted some of the respectability that they felt should accompany their new rising position in society. They still saw the large Victorian house with its artistic applications as a sign of wealth, influence, and position within society, but these older homes and their cost of operation were not affordable to them. However, the small, efficient, modern house was and it would nicely reflect their newly elevated position within American society. Progressive era architects and builders made a distinct step toward the goal of affordable housing in the early 1900s with the adoption of the popular bungalow house type. The bungalow could be as compact as the owner's means, while still including modern conveniences. Its simple, efficient plan was a break from Victorian housing. The concern for fostering home ownership for the middle class in the 1920s found expression in myriad groups, agencies and associations who used the term "small house" to describe their offerings. These designs combined the more compact plan of the bungalow with the simplified, minimal, period revival references.

A continual quest for a well-designed small house, that was both functional and economically affordable, continued through the Great Depression (1929-1940) even though new house construction was at a virtual standstill. During these hard pressed years the primary driving force behind new house design was minimum cost, with a simplified functionality running a close second.⁵ This quest created a housing form that has become known as the **American Small House** (c. 1935-1950), also referred to as the Minimal Traditional⁶, or by contemporary builders as the "FHA minimum house."⁷ The development of this, double-pile, one-to-two story housing form came about in part as a result of the Federal Government's concern about a national

⁴ David L. Ames and Linda Flint McClelland, Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places, (Washington DC: U. S. Department of the Interior, 2002), p. 56. (hereafter referred to as Ames)

⁵ "Modern Aim to Get Most For Dollars," Gary Post Tribune, 5 May 1941, p. 18, col. 1. Also, in "Design of Modern Home Involves Developments in Plan and Structure," Gary Post Tribune, 12 May 1941, p. 8, col. 3.

⁶ Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Homes, (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), p. 478.

⁷ Ames, p. 56.

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housing shortage crisis and an idle home construction industry that had left almost two million out of work when the Depression hit.⁸

Out of this concern came the creation of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) within the Federal Housing Act passed by Congress in 1934.⁹ The act had three parts: Titles I, II, and III. Each of these addressed a different area of construction and how they would be financed with government backed loans. These titles also set forth specific requirements and guidelines to qualify for a government-backed FHA qualified home loan and included minimum standards of quality that had to be met. *Principals of Planning Small Houses*, first published in 1936 and revised in 1940, laid out the guidelines set forth by the FHA. These guidelines were more specifically addressed in published FHA *Technical Bulletins* with each bulletin dealing with its own specific subject.

To help keep the construction cost low the architects, or house designers, looked to eliminate all that was non-essential from their design. The decorative style of these houses was less important than planning a functional and efficient layout. The house became more compact with some rooms serving dual purposes.¹⁰ Virginia and Lee McAlester, in their book *A Field Guide to American Homes*, describes this house, which they label the "Minimal Traditional," as a,

compromise design that reflects the form of traditional Eclectic houses, but lacks their decorative detailing. The roofs are low to moderately pitched with eaves and rake set close to the elevation. Often there is a large chimney and at least one front-facing gable which easily lend itself to the minimal application of Tudor style attributes [these are often referred to as the English cottage] or Colonial Revival attributes these are often referred to as the Colonial Revival cottage] is another popular style. Although most of the houses are one-story in height, occasionally two story examples may be found, these usually contain a greater degree of stylish detailing.¹¹

All of the single family homes in the Combs Addition Historic District are examples of small house designs from the interwar period. The district reflects how these housing trends coalesced in Gary. Most also reflect interest in historical styles.

The **Colonial Revival** style (1880-1955)¹² developed after the 1876 Centennial Celebration held in Philadelphia where the American people experienced a rebirth in the interest in their nation's

⁸ "The Federal Housing Administration (FHA)," Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) website, available at: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/housing/fhahistory. Last accessed 3 January 2013.

⁹ Neal V. Hitch, *Homes in the Depression and World War II Era, 1921-1945*, *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Homes Through American History*, (Westport CT: Greenwood Publishing, 2008), p. 269.

¹⁰ "Modern Aim to Get Most For Dollars," *Gary Post Tribune*, 5 May 1941, p. 18, col. 1.

¹¹ Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Homes*, (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), p. 478.

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colonial heritage.¹³ The earlier Georgian and Adam styles are the main historic influences on the revival's styling with some attributes taken from the post medieval English and Dutch Colonial homes from the Atlantic seaboard colonies.¹⁴ The Colonial Revival can be divided into two eras. The earliest came on the heels of the Centennial Celebration and was promoted by the fashionable architectural firm of McKim, Mead, White and Bigelow. The architecture of the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893 embraced the style. In addition to the grand classism of the fair's main buildings, the thirteen original colony/states constructed their pavilions in the colonial style. Early use of the style was rarely historically correct and was the result of a freely interpretive use of historic colonial attributes. This trend began to shift around the turn of the twentieth century when a more detailed research was performed with an adherence to proportion studied and applied to the style.¹⁵ Colonial Revival styling was adaptable to large, leisure class homes and could also be easily adapted to small working class homes, its popularity was universal.

Identifying features of the style are accentuated front doors, often with pediments supported by pilasters. The doors often have sidelights, sometimes with fanlights overhead, and are at times protected by a portico supported by columns. The façades demonstrate a balanced symmetry, though occasionally they are designed with off center doors. The windows are double hung with multi-lighted sashes and frequently set in adjacent pairs. At times Palladian windows are set into the façade. Wall coverings vary from wood clapboard to brick and stone. The roofs can be hipped, side-gabled and gambrel in their construction.¹⁶

The **Colonial Revival cottage** is generally a one to one-and-a-half story structure that employed Colonial Revival attributes; sometimes the interiors of these cottages reflected the symmetrical and balanced floor plans inherent in the style's historic origins. Other times the cottage will employ a freer flowing floor plan recently made popular by the introduction of the bungalow.

The **Tudor Revival** style, popular from the 1880s through the 1930s and beyond, is a modern mimic of a mixture of Medieval English housing forms with attributes of the English Renaissance, Elizabethan and Jacobean styles. The style gained popularity in America during the late 19th Century as large, country or suburban, architect-designed, homes. These large structures are more formal than the other "English" styles, such as the English cottage, and intend to evoke English manor houses.

Attributes of the styles include steeply pitched roofs and gables, patterned stone or brick work, leaded windows, often grouped, in either double hung or casement construction, half-timbering

¹² Note: All eras of the style popularity dates taken from Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Homes, (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003)

¹³ Gerald Foster, American Houses: a Field Guide to the Architecture of the Home, (NY: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), p.284. (hereafter referred to as Foster)

¹⁴ Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Homes, (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), p. 326. (hereafter referred to as McAlester)

¹⁵ McAlester, p.326.

¹⁶ McAlester, p. 321.

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often with the void areas between the timber being filled with stucco, prominent chimneys and often a Tudor arched doorway.¹⁷ The use of multiple building materials created an artistically pleasing façade. Frequently there is a “meandering” break between the brickwork and the stucco or a slightly upward curved roofline that is meant to suggest a picturesque crumbling or settling of an antique building. The use of elements such as various roof heights and a variety of construction materials, reflected the historical precedents of the medieval and post-medieval rural houses, which were not designed as they stand but were added to incrementally as the need arose. The style adapted easily to small as well as grand scale homes.

The term **English Cottage** generally refers to a small, one or two story, modern house utilizing some degree of Tudor style attributes. These houses are meant to resemble small, rural, vernacular dwellings. The designs intended to reinterpret historical architectural idioms onto thoroughly modern house forms. In the 1920s the functional floor plans of the bungalow were being adapted and designed with various period revival attributes. One of the key elements of the Tudor Period Revival style is its asymmetrical façade and massing of the building’s components. In twentieth century practice the style’s asymmetry allowed it to be adapt easily to the modern, efficient and free flowing floor plans embraced by the Small House movement.

The Combs Addition Historic District contains many fine examples of the American Small House. The majority of these small houses reflect the minimal application of Colonial Revival attributes. They are in excellent condition and the appearance of the district today is still highly representative of the district’s era of significance.

Criterion A

Community Planning and Development

The creators of Gary, the investors in United States (U.S.) Steel Corporation, when planning for the establishment of their new company town, were all very aware of the labor troubles that other company towns, such as Homestead, Pennsylvania and Pullman, Illinois had experienced just a few short years before. The company’s planners looked at several options before deciding on the approach they would take in establishing their new city.¹⁸ They came to believe the problems associated with industrialization and urbanization were inherent in the modernization of society and that the cause of labor’s anxiety was not due to the presence of industry and the laboring class, but was due to the uncontrolled interaction and lack of definition within the urban spaces. They therefore sought to clearly define and restrain the urban spaces within their new city.¹⁹ To do this they would distinctly separate the industrial operations from the public sector. They used the Grand Calumet River, running east/west through their newly acquired lands, as the dividing line. To control the development of these lands, the officers of U.S. Steel formed the Gary Land

¹⁷ McAlester. p. 358.

¹⁸ Hardy Green, The Company Town: the Industrial Eden’s and Satanic Mills That Shaped the American Economy, (New York: Basic Books, 2010), p. 113-118. (hereafter referred to as Green).

¹⁹ S. Paul O’Hara, Gary, the Most American of all American Cities, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011), p. 45.

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Company (GLC) as a holding organization for both their industrial and residential properties.²⁰ One of the primary purposes of the GLC was to control residential development within the U.S. Steel owned land located south of the Grand Calumet River and north of the Wabash Railroad tracks; it is in the far western reaches of this area that the Combs Addition Historic District is located. The GLC's plans called for an orderly and efficient growth for the city.²¹ Development would not be haphazard and new additions to the GLC controlled areas would not be opened up for development until the previous addition was almost completely sold and built. The GLC's prime responsibility was not so much to control what was built in the area, though they did, as much as it was to govern who would reside within it.²² The GLC was organized to serve the steel industry's purposes. The steel company chose Horace Singer Norton to run the GLC.

Captain Norton, as he liked to be called, established strict regulations and standards to govern the construction of the residential and commercial structures in the areas he controlled. To accomplish this, the GLC required that any lot purchased must be developed by the owner within eighteen months of purchase and if not the GLC would recover the deed. Under contract the purchaser could buy one lot at a time and if they completed improvements within the eighteen months allowed and occupied it, they could then purchase another lot for development.²³ To obtain the GLC's approval, really Captain Norton's, the prospective owner was required to supply the GLC with a set of architectural plans along with the estimated cost of construction. When approved the plans were stamped and signed in red ink by the GLC land agent, Captain Norton, and then the building could begin. These restrictions kept the occupants limited to those who could meet all of these economic constraints and left out most of the steel mill's labor force, especially the immigrants, blacks and unskilled whites. It was believed by the corporation that these people, due to their often low economic situation, were considered to be supportive of organized labor.²⁴ These simple requirements were an effective way for the corporation to control who lived within the areas under their control. Norton remained in control of the GLC's operations until his retirement in 1938.²⁵

In 1937, the GLC began to alleviate itself of its residential properties (they had 932 of them) by offering them to employees of United States Steel (USS), who were then renting them, at adjusted prices. In July of that year they ran an advertisement in the Gary Post Tribune stating

²⁰ William Frederick Howat, ed. A Standard History of Lake County Indiana and the Calumet Region, (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1915), p.542.

²¹ Raymond A. Mohl and Neil Betten, Steel City: Urban and Ethnic Patterns in Gary, Indiana, 1906-1950, (NY: Holmes and Meirer Publishers, Inc, 1986), p.17.

²² Green, p.117.

²³ Powell A. Moore, The Calumet Region: Indiana's Last Frontier, (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1959), p., p. 262-264.

²⁴ Martin Buechley, et al, Steelmaker-Steel Town: Building Gary, 1906-1930, "Steeltown," (a photographic exhibit September 1990 produced by the Calumet Regional Archives at Indiana University Northwest, copy available in Calumet Archives)

²⁵ James Lane, City of the Century: a History of Gary Indiana, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1978), p. 202.

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that the period during which these homes were being offered was near its end.²⁶ Another article in the newspaper the next day stated that those not purchased by August 1 would then be offered to non-USS employees.²⁷ The process of unloading the already constructed properties also appears to include undeveloped lots, such as existed within the area that would become the Combs Addition Historic District. This was a big change in Gary Land Company policy. On November 27, 1938 Captain H. S. Norton retired²⁸ and Sam H. Cohn was named as his successor.²⁹ This signaled the end of the GLC's absolute control in the residential areas they platted in Gary. The primary cause for the loosening of these controls was due to a major shift in the labor policies of the United States Steel Corporation. On April 27, 1937, chairman of the board Myron Taylor announced that USS corporation had agreed to the unionization of its workers by the C.I.O. This was a major shift by the corporation in its approach to labor. Fortune magazine quoted that, "it was evident to Mr. Taylor that a great change had come over the phase of the U.S. industry. The blood and brimstone of labor philosophy of his predecessor, Judge Elbert H. Gary, was out of tune with the times."³⁰ This change in GLC policy coincided with a national housing shortage.³¹ This agreement made the original purpose of the GLC null and void. By the late 1930s the organization only dealt with the corporations industrial properties.

The Great Depression had brought to an end the building boom that had spread across the country in the 1920s. Between 1932 and 1936 new construction of residential housing in the United States is greatly curtailed. During the Great Depression the population migrated towards many of the industrial centers of the nation seeking employment. This migration caused a national housing shortage; in Indiana, the housing shortage was particularly acute around the industrial cities, such as Muncie, Anderson, Kokomo and the Calumet Region.³² The federal government began to see this shortage as a possible solution to some of the unemployment caused by the Depression. After WWI, in the early 1920s, the federal government, with some success, sought to stimulate the economy by promoting the "Own Your Own Home" program. The program met with success. President Roosevelt (FDR) believed that the government's involvement in home building could again provide some relief to those hurt by the Depression.

The National Housing Act of 1934 was passed to help relieve unemployment and stimulate the release of private credit, being held in the hands of banks and lending institutions, to be used for the upgrading (modernization) of older homes and four new home construction. The Act of 1934 created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and authorized it to create a national mortgage association that would provide a secondary market where home mortgages could be

²⁶ "Land Company Tenants Have Last Chance Saturday to Buy Their Houses," Gary Post Tribune, 29 July 1937, p. 12, col. 4.

²⁷ "US Steel Ends Gary Lot Sales," Hammond Times, 30 July 1937, p. 13, col. 9.

²⁸ "Await Naming of Successor, Capt. Norton," Valparaiso Vidette Messenger, 18 November 1938, p. 4, col. 6.

²⁹ "Norton Post is Taken by Sam H. Cohn," Valparaiso Vidette Messenger, 29 November 1938, p. 8, col. 3.

³⁰ "Taylor Beats Independence To The Draw," Hammond Times, 4 April 1937, p. 5, col. 1.

³¹ "U. S. Is Facing Building Era," Hammond Times, 9 January 1937, p. 16, col. 2.

³² "25,000 Doubled Up," Hammond Times, 15 July 1937, p. 7, col. 8.

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sold. This allowed more money to become available for home loans. In 1937, the Federal National Mortgage Association, or Fannie Mae, was chartered by the FHA as a subsidiary of the RFC. The FHA's assumption of risk, through its insurance programs, made possible the amortization of mortgage loans with regular monthly payments to reduce the size of loan.³³

In February 1937, President Roosevelt signed the housing act that would insure mortgages up to ninety percent on larger homes and eighty percent on smaller homes. The 1937 Housing Act was designed to encourage residential building. It did this by reducing down payments and cutting mortgage interest. The goal of this program was to aid in the construction of four-hundred-fifty thousand new homes across the nation.³⁴ These programs appear to have had a positive effect within Gary. The programs limited the exposure of the mortgage lender and the builder by insuring their investments. Between 1929 and 1932 many of those involved in the building industry had been ruined financially. Now the federal government would insure against this risk. This security started a building era that lasted in Gary until the start of WWII. One of the builders that came forward at this time and started building within the area that became the Combs Addition Historic District was Leslie I. Combs of the Combs and Sons Construction Company. He and his sons would build several structures within the district and would be the primary builder within the district in the post-WW II years. The prewar construction period started under the auspices of the GLC and the homes built in the late-1920s and again in the late-1930s were constructed by their individual owners, with the GLC's approval. This changed and by the end of the war L.I. Combs and Sons bought up the remaining undeveloped lots in bulk in December 1945 and January 1946³⁵ from the GLC. Combs built on several of the lots within the next year. These lots are located along the north and south sides of W. 5th Avenue, the west side of the 500 block of Ellsworth Street in the 500 block of Marshall Street. It was during this postwar era that the contractor, Combs and Sons, transitioned the company from a home builder into a community builder.³⁶

Landscaping

In the late nineteenth century, landscape designers began to visualize the house as the central interest of a picture. The purpose of plantings around the house was to frame the picture, and that a well landscaped suburb was a succession of these pictures.³⁷ The new small house owner of the early twentieth century used plants to help frame their home, but in a less formal application than applied in the preceding Victorian era. One of the concepts embraced by the bungalow craze, and an integral component of the Small House Movement, was that the house was designed to meld

³³ "HUD Historical Background," *Housing and Urban Development website*: available at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/about/admguide/history.cfm>. last accessed 17 January 2013.

³⁴ "Housing Bill Will Provide Needed Money," *Hammond Times*, 2 February 1938, p. 1, col. 1.

³⁵ *Lake County Indiana Deed Book*, no.738, page 595, *Book*, no.736, page 613., and no.736, page 613.

³⁶ David L. Ames and Linda Flint McClelland, *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places*, (Washington DC: U. S. Department of the Interior, 2002), p. 26.

³⁷ Clark, p. 99.

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the interior and exterior of the house, blending the natural world with the built environment. Informality and simplicity was the emphasis.³⁸ Trees played a big role in softening the landscape and enhancing the house. Foundation plantings became a significant part of the transition from nature to structure. The scale of the plantings had an effect upon the picture of the house. The belief was that the small house looked its best if the decorative plantings and trees were kept simple in their arrangement and appropriate in their scale. Medium sized trees such as Wild crabapple, Wild Plum and Hawthorne were popular as were the small trees such as the Dogwood, Red Bud and Japanese Maple. Spirea and Barberry were popular foundation cover shrubs; the use of evergreens provided a year around effect upon the structure's landscape. Climbing vines were also a popular planting.³⁹ As one travels through the Combs Addition district today the use of these landscaping concepts is, even though in their maturity, still highly evident.

Conclusion

The Combs Addition Historic District is an intact mid-twentieth century small house working class neighborhood. The district has many excellent examples of the American Small House in its various forms with many fine examples demonstrating a minimal application of popular early twentieth architectural styles. The structures within the district demonstrate the influence of the continuing search for the perfect small house as affected by the economic restraints of the Great Depression. The number of contributing resources in prime condition and the cohesiveness of this community, as relating to its era of significance, makes the Combs Addition Historic District eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under both Criterion A and C.

Developmental History/Additional historic context information

The city of Gary sits at the southern end of Lake Michigan in the northeast corner of Lake County, Indiana. It is part of what is called the Calumet Region, which was once a succession of sand dunes and wet lands that made settlement difficult. As part of the Indian Treaty lands, the region was also protected from early settlement. It would be after the Indian removal in the 1830s that the Calumet Region was officially opened for Euro-American settlement.⁴⁰ Early settlement in the region of Gary was sparse and slow to develop. The area around Gary had very little arable land to sustain a dense population through large scale agriculture. The primary occupations of those who settled there were hunting, trading and agriculture on small farms.

The modern City of Gary owes its origins to industry, the United States Steel Company (USS), but this was not the first industry to locate in the area. In 1881, the Aetna Powder Plant, a gunpowder mill, was built amongst the dunes in vicinity of what would become modern Gary;

³⁸ John A. Jakle, Robert W. Bastian, and Douglas K. Meyer, Common Houses in America's Small Towns, (Athens, GA: Georgia Press, 1989), p. 171.

³⁹ Neal V. Hitch, Homes in the Depression and World War II Era, 1921-1945, The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Homes Through American History, (Westport CT: Greenwood Publishing, 2008), p. 304-308.

⁴⁰ Kenneth J. Schoon, Calumet Beginnings, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), p.58. (hereafter referred to as Schoon)

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the site was chosen because its remoteness from more the densely populated areas of Chicago, lessening the possible damage that could be caused from accidental gunpowder explosions.⁴¹ In the 1890s large tracts of land were purchased in the vicinity by stockyards of Chicago as a possible relocation site, but the plans never came together.⁴² In 1895 the Wabash Railroad was built through the Aetna area making it easier to ship finished products to market.⁴³

In 1904, U.S. Steel began looking for a place to build a new plant in the Lake Michigan area. They initially thought of locating it in the Waukegan, Illinois vicinity and investigated the possibility of building at that location. They found the Waukegan location too congested and began looking at the unoccupied lands at the south end of Lake Michigan. This led to the establishment of the City of Gary, named in honor of Judge Gary, a key member of the board, in 1906. The Gary Land Company (alternately referred to throughout the text as the GLC), a subsidiary of U.S. Steel, was organized the same year and began surveying and laying out the streets and lots for the newly created city. People began to migrate into the area seeking employment.⁴⁴ Indiana Steel, a subsidiary of U.S.S., started steel production in 1908.⁴⁵ Gary was on its way to becoming the largest city in the Calumet Region.⁴⁶ The city grew quickly. By 1910 it had a population of 16,802 and by 1930 the city had topped the 100,000 mark. Gary was to become an integral part of one of the largest industrial complexes in the world that spread along the southern shores of Lake Michigan.

Gary was the proverbial American melting pot. The establishment and development of this new industrial city attracted many settlers to the area. White, native-born Americans, European immigrants and African Americans, all came to Gary seeking employment in the mills or to make a living off the industry. Gary experienced the class struggles that dominated American culture during this era, including that between labor and management. The greatest worry of the founding fathers of Gary was that with the influx of the workers needed to make their company function would include those that supported organized labor, a possible disruption to their new investment's profitability. Many of the founding fathers that formed United States Steel had vivid memories of the violence and business disruption of the Homestead Steel and Pullman labor strikes of the decade before.⁴⁷ In an attempt to control this from happening in their new city, they decided to separate the industrial center from the residential areas of the city by placing the industrial complex to the north of the Grand Calumet River running along seven miles of the

⁴¹ Schoon.

⁴² W.P.A. Writers Program, The Calumet Region Historical Guide, (Place of publication unknown: Garman Printing Co., 1939), p.151. (hereafter referred to as Writers Guide)

⁴³ Schoon, p. 152.

⁴⁴ Writers Guide, p.151-153.

⁴⁵ Schoon, p. 156.

⁴⁶ Schoon, p. 152.

⁴⁷ Hardy Green, The Company Town: the Industrial Eden's and Satanic Mills That Shaped the American Economy, (New York: Basic Books, 2010), p. 114-115. (hereafter referred to as Green)

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south shore of Lake Michigan.⁴⁸ To have enough room to do this the planners moved the Grand Calumet River south, about a quarter mile, to its present location; forming what many locals referred to as a "moat".⁴⁹ The corporation then limited access into the industrial areas by building only three bridges across the river into the industrial complex. They built the industrial area, north of the river, up above lake level by using sand removed from the dunes south of the river in the areas owned by U.S. Steel. These lands would become the commercial and residential districts of the new city. It is within the western limits of this area that the Combs Addition Historic District is located.

The history of development within the Combs Addition Historic District can be divided into three construction periods. The first lasted only one year with the three, two-story townhouses being constructed in the 400 block of Ellsworth Street in 1928. There would be no additional building for nine years. The end of this era was due to the onset of the Great Depression. The second building period started in 1938 and lasted until 1942. This was sparked by an upswing in the economy due to industrial growth and by a housing shortage that this recovery caused. This took place along the 400 and 500 blocks of Rutledge Street, the 400 block of Ellsworth Street, and the north side of 4th Avenue between these two streets. This period came to an end with the onset of WWII and the Federal government's control of building materials. The third, and last, building period began in 1946 and ended in 1951. It was during this period that the apartment houses along W. 5th Avenue and the houses in the 500 block of Ellsworth and Marshall Streets were built. There is only one house built within the district after 1951 and with it the district's infill was complete, this was in 1959.

Building within the district began in 1928 with the construction of the three townhouses located between 444 and 458 Ellsworth Street. A review of the Polk City of Gary directories indicates that these were rental properties when they were first constructed. The structures are located in the Gary Land Company's 6th addition and were part of a large building boom that took place in Gary during the 1920s. This building phase between 1923 and 1929 has been called Gary's Augustan Age by local historians because of the tremendous amount of construction within the city during those six years.⁵⁰ When these three townhouses were constructed they would have had a large undeveloped area to their east, this area would not be built upon until 1937. However, immediately to the west of the district, along the 400 block of Marshall Street and beyond, west and north, is part of Gary known as Ambridge. This is short for American Bridge, a large steel bridge manufacturer with a plant located to north, just over the Grand Calumet River. The employees of this company lived in the Ambridge area which started to build up in the 1910s; these three townhomes were probably built as income property to take advantage of its close

⁴⁸ This area would eventually contain Indiana Steel, American Bridge Co, American Sheet and Tin Plate Co, the National Tube Co, the American Steel and Wire Co., the American Car and Foundry Co., the American Locomotive Works and the Universal Portland Cement Co.

⁴⁹ James Lane, City of the Century: a History of Gary Indiana, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1978), p.28. (hereafter referred to as Lane)

⁵⁰ James B. Lane, ed., Steel Shavings, vol. 37, 2006, Gary's First Hundred Years: a Centennial History of Gary, Indiana 1906 - 2006, p. 75 (available at Calumet Regional Archives, University of Indiana North, Gary, Indiana)

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proximity to the plant. Further development was delayed for several years with the onset of the Great Depression. The balance of the area that became the Combs Addition remained undeveloped until the second building era began in 1937 and lasted until the early months of World War II, ending in early 1942. During this era the GLC still controlled the sale of their properties, selling them to individual homeowners or builders. Gary Land Company was relaxing its complete control by allowing builders to construct several homes at one time, even if they did not yet have a buyer for the property. This appears to be in part due to a housing shortage in Gary, driven by an increased demand for steel. Also, the United States Steel Corporation had come to terms with organized labor and the fear of a disrupted productivity was greatly lessened.

New construction within the district during the second and third building periods was made easier by the policies of the new Federal Housing Authority in an attempt by the federal government to alleviate the national housing shortage. Leslie I. Combs and son Allen led the way by starting construction of eleven new residences in the 400 block of Taft Place, one block to the east of the district.⁵¹ This started a building period that carried over into the district along the 400 and 500 blocks Rutledge Street, the 400 block of Ellsworth Street and along the south side of W. 4th Avenue between these two streets. The houses along W. 4th Avenue are very similar in construction to the eleven residences on Taft Place. The Combs were not the only builders to work in the area at this time. Another was Certified Homebuilders, Inc. of Gary (Ford L. Bruce, president, Harris A. Roy, treasurer). They built the two houses at 524 and 530 Rutledge Street, both of these houses were damaged by fire when under construction in 1941.⁵²

A May 1941 newspaper advertisement describes one of the houses located within the district, at 438 Ellsworth Street (built during the second period) as, "an attractive, modern, 6-room brick; 3 large bedrooms, extra lavatory, fireplace, automatic oil heat; \$9400."⁵³ This description would fit a majority of the residences located within the district. The second building period came to an end with the onset of World War II when the Federal government placed controls on building materials.

The final building period began in 1946. This primarily took place along the 500 block of Ellsworth and Marshall Streets and along W. 5th Avenue between Ellsworth Street and Taft Place. Of this final build-out, the majority of the construction was done by L. I. Combs and Sons. They built the four apartment buildings on the north side of W. 5th Avenue between Ellsworth and Rutledge and the houses south side of W. 5th Avenue between Rutledge and Taft Place. The company was also responsible for all the construction of the houses located on the 500 block of both Ellsworth and Marshall Streets.

The Combs organization was started by Leslie Ira Combs (1878-1959). Combs came to Gary in 1908 from Cayuga, Indiana with his wife, Ella and young son, Allen. In 1917, Combs formed a

⁵¹ "11 New Homes Being Erected Are on Taft Place," Gary Post Tribune, 27 July 1937, p.4, col. 1.

⁵² "Flames Roar through Two New Houses," Gary Post Tribune, 13 May 1941, p.6, col.3.

⁵³ "Houses for Sale, Ellsworth, 438," Gary Post Tribune, 7 May 1941, p.27, col. 5.

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building partnership with Joseph Verplanck and began a building construction career that spanned almost six decades. In 1927, his son, Allen, joined the firm and his younger son, Leslie, Jr., joined the organization in 1940.⁵⁴ In his career Combs and his organization built over two thousand individual homes, ten apartment buildings and many commercial buildings in Gary. Many of these were in the Gary Land Company's additions located to the west of Broadway, where the Combs Addition Historic District is located.⁵⁵ Many fine examples of the houses he built can be found in the Lincoln St., Eskilson and Horace Mann Historic Districts, all of which are located west of Broadway.⁵⁶ By 1941, the Combs organization had moved his offices from Broadway to a location just opposite the southwest corner of the historic district at 2645 Wabash Ave. One of Leslie, Sr.'s major accomplishments was the postwar construction, in 1953, of the Village Shopping Center at 35th and Grant Avenue in Gary. This, according to his obituary, was the first enclosed shopping center in the Midwest. At the time of his death Leslie, Sr. was residing within the Combs Addition Historic District at 2508 - W.5th Avenue, in one of the apartment buildings his firm had built. His son Allen also resided in the district at this time in the house at 2401 W. 5th Avenue.

⁵⁴ "Leslie Holmes Sr. Dies; Pioneer City Business Leader," Gary Post Tribune, 2 July 1959, p.1, col.1.

⁵⁵ "L. I. Combs, One of the Earliest Builders in Gary, Still Active," Gary Post Tribune, Jubilee Edition, 27 May 1956, p. A9.

⁵⁶ Note: the location of many of these houses can be found in the Gary Land Company architectural files located in the Indiana Room at the Gary Public Library.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Journals

James B. Lane, ed., Steel Shavings, vol. 37, 2006, *Gary's First Hundred Years: a Centennial History of Gary, Indiana 1906 – 2006*. Calumet Regional Archives, University of Indiana North, Gary, Indiana.

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"11 New Homes Being Erected Are on Taft Place," Gary Post Tribune, 27 July 1937, p.4, col. 1..

"Land Company Tenants Have Last Chance Saturday to Buy Their Houses," Gary Post Tribune, 29 July 1937, p. 12, col. 4.

"Modern Aim to Get Most For Dollars," Gary Post Tribune, 5 May 1941, p. 18, col. 1

"Houses for Sale, Ellsworth, 438," Gary Post Tribune, 7 May 1941, p.27, col. 5.

"Design of Modern Home Involves Developments in Plan and Structure," Gary Post Tribune, 12 May 1941, p. 8, col. 3.

"Flames Roar through Two New Houses," Gary Post Tribune, 13 may 1941,p.6, col.3.

"L. I. Combs, One of the Earliest Builders in Gary, Still Active," Gary Post Tribune, Jubilee Edition, 27 May 1956, p. A9.

"Leslie Holmes Sr. Dies; Pioneer City Business Leader," Gary Post Tribune, 2 July 1959,p.1, col.1.

"U. S. Is Facing Building Era," Hammond Times, 9 January 1937, p. 16, col.

"Taylor Beats Independence To The Draw," Hammond Times, 4 April 1937, p. 5, col. 1.

"25,000 Doubled Up," Hammond Times, 15 July 1937, p. 7, col. 8.

"US Steel Ends Gary Lot Sales," Hammond Times, 30 July 1937, p. 13, col. 9.

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"Await Naming of Successor, Capt. Norton," Valparaiso Vidette Messenger, 18 November 1938, p. 4, col. 6.

"Norton Post is Taken by Sam H. Cohn," Valparaiso Vidette Messenger, 29 November 1938, p. 8, col. 3.

Combs Addition Historic District _____

Lake County, Indiana _____
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Electronic Sources

“The Federal Housing Administration (FHA),” Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) website, available at: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/housing/fhahistory. Last accessed 3 January 2013.

“HUD Historical Background,” *Housing and Urban Development website*: available at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/about/admguide/history.cfm>. last accessed 17 January 2013.

Unpublished Sources

Buechley, Martin, et al. Steelmaker-Steel Town: Building Gary, 1906-1930, “Steeltown,” (a photographic exhibit September 1990 produced by the Calumet Regional Archives at Indiana University Northwest, copy available in Calumet Archives)

Lake County Deed Book 14.

Lake County Deed Book 15.

Lake County Indiana Deed Book 736.

Lake County Indiana Deed Book 738.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 089-232-15001-100

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 21.11 acres

Use the UTM system

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1. Zone: 16	Easting: 469113	Northing: 4605856
2. Zone: 16	Easting: 469561	Northing: 4605859
3. Zone: 16	Easting: 469546	Northing: 4605394
4. Zone: 16	Easting: 469108	Northing: 4605375

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Start at the northeast corner of the intersection of Marshall and Wabash Streets. Proceed southeast along the north curb of Wabash Street until you reach its intersection with W. 6th Avenue. Turn east and follow the north curb of W. 6th Avenue to the southwest corner of the intersection of the alley between Rutledge Street and Taft Place. Turn north and proceed along the west side of the alley until you intersect the east/west running alley to the south of W. 5th Avenue. Cross over to the north side of the alley and turn east. Proceed along the north side of the alley to the northwest corner of the alley's intersection with Taft Place. Turn north and proceed to the northwest corner of the intersection of Taft Place and the east/west alley paralleling the north side of W. 5th Avenue. Proceed west along the north side of the alley to the northwest corner of the alley's intersection with the north/south alley located between Taft Place and Rutledge Street. Turn north and travel along the west side of the alley to the southwest corner of its intersection with W. 4th Avenue. Turn west proceeding along the south side of W. 4th Street to the southeast corner of the intersection of W. 4th Avenue and the alley located between Ellsworth and Marshall Streets. Turn south and proceed along the east side of the alley to where the alley intersects with the east/west alley paralleling the north side of W. 5th Avenue. Turn east and proceed along the north side of the alley until you reach the northeast corner of the alley's intersection with Ellsworth Street. Turn south and proceed along the east side of Ellsworth until you reach the southeast corner of the intersection of Ellsworth and the east/west alley that parallels 5th Avenue. Turn west proceeding along the south side of the alley to the

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southeast corner of the intersection of the alley and Marshall Street. Turn south proceeding along the east side of the street until you reach the starting point.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

These boundaries include all sites listed within the Combs Addition Historic District in the *Lake County Interim Report*.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Gregg Abell, consultant
organization: Partners in Preservation, Inc.
street & number: 8167 Patterson St.
city or town: Dyer state: IN zip code: 46311
e-mail gabell@bsugmail.net
telephone: 813-312-3483
date: Jan. 24, 2013

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Combs Addition Historic District

City or Vicinity: Gary

County: Lake State: Indiana

Photographer: Gregg Abell

Date Photographed: Photos 3,4,5,7,8,9,10, 12,14,15 and 16 on July 26, 201, photos 1, 2, 6, 13, 17 on November 14, 2012, photo 11 on February 28, 2014.

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 17. Perspective of south side of 2500 block of W. 4th Avenue. View to southwest.
- 2 of 17. Perspective of south side of 2500 block of W. 5th Avenue. View to southeast.
- 3 of 17. Perspective of north side of 2500 block of W. 5th Avenue. View to northwest.
- 4 of 17. 407 Rutledge Street. View to east.
- 5 of 17. 435 Rutledge Street. View to east.
- 6 of 17. Perspective of west side of 400 block of Rutledge Street. View to northwest.
- 7 of 17. 539 Rutledge Street. View to east.
- 8 of 17. 543 Rutledge Street. View to east.
- 9 of 17. 560 Rutledge Street. View to west.
- 10 of 17. 551 Rutledge Street.
- 11 of 17. 430 Ellsworth St. View to west.

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- 12 of 17. 439 Ellsworth St. View to east.
- 13 of 17. 450-452 Ellsworth St. View to west.
- 14 of 17. Perspective of west side of 400 block of Ellsworth Street. View to northwest.
- 15 of 17. 547 Ellsworth St. View to east.
- 16 of 17. 565 Ellsworth St. View to east.
- 17 of 17. Perspective of east side of 500 block of Marshall Street. View to southwest.

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.460 et seq.).

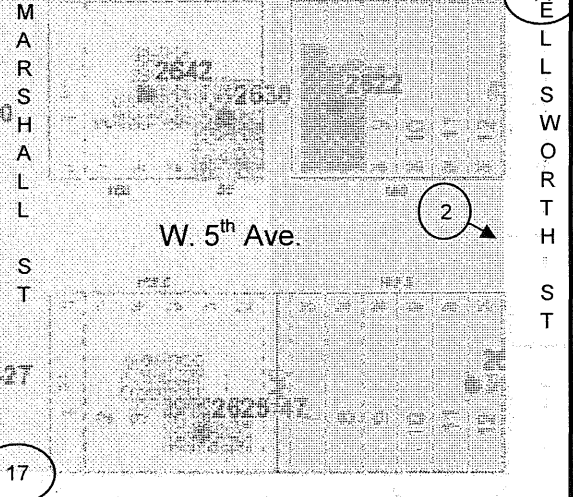
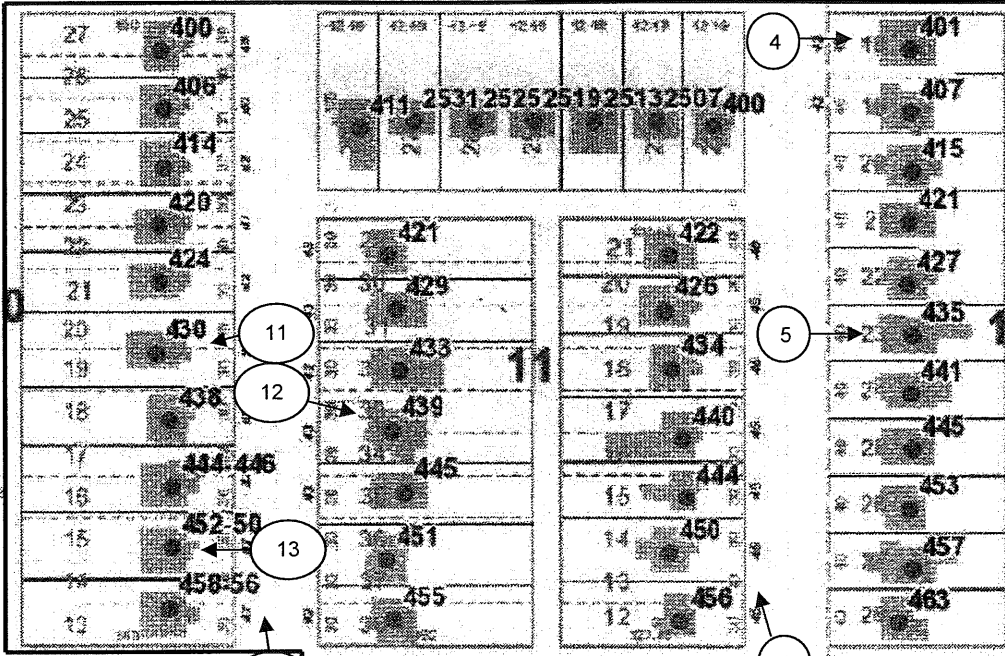
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

W. 4th Ave.

GLC 6th Addition

GLC 5th Addition

NORTH

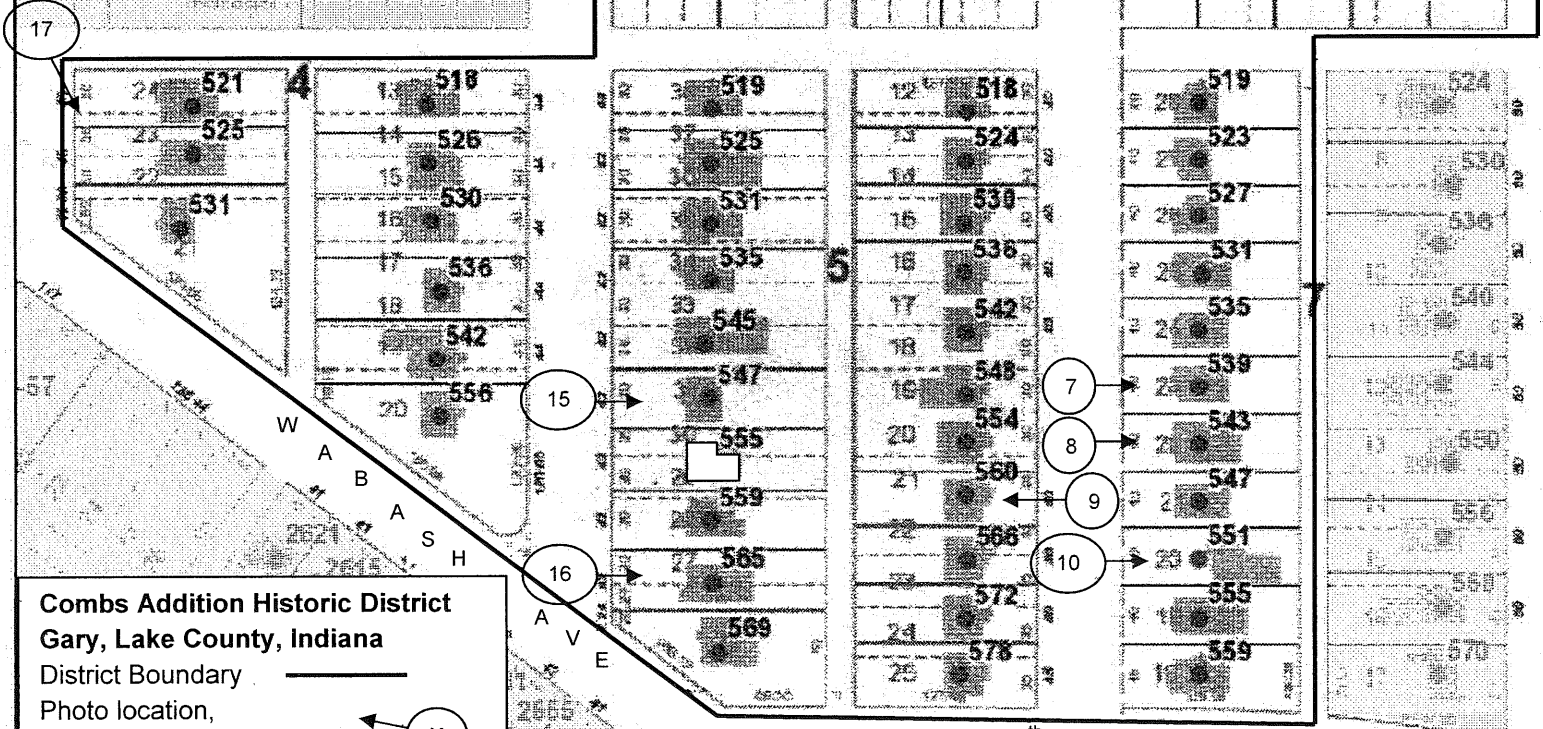


W. 5th Ave.

W. L E W S W O R T H S T

R U T L E D G E S T

T A F T S T



W 6th Ave.

**Combs Addition Historic District
Gary, Lake County, Indiana**

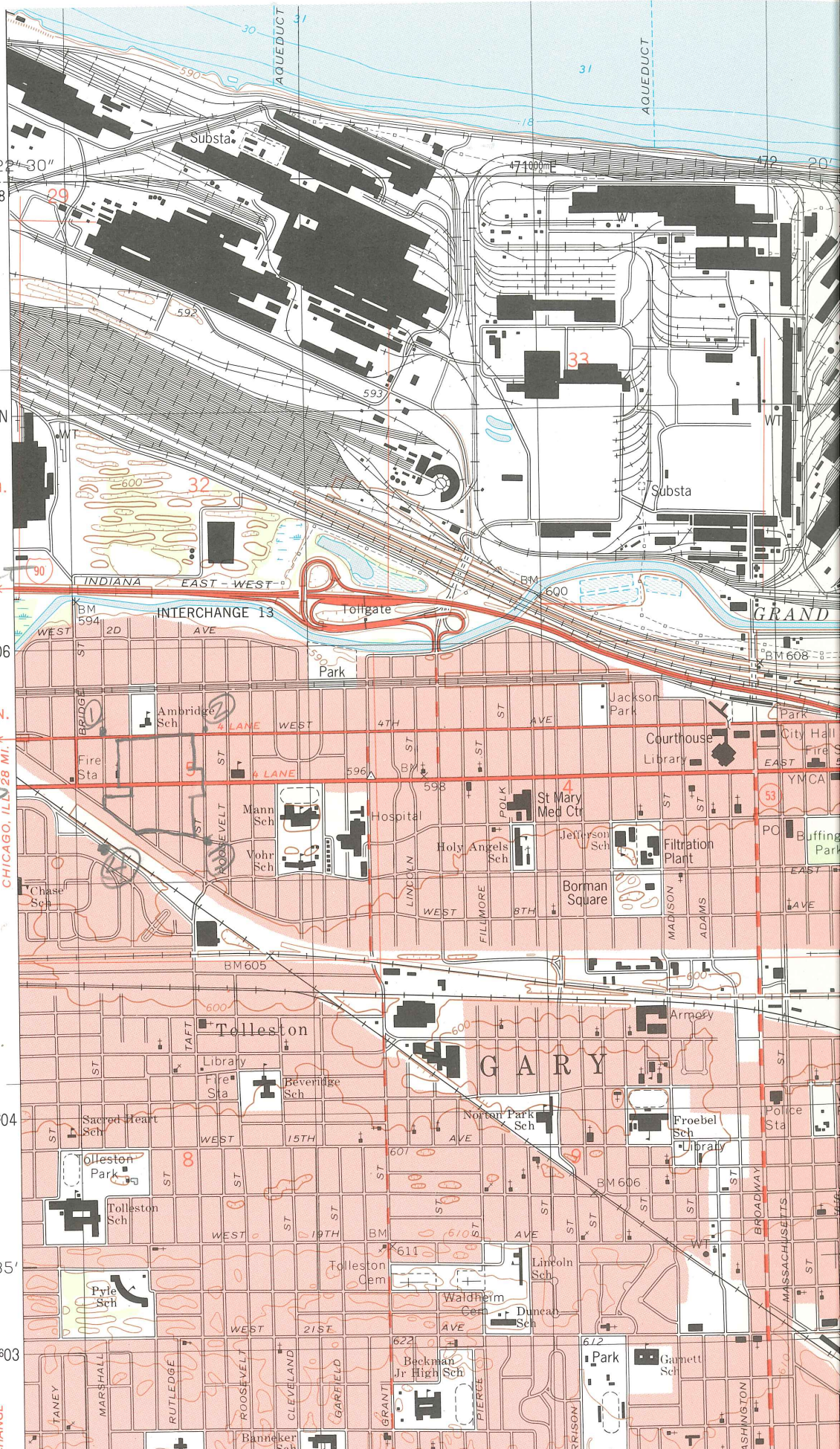
District Boundary

Photo location,
number and camera direction



● Contributing Structure □ Non-contributing structure

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



3567 11 NW
(WHITING)
87° 24' 30"
41° 37' 30"
4608

4607000mN

T. 37 N.

R. 39 W.

CHICAGO, ILL. (INTERSTATE 94) 22 MI.

35'

4603

CONES ADDITION
HISTORIC DISTRICT
LAKE CO., IN
NAD 83 UTM'S

① 469113 4605 856
② 469561 4605 859
③ 469546 4605 394
④ 469108 4605 375

GARY QUAD

INDIANAPOLIS BLVD. INTERCHANGE
CHANGE