

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. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Polk Street Concrete Cottage Historic District
other names/site number The Edison Concept Houses

2. Location

street & number 604 - 614 Polk Street
city or town Gary
state Indiana code IN county Lake code 089 zip code 46402

N/A	not for publication
N/A	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

[Signature] 8/2/2011
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Deputy SHPO
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- other (explain:)
- determined eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register

[Signature] 9.15.11
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Polk Street Concrete Cottage Historic District
 Name of Property

Lake Co., IN
 County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
 (Check only one box.)

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

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4	2	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
4	2	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Concrete in the Steel City: The Edison
 Concept Houses of Gary, Indiana

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Craftsman/Bungalow

foundation: CONCRETE
 walls: CONCRETE

 roof: ASPHALT
 other: _____

Polk Street Concrete Cottage Historic District
Name of Property

Lake Co., IN
County and State

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Polk Street Concrete Cottage Historic District consists of four individual houses located in the First Subdivision of Gary, Indiana. They are located on the west side of the 600 block of Polk Street. The district contains four contributing resources, and two noncontributing resources (garages). All the houses are occupied.

Narrative Description

The district is located on Polk Street between 6th and 7th Avenues. It is bordered on the north by an apartment building, on the east by Polk Street and a parochial school, on the south by the school's playground, and on the west by an alley, a house, and a church.

In plan, each cottage is identical in size. Their footprints are east-to-west oriented, 16'x40' rectangular blocks separated by only a few feet. The porches are approximately 6'x16.' 604 and 612 have second stories that run the length of the house, and are assumed to have three bedrooms. The upper story of 608 and 612 only covers about two-thirds of the building's footprint, and is assumed to have two bedrooms. In elevation, the concrete cottages are two stories in height, and have raised basements. Side and rear elevations are devoid of ornament. In proper light, the two foot square modules of the metal concrete forms used in the 1910 construction of the houses are visible. Side opening are placed in functional locations. For example, small casement windows light living rooms that are located adjacent to the porch, and doubled windows light dining areas located in the center of the house. Additional openings allow for one window per room per side for cross ventilation. Each front façade displays a raised, one story, flat roofed porch. The monotony of repetition typical of mass-produced housing is lessened through variations in the number and location of windows, stylized parapets, and cast details.

Only 612 Polk Street is completely constructed of concrete. 604, 608, and 614 have concrete exterior walls and porches. The roof, floors, and interior partitions are constructed of dimensional lumber. Each house has a flat roof (that sheds to the building's rear), front and side parapet walls, and a chimney. Architectural ornamentation is formed in the front façade's concrete walls. Cast details include panels, drop ornamentation, windowsills, and varying parapet walls.

604 Polk Street (Photo #3)

The main façade of 604 Polk Street has a single story, flat roof porch that covers the lower story. It is accessed from its north side. The porch façade is topped by copings that simulate capitals. The wall's outer edges are battered. Two large window openings have been enclosed with paired one-over-one double-hung windows. The openings are topped with flat hoods supported by brackets. The brackets at the center of the porch are longer than the outer brackets. A rectangular recessed ornament is located between the windows, and four, recessed rectangles are located below the lower corners of the two window openings.

The second story has a flat parapet roof topped with a simple coping. The coping connects two decorative corbel blocks. A central one-over-one double-hung window, flanked by smaller one-over-one double-hung windows, is located over the porch. All three windows are linked by a cast concrete sill. A long, recessed, horizontal rectangle, flanked by recessed ornamentation, is located over the windows.

Polk Street Concrete Cottage Historic District
Name of Property

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608 Polk Street (Photo #4)

The lower story of 608 Polk Street is a one-story porch that has a central entry door flanked by two windows. It has been enclosed with a door and two six-over-one double-hung windows. The porch's parapet roof has paired battlement-like tabs on each corner that extend past the roofline. Two one-over-one double-hung windows are located above the porch on the second story, and are linked with a common window sill. The façade is topped with a gabled parapet. A recessed ornament of a half circle over an elongated rectangle is located in the center of the parapet. Ornaments of cast squares over large inverted triangles are located on the façade's outer edges.

The property has a non-contributing one-story garage.

612 Polk Street (Photo #5)

612 Polk Street has a one-story porch accessed from the south façade. Its front wall is slightly battered. The porch's east, or front, façade has two large, square openings with slightly arched tops and chamfered upper corners. The porch's roof has battlement-like tabs that extend past the roofline at its center and on each corner. The house's front façade has paired one-over-one double-hung windows adjacent to the entry door. The upper story has two one-over-one double-hung windows with formed concrete sills. The façade is topped by a Mission Style inspired pent roof parapet supported by decorative concrete brackets. The wedge-shaped brackets display recessed squares, and are located over decorative recessed triangles.

The property has a non-contributing one-story garage.

614 Polk Street (Photo #6)

The porch for 614 Polk Street is entered from the north. The porch's flat roof is topped by a coping and has battlement-like tabs on each corner that extend upwards past the roofline. The tabs have decorative recessed pentagonal shapes. The house's façade has an entry door and paired one-over-one double-hung windows on the ground floor. The upper story has two one-over-one double-hung windows with formed concrete sills. The façade is topped by a parapet that displays a low pediment flanked by battlement-like tabs. Decorative recessed ornamentation is located at the center of the pediment and on the wall's outer edges.

The second story has been enlarged by extending the floor over the ground story (Photo #8). A gable-roofed canopy extends off the rear of the house.

Polk Street Concrete Cottage Historic District
Name of Property

Lake Co., IN
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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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

ENGINEERING

INVENTION

Period of Significance

1910-1960

Significant Dates

1910

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Creighton, D.F.

The United States Sheet and Tin Plate Company

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Period of Significance (justification)

The district's period of significance is 1910-1960. Cottage construction began in 1910, and the fifty year benchmark for eligibility is 1960. City directories indicate the mill continued to rent the houses to employees into the early 1970's. Rental periods appear to have been as short as a year and for up to decade or more in length. Some units continued to be rented for several years to the widows of mill workers.

Polk Street Concrete Cottage Historic District
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Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

None.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Polk Street Concrete Cottage Historic District is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A as an example of the historic trends in the development and growth of the City of Gary. It represents a novel concept for house construction designed, patented, and promoted by inventor Thomas A. Edison, and refined by other architects and inventors. Their construction was regarded as the country's first experiment of this type of large-scale housing production. Constructed for the employees of the U.S. Sheet and Tin Plate Company, they are also representative of one solution to the city's housing shortage caused by the influx of workers to the new mills. The district was identified in the Multiple Property Document Form "Concrete in the Steel City: The Edison Concept Houses of Gary, Indiana."

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

The district is eligible under Criterion C as an outstanding example of early twentieth century company-supplied worker housing that utilized experimental methods and materials of house construction. The houses were designed by architect D. F. Creighton of Ambridge, Pennsylvania. They exhibit simple, efficient, and homey spaces. The use of varying building heights, and cast details shows the architect understood the need for variation to lessen the monotony of mass production. The cottages are identified in the Lake County Interim Report and received an Outstanding rating.

The district is one of five included in the *Concrete in the Steel City: The Edison Concept Houses of Gary, Indiana* (2007) Multiple Property Document within the historic context of *United States Sheet and Tin Plate Company Concrete Houses of Gary, Indiana, 1910-1957*. By 1910, Gary's private enterprises could not meet the housing demand caused by the new U.S. Steel mill works and its subsidiaries. To help speed the transfer of management level employees, the subsidiary U.S. Sheet and Tin Plate Company constructed worker housing in cottages, apartments, and terraces of formed concrete. Later census data shows that the Polk Street cottages were rented to non-management level employees of the mill. It appears that by 1920, some managers and their families had secured housing elsewhere in the community. U.S. Sheet and Tin Plate Company continued to rent the Polk Street concrete houses to both their managers and general laborers into the 1970s; the concrete houses fulfilled their purpose of providing company housing for over 60 years.

The houses are the first large-scale attempt of employing Thomas Edison's concept of providing affordable and sanitary housing for the working classes. Beginning in 1906, Edison patented metal forms and a process for casting a house in a single pour. While Edison never successfully employed his invention, the concept was assumed and developed by others, including the Reichert Manufacturing Company (that patented the forms used in Gary). The method was described in 1920 as "small, light-weight unit steel forms."ⁱ Their advantage over other concrete forming systems (for instance wood or hydraulic forms) was the ability to be assembled with unskilled labor in repeated applications. The forms were invented and patented in Milwaukee, Wisconsin by August Reichert in 1911, and sold under the name of Reichert Adjustable Metal Forms. Apparently, it was further refined about 1919 and renamed Metaforms. The company is still actively producing concrete related products.

ⁱ Whipple, *Concrete Houses: How They Were Built*, 10.

Polk Street Concrete Cottage Historic District
Name of Property

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The houses in the district are privately owned. The Multiple Property Document presented the houses' historic context, significance, and conditions for listing. To be eligible, the district, must display the integrity of design, location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The overall design of the district's cottages is intact. Their exteriors represent original design and construction. The concrete building material has not been covered or altered. While two of the porches have been enclosed, they remain identifiable as a porch. The cottages are in their original location, and the historic, residential, First Subdivision context remains relatively intact. The cottage's materials represent the workmanship of materials, most notably the concrete walls and formed details.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

None.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Christopher Baas, *Concrete in the Steel City: The Edison Concept Houses of Gary, Indiana* (Multiple Property Document, 2007).

Harvey Whipple, "How Will the Individual Owner Get a Concrete House?," *Concrete Houses: How They Were Built*, (Detroit: Concrete-Cement Age Publishing Company, 1920).

Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, *Lake County Interim Report: Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory*, (Indianapolis, 1996).

Metaforms. Company files, Milwaukee, WI

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: _____

Polk Street Concrete Cottage Historic District
Name of Property

Lake Co., IN
County and State

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16</u>	<u>470830</u>	<u>4605160</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

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

The Polk Street Cottages Historic District starts at a point of beginning on the northwest property corner of 604 Polk Street; then east to the northeast property line of 604 Polk Street; then south to a point southeast corner of 614 Polk Street; then west to a point even with the west property line of 614 Polk Street, then north to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary uses easily identifiable points to define its limits, includes all contributing resources, and excludes neighboring properties. The boundary includes the free-standing concrete houses, which are the only resource of its type on this section of Polk Street.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christopher Baas
organization _____ date March 2010
street & number 21116 North Banbury telephone (317) 877-7799
city or town Noblesville state IN zip code 46062
e-mail _____

Polk Street Concrete Cottage Historic District
Name of Property

Lake Co., IN
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Polk Street Concrete Cottage Historic District

City or Vicinity: Gary

County: Lake Co. State: Indiana

Photographer: Christopher Baas

Date Photographed: August 2, 2008

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

604-612 Polk Street looking southwest. Photographed August 2, 2008.
1 of 10.

604-612 Polk Street looking northwest. Photographed August 2, 2008.
2 of 10.

604 Polk Street looking west. Photographed August 2, 2008.
3 of 10

608 Polk Street looking west. Photographed August 2, 2008.
4 of 10.

612 Polk Street looking west. Photographed August 2, 2008.
5 of 10

614 Polk Street looking west. Photographed August 2, 2008.
6 of 10.

604-612 Polk Street looking southeast. Photographed August 2, 2008
7 of 10.

Polk Street Concrete Cottage Historic District
Name of Property

Lake Co., IN
County and State

604-612 Polk Street looking northeast. Photographed August 2, 2008.
8 of 10.

614 Polk Street looking west (detail). Photographed August 2, 2008.
9 of 10

608 Polk Street looking west (detail). Photographed August 2, 2008.
10 of 10

Property Owner:

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

name _____

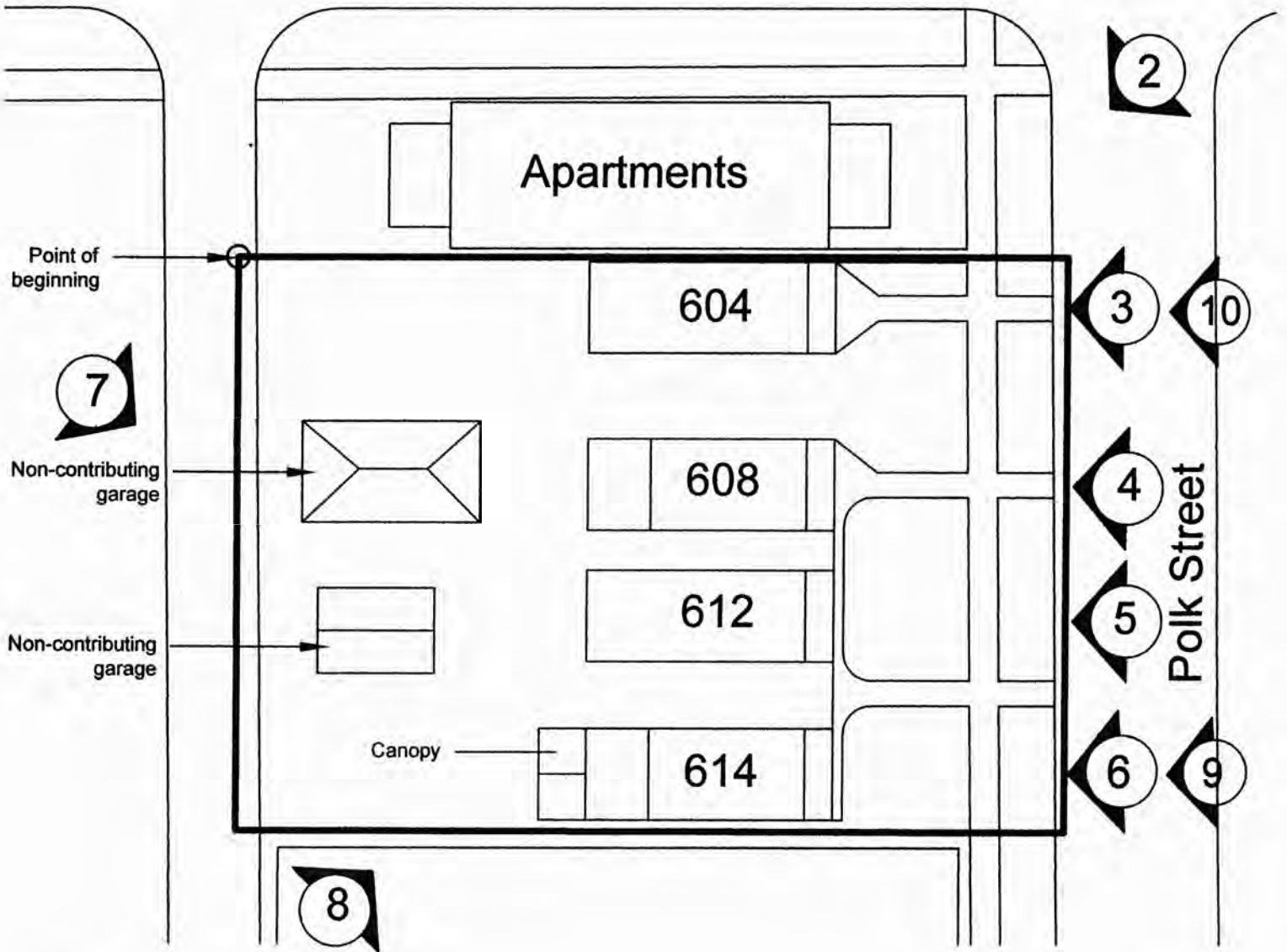
street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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,

6th Avenue



Point of beginning

Apartments

604

7

Non-contributing garage

608

3 10

Non-contributing garage

612

4

5

Polk Street

Canopy

614

6 9

8



District Boundary

1



Photo Number and Direction

Polk Street Concrete Cottage Historic District
Gary, Indiana (Lake County)



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Polk Street Concrete Cottage Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME: Concrete in Steel City: The Edison Concept Houses of Gary In
diana MS

STATE & COUNTY: INDIANA, Lake

DATE RECEIVED: 8/05/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/31/11
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/15/11 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/20/11
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000657

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 9.15.11 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places**

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

Polk Street Concrete Cottages H.D., Lake Co., IN #1



Polk Street Concrete Cottages H.D., Lake Co., IN #2





Polk Street Concrete Cottages H.D., Lake Co., IN #3



Polk Street Concrete Cottages H.D., Lake Co., IN #4



Polk Street Concrete Cottages H.D., Lake Co., IN #5



Polk Street Concrete Cottages H.D., Lake Co., IN #6

Polk Street Concrete Cottages H.D., Lake Co., IN #7



Polk Street Concrete Cottages H.D., Lake Co., IN #8

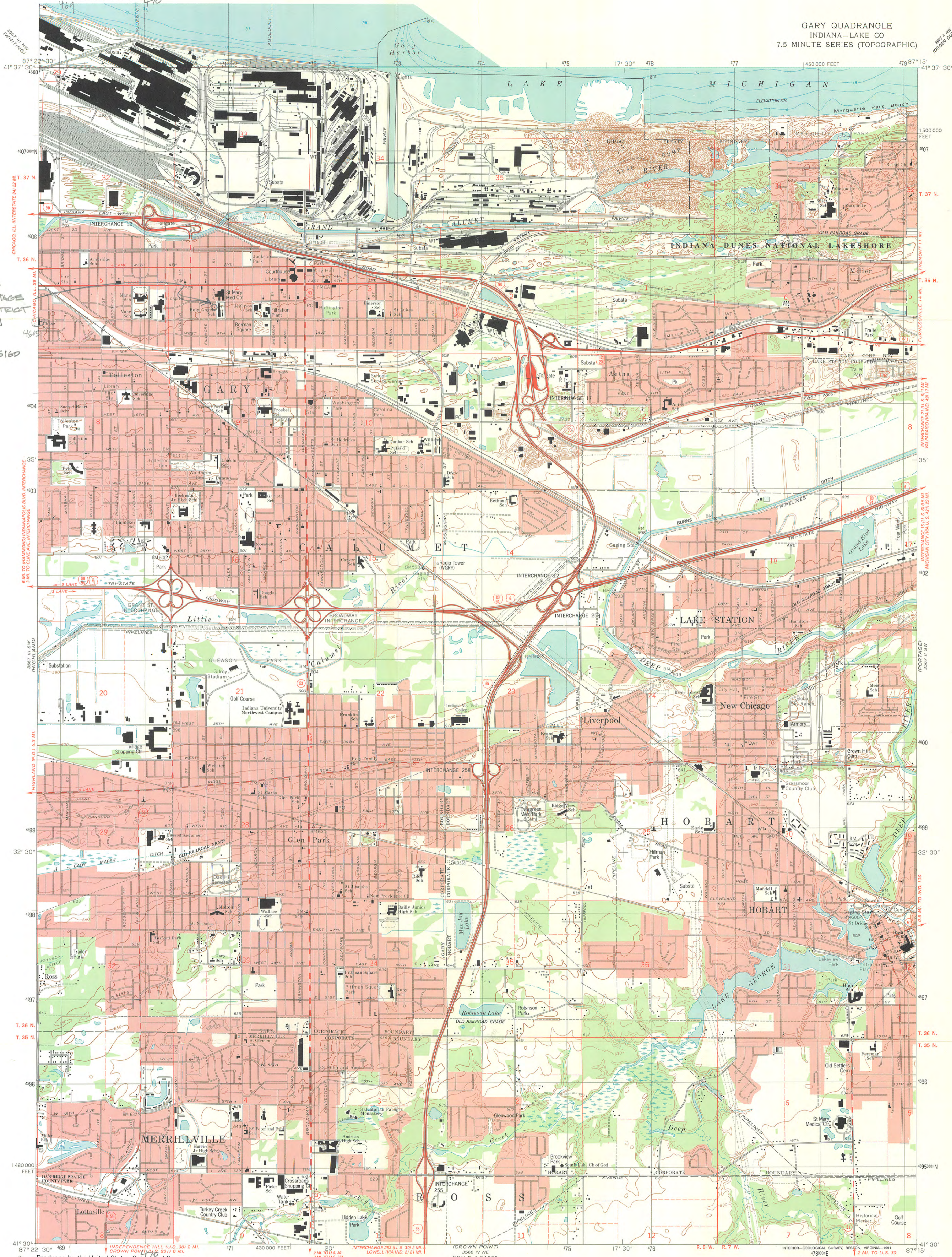


Polk Street Concrete Cottages H.D., Lake Co., IN #9



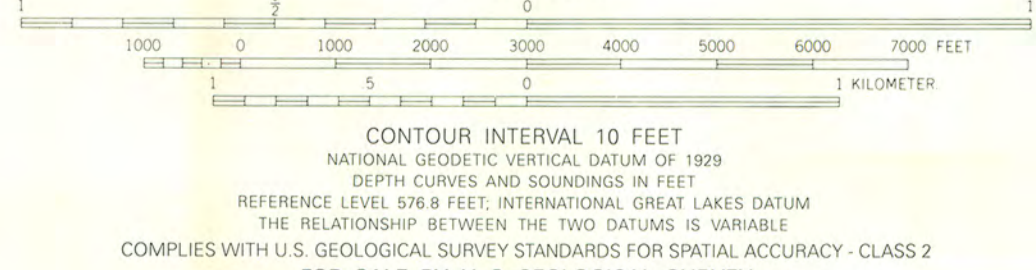
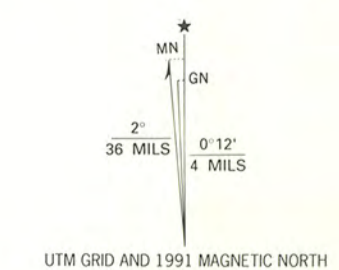
Polk Street Concrete Cottages H.D., Lake Co., IN #10





POK STREET
CONCRETE COTTAGE
HISTORIC DISTRICT
LAKE CO., IN
UTM:
16 470830 4605160
GARY QVAD

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
in cooperation with Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1951 and planimetric surveys 1953. Revised from
aerial photographs taken 1989 and 1991. Field checked 1991
Map edited 1991
Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS chart 14905 (1986)
This information is not intended for navigational purposes
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Indiana coordinate
system, west zone (transverse Mercator)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 16
1927 North American Datum
The difference between 1927 North American Datum and North
American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) for 7.5-minute intersections is
given in USGS Bulletin 1875. The NAD 83 is shown by
dashed corner ticks
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the
National or State reservations shown on this map
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET
REFERENCE LEVEL 59.8 FEET INTERNATIONAL GREAT LAKES DATUM
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
COMPLIES WITH U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY STANDARDS FOR SPATIAL ACCURACY - CLASS 2



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, all weather, Light-duty road, all weather,
hard surface, improved surface
Secondary highway, all weather, Unimproved road, fair or dry
hard surface, weather
Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route

FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80226, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

GARY, IND.
41087-E3-1F-024
1991
DMA 3567 III SE - SERIES V851



DNR

Indiana Department of Natural Resources



Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology • 402 W. Washington Street, W274 • Indianapolis, IN 46204-2739
Phone 317-232-1646 • Fax 317-232-0693 • dhpa@dnr.IN.gov • www.IN.gov/dnr/historic

August 2, 2011

Carol D. Shull
Interim Keeper of the National Register
National Park Service 2280
National Register of Historic Places
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20005



Re: Polk Street Concrete Cottages, Lake County, Indiana.

Dear Ms. Shull,

Enclosed is a National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Polk Street Concrete Cottages, Lake County, Indiana. The Indiana Historic Preservation Review Board reviewed the application and voted in favor of recommending its approval for the National Register of Historic Places.

Please address any questions you or your staff may have about this nomination to my National Register staff, Paul Diebold, Frank Hurdis, or Holly Tate.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Carter, Jr.
State Historic Preservation Officer

REC:PCD:pcd

enclosure: nomination package