

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Northside Boulevard Riverwall
other names/site number Northside Boulevard WPA Project 141-597-36421

2. Location

street & number 600-1100 Northside Boulevard N/A not for publication
city or town South Bend N/A vicinity
state Indiana code IN county St. Joseph code 141 zip code 46617/46615

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Signature of certifying official/Title [Signature] Date _____
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
 entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper [Signature] Date of Action 9-27-06

Northside Boulevard Riverwall
Name of Property

St. Joseph 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
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

New Deal Work Relief Projects in St. Joseph County, IN

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE: Park
RECREATION/CULTURE: Outdoor Recreation

LANDSCAPE: Park
RECREATION/CULTURE: Outdoor Recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

foundation CONCRETE
walls STONE: Fieldstone
roof
other

Narrative Description

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

Name of Property

County and State

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.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- Criteria A-G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
SOCIAL HISTORY
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1935-1955

Significant Dates

1935

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Works Progress Administration (WPA)

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Criteria for previous documentation on file (NPS).

Primary location of additional data:

- Criteria for primary location of additional data.

Name of repository:

Northside Boulevard Riverwall
Name of Property

St. Joseph IN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3.8 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	563010	4613490	3	16	563530	4612380
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	16	563390	4613490	4	16	563630	4612780

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Glory-June Greiff
organization _____ date 08-01-2005
street & number 1753 S. Talbott St. telephone 317/637-6163
city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46225

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name South Bend Parks & Recreation, Phil St. Clair, Supt.
street & number 321 E. Walter St. telephone 574/299-4765
city or town South Bend state IN zip code 46614

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

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

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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Northside Boulevard Riverwall

St. Joseph County, IN

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The City of South Bend, the seat of government in St. Joseph County, lies in the central north section of the county a few miles south of the Michigan state line. The St. Joseph River winds through the city skirting the east side of the downtown commercial area before turning in a westerly direction. Howard Park lies just east across the river from downtown South Bend, and the Sample Street bridge carries its route over the river to Northside Boulevard. The Northside Boulevard riverwall extends southward, and then eastward along the north bank of the St. Joseph River from the south boundary of Howard Park nearly two-thirds of a mile to the Sample Street bridge.

Apart from the interruption created in 1962 when the construction of the SR 23 bridge caused the demolition of a section of wall, the riverwall is continuous for about 3360 feet¹. The site includes the riverwall (photos 1,12), a fieldstone bridge, a fieldstone grandstand located in Viewing Park, and five additional fieldstone stairways at irregular intervals, leading down the bank from the boulevard to the water's edge. Another small stair descends a shallow slope but does not reach the water. The two sets of stairs that lie between the Sample Street bridge and the SR 23 bridge are the most elaborate. A paved walk – dubbed the Riverwalk – created in 1984, runs along the upper bank at the top of the stairs, is routed behind the grandstand, then curves toward the river and continues alongside the riverwall. Only at this point is the Riverwalk within the boundaries of the historic site. While this was not part of the original development, it does not destroy the overall integrity of the WPA work. The stonework is dislodged, even missing in places, especially along the river, where the bank has eroded away from the wall. The concrete mortar needs attention and is gone in some areas. Even so, this is not so great as to compromise the integrity of the structure.

A fieldstone wall, an extension of the northwest abutment for the Sample Street bridge, flanks a stairway whose outside wall curves down to the river (photo 2). The entire ensemble is composed of fieldstone of random sizes. The walls taper at their top. There is not a comparable structure on the other side of the bridge approach.

The next stairway, 243 feet downstream, is more elaborate (photos 3, 4). The top of the stair is set off by low fieldstone piers with roughly conical tops. The stair, which is about twelve feet in width, as well as the associated features are composed of fieldstone in mortar. The landing expands on each side to form exhedras composed of the fieldstone and concrete for the seating. Conical-topped piers form a midpoint punctuation and then the stairway continues straight toward the water, finally set off again by conical-topped piers.

The next stairway (photo 5), 150 feet farther downstream, is the most fanciful of all. The main stair is entered by way of two sets of curving steps that flank an exhedra-shaped space with a seat projecting from its riverside wall at the first landing. Smaller semi-circular benches also extend into the landing area to more or less face the larger seat. From this landing, the main stair extends to the water's edge where there is opening in the riverwall. Like the stairway

¹The SR 23 bridge underwent major repairs and reconstruction in 1984 and 1994.

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Northside Boulevard Riverwall

St. Joseph County, IN

upstream, this entire structure is composed of round-topped fieldstone walls punctuated at fairly even intervals by piers with conical tops. The seats are smooth concrete.

A grandstand (photo 6), located 741 feet downstream along the riverwall and past SR 23, was constructed to accommodate the audiences of boat races that were commonplace in the 1930s. This feature is located in a space known as Viewing Park, originally named LaSalle Park. The entire park has not been included in this nomination due to the number of modern intrusions it contains. The grandstand is 110 feet wide; its outside walls composed of the same fieldstone construction already seen in the previously described stairways. The concrete tiers within the walls replaced of the original concrete-capped fieldstone tiers at the time the Riverwalk was created. A staging area (photo 7) immediately in front of the grandstand juts into the river twelve feet and is surrounded by fieldstone-constructed riverwall. Prior to the construction of the Riverwalk, this area was surfaced in grass.

Another fieldstone stair, located 420 feet further downstream, extends directly down the bank to the water's edge with a landing about two-thirds there. These stairs are 8 feet wide and flanked by the same low fieldstone walls already described. The bank is interrupted by additional stairways 152 feet further downstream (photo 10) and 428 feet beyond that (photo 11) plus a shorter flight (photo 8) in the flatter part of Viewing Park. All are characterized by the same fieldstone construction already identified.

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Northside Boulevard Riverwall

St. Joseph County, IN

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Southeast of downtown South Bend, following the St. Joseph River, the fanciful fieldstone walls and stairs along Northside Boulevard, built of glacial stones gathered from fields around the county, could be called the quintessential WPA project. As described in the multiple property listing document, "New Deal Work Relief Projects in St. Joseph County, Indiana", the identified property type, "New Deal work projects related to parks and recreation", the Northside Boulevard riverwall is eligible for the National Register for its significance in the areas of recreation and social history (Criterion A). It is also eligible under Criterion C because the site as a whole and its individual elements are representative of the style of construction and site development created by the WPA in St. Joseph County. The site retains integrity of location and setting. Its design and materials remain largely intact and display typical WPA workmanship, specifically the fieldstone construction. The site's high level of integrity confirms its association with New Deal Work Relief Projects in St. Joseph County.

At least on paper, Northside Boulevard along the St. Joseph River was part of George Kessler's 1912 plan for the city's park and boulevard system. His ambitious ideas, typical of his work, called for a system of greenways surrounding the city and running along both sides of the river with parks at intervals. Northside Boulevard was constructed to connect the extant Howard Park (itself to be enlarged) to the smaller property then called LaSalle Park and proceed on to the Mishawaka city limit.

Among the first WPA projects undertaken in South Bend upon its inception in August 1935 was the construction and improvement of Northside Boulevard along the St. Joseph River southeastward from downtown. None of the original work on the boulevard roadway itself survives; later improvements built upon that foundation. The original surface of the roadway was gravel. Actually, work on the boulevard had begun before 1935 under the auspices of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA). Part of the development was the beautification of the riverbank itself, which was done in stages until all was completed in 1938. From Howard Park to Sample Street, WPA workers erected a riverwall using abundant fieldstone found throughout St. Joseph County. The wall was primarily decorative but helpful in flood control to some degree. At irregular intervals fieldstone stairways gave access from the boulevard to the river's edge. Improvement of the area, then called LaSalle Park², was the concluding phase completed in June 1938. Here the stairways were especially decorative, and WPA workers constructed a grandstand suitable for watching the boat races that were held on the river in that area. The park was adjacent to the National Guard Armory, on which the WPA also worked, building additions that included a garage. The riverbank beautification project was highly visible and a point of community pride.

WPA Projects related to parks and recreation often were constructed of recycled or locally acquired materials and assembled in a way that put less emphasis on high finish and refinement and

² Part of the former LaSalle Park became today's Viewing Park, which is the triangular area of land, the widest section between the river and the boulevard, that includes the fieldstone grandstand. The name LaSalle Park was transferred to another small park developed after World War II west of downtown South Bend.

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Northside Boulevard Riverwall

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more on direct application and simplicity. The stonework found in all elements of the riverwall site displays those qualities. The fieldstone, irregular in size and shape, was embedded in the mortar in such a way that it created irregular segments of wall and step surface that yielded an impression of rusticity. In summary, the site is locally significant and meets the registration requirements enumerated for its class of property type in the multiple property listing document. It merits listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

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St. Joseph County, IN

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

(See bibliography in "New Deal Work Relief Project in St. Joseph County" multiple property listing document)

Kessler, George E. & Co. "Plan of the Park and Boulevard System for South Bend, Indiana". 1912.

Report of the Department of Public Parks, South Bend. 1913.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

From the point at which the east bank of the St. Joseph River meets the southern boundary of Howard Park, follow the edge of the river upstream (southeasterly) to the Sample Street bridge, a distance of 3360 feet. From this point, proceed northeast along the bridge to the near edge of Northside Boulevard, a distance of 49 feet. From there proceed northwesterly along a line exactly paralleling the river's edge to a line extending due east from the point of origin.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes all of the continuous WPA-built fieldstone structures along the bank of the St. Joseph River along Northside Boulevard southeastward from Howard Park to the Sample Street bridge.

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Unless otherwise noted, the following information is the same for all photographs:

1. Northside Boulevard Riverwall
2. St. Joseph County, Indiana
3. Glory-June Greiff
5. Negatives on file with Historian-at-Large, 1753 South Talbott St., Indianapolis, IN

Individual photos:

4. 2/05
6. looking SE toward Sample Street bridge
7. Photo 1

4. 2/05
6. looking N from river's edge to stairs and bridge abutment
7. Photo 2

4. 2/05
6. looking WSW from sidewalk top of bank, down second stairway downstream from Sample Street bridge.
7. Photo 3

4. 2/05
6. looking N, detail, second stairway downstream from Sample Street bridge
7. Photo 4

4. 2/05
6. looking NW at third set of stairs downstream from Sample Street bridge
7. Photo 5

4. 8/05
6. looking NNW
7. Photo 6

4. 2/05
6. looking S toward SR 23 bridge
7. Photo 7

4. 8/05
6. looking NW at set of stairs downstream from grandstand
7. Photo 8

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- 4. 2/05
- 6. looking SW from boulevard down third set of stairs SE of Howard Park
- 7. Photo 9

- 4. 8/05
- 6. looking S from boulevard down second set of stairs SE of Howard Park
- 7. Photo 10

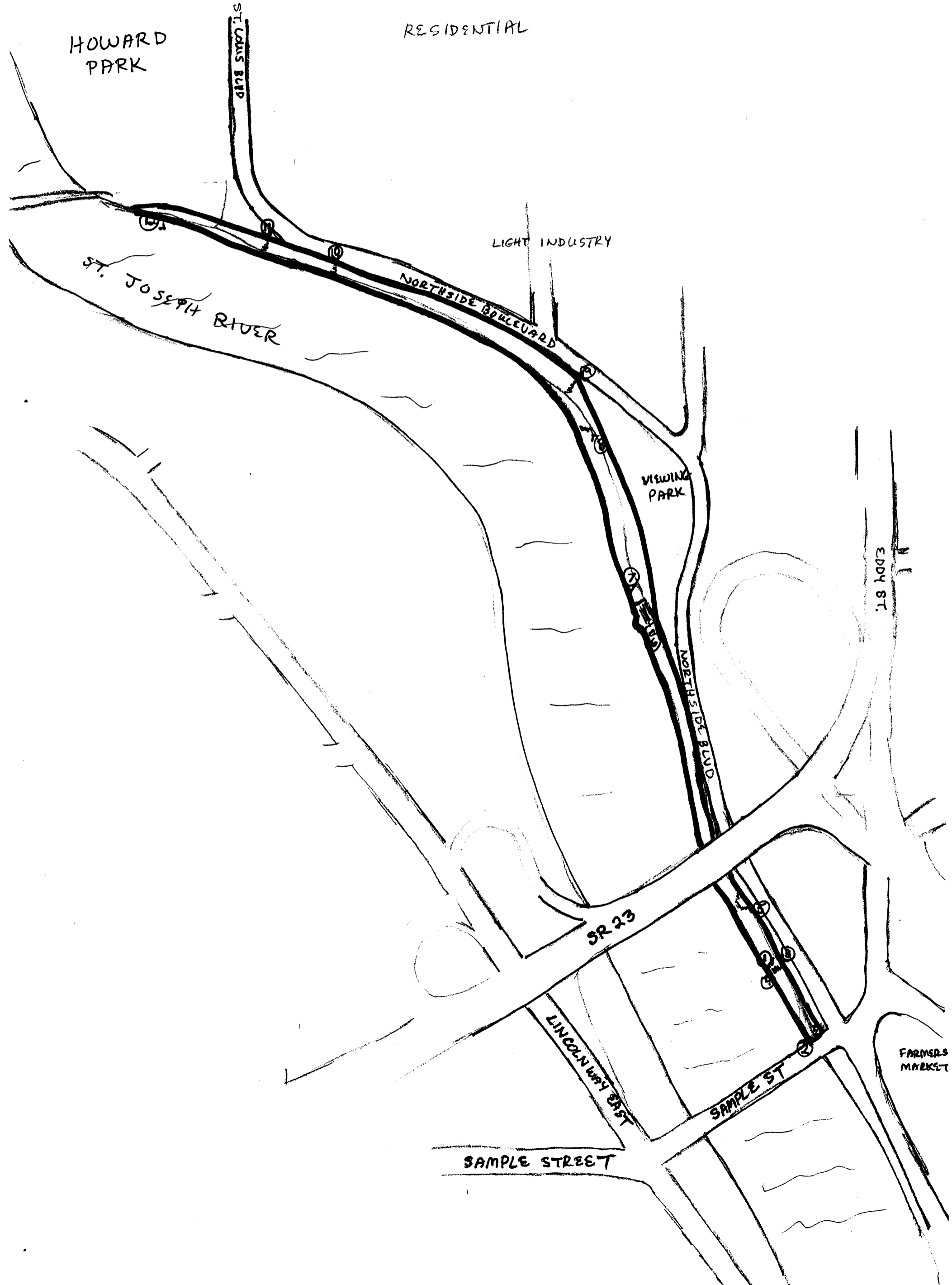
- 4. 8/05
- 6. looking S down first set of steps SE of Howard Park
- 7. Photo 11

- 4. 8/05
- 6. looking SE upstream from near S edge of Howard Park
- 7. Photo 12

NORTHSIDE BOULEVARD AND J. WILL

BOUNDARY —

(LINES & DISTANCES NOT EXACT TO SCALE)



HOWARD PARK

RESIDENTIAL

LIGHT INDUSTRY

ST. JOSEPH RIVER

NORTHSIDE BOULEVARD

VIEWING PARK

EDDY ST.

SR 23

LINCOLN WAY EAST

SAMPLE ST

SAMPLE STREET

FARMERS MARKET