



CITY OF SOUTH BEND

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION



PROPOSED (CITY of SOUTH BEND) LANDMARK

3016 PORTAGE AVENUE

“PORTAGE MANOR”

SOUTH BEND, IN

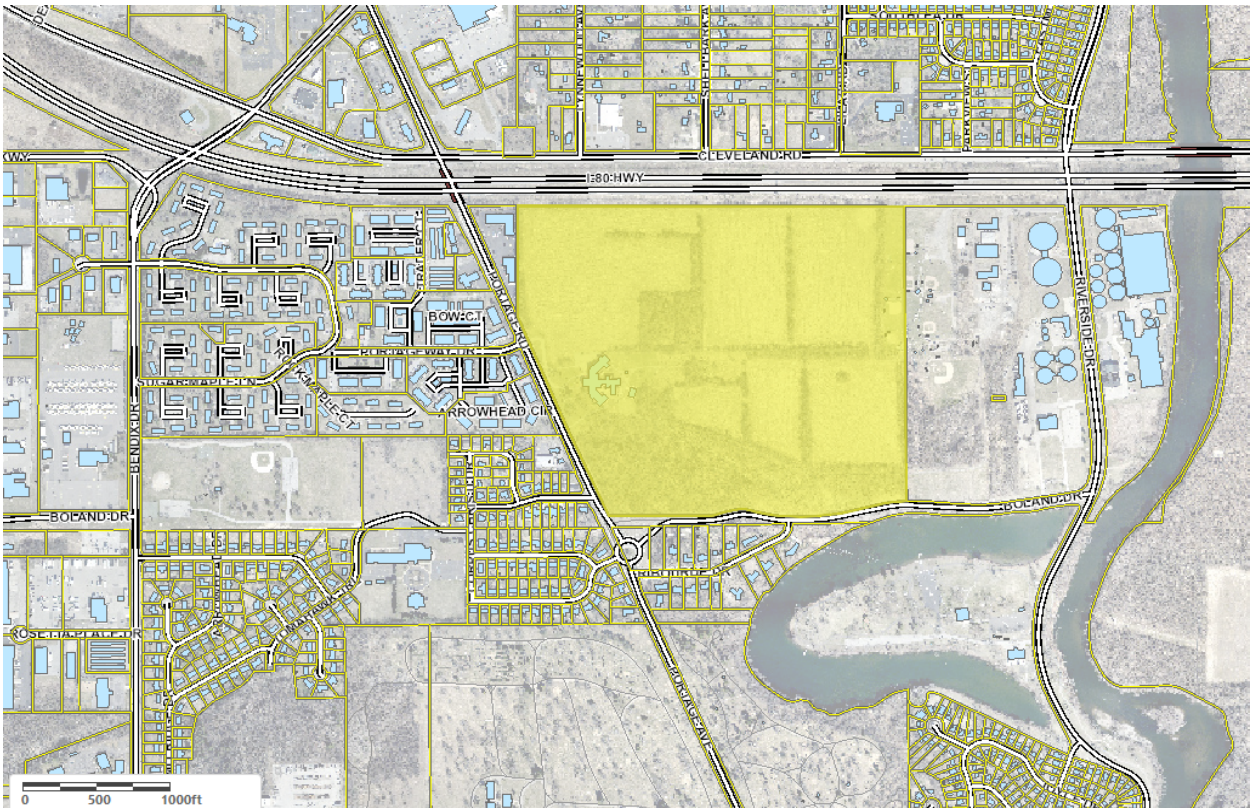
46628

SARAH ANDREWS
PRESIDENT

A CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT
OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

ADAM TOERING
HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADMINISTRATOR

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PROPERTY LOCATION

PARCEL STATE ID: 71-03-27-201-001.000-026

PARCEL ID: 018-2229-8542

ACRES: 123.62

OWNER NAME: St. Joseph County

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 3016 PORTAGE RD



PORTAGE MANOR – February 6, 2020



PORTAGE MANOR – February 6, 2020

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

This property is located on the east side of Portage Avenue just south of the Indiana Toll Road, in South Bend, Indiana. It is described as being 113.8 acres northeast 1/4 of Portage Avenue, section 27-38-2E of St. Joseph County. The St. Joseph County Infirmary, now called Portage Manor, at 3016 Portage Avenue stands on property that was originally owned by Rezeau and Nancy Brown.

The original occupant of this land, Rezeau Brown, was born in New Jersey in 1824 and came to St. Joseph County, Indiana in 1834, and is thus regarded as one of the areas earliest pioneers. Rezeau Brown was a mason by trade and was responsible for erecting many of the city's first buildings, including the first Odd Fellows Hall and the first college building in Notre Dame University. In 1852 Mr. Brown took up farming in German Township, he later traded his contracting business for land speculation and bartering which is how he acquired the land at 3016 Portage Avenue.

In 1905, the Board of County Commissioners purchased the Brown Farm, beyond the Riverview Cemetery, for \$20,962.50, as the site of the new County Farm and Infirmary. A large Classical revival structure was erected for the infirmary by the Keogan Construction Company, who submitted the winning bid of \$72,549.69. The plans for the building were drawn by local architects George W. Freyermuth and R. Vernon Maurer.

When the building was not completed by the Keogan Construction Company within the contract period, the Federal Union Surety Company assigned the building responsibility to the Miller and Donahue Lumber Company of South Bend. The actual cost of the infirmary, including the cost of the farm, and the sewer was \$126,370.80. The building was designed to be 50 by 450 feet, made of red brick with stone trimmings, consisting of two stories and a basement. The plans for the building included the administration department of the asylum located in the center. The residence of the superintendent occupied the front portion of the building. Immediately behind this residence was the women's quarters and to the left were located the men's quarters. Each ward included hospital rooms, nurse rooms and toilets and baths. An operating room was also located on the main floor of the building. The new facility was built to accommodate about 90 women and 195 men.

On April 4, 1907 the patients were transferred to the new building described as, "one of the most beautiful and salubrious." This new building brought the County into what was then considered the modern era of health care. Although the institution was historically defined as being an infirmary, it was, and is, a public facility existing for the purpose of providing shelter and care for those dependent upon the public for subsistence.

Thomas E. Clancy was appointed superintendent of the county infirmary in 1932, for a term of four years at an annual salary of \$1,800.00. Mrs. Clancy was named matron of the institution for a salary of \$1,200.00. Under Mr. Clancy the infirmary farm was worked to capacity to aid in reducing the cost of feeding the residents. Clancy set out a hundred fruit trees and went into poultry raising on an extensive scale to help bring down the per capita cost of the operation. The existence of the county farm helped make the infirmary as self-supporting as possible and gave some residents opportunity to gainfully occupy themselves. Although most of

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the work of tilling 600 acres was too heavy for the elderly men of the institution, there were other tasks that they performed, such as, caring for the poultry and gathering eggs. Other inmates were involved in sorting potatoes, wrapping paper around the Keifer pears and helping in the canning process.

Stephen A. Newrock was appointed superintendent of the County Home starting January 1, 1940, with his wife serving as the Matron. In 1943, the St. Joseph County Council appropriated \$7,000.00 for the construction of a livestock barn at the infirmary. Operation of the farm netted the county \$6,034.50 in profits in 1942. Thus, farming continued to be an integral part of the history of the St. Joseph County Infirmary. In November of 1946, requests for sealed bids for the construction of a hog barn were solicited by the St. Joseph County Auditor, indicating an expansion in operations.

In January of 1947, the St. Joseph County Infirmary is described as “truly outstanding” in a report published by the Indiana Department of Public Welfare. Changes in state law passed later that year result in the renaming of the St. Joseph County Infirmary to the “St. Joseph County Home.” This legislation also required that financial support of institutions like the county home would be supported by county township funding, instead of by a county-wide tax.

Superintendent Newrock died May 22, 1962. His wife, Ms. Hattie Newrock, assumed the role of acting superintendent upon his death. Administration of the County Home came under scrutiny in 1962, following an expose by the South Bend Tribune. Scrutiny of the care and conditions that residents lived in at the time led to a Grand Jury investigation, documenting living conditions and that some residents were housed in jail cells. Allegations of impropriety regarding the theft/loss of meat slaughtered at the County Home farm circulated in newspapers at the time. Ms. Newrock submitted her resignation in December of 1962, pending an end date on February 1, 1963

Senator Robert F. Kennedy visited the County Home on Thursday, April 4th, 1968, where he spoke to approximately 100 residents in the facility’s dining room. This low-key event followed a large (5,000+ person) speaking engagement held at the University of Notre Dame. Kennedy left the County Home and travelled to the St. Joseph County airport, where he would be informed that Martin Luther King, Jr. had been shot. That evening he would go on to give the impromptu speech to mourners of Martin Luther King, Jr. in Indianapolis.

In 1989, after 18 months of renovations the manor was a place that its residents could once more appreciate. Although patients range in age from 29 to 90, it is essentially a home for the aged who have no families or whose families cannot or will not provide them care. The renovation preserved the building's turn-of-the-century character. The institution has been known by a variety of names, such as poor house, the infirmary, the poor farm and the old age asylum, and by 1962 a legislative decree designated it as the County Home.

The remnants of the Brown farm such as the smoke house and a couple of barns were demolished in February of 1999.

Portage Manor was listed on both the State and National Register of Historic Places on June 15, 2000; as such, the structure is eligible for financial assistance to ensure its preservation.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

This is a two-story structure with attic and basement designed in the Classical Revival Style by Feyermuth and Maurer. The building is "Y" in shape with projections and has a concrete foundation with cut stone at ground level and brick above ground level. The walls are made of red brick with quoins and string courses of Chicago common brick. It also has a molded wooden frieze below the roofline. The roof is a pitched gable with pedimented gable ends and dormers and is covered in asphalt roofing. It also has circular windows in the gable ends with molded cornice. The structure boasts a full height projecting front gabled entrance portico with cut-stone Ionic columns supporting an entablature and an enclosed gable end with an ornate oval window. The porch also has a second level balcony, tile flooring, wide first story stairs and wrought iron balustrades.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The main entry doors are framed in dark wood, with sidelights, engaged Doric columns, leaded glass transoms and newer aluminum screen doors. Most of the windows were replaced in 1989 and are 12 over 1 insulated double hung sashes with flat brick arches and pronounced Chicago brick keystones. The building is located on 113.8 acres, allowing for an expansive wooded lawn, a circular drive, parking lot, and a pole barn.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based on the Historic Preservation Commission's Local Landmark Criteria adopted by the Common Council, the building at 3016 Portage Avenue meets the criteria in three of the following four areas:

1. Embodiment of elements of architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship which represents an architectural characteristic or innovation.
2. Educational value.
3. Suitability for preservation.
4. Identification with the life of a person or persons of historical significance.

The building fulfills criteria #1 as an excellent example of a turn-of-the-century Classical Revival style government infirmary. The building is rated "Outstanding" in the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory.

The building fulfills criteria #2 as an example of a turn-of-the-century County Infirmary. The building represents the changes in public views and treatments of the mentally handicapped and elderly.

The building fulfills criteria #3 by the integrity of its original construction with little alteration to the facade. The building is an impressive classical revival style structure and a prominent feature of St. Joseph County's history.

Staff finds that the building meets the criteria for designation as a Local Landmark and recommends that the Commission send such a recommendation to the Common Council. Staff advise that the Commission consider two additional concerns when making their recommendation:

1. **LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** Further discussion regarding the proposed Landmark's legal description is necessary. The entire parcel is not recommended for Landmark designation. Focus should be directed towards the main structure and 'approach' to the building from Portage Avenue.
2. **INTERIM PROTECTION:** The received request for nomination for this landmark asks for 'Interim Protection' to be applied to the property. The threat of the closure of "Portage Manor" causes concern for the future of the structure.

Originally drafted by HPC Director Rhonda Lynn Summers, 2000.

Updated and revised by Historic Preservation Administrator Adam Toering, 2023.

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Maps and Imagery of Area of Interest:

Michiana Memory has a [wonderful selection of maps](#) that show the subject area. Below are links to specific pages showing the Portage Manor Site, corresponding to different years:

[1863 – Map of St. Joseph Co., - “German Township”](#)

[1875 – An Illustrated Historical Atlas of St. Joseph Co., Indiana, 1875 – “German Township”](#)

[1895 – Standard Atlas of St. Joseph County, Indiana, 1895 – “German Township”](#)

[1911 – Standard Atlas of St. Joseph County, Indiana, 1911 – “German Township”](#) – first map showing County ownership, of 139.69 acres.

[1929 – Atlas and Plat Book of St. Joseph County, Indiana, 1929 – “German Twp”](#) – County has expanded land ownership east, adding 65.73 acres. The area immediately adjacent to the river remains privately owned.

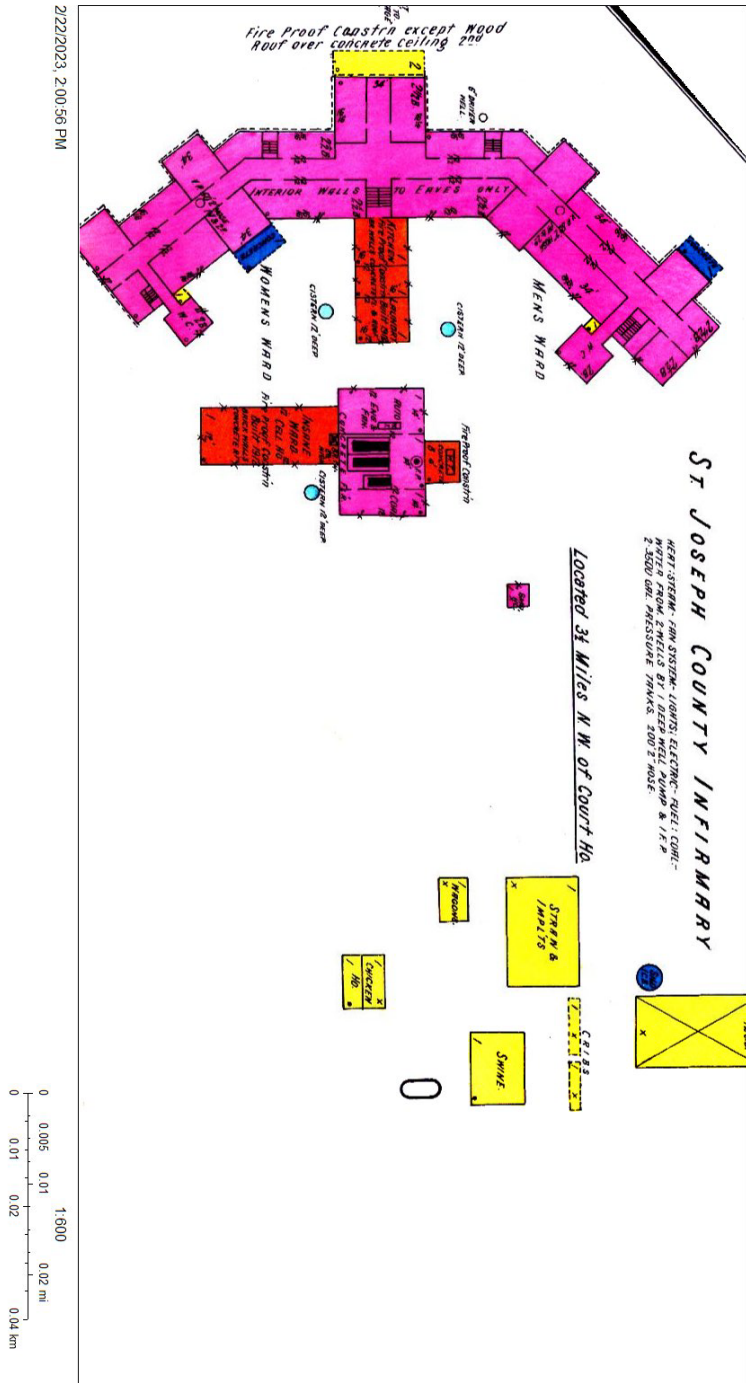
[1936 – Plat Book of St. Joseph County, Indiana, 1936](#) – German Twp. – This map indicates that by 1936 the County has acquired all the property East to the river.

Aerial Imagery:

[Historic Aerial Imagery – St. Joseph County GIS Website](#)

- The Barns and outbuildings to the east of the main structure/complex were torn down between 1998 and 2002. These were the structures that supported the County’s working farm.
- The existing pole barn due east of the main complex was erected between 1994 and 1998.

1917 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map



National Fire outages Conservation Service (NFCS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) | copyright 2011 | copyright 2015 | copyright 2020 | Credit: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Haz. Map -- U.S. National Library of Medicine | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) | copyright 2019 | copyright 2018 |

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ADDENDUM – HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Previous Landmark Attempt – 2000-2001

The Commission advocated for the Landmarking of Portage Manor in 2000 and 2001. This attempt was not successful.

- The HPC reviewed the nomination in January of 2000 and sent the Common Council of South Bend a favorable recommendation for landmark designation. Minutes from those meetings are available online:
 - [January HPC Meeting](#) – the staff report can be found on pages 18 – 23. The [transcript of the January meeting can be found here](#), on page 21.
- [City of South Bend Common Council, Zoning and Annexation Committee met on February 28, 2000](#) to have first reading on Bill No. 10-00 to establish Portage Manor as a Local Landmark. Much discussion took place. The Bill was continued until April 10th, 2000 for staff and the chairperson to “contact the County Commissioners for their input on this proposed designation.”
- [City of South Bend Common Council, Zoning and Annexation Committee met on April 10, 2000](#) to again revisit the bill. It was then continued until October 10, 2000 at the request of the petitioner (HPC).
- [City of South Bend Common Council, Zoning and Annexation Committee met on October 9, 2000](#) to again revisit the bill. The petitioner again requested it be continued until November 13th, 2000.
- There are no minutes from a November 13, 2000 Zoning and Annexation Committee meeting.
- [City of South Bend Common Council, Zoning and Annexation Committee met on February 12, 2001](#) to again discuss Bill No. 10-00. Discussion result in the proposal being continued until February 26, 2001.
- [City of South Bend Common Council, Zoning and Annexation Committee met on February 26, 2001](#) to again discuss Bill No. 10-00. After deliberation regarding the legal description that would include the entirety of the County-owned parcel, it was sent to the full council with an unfavorable recommendation.
- [City of South Bend Common Council met on February 26, 2001](#) – After a request from the petitioner to withdraw (to discuss a compromise regarding legal description), Bill No. 10-00 was stricken from the agenda, with a unanimous vote.

Local Landmark Eligibility Assessment:

- No major exterior changes to the structure have occurred since 2001. The structure remains worthy of being designated a Local Landmark.
- Previous attempts at Landmark designation failed because the legal description was proposed as the entirety of the parcel of Portage Manor.
- Truncating the legal description may result in a less contentious landmark designation process.



March 6, 2023

Ms. Sarah Andrews
President
Historic Preservation Commission of South Bend
and St. Joseph County
227 W. Jefferson Boulevard, Suite 1400
South Bend, Indiana, 46601

RE: Request to Landmark Portage Manor

Dear Ms. Andrews,

I am writing today to request the Historic Preservation Commission of South Bend and St. Joseph County initiate interim protection followed by permanent landmark status for the historic Portage Manor county home located at 3016 Portage Avenue. The request is prompted by decisions of St. Joseph County officials which indicate an uncertain future for this community landmark.

The request does not contemplate landmarking the entire parcel encompassing the farm ground. Nor are we concerned about the development of the preponderance of the land to the north and east of the building. However, the designated parcel should contain sufficient ground to protect the character defining features of the site such as the front yard setback from Portage Avenue, the north side yard to any new proposed access road, ravine to the south, and sufficient acreage to the east to allow for additions to Portage Manor and/or new constructions needed in the future to support that building. While there is State law governing development near a cemetery, I would add that the cemetery and adjacent land would also benefit from protection.

Constructed in 1906, Portage Manor, aka St. Joseph County Infirmary, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in June of 2000. It is recognized for architectural importance for its Classical Revival design by South Bend architects Freyermuth and Maurer. It is also recognized for social history for its "role in the public welfare of St. Joseph County and as an example of the type of facility- the modern county infirmary – that was erected after the late nineteenth century and role in public health and human services." The public deserves a say in its future through protection of this important site which the National Register listing does not provide.

While deliberations are on-going by County officials about the future use of the building and discussions- negotiations are understood to be underway about the sale of the parcel, the lack of protection for Portage Manor and the immediate land around it is of utmost concern. Landmark status will provide assurance that the building will not be demolished should the property be sold and that any proposed changes will be made in its reuse will be done in a sympathetic manner while facilitating development of the adjacent ground.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Best regards,

Todd Zeiger
Director, Northern Regional Office

Cc. Adam Toering, Administrator



CITY OF SOUTH BEND

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

March 13, 2023

St. Joseph County Board of Commissioners
Commissioner Baxmeyer
Commissioner Dieter
Commissioner Fleming
227 W. Jefferson Boulevard
South Bend, IN 46601

Dear County Commissioners,

On March 7, 2023, HPC Staff received a formal request for the Commission to investigate the building known as “Portage Manor”, with an address located at 3016 Portage Avenue, South Bend, IN 46628, for Local Landmark designation, as well as a request for “interim protection”, a temporary status placed on potential landmark properties that restricts changes, modifications, and/or demolition for a maximum period of six months. The landmark proposal for the property is reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission and they shall make a recommendation on the basis of historical and cultural significance, educational value, and suitability for preservation. As the property owner you are receiving this as written notice of the aforementioned proposal. I have attached a copy of the request to this correspondence for reference.

The request – as received from the statewide preservation advocacy non-profit, *Indiana Landmarks* – is for the following:

“This request does not contemplate landmarking the entire parcel encompassing the farm ground. Nor are we concerned about the development of the preponderance of the land to the north and east of the building. However, the designated the parcel should contain sufficient ground to protect the character defining features of the site such as the front yard setback from Portage Avenue, the north side yard to any new proposed access road, ravine to the south, and sufficient acreage to the east to allow for additions to Portage Manor and/or new constructions needed in the future to support that building. While there is State law governing development near a cemetery, I would add that the cemetery and adjacent land would also benefit from protection.”

This request does not define a specific legal description, affording some leeway for discussion regarding what land such a description will ultimately include.

SARAH ANDREWS
PRESIDENT

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OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADMINISTRATOR

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This landmark proposal will be presented to The Historic Preservation Commission at their next regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, March 20, 2023 at 6:00pm in the Council Chambers on the 4th floor of the County-City Building, 227 W. Jefferson Blvd., South Bend, IN. The Commission will discuss the request and make a decision concerning next steps.

As the property owner the Commission invites you to attend the meeting and speak during the privilege of the floor to ensure your opportunity to voice your concerns and ask questions of the Commission related to the landmark proposal.

The Historic Preservation Commission remains committed to preserving the built environment of the City of South Bend and unincorporated St. Joseph County.

Sincerely,



Adam Toering
Historic Preservation Administrator
P: 574-235-7478
E: atoering@southbendin.gov

CC:

Bill Schalliol, St. Joseph County Economic Development
St. Joseph County Council
South Bend Common Council
Mayor James Mueller