

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.

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Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Villa San Bernardo Historic District

Other names/site number: Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Bedford

Name of related multiple property listing:

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

N/A

2. Location

Street & number: 1160 Broadway Ave.

City or town: Bedford State: Ohio County: Cuyahoga

Not For Publication: Vicinity: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

<u>Barbara Power</u>	DSHPO for Inventory & Registration	<u>July 9, 2015</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:		Date
Ohio History Connection, State Historic Preservation Office		
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		

In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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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:)

Patrick Anderson
Signature of the Keeper

9/1/2015
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>7</u>	<u>4</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>8</u>	<u>4</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION: Church-related Residence
RELIGION: Church School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT
HEALTH CARE: Sanitarium

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY REVIVALS: Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival
Modern Movements

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete, Brick, Wood, Ceramic Tile

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

Villa San Bernardo Historic District contains 22.96 acres, eleven buildings and one site, which includes natural features, designed gardens, and numerous sculptures. Located one mile from the center of Bedford, the Vincentian Sisters of Charity property is a wooded, hilly site, containing designed gardens and sculptures. Completed in 1931-32, the Motherhouse, historically known as Villa San Bernardo, is a three-story, brick building and is the primary building within the historic district. The Mediterranean Revival Motherhouse and the multiple Modernist buildings added to the property in the 1950s and 60s, as well as landscape features, distinguish the historic district. The buildings within the district maintain historic integrity, reflecting their respective styles, materials, and era of construction and the overall historic district maintains historic integrity. The Vincentian grounds were designed to be a "spiritual oasis from the city." Villa San Bernardo Historic District still reflects this ideal, retaining a wooded, secluded feel.

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Narrative Description

The Villa San Bernardo property contains 22.96 acres, eleven buildings (seven contributing, four noncontributing), and a contributing site. The landscape includes designed gardens, sculptures, natural features, and landscaped features, such as wooded pathways. Major construction dates from 1931 to 1979 and resources in the historic district include the following:

- A. Motherhouse/Villa San Bernardo – 1931-32 brick building with a 1979 addition; contributing
- B. Our Lady of Levocha Shrine – 1951-55; contributing
- C. Auditorium – 1955; contributing
- D. Retreat House (Emmaus) – 1954-1960; contributing
- E. Garage – c.1960; contributing
- F. Priest's Residence – 1952-53; contributing
- G. Tabor – c.1960 with a c.1980 addition; noncontributing
- H. Lumen Cordium High School (Light of Hearts Villa) – 1965 with a 1989 addition; contributing
- I. Garage/Service Building – Date unknown; noncontributing
- J. School bus garage – 1978-79; noncontributing
- K. Equipment shed – 1997; noncontributing
- L. Landscape/site – 1930-1960s; contributing

The Motherhouse, the historic district's pivotal building, sits at the highest point on the property and is several feet above Broadway Avenue, making the building barely visible from the street. A driveway enters the property in front of the Auditorium building, turns to parallel Broadway Avenue, passing by the Motherhouse, then goes west and downhill, splitting at the bottom of the hill to access Broadway again in front of the Retreat House or passing behind Lumen Cordium High School. On the hilltop, a grass lawn is between the driveway and the wooded slope down to Broadway Avenue. Another wooded hill is behind, to the west, of the Motherhouse. See Attachment A for historic images of buildings and gardens.

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Motherhouse (Villa San Bernardo): Photos 1-36

The Motherhouse (Building A) was originally built as an addition to a late 19th century house, although it appears as an independent building. Groundbreaking for the \$150,000 addition took place July 1931 and it was dedicated, in a Slovak sermon, on February 23, 1932. The addition contained space for 54 nuns and connected to the 19th century mansion via a passageway. The older building contained administrative offices and a chapel. The three-story brick building is Mediterranean Revival in style and has a clay tile roof. Roughly rectangular in form, the primary façade faces east toward the driveway and Broadway Avenue. The façade features three arched bays, encompassing windows for all three floors. At the first floor, paired windows are separated by Corinthian columns and each window has an arched stone hoodmold. Stone panels are between the second and third floors. The third floor windows are within the soldier course arches. The gabled end of the façade has a parapet wall with clay tile coping and a cross at the apex. The window bays are recessed and the pediment of the recess is defined by arched corbeling. A carved stone crest is within the pediment.

On axis, the entrances to the Motherhouse are on the north and south elevations. The entrances are recessed and emphasized by arched stone surrounds. A tripartite transom is above the paired doors. These elevations feature the same cornice corbeling pattern as the façade. A stone stringcourse serves as the header for the third floor windows and a continuous stone sill with dentils is underneath the second floor windows. The north elevation has arched niches on either side of the entrance.

The rear portion of the building is plain, lacking the ornamentation of the front. A random course stone water table is visible around most of the building. A raised basement, which is exposed to the rear of the building where the terrain slopes downward, was a functional part of the building containing the kitchen and dining room.

On the interior, the first floor contained offices, chaplain's quarters, and public gathering spaces, such as small sitting rooms and a large community room. The second and third floors were the living quarters for the sisters. In the basement and first floor, roughly the front half of the 1931 Motherhouse retains early 20th century architectural fabric. In the basement, a wood paneled room is intact, complete with linoleum flooring, leaded glass cabinets, and wood panel walls. Additionally, basement room layout was not changed, keeping the functional space complete.

On the first floor, rooms off of the north-south hallway, which corresponds to the entrances on the north and south elevations, contain a variety of historic materials. The hallway has arched doorways at hallway intersections and a coved cornice. The hallway floor has terrazzo panels in two different colors, which are laid in a diamond pattern. The northern entry foyer has wood paneled walls and ceiling. Two offices, formerly used as sitting rooms, are off of the vestibule. The smaller office, to the west, has wood paneled walls that are of a more vertical orientation than the vestibule paneling. The small office has a beamed ceiling arranged in a grid pattern. To

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the east, a larger office is off of the vestibule. It has wood paneled walls and a board ceiling. Exposed wood beams with inlaid brackets extend the width of this former sitting room. Within the chaplain's residential quarters, walls are paneled or have knotty pine. These rooms feature multiple built-in cabinets.

In 1976, the interior of the Motherhouse was remodeled. Designed by the Cleveland architectural firm of Lipaj, Woyar & Tomsik, the remodel was the first phase in a larger plan for the Motherhouse. Architect John F. Lipaj had previously designed the Lumen Cordium High School on the Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Bedford property (see description below). The 1976 remodel project included the demolition and new construction of several partition walls throughout the building. These wall arrangements created a new configuration in the rear half of the first floor. On the upper floors, larger residential bedrooms were created, typically by removing walls and combining two smaller rooms. The overall 1931 hallway configuration and circulation pattern remained intact, including stairwells and the elevator shaft. Evidence of the arched hallway partitions are still visible in some locations, such as on the third floor near the stairwell (Photo #35). The arch matches that seen on the first floor in the central hallway. The remodel project included new door trim, baseboards, and marble window sills, replacing the historic materials. At the basement level, an existing porch on the south end was removed and a new room was constructed on the same footprint as the porch. Labeled as a growing room, the roof of the new room created a patio at the first floor. Architectural plans indicate that the windows were replaced during the remodel, and the current windows date from 2000.

The second phase of construction for the Motherhouse included demolition of the existing 1800s house and a new addition built in its place. Also designed by Lipaj, Woyar & Tomsik, construction of the addition took place 1977-79. Modernist in style, the addition has a flat roof and is cubist in form with an asymmetrical façade. The addition is characterized by the contrasting materials of concrete panels against variegated blonde brick, the interplay of vertical and horizontal planes, and an integrated bell tower. Soaring, artistic bell towers were a common design feature of mid-20th century ecclesiastical architecture. The windows are within vertical bays, created by concrete piers, and are topped with recessed arched reveals. Arches are also seen in the bell tower and on rear elevations windows. This subtle design device relates the Modernist addition to the Mediterranean Revival building and gives it an element of the New Formalism style, popular from roughly 1955 to 1970.

On the interior of the 1979 addition, the basement continued to contain utilitarian spaces, such as the laundry and storage rooms, and added a new state-of-the-art kitchen, dining room, and three-car garage. The octagonal dining room features a heavy coffered concrete ceiling and multiple full-height windows, which provide views out to the wooded hillside. The first floor of the 1979 wing included numerous offices, a wood paneled conference room, and an octagonal chapel over the dining room. The chapel features paired arched stained glass windows and a wood ceiling. The unobstructed open room is supported by laminated wood beams. The ceiling has exposed

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beams arranged in triangular patterns and four triangular stained glass skylights. The second floor contains bedrooms.

The Motherhouse individually maintains historic integrity and currently appears as it did in 1979, upon completion of the new addition. Although the 1979 addition is sizeable in scale, it does not diminish the original building. The addition is sited to the rear and well below the roofline of the 1931 Motherhouse. Furthermore, the addition was constructed at the location of an older house; the 1931 Motherhouse, itself an addition, was never a freestanding building. The addition was part of an overall plan and design scheme that unified with the 1931 Motherhouse.

The exterior of the Motherhouse still reflects its two respective eras of construction. With the exception of replacement windows (installed in 2000), the 1931 Mediterranean Revival section of the building maintains its character defining features, such as clay tile roof, articulated deep reveal doorways, and corbelled cornice. Interior features, including wood paneling, knotty pine, wood ceilings and exposed beams, arched hallway walls, and built-in cabinetry, are still present reflecting materials of the early 20th century. The 1979 Modernist addition is intact on the exterior and retains a great deal of period materials on the interior. For example, the split-level foyer features ceramic tile flooring and stairs, an integrated planting bed, and a decorative tile wall adjacent to the door.

Lumen Cordium High School: Photos 37-42

Constructed 1963-65, the Lumen Cordium High School (Building H) is an L-shaped building, facing onto the intersection of Union and Northfield streets. It was designed for a capacity of 1200 students. Lumen Cordium High School is defined by a round gymnasium on the north end, a rectangular section, another round section in the ell, and a second rectangular piece, extending to the west. The building is characterized by arched windows in vertical bands, paired in the rectangular sections and singular in the round sections. Windows in the rounded ell are stained glass, of the dalle de verre technique, corresponding with the chapel. The building is faced with a pre-cast curtain wall system, comprised of exposed aggregate concrete panels. The pattern alternates between concave white panels that extend full-height and contrasting black panels that are flat. The white aggregate is comprised of larger stones versus the black aggregate, which is smaller. The school building responds to the slope of the Villa San Bernardo landscape. Facing Union Street, the building is two stories, but to the rear, it is three stories.

On the interior, historic materials are intact. The gymnasium has an ornate wood ceiling, arranged in diamond patterns. Terrazzo stairs with delicate arched metal railings are found in the stairwells. A vertical band of decorative glazed ceramic backsplashes is present at the water fountains. The basement dining room, located in the ell, curves around the rear portion of round building section. Here is where the building corresponds to the ground slope, exposing the basement level to the exterior. The dining room has a continuous bank of windows, providing an

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interplay of interior-exterior spaces. Marble wall panels emphasize the staircase at the basement level.

The school building was designed by John F. Lipaj Associates and is a combination of the New Formalism and Neo-Expressionism styles. Both styles were popular during the 1950s and 1960s and both sought to return an artistic sensibility to architecture. New Formalism elements of the building include the flat roof and the emphasized repetitive bays of arched windows, which invoke the essence of a Classical colonnade. Neo-Expressionism design elements include the scalloped effect of the alternating flat and concave panels, resulting in a sculptural building envelope, the textural quality of the aggregate panels, and the round sections.

The school was closed in 1987 and converted to a senior living facility, reopening in September 1989. An addition, with a porte-cochere for resident drop-off, was added to the front of the circular gymnasium in 2007. Completed by the same architectural firm as the original building, Tomsik Architects/Planners, the design utilized compatible materials and similar features such as arched windows and curved walls. The addition is harmonious with the original building, but does not try to directly copy it. Furthermore, a 1973 photograph indicates that a canopy was always on the building, in roughly the same location as the present addition and porte-cochere (See Attachment A).

Lumen Cordium High School individually maintains historic integrity and predominantly retains its 1960s appearance. With the exception of the 2007 addition on the north end, the building is little changed. The building's sculptural, artistic qualities are intact, including aggregate panels, projecting concrete window headers, contrasting round and rectilinear sections, and stained glass chapel windows. The addition does not adversely impact the historic character of the original building. It is lower in height and proportionately small in scale against the historic school. Visually, the addition does not diminish the historic school building's configuration – it's original, unusual shape is still evident. Only connecting to about a third of the gymnasium's exterior, the addition would be easily reversible. Within it, on the interior, the original exterior wall is still extant and exposed.

Secondary Buildings: Photos 43-49

There are a number of secondary buildings within the Villa San Bernardo historic district, including a shrine, auditorium, garages, and school/retreat buildings. The shrine and multipurpose auditorium were both constructed in the early 1950s as part of a \$300,000 expansion. Located north of the Motherhouse, a Mediterranean Revival style building (Building B) was completed in 1951 to house a shrine of Our Lady of Levocha. (Photo 43) This brick and stone building replaced an older, smaller structure. The symmetrical stone-faced façade has an arched entrance bay, comprised of a glass curtain wall, flanked by shorter flat-roof blocks. The central portion of the building has a curved, stepped parapet wall topped with a cross at the apex. The central block has embedded columns with Corinthian capitals at the corners. The slightly

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recessed side blocks each have a tripartite niche and are decorated with a Vitruvian wave at the cornice. The rear of the building is faced with brick. On the interior, the shrine has granite wainscoting and wall murals. Also referred to as a chapel, the shrine building contains altars from Italy, which were added to the building in mid-summer 1955.¹ The shrine building was dedicated in August 1955.

A large seating platform was added in front of the shrine building c.1960. The platform was partially covered with metal, flat-roof canopies that extend like arms out from the shrine building. The canopies abut the shrine and do not attach to it. They are not particularly sensitive to the design of the shrine and overwhelm it in scale. The actual shrine statue of Our Lady of Levocha was removed c.2010, upon relocation of the congregation to Cincinnati.

Built to accommodate large pilgrimages to the property, a \$100,000 auditorium (Building C) was constructed in 1954-55 and dedicated in October 1955. (Photo 44) The brick auditorium is a two story building, located south of the Motherhouse. The auditorium is of a conservative Modernist style, sometimes referred to as Streamlined Classicism. The façade, which faces inward toward the Motherhouse instead of the street, has a central projecting block with stone facing at the entrance level, three vertical windows at the upper (balcony) level with concrete surrounds, and a cross at the pediment. The entrance was altered in 1992-93 with the opening partially infilled and a glass box enclosure added at the door. A small one-story addition was added to the rear of the building in 1972. This addition is along the crest of the wooded hillside and is only visible from the rear parking area. A small, one-story rectangular addition was added in 1985 on the north, side elevation. This addition faces Broadway Avenue, is set back from the façade, and is much shorter than the original building. Its scale does not impact the Auditorium, its materials are compatible with the original, and along Broadway it is partially obscured by a stone wall lining the property. (Photo 58) The interior of the building has an auditorium with wood floor, a stage, and rear balcony. Vestibules are to either side of the auditorium. The interior retains some historic materials such as wood doors and exposed random ashlar pattern concrete block walls. Small cosmetic updates, such as new carpeting, lighting, installation of water fountains, and change of décor theme, were completed in 1996, when the current caterer leased the building. The interior configuration is intact, illustrating the building's historic function, and the present use of the building as a rental facility keeps the auditorium setting in place.

After the shrine and auditorium, several more buildings were added to the Vincentian property in the 1950s. Constructed 1954-1960, the Retreat House (Building D) was initially constructed to serve as a high school for Vincentian Sisters of Charity postulants and lay-girl students living at the Motherhouse. (Photo 45) To be called Levocha High School, the building was constructed by Bacon Construction, a small local company that was also involved with the construction of the Shrine. Construction was sporadic and the high school concept did not materialize. After

¹ 'Thongs to Visit Bedford Shrine,' *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, July 2, 1955.

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completion in 1960, the building became known as the Retreat House and was occupied during summer months by the Vincentian Sisters who had returned to the Motherhouse from parish schools. Briefly, while the Lumen Cordium High School was being constructed, the Retreat House did serve as a school building. In the early 1980s, the second story was slightly reconfigured and it was used as a residence for Vincentian Sisters, while the first floor continued to be rented out for day time events. At this time, the building acquired the name Emmaus. From 2002 until 2011, the building was rented to a non-profit, Esperanza Threads, which produced organic clothing. The building is currently empty.

The Retreat House is a two-story, flat-roof, yellow brick building. It is located north of the Villa San Bernardo Motherhouse. Due to the hilly terrain, the building is sited well below the Motherhouse and is largely not visible, except glimpses of the roof. The building is plain with only a single stringcourse, just below the roof line, to provide decorative relief. The south elevation has a bank of fixed multi-light windows at the end bays, at the interior stairwells. At the first floor level, which is below grade on the south elevation, there is a door near each end of the building. The doors are replacements within altered openings. Between the two doors, there are four window bays containing multi-light casement windows. The second story has paired replacement windows that do not fit the original opening. The east elevation has five window bays at the second story, with one-over-one windows. The north elevation has wood casement windows on the first floor and paired replacement windows on the second floor. This elevation has secondary exits that are framed by protruding porches. The porch side walls are constructed of brick in a perforated pattern. Throughout the building, the windows have concrete sills and a deep reveal. On the interior, metal staircases with brushed aluminum handrails are at each end of the building. The first floor contains a hallway extending the length of the south wall, and a large open room in the northern portion of the building. Wood accordion doors are present between each window bay, allowing for a variety of room size configurations within the large room. The second story has a central hall, with rooms opening off of it on both sides. The walls in the stairwells, first floor hall, and second floor vestibules are glazed ceramic tile.

A five-bay garage (Building E) located next to the Retreat House was likely built around the same time, 1954-1960. (Photo 46) It is brick and concrete block construction. It was built into the hillside and is partially below grade. A knee wall at the west end of the garage matches those at the school entrance. A small brick gas house is directly behind the garage, date of construction unknown.

Three buildings are located in the valley of the historic district, south of the lake. Constructed c.1952-53, a two-story building (Building F) is situated at the base of the hill, below the Auditorium. (Photo 47) It was initially constructed to be a residence for the priest who served as the Vincentian Sisters' chaplain. However, the building was not connected to utilities until the 1990s, and it never served as its intended function. It was primarily used for storage until the utilities were installed, and then was rented out for private retreats. The building is rectangular

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and has a forward projecting section, which is supported by four concrete posts. The lower level of the building is also concrete, while the upper, primary level is wood, resembling log construction. A brick chimney is on the south gable end.

A large garage/service building (Building I) is south of the Priest's Residence. (Photo 48) It is rectangular with vinyl siding, two pedestrian doors, and three garage doors. A second retreat building, known as Tabor, (Building G) is south of the garage. (Photo 49) The original portion of the building was constructed in the early 1950s, as a wooden storage shed. This section has the same log facing as the Priest's Residence. After a fire, c.1960, a concrete block addition was added to the partially destroyed wood building. In the late 1970s, the building was extended, tripling the size of the original section, and the interior was remodeled. The Tabor building contained a kitchen and small bedrooms and was used as a retreat facility by the Vincentian Sisters and the laity.

A school bus garage (Building J) is accessed from Union Street. Constructed 1978-79, it is a gabled wood garage. An L-shaped equipment building (Building K), constructed in 1997, was built to house maintenance equipment for the Light of Hearts Villa (former Lumen Cordium High School). Both of these buildings are tucked in the trees and barely noticeable from the road.

Landscape Features: Photos 50-60

The contributing landscape (Site L) is an integral component of the property. It includes natural features, five designed gardens and sculpture courts, individual sculptures, stone or brick walls, and landscaped features, such as pathways. These combined features collectively create a comprehensive and distinctive site that contributes to the setting of the historic district.

The natural topography of the proposed 22.96-acre historic district is defined by two hills, a lake, and a dense tree cover. The hills dictate siting for the buildings, as some are partially built into the hillside or, conversely, lower floor levels are exposed where the ground slopes away. The hills and multitude of trees also serve to obscure sight lines between buildings. A grass lawn and a small lake are in the valley created by the two hills. (Photo 59) Due to dredging problems, the lake was partially in-filled in the early 2000s, losing roughly 1/3 of its original size. A concrete driveway and walking path ring the lake.

Several pathways wind through the forested hillsides. For example, concrete steps descend from the Auditorium into the woods to the Terrace Garden. From there, a wooden staircase further descends into the valley, ending at the Priest's House. A gravel pathway is above the valley, on the wooded hillside to the south of the valley. Established in 1940, a Way of the Cross trail, with the fourteen Stations of the Cross, is along the gravel path. (Photo 54) The stations are comprised of small gabled wood huts that housed sculptures. Due to deterioration and

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vandalism, new huts were constructed in the early 1970s. They are in their original location. All of the sculptures from the Way of the Cross have been removed from the protective huts. Designed gardens were added to the property, beginning in the 1930s. The first was a terraced garden, on the hillside to the south of the Motherhouse. (Photos 50-52) It was constructed by the sisters, starting in the 1930s. This garden is the largest in the historic district and extends between the south elevation of the Motherhouse and the bottom of the hill below the Auditorium. A concrete retaining wall defines the back of the highest terrace, which has a grass lawn. Lower terraces are defined by planting beds. Stone pathways and stairs wind through the terrace garden, and the area is partially wooded. There are still a few religious sculptures present in the terrace garden, some on pedestals and some tucked within stone niches. Other religious sculptures have been removed from this area, with only the pedestals remaining to indicate their former presence. Other remaining sculptural elements include a large urn and a sundial. Currently, the terraced garden is overgrown and some of the stairs and walls have deteriorated.

A designed garden is at the south end of the lake. Known as the St. Joseph Garden, it featured a circular planting bed with a pedestal and sculpture in the center. The planting bed is encircled by a sidewalk and four sidewalk segments extend off of the circle. The St. Joseph sculpture has been removed from this garden (Photo 53).

Three sculpture groupings are also on the grounds. Located on the hill, just west of the Levocha shrine, is the Calvary Garden, begun in 1939. (Photo 55) The stepped stone platform and the brick and stone wall remain, but the sculptures have been removed. This garden area once featured a large sculptural scene of Jesus on the cross. Located just north of the Auditorium, a concrete memorial to the soldiers of WWII was dedicated in May 1948. (Photo 56) A gift of the Slovak people, it features a raised platform, two urns, stone balustrade, and a sculpture of Jesus on the cross. This sculpture group remains intact. A c.1960 statue of St. Vincent DePaul was located across from the Motherhouse. The statue was removed to Cincinnati, but the walled court is intact. (Photo 57) Constructed of brick, the court is defined by low walls with concrete coping. The tallest wall section at the back framed the statue.

Individual statues, outside of the sculpture gardens, are also found in the historic district. Two examples are the 1940 St. Bernard statue, located near the WWII memorial, and the statue within the lake. Additionally, objects such as a large sundial and urn are still present in the terrace garden.

Wishing to develop a retreat center, the property once had recreational facilities in the valley, near the retreat buildings. The concrete remnants of a shuffleboard court are present next to the St. Joseph Garden and a back stop for a baseball diamond is in the far southwest corner of the property. Tennis courts were once in front of the garage/service building. These recreational remnants serve to illustrate attempts at broadening the use of the Sisters of Charity property over

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time. Tucked away in the far corner of the valley, they do not detract from the natural or designed landscape.

The overall landscape is intact, particularly the wooded characteristic of the historic district. Lumen Cordium High School and the secondary buildings are largely not visible from the Motherhouse, concealed by trees. Although alterations have been made to the small individual gardens and the lake was reduced, they are not of sufficient scale to affect the landscape's historic integrity as an integrated site. The design intent of Villa San Bernardo is evident through the remaining gardens, sculptures, pathways, walls and light fixtures.

Historic Integrity

Villa San Bernardo retains historic integrity. The historic district that encompasses the Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Bedford property reflects its association with the Vincentian Sisters and their role in Slovak religion and education. The individual buildings and the site create a comprehensive setting that maintains a sense of time and place. Alterations, as they impact individual resources, are discussed above. Individually and collectively, the historic resources illustrate their respective era of construction and materials.

While some buildings have had additions, as noted above, none of the alterations are of such extreme character as to detract from the historic building. The number of buildings added to the historic district in the 1950s reflects the property's growing role within Slovak religious tradition. The Levocha shrine itself might be gone, but the building and setting are intact. The place of pilgrimage is recognizable, even if the sacred artifact has been removed. Even before the Way of the Cross pathway was added in 1940, processions wound their way through the property. Pilgrimages took advantage of the whole estate and were not confined to just the Our Lady of Levocha shrine building. The Lumen Cordium High School and the 1979 addition to the Motherhouse reflect the Vincentian Sisters of Charity's growing role within the educational realm of the Cleveland Diocese. Historic association with all of the individual buildings is intact, and each of the contributing buildings retains sufficient historic materials to convey historic use, style, and era of construction. Any one of them would still be recognizable to a former visitor or resident of Villa San Bernardo.

The landscape, as a contributing site, with its pathways, walls, individual sculptures, gardens, and sculpture groupings is intact. (Photos 58 & 60) As noted some sculptures have been removed from the site, but many do remain in place, contributing to the overall landscape character. At least six statues, representing roughly half of the original number are intact. The gardens themselves, interconnecting pathways, stone/brick walls, and the Way of the Cross trail are unaltered. The retreat setting of the gardens, lake, and pathways through wooded terrain is very much in place. When on the Villa San Bernardo property, its historic use as a summer picnic grounds, retreat and conference center, and pilgrimage site is very apparent by the number of extant resources scattered throughout the historic district.

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Cumulatively, the various components that comprised this important Slovak-related site – motherhouse, school, shrine building, auditorium, gardens, and sculptures - are present and still reflect the historic use of the district.

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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

Education

Religion

Period of Significance

1931-1979

Significant Dates

1931

1955

1965

1979

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

John F. Lipaj Associates

Lipaj, Woyar & Tomsik

Tomsik Architects

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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.)

Villa San Bernardo Historic District meets Criterion A for religion and education, associated with the large Slovak immigrant community of Cleveland. "At one time in the early 1900s, Cleveland was reputedly the city with the largest number of Slovaks in the world."² The Vincentian Sisters of Charity congregation was established in Bedford in 1928 specifically to serve the Slovak population in the greater metropolitan Cleveland area. Containing several buildings and landscape features, the Villa San Bernardo Historic District meets Criterion C as a distinguishable entity. As the congregation's role within the ethnic community grew, new buildings were added to the property to accommodate the cultural traditions of the Slovaks. Villa San Bernardo is being nominated at the local level of significance. Owned by a religious institution, the historic district meets Criteria Consideration A as it is primarily being nominated for historic significance. The Period of Significance is 1931, when the Mediterranean Revival Motherhouse was constructed, to 1979, when a Modernist addition was added to the Motherhouse. The addition represents the last major construction on the property and reflects the final peak years of congregation membership, making the year a logical end point for the historic district. Villa San Bernardo Historic District includes a majority of buildings and features greater than fifty years old and its period of significance predominantly falls within a span of fifty or more years. The only elements that date to less than fifty years are additions to several of the buildings. Therefore, based upon National Register guidance the historic district does not have to meet National Register Criteria Consideration G.

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

Background History

The Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Bedford was formed from the Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Pittsburgh in 1928. The Vincentian Sisters of Charity trace their roots to 1633, when St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac established the Daughters of Charity in Paris. Reflecting the virtues of humility, simplicity and charity, the Vincentian Sisters of Charity advocate for the poor and adopt education as their core mission. Saint Elizabeth Bayley Seton is credited with establishing the first Sisters of Charity congregation in the United States. Founded in 1809 in Emmitsburg, Maryland, Seton and her fledgling community sought the rules from the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in France, which were adopted by Archbishop Carroll in 1812. Subsequent Sisters of Charity congregations were spun off of Seton's original group, such as the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, or arrived directly from Europe, having been under the

² Gerald Sabo, "Slovaks," in *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, ed. David D. Van Tassel and John J. Grabowski, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), p.926.

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umbrella of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. Although the two groups are quite similar, following the rule of Saints Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac, they are generally referred to as being either of the Setonian or Vincentian tradition. The Pittsburgh Sisters of Charity, and their Bedford offshoot, are an example of the latter group. Sisters of Charity congregations typically opened and operated hospitals, schools, and missions.

In 1947, a Sisters of Charity Federation was formed to advocate for the canonization of Elizabeth Seton. The organization is an association of women's religious congregations in the Vincentian or Setonian tradition. "The Federation is committed to the Gospel and serving as advocates for the poor, to collaborating and mutual support and to further their common heritage rooted in Saints Vincent de Paul, Louise de Marillac and Elizabeth Ann Seton."³ In 1997, the Federation was recognized as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) at the United Nations, giving them an international voice to advocate for peace and justice. As of 2013, the Sisters of Charity Federation in the Vincentian-Setonian Tradition had roughly 4,000 members, from thirteen independent congregations.⁴

Wishing to better serve Cleveland's large and growing Slovak immigrant community during the 1920s, the Archbishop of the Diocese of Cleveland requested help from the Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Pittsburgh. The Pittsburgh congregation had been formed over two decades earlier for the same purpose. Five Vincentian Sisters, from Satu-Mare, Romania, immigrated to Pittsburgh in 1902 to serve the large number of Slovak immigrants in that region. Education for the Slovak children was their primary undertaking.

Like Pittsburgh, which was gaining a large Slavic population who came to work in the nearby coal fields, Cleveland was also experiencing an influx of Slavic immigrants. Due to the large number of industrial enterprises in the city, Cleveland received a substantial population of immigrant workers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Originating mostly from northern European countries, 40% of Cleveland's population was foreign born in the 1860 census.⁵ As Cleveland's industrial climate dramatically increased during the late 1800s, there was soon a labor shortage. Business leaders began to look farther south and east into Europe for recruitment of factory workers.

As Cleveland's foreign born population expanded, more of the immigrants were coming from central, southern, and eastern Europe. By the 1920s, the various nationalities that encompassed the Slavic immigrants were the largest ethnic group in Cleveland. A 1918 survey, conducted by

³ <http://famvin.org/en/2004/06/15/federation-of-women-religious-speak-with-one-voice/>

⁴ http://www.famvin.org/wiki/Sisters_of_Charity_Federation

⁵ Edward M. Miggins and Mary Morgenthaler, "The Ethnic Mosaic: the Settlement of Cleveland by the New Immigrants and Migrants," in *The Birth of Modern Cleveland 1865-1930*, editors Thomas F. Campbell and Edward M. Miggins. (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1988), p.104.

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the Cleveland Federated Churches, enumerated 139,273 foreign-born Slavs.⁶ This far outnumbered other sizeable ethnic groups in Cleveland at the same time, including Italians, Hungarians, and Russian Jews.

The ethnic designation of Slavic is a broad category that included many distinct cultures and nationalities, including Slovaks. "Residing in Europe as far north as what was then Russia and as far south as Serbia and Bulgaria, the more than a dozen distinct Slavic nationalities were geographically separated by Germans, Hungarians, and Rumanians into three divisions: East Slav (Great Russians, Carpatho-Russians, Byelorussians, and Ukrainians); West Slavs (Poles, Czechs, Moravians, Slovaks, and Lusatian Sorbs); and South Slavs (Bulgarians, Serbs, Slovenes, Croats, Macedonians, and Montenegrins)."⁷ Religion was an important cultural tradition among the differing Slavic groups, although they did not share the same religious beliefs. In general, most of the East and South Slavs were of the Orthodox Church, while most of the Slavs from Western Europe, such as Poles, Czechs, Moravians, and Slovaks, were Roman Catholic.

Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Bedford

The Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Bedford congregation began with a request from the Archbishop of Cleveland to the Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Pittsburgh. Bishop Joseph Schrembs wanted help ministering to the growing number of Slovak families in the Cleveland area. Five sisters (four teachers and one domestic helper) arrived from Pittsburgh on September 4, 1928. They were assigned to teach at the St. Mary's Parish School in Bedford, on nearby Paul Street, taking over for the Ursuline Sisters who had been teaching there. Established in 1921, Saint Mary's, a territorial/geographical parish, was the first Catholic parish in Bedford.

The Vincentian Sisters of Charity were given accommodations in Bedford, at the southern edge of metropolitan Cleveland. Located twelve miles southeast of Cleveland, Bedford was a growing community in the 1920s. Incorporated as a town in 1837, the municipality's population didn't reach sufficient numbers for incorporation as a city until nearly one-hundred years later, incorporating in 1930. In 1910, the village's population was 1,783, and in 1930 it was 6,814, which was partially attributable to a general suburban migration and to annexation of township lands.⁸ At the time, Bedford was connected to both Akron and Cleveland via an interurban line. Throughout its history, Bedford has been home to a number of industries, including the B.L. Marble Co., Bedford Roller Mill, Owen Tire & Rubber, and the Taylor Chair Co. In the 2000 census, Bedford had 14,214 residents within its 5.5 square miles.

⁶ Miggins and Morgenthaler, "The Ethnic Mosaic: the Settlement of Cleveland by the New Immigrants and Migrants," in *The Birth of Modern Cleveland 1865-1930*, p.106.

⁷ Miggins and Morgenthaler, "The Ethnic Mosaic: the Settlement of Cleveland by the New Immigrants and Migrants," in *The Birth of Modern Cleveland 1865-1930*, p.105.

⁸ James Borchert, "Suburbs," in *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, p, 972-973.

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Just outside Bedford's commercial center, the Vincentian Sisters were housed in a late 19th century mansion, which became their Motherhouse. The property had been donated to the Cleveland Diocese and this was the determining factor in their being situated in Bedford, rather than the community being heavily populated by Slovaks. In fact, Bedford was predominantly Protestant. Donated by the owner, Bernard Schatzinger, the house (and associated acreage) was rechristened Villa San Bernardo, in his honor. On September 10, 1928, Bishop Schrembs presided over a blessing of the grounds. In attendance were several Pittsburgh Vincentian Sisters, approximately three dozen Slovak priests, and the Schatzinger family.

From the 1850s to at least the early years of the Bedford Vincentian Sisters residency, there was anti-Catholic sentiment in metropolitan Cleveland. In Cleveland, the Catholic Church was considered an immigrant church, as its membership was largely composed of European newcomers. The immigrant association caused suspicion among entrenched Americans, wondering where the loyalties of the multitude of ethnic Catholic groups aligned. The Bedford Vincentians themselves experienced the distrust and dislike of the denomination. "The five founding sisters entered a house where there was no furniture, no heat, no running water. Bedford residents immediately pitched in and, within weeks, the sisters had many of their needs addressed. But once, in the middle of the night, they were awakened to a burning cross at their entrance and a fleeing contingent of the Ku Klux Klan determined to squelch the growing spread of Catholicism."⁹

Three young women joined the community within its first six weeks of existence, thus beginning a steady membership expansion that lasted until the 1960s. Although working within the Cleveland Diocese, the Vincentian Sisters of Charity were still an outpost of the Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Pittsburgh. By 1939, Bedford membership had grown to 65, with 44 Sisters having taken permanent vows and the remaining members being under temporary vows. The Bedford community was officially separated from Pittsburgh, in 1939, forming an independent congregation.

The primary responsibility of the Vincentian Sisters was to teach school in the Slovak parishes throughout the Cleveland area. As the Bedford Vincentian Sisters community grew, they were able to teach in more schools. During the 1930s, they began teaching in five additional parish schools in multiple cities, including Cleveland, Lorain, Barberton, and Youngstown.

In the 1940s, Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Bedford added three more schools, located in Cleveland, Struthers, and Akron, to their roster of responsibilities, plus St. John College in Cleveland. In addition to teaching in multiple extant schools, the Vincentian Sisters began to establish new schools in the 1940s. They founded St. Rita School in Solon, 1949, Sacred Heart

⁹ Flannery, Sister Mary Ann. 'Motherhouse was a home for generations of sisters: Messages of faith,' *The Plain Dealer*, January 22, 2011.

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School in Wadsworth, 1949, and Holy Family School in Parma, 1950. They also taught in Wickliffe at the new Our Lady of Mount Carmel School in 1955.

The Bedford Vincentian Sisters also provided support to other Diocese facilities. These entities included the St. Andrew Abbey Laundry, 1935-1945, the newly formed Slovak Parish in Warren, 1935-1960, Archbishop Hoban's Residence in Bratenahl, 1943-1970, St. John the Evangelist Cathedral Rectory, 1944-1980, a community farm in Medina, 1946-1951, and St. Alexis Hospital in Cleveland, 1949-1959. They took care of the domestic work at St. John's Cathedral in the 1950s, as well as the new St. Charles Borromeo Seminary (1953) in Wickliffe.

Attending to the Slovak parishes and schools remained the primary charge of the Vincentian Sisters until the 1950s, when the Slovak community began to disperse into the suburbs. During this decade, they were instrumental in assisting with the establishment of new parishes, with accompanying schools, such as the St. Pius X Parish in Bedford and the St. Barnabas Parish in Northfield. As the Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Bedford celebrated their 25th anniversary in 1954, they had 138 sisters teaching in fourteen Cleveland Diocese schools and in two Youngstown Diocese schools.

As part of a 1950s campaign to construct more Catholic high schools within the Cleveland Diocese, the Bishop of Cleveland asked the Vincentian Sisters of Charity to establish a girl's high school in Bedford. Named Lumen Cordium High School, groundbreaking took place November 3, 1963. Located on the Villa San Bernardo property, the \$2,000,000 school was the first high school to be operated by the congregation. Upon completion of the building, in May 1965, the high school program was relocated from the Retreat House, where classes were initially held. Along with Lumen Cordium High School, the Vincentian Sisters continued to teach at or operate other regional elementary schools.

The congregation reached peak membership in the 1960s, with over 150 Sisters, 56 of which were teachers. The non-teachers among the Vincentian Sisters were nurses or pastoral ministers. By the 1970s, the Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Bedford had expanded their service outreach to include nursing for the elderly and infirm and social justice issues. One social justice cause was that of migrant workers. Sisters, who had the summer off from teaching school, spent summers in the migrant camps of Michigan and California, supporting the labor efforts of Caesar Chavez. Other Sisters spent summers working with the poor in inner cities and on Indian reservations.

When enrollment declined at the Lumen Cordium High School, the Vincentian Sisters closed it in 1987 and converted the building into a senior residential facility. Working with the original architectural firm, the building reopened in 1989 with ninety apartments. It was renamed Light of Hearts Villa, ownership of the facility remaining with the Vincentian Sisters of Charity of

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Bedford. In 2001, a 50-50 ownership structure was created with the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine Health System for Light of Hearts Villa.

With its own membership aging and declining, the Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Bedford began to consider the future of the congregation. As early as 1991, the congregation was deliberating on the possibility of a merger with another congregation or whether to let the Bedford congregation fade. The choice to pursue a merger won out.

For a while, a return to the original Pittsburgh Sisters of Charity congregation was courted. After two years of discussions, it was decided by both congregations that a merger was not the best option. At this time discussions were renewed with the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati. After another two years of consultation, a vote was held in March 2003 by both congregations and a merger was approved. Although some Dominican and Ursuline congregations had combined, the Bedford-Cincinnati merger was a first among the national Sisters of Charity Federation.¹⁰ The remaining forty-nine Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Bedford dissolved their congregation and officially merged with the larger, 500-member Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati in June 2004.

After several years of transition, the Bedford Motherhouse was closed in November 2010 and the building was vacated. However, the Light of Hearts Villa is still in operation, with 100% ownership transferring to the Sisters of Charity of the St. Augustine Health System in 2015. The 1950s auditorium building is currently leased by a private commercial entity.

Slovak Immigration in Cleveland

The ethnic population of Cleveland was quite diverse, with immigrants arriving from many European nations in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The arrival of immigrant workers facilitated industrial development during that era and was an important factor in the success of the city. Specifically, “the Slavic nationality groups were an important part of the industrial city. Their labor contributed to the growth and the wealth of the urban environment.”¹¹ Among the Slavic nationalities, the Czechs were the first and largest block to arrive, beginning in the 1850s. Slovaks began arriving to a noticeable degree two decades later.

Because the Slavic people were composed of many nationalities, with differing traditions, cultures, languages, religions, and political beliefs, they did not always get along, sometimes holding on to their homeland resentments against each other. As a result, “there was no homogeneous Slavic neighborhood in Cleveland, but a number of separate ethnic enclaves composed of members of the same nationality group who shared a similar language and heritage,

¹⁰ Vance, Karen. ‘Religious sisters merge orders,’ *Cincinnati Enquirer*, June 26, 2004.

¹¹ Miggins and Morgenthaler, “The Ethnic Mosaic: the Settlement of Cleveland by the New Immigrants and Migrants,” in *The Birth of Modern Cleveland 1865-1930*, p.115.

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and often a regional affiliation.”¹² The enclaves provided a sense of cultural familiarity among the immigrants, now living a foreign life in a new country. They also provided a buffer to the urban environs, which was unfamiliar to the former villagers. The majority of Cleveland’s Slavic population had been agricultural landowners in their native countries, earning a living from their land.

In the 1870s, as the first Slovak immigrants arrived in Cleveland, they settled in the Haymarket district, south of Public Square. Subsequent Slovak arrivals settled on the outskirts of the city’s east side on Buckeye Road, around Woodland Hills Avenue and E. 93rd Street, and on Aetna Road. On the west side, they settled in the industrial Tremont neighborhood, and in the small municipality of Lakewood. In Lakewood, the Slovaks resided in the Bird’s Nest neighborhood, which was platted by the National Carbon Co. in 1892. By 1910, the Slovaks comprised 70% of the population in that neighborhood.¹³ Citywide, a 1918 survey by the Cleveland Federated Churches enumerated 18,977 Slovaks throughout the Cleveland area.¹⁴ By 1900, there were three Slovak newspapers printed in the city.

Slovak settlement tended to be driven by occupational location, where they could easily walk to work. “All these areas of settlement were near manufacturing plants, Slovak men furnishing the fundamental heavy labor for many of the city’s largest industries, while many of the young women worked in the city’s cigar and candy factories.”¹⁵ Within the Slovak neighborhoods, the parish church served as both the religious and cultural center of the community, as well as a symbolic bridge to their homeland. “Parishioners lived near their churches. Historian Marian Mark Stolarik found that Slovaks in Cleveland tended to live within ten blocks of their church, and that many of a church’s members had come from the same villages in Europe.”¹⁶

Although a percentage of Slovaks were of Lutheran or Calvinist faith, the Slovaks of Cleveland were overwhelmingly Roman Catholic. By 1918, they had established eight Catholic parishes.¹⁷ Slovak parishes and schools were established in the early 20th century, with many constructing new churches from the 1920s into the late 1940s.

Cleveland’s Catholic immigrants were coming from European regions where religion, nationality, and ethnicity were interwoven into a singular identity. As such, religion was

¹² Miggins and Morgenthaler, “The Ethnic Mosaic: the Settlement of Cleveland by the New Immigrants and Migrants,” in *The Birth of Modern Cleveland 1865-1930*, p.106.

¹³ Van Tassel, *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, p.108.

¹⁴ Miggins and Morgenthaler, “The Ethnic Mosaic: the Settlement of Cleveland by the New Immigrants and Migrants,” in *The Birth of Modern Cleveland 1865-1930*, p.106.

¹⁵ Miller, Carol Poh and Robert Wheeler. *Cleveland: A Concise History, 1796-1990* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), p.84.

¹⁶ Michael J. McTighe, “Babel and Babylon on the Cuyahoga: Religious Diversity in Cleveland,” in *The Birth of Modern Cleveland 1865-1930*, p.245.

¹⁷ Miggins and Morgenthaler, “The Ethnic Mosaic: the Settlement of Cleveland by the New Immigrants and Migrants,” in *The Birth of Modern Cleveland 1865-1930*, p.113.

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instrumental in maintaining ethnic traditions and honoring nationalistic heritage. “Historian Josef Barton describes the norm of Slovak ethnicity: ‘Membership in a Slovak parish, elementary education in a Slovak parochial school, and adherence to some local branch of a national benefit union – these facts constituted the norm of Slovak ethnicity.’ A Slovak parish committee, in defining its cultural program in 1896, provided a shorthand summary of the same position: ‘Our own church, our own school, and worship in our own language.’”¹⁸

Father Stephen Furdeck,¹⁹ a Slovak priest, was sent to Cleveland specifically to work with the Czech and Slovak immigrants. Arriving in 1882, he quickly became a religious and social leader within the Slovak community. In 1885, Father Furdeck established St. Ladislav Church, the first Slovak parish church in Cleveland. A proponent of maintaining a Slovak ethnic identity, he was also instrumental in organizing the First Catholic Slovak Union. A union of multiple fraternal groups, the First Catholic Slovak Union, which became a national fraternal insurance organization, also served as a cultural institution, combining religion and ethnicity.

Fraternal groups and social clubs were important components of immigrant life. The First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association was formed in 1892 to serve women and children. Also a national fraternal organization, it remains headquartered in the Cleveland area. The association was active in funding education, donating over \$100,000 between 1922-1935 to Slovak schools and religious institutions.²⁰ Social clubs could be cultural and recreational related or more political in nature. Social clubs included Krivan, founded in 1906, which showcased Slovak dramas and operettas and the Stefanick Circle, formed in 1921 to promote Slovak art. The Slovak League of America focused on political issues, such as Slovak repression in their native Austro-Hungarian lands.

In the early 1920s, automobile ownership began to have an impact on the old established settlement patterns. “When a physical area could no longer support an increase in population or was surrounded by other ethnic groups that prevented a neighborhood from expanding, new areas were settled, either near new industrial sites or on the outskirts of the city where farming was still possible.”²¹ New housing developments - constructed in places like Garfield Heights on Cleveland’s southeast side - courted immigrants and children of immigrants, resulting in a migration of working class Slavs to the area. Between 1916 and 1926, automobile registration in Cuyahoga County increased from 61,000 to 211,000.²² That, combined with extant interurban lines, suddenly made distant rural villages, such as Bedford with its small industrial base, into second ring suburbs.

¹⁸ McTighe, “Babel and Babylon on the Cuyahoga: Religious Diversity in Cleveland,” in *The Birth of Modern Cleveland 1865-1930*, p.245.

¹⁹ Furdeck’s first name is alternately spelled Stephan, Stefan, or Stepan in various publications.

²⁰ Van Tassel, *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, p.427.

²¹ Miggins and Morgenthaler, “The Ethnic Mosaic: the Settlement of Cleveland by the New Immigrants and Migrants,” in *The Birth of Modern Cleveland 1865-1930*, p.111.

²² Miller, *Cleveland: A Concise History, 1796-1990*, p.119.

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Cleveland's Slovak community was thriving in the 1920s and 1930s, but the arrival of new immigrants considerably decreased during those decades. After WWII, there was little immigration to the metropolitan area. If the 1920s had brought a first wave of suburban development, the post war decades brought a tsunami of suburban development, facilitated by highway construction. Like thousands of others, the second and third generation Slovaks followed the suburban tide. "By the 1980s, most individuals of Slovak ancestry in Cleveland had moved to the suburbs of Parma, Bedford, or Garfield Heights."²³

Catholic Education

"The influence of parochial schools, for education and the preservation of the Catholic faith, cannot be overemphasized. The tone of public schools was often hostile to Catholicism... Therefore the Catholic church erected schools in which children would be taught in a nonthreatening atmosphere."²⁴ Following the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884, the Council decreed a stronger commitment to Catholic education in the United States. The desired goal was a parochial school at every parish church, teaching moral character as part of the overall curriculum. It was further mandated that Catholic parents send their children to the parochial school. "Catholic education continued to improve and between 1885 and 1920 most dioceses had established a Board of Examiners that held annual examinations and issued credentials to qualified teachers."²⁵ The Cleveland Diocese inaugurated its school board in 1887.

Expansion of Catholic education, as promoted by church leadership, coincided with the rapid increase of nationality parishes in the Cleveland Diocese. From formal establishment in the 1840s until the 1940s, the parishes within the Diocese of Cleveland were predominantly organized by ethnicity and language, referred to as nationality parishes. As noted above, during the same time period, many nationality and ethnic groups believed that religion and education were inextricably entwined endeavors. As such, nationality or ethnic groups maintained separate parochial schools from each other, in order to maintain their cultural identity. After World War II, due to greater assimilation among later immigrant generations, and a general move to suburbia, parishes were organized geographically.

A religious fervor, among all denominations, coursed through the United States during the late 1940s and 1950s. "If fears of 'Godless Communism,' atomic war, and rampant materialism contributed to the desire for religious affiliation that swept over America, so did gratitude for the end of depression and war, and optimism that a new era was dawning. Creating a religious-building boom, new young suburban families looked to church and synagogue not only for

²³ Gerald Sabo, "Slovaks," in *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, p.927.

²⁴ Rev. John A. Leahy, "Parochial Education (Catholic)," in *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, p.778.

²⁵ Gowdy, Harrison Stamm, *Julienne Girls Catholic High School National Register of Historic Places Nomination*, 2008, p.8.10.

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spiritual support, but for a sense of belonging, social activity, and educational programs for the children. Religious institutions enjoyed a prosperity heretofore unknown...²⁶

The large uptick in religious participation certainly had an effect on parochial school growth. In the Cleveland Diocese, the number of parishes increased, reaching about 90 in 1947, and by the early 1960s, the “number of parishes (nearly 125) and parochial school attendance reached new highs.”²⁷ The majority of these new parishes were established in the suburban neighborhoods at the city’s fringes or in the suburbanizing rural villages. Some of the old, urban nationality parishes, along with their schools, were merged or closed, making geographically based parishes the dominate presence within the Cleveland Diocese. After WWII, as ethnic groups experienced greater prosperity and dispersed across the metropolitan area, the need to have separate nationality-based schools also diminished.

Under the direction of Bishop Edward F. Hoban (1945-1966), elementary school expansion was rapid, resulting in 33 new elementary schools and just as many existing schools remodeled, enlarged, or rebuilt, by 1952.²⁸ A second capital campaign, for secondary schools, took place in the late 1950s. This building campaign generated the Lumen Cordium High School, fulfilling Bishop Hoban’s desire for a girl’s high school in southeast Cleveland. With its freshmen class of 80, Lumen Cordium was the 30th Catholic high school in Cuyahoga County.

The 1960s represented the heyday of Catholic education, but by the end of the decade, many schools were consolidated and a new movement away from parochial schools was beginning to take hold. A shift in philosophies, decreased membership of priests and nuns, and declining enrollment in Catholic schools occurred after the Second Vatican Council, 1962-1965. “Vatican II changed the work of the Third Plenary Council. The Parish elementary school and the neighborhood secondary school would no longer be the focal point of American Catholicism.”²⁹

Historic Significance

Villa San Bernardo meets **Criterion A** for its association with religion, particularly the Slovakian immigrant population of 20th century metropolitan Cleveland, and for its association with Catholic education. The congregation’s peak membership lasted into the 1970s, and they had long outgrown their confines. Additionally, some of the older, original congregation members were retiring or reaching an age requiring assisted living. By the mid-1970s, it was determined to renovate the 1931 Motherhouse and to construct an addition replacing the 19th century mansion. Completed in 1976 and 1979, respectively, the Modernist addition was the last major construction project on the Villa San Bernardo property. New membership in the order

²⁶ Rifkind, Carole. *A Field Guide to Contemporary American Architecture* (New York City: Dutton, 1998), p.189.

²⁷ Henry B. Leonard, “Catholics, Roman,” in *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, p.158-159.

²⁸ Rev. John A. Leahy, “Parochial Education (Catholic),” in *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, p.779.

²⁹ Davis, Paul W. *A Historical Study of American Catholic Education and The Oral Histories of Archbishop Elder High School Teachers*, University of Cincinnati, dissertation, 2004, p.62.

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began to decline after this point, and especially after the closing of Lumen Cordium High School, the teaching mission shifted. These converging factors make 1979 a logical end point for the Period of Significance.

Religion

Beyond the parish church, Villa San Bernardo represents another expression of Slovak religion. While Slovak neighborhoods had religious, institutional, and fraternal buildings to illustrate the early 20th century immigrant cultural experience, the nominated historic district completes the story. It demonstrates a different aspect of the Slovak's connection and commitment to their Catholic faith as an expression of their ethnicity.

In addition to supplying teachers and active participation in Slovak parishes, the presence of Villa San Bernardo allowed for young Slovak women to enter into a novitiate of their own nationality. Previous to the establishment of the Vincentian Sisters of Charity congregation in Bedford, Slovak women wishing to become postulants and remain within the Cleveland metro area had join an order of a different nationality. During the early 20th century, this would have been viewed as a weakening of the Slovak ethnic identity, by not continuing the interwoven connection between religion, nationality, and education.

The Villa San Bernardo property also served the Slovak community by being a spiritual, cultural, and social gathering place. As noted in the Background History discussion, there were multiple Slovak neighborhoods scattered about broader Cleveland, and each would have had its own parish churches and schools, as well as social halls. In essence, the Bedford Vincentian property was a place that the various Slovak parishes and organizations shared for numerous occasions. For example, during a 1932 convention of the Catholic Slovak Federation of America, attendees visited Villa San Bernardo as part of the conference curriculum.

The establishment of the Shrine of Our Lady of Levocha, in 1930, was the beginning of a decades-long tradition of pilgrimages to Bedford. The women of St. Wendelin Parish, a Slovak parish formed in 1903, funded the shrine and arranged for its placement in the care of the Vincentian Sisters. In fact, some of the parish women were the mothers of the young women beginning to join the Vincentian Sisters as novices and postulants.³⁰

The Bedford shrine of Our Lady of Levocha is a solid wood statue, carved from an apple tree, which was touched to the original Virgin Mary shrine in Levocha, Slovakia. "It is the only National Shrine of Our Lady of Levocha in America."³¹ Costing several thousand dollars, the shrine was sited within a small brick building that faced Broadway Avenue. Archbishop

³⁰ Correspondence with Sister Dorothy Ann Blatnica, January 29-30, 2015.

³¹ <http://www.catholicshrines.net/states/oh7.htm>

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Schrembs blessed the shrine on October 5, 1930, with 70 priests, 100 nuns, and 45,000 people in attendance.³²

The shrine was opened for the season in May and closed in October. Opening and closing ceremonies were attended by thousands, and several feasts would be held throughout the season. Smaller pilgrimages by different Slovak parishes would occur on Sundays, while larger feasts would last for days. For example, the Feast of Our Lady of Levoc lasted for four days in July 1931. This large feast attracted 50,000 Slovak attendants from northeast Ohio and outside states. The *Plain Dealer* noted that the funds raised from the feast would support the construction of a new motherhouse.³³

A trail winding through the wooded hillside contained a Way of the Cross path, which was added to the property in 1940. Blessed on October 6th, the fourteen Stations of the Cross became part of the pilgrimage tradition. The Stations of the Cross pathway is also a Slovak tradition. Throughout the warm months, Slovak pilgrims would spend hours at Villa San Bernardo, attending mass, walking the Stations, and ending in a procession to the Our Lady of Levocha shrine.

Although the Slovak neighborhoods were beginning to dissolve by the 1950s, the Slovak parishes were still in existence in that decade. During the early 1950s, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* still noted that Slovak priests were officiating at Villa San Bernardo events and that feast devotions were still held in Slovak. Pilgrimages to Villa San Bernardo continued to be an important ethnic and religious tradition. So much so, that they prompted the construction of new buildings on the property in the 1950s. In 1955, a new building for the Our Lady of Levocha statue was constructed. Now oriented towards the Motherhouse to avoid the overflow of pilgrims near the road, it was significantly larger than the original shrine building. Also in 1955, an auditorium was constructed to provide a place to serve meals and socialize for people attending pilgrimages.

Replicating a shrine from their homeland, the Our Lady of Levocha shrine was an important cultural touchstone for the Cleveland Slovaks. The ability to have pilgrimages on the Villa San Bernardo property was an important connection for the Slovaks in maintaining their heritage. Pilgrimages were common to the Catholic faith, especially for disciples from that portion of Europe. "Pilgrimages to Our Lady of Levocha began to wane in the 1960s, particularly after Vatican Council II (1962-65) which put more emphasis on mass instead of ceremonial pilgrimages. Also the assimilation of second and third generation children into American life began to impact their desire to retain this devotional practice."³⁴ Whereas in the 1930s and 40s,

³² Vincentian Sisters, *75 Years Making God's Love Visible: 1928-2003*, p.30.

³³ '50,000 Slovaks Flock to Shrine,' *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, July 6, 1931.

³⁴ Correspondence with Sister Dorothy Ann Blatnica, January 29-30, 2015.

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newspaper articles reported tens of thousands of feast day participants, by the mid-1960s, the numbers were generally around 1,500.³⁵

However, the decline in pilgrimages to the Bedford convent was gradual and the shrine was still visited on feast days, with about 200 people generally attending. Slovak clubs continued to celebrate feast days until the Bedford property was closed. A 2008 article written by the assistant director of the Slovak Institute, wistfully promoted an upcoming feast day. "Every July 26th on the Church calendar brings about the celebration of the feast day of Saints Joachim & Anne, the birth parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In Bedford Ohio at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Levoca the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association (FCSLA), Cleveland District, national headquarters in Beachwood Ohio, has been holding a weekday outdoor mass and luncheon to observe this feast day, since back in the days... Come attend, if only for the devotion at the Shrine, and help keep this wonderful Slovak local tradition going."³⁶ Again hosted by the Slovak Catholic Ladies Association, the last feast day at Villa San Bernardo occurred on July 26, 2010, with about 150 people present.

Education

The Vincentian Sisters were recruited by the Diocese of Cleveland to serve the Slovak community, particularly related to education. "[Bishop] Schrembs had asked the sisters to teach in Slovak schools because the influx of European immigrants then flooding the diocese created a need for bilingual teachers."³⁷ Indeed, the Vincentian Sisters themselves were identified as a Slovak community; its members originally were all of Slovak descent, from what is today called Slovakia.³⁸ The Motherhouse (Villa San Bernardo) in Bedford served as the base of operations for the Vincentian Sisters as they commuted throughout the region, teaching at multiple parish schools, assisting with the establishment of Slovak parishes, and working as nurses.

To retain a sense of homeland ethnicity and culture, parochial schools within the distinct nationality parishes were of utmost importance for the immigrant groups. For the Slovaks, just as religion was tied to ethnicity, education was tied to religion. Additionally, the parochial school system served to reinforce the Catholic faith and to provide educational opportunities outside of the public system, where the attitude toward Catholic children was often antagonistic. "Catholic education, which was to be an antidote to the pressure of a hostile Protestant culture, reflected the ethnic divisions of the parishes. Each group formed its own parish-related schools. 'Slovak children must attend a Slovak school daily,' reasoned Stephen Furdek in 1891, 'and where else but in a Catholic school can they learn the religion of their fathers and their native

³⁵ '1500 Due Today on Pilgrimage,' *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, July 2, 1965.

³⁶ Hornack, Joseph. 'Annual Parents Day Observance in Bedford Ohio,' *The Plain Dealer*, June 27, 2008.

³⁷ Flannery, Sister Mary Ann. 'Motherhouse was a home for generations of sisters: Messages of faith,' *The Plain Dealer*, January 22, 2011.

³⁸ Correspondence with Sister Dorothy Ann Blatnica, January 29-30, 2015.

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tongue? ... By 1929 there were approximately 46,000 students in the parochial school system."³⁹
The Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Bedford congregation taught at dozens of parish schools, most of which were in Slovak parishes.

The Bedford Vincentian community, like other similar orders, was self-supporting and did not receive financial support from the Cleveland Diocese. It was expected that the Slovak parish priests and the Slovak community would support the Vincentian school teachers. There was no large donor for the Bedford Vincentian Sisters. The Slovak community supported them with small monetary contributions and donations of food and supplies. It was also common for family members of the nuns to help build resources in the historic district. This arrangement served to strengthen the ties between the Bedford Vincentian congregation and the Slovak immigrant community.

After WWII, when parochial schools shifted to a more geographically-based organizational structure, the Vincentian Sisters of Charity remained integral to the Cleveland Diocese's educational goals. As noted in the Background History section, the Bedford Vincentian Sisters assisted with the establishment of five new parish schools during the late 1940s and 1950s. And, of course, to meet the growing high school needs of the diocese, they founded, owned, and operated a girls' high school on their property. Headquartered at the Villa San Bernardo, the Vincentian Sisters were essential in supporting the interlaced relationship between education and the Catholic faith - first by meeting the needs of the early 20th century Slovak immigrant population, who desired to maintain their ethnic culture via education and religion, and second by contributing to the mid-20th century expansion of greater Cleveland's parochial school system.

Villa San Bernardo meets **Criterion C** as an excellent representative of an ecclesiastical property, including distinctive architectural and landscape features. Beginning in 1931, with the brick structure that created a new Motherhouse, the Vincentian property was transformed over the next few decades into a respite from the ever expanding metropolitan environment. The Sisters began constructing a terraced garden on the hillside south of the Motherhouse in the 1930s. This was the first of several landscape design features that were added to the historic district, which combined with the architectural resources of the site create a distinguishable entity.

Each of the nine Motherhouse diocesan communities in Cleveland are different, depending on their mission and the amount of land that they have. Although there's no prescribed architectural arrangement dictating what constitutes a convent property, there are some commonalities within the Cleveland Diocese. Obviously, a Motherhouse would be present and it was typical to build a high school on the congregation's land. Sometimes, if there was enough land, a hospital would

³⁹ McTighe, "Babel and Babylon on the Cuyahoga," in *The Birth of Modern Cleveland 1865-1930*, p.248.

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be constructed. It was very common to have statues on a convent site, but not as elaborate as at the Bedford Vincentian property. Shrines were present, depending upon the congregation and its tie to Europe. A community wouldn't necessarily always have a shrine, unless there was a specific ethnic heritage connecting a congregation to the devotional practice. Three other convents that also have a shrine on their property, include the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis on Granger Road in Garfield Heights, Ohio (on the same property as Marymount Hospital); Sisters of the Incarnate Word on Pearl Road in Parma Heights, Ohio; and the Sisters of the Most Holy Trinity on Chardon Road in Euclid, Ohio.⁴⁰ The St. Joseph Convent and Academy Complex was listed in the National Register in 2006 for its religious and educational association with the Polish immigrant community of Cleveland.

The Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Bedford property contains the requisite Motherhouse and statuary, and also had a high school and shrine, representing the typical convent features found within the Cleveland Diocese. Completed in 1931, the Mediterranean Revival style Motherhouse is the central architectural feature of the historic district. Situated on the highest point of the property, some portion of it is generally visible, above the tree line, from anywhere on site. The Vincentian property contains an interesting heterogeneous collection of buildings, ranging from Mediterranean Revival to conservative Neo-Classical Modernism to Modernism to New Formalism and Neo-Expressionism. The primary buildings respond to the topography. With the exception of one garage in the valley, even the secondary buildings blend in with the wooded landscape.

Constructed 1963-1965, the Lumen Cordium High School represents the other architecturally significant building in the historic district. Lumen Cordium High School was designed by John F. Lipaj Associates. Lipaj graduated from Ohio State University in 1950 and organized his architectural firm in 1954. He specialized in educational buildings, designing a number of schools, and municipal projects, including a Cleveland fire station, the Bedford Municipal Building, and the Parma Heights Pool. In 1967, Lipaj joined two colleagues, Peter Woyar and Thomas E. Tomsik, to form Lipaj, Woyar & Tomsik. A 1989 addition to the school building was designed by Lipaj-Tomsik Architects/Planners.

In the 1970s, the Bedford Vincentian Sisters turned to John Lipaj again, then a principal in the architectural practice of Lipaj, Woyar & Tomsik. The firm specialized in educational and religious structures, working throughout northeast Ohio. Lipaj, Woyar & Tomsik also completed a number of renovations/additions to older buildings in the late 20th century. The Vincentian Sisters wanted to remodel the Motherhouse's interior to meet their changing needs and to build an addition replacing the extant 1800s building they had been using. The 1979 Modernist addition is good representative of the era and was designed in a manner, which does not detract

⁴⁰ Information about the nine Motherhouse communities and convent architectural components provided by Sister Dorothy Ann Blatnica, January 29-30, 2015.

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from the 1931-32 Motherhouse, and ties into the architecture of the Motherhouse and other major campus buildings through its scale, orientation, and materials.

John Lipaj, a Slovak, designed several buildings for the Cleveland Diocese. Particularly during the 1960s, Lipaj was experimenting with unusual building shapes and distinctive roof lines. The Lumen Cordium High School fits squarely into his overall body of work and represents Lipaj's exploration of innovative forms for new construction. Other school designs by Lipaj in the 1960s included a round, corridor-less elementary school in Parma, a Cleveland elementary school that appeared like a cluster of carousels, and the Beaumont Girls High School, complete with a butterfly roof canopy. The c.1960 Y-shaped Byzantine Catholic Center with concrete barrel roof and the 1963 horseshoe-shaped Bedford City Hall represent two other institutional buildings of irregular shape. By the late 1970s, architectural tastes had changed and a return to a more conservative modernism was taking place. The Motherhouse addition is more reflective of this trend and the post-Vatican II simplification of ornament on Catholic buildings.

Due to the same architectural firm designing the two primary buildings, there is cohesiveness to the designs. The 1979 octagonal chapel in the Motherhouse responds to the rounded forms of Lumen Cordium High School, anchored in the northwest corner of the property. On the interior, design devices of the two buildings make reference to each other. The dynamic domed ceiling of the school's gymnasium is coffered with a diamond pattern (Photo 40) as is the Motherhouse chapel ceiling (Photos 25-26).

Villa San Bernardo has the characteristic of a park or forested campus. Both the 1931 Motherhouse and the 1979 addition respond to the landscape. The 1963 high school is also sited to take advantage of the landscape. All have a sense of integrating exterior and interior spaces. There are multiple gardens and sculpture groupings throughout the historic district. Additionally, the district contains brick or stone walls along driveways and walkways, stone stairs, pathways, and a stone retaining wall along the extent of the Broadway Ave elevation. "From the beginning, the beauty of the Vincentian property was regarded as a spiritual oasis in the city. Nestled between two city streets, people have come here for prayer, reflection and peace. The sisters sculpted the gardens, learning the trades of wall building and stone cutting in addition to flower care."⁴¹ The buildings, gardens, statuary, pathways, and retaining walls collectively form a comprehensive setting that invites a visitor to quietly meander in contemplation. "Honestly, I think our property is rather unique in its gardens, sculptures, etc. Our original Mother Superior Mary John Berchmans had a vision for the property that accentuated the natural beauty of the area."⁴²

Conclusion

⁴¹ Vincentian Sisters, *75 Years Making God's Love Visible: 1928-2003*, p.38.

⁴² Correspondence with Sister Dorothy Ann Blatnica, January 29-30, 2015.

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Villa San Bernardo represents the important work of the Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Bedford as associated with the Slovak community of greater Cleveland. Through religion and education, the Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Bedford congregation helped the Slovak immigrant community maintain their identity and cultural traditions of the homeland. The bilingual Vincentian Sisters, also of Slovak heritage, provided the much needed teaching staff in the Slovak schools and assistance to poor families as they adjusted to their new life in America. As the 20th century advanced, the Vincentian Sisters played an important role in general Catholic education for the Cleveland Diocese. As an intact distinguishable entity, Villa San Bernardo contains multiple individual buildings and an integrated landscape that reflect the congregation's historic association with broad patterns of local history.

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Interviews and Correspondence

Sister Dorothy Ann Blatnica – Nathalie Wright, January 29-30, 2015 and May 12, 2015: Email correspondence and phone interview concerning Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Bedford history and evolution of the Vincentian’s Villa San Bernardo property.

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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): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 22.96

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- 1. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____
- 2. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____
- 3. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

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4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1. Zone: 17	Easting: 455870	Northing: 4581186
2. Zone: 17	Easting: 456219	Northing: 4581268
3. Zone: 17	Easting: 456363	Northing: 4580884
4. Zone: 17	Easting: 456296	Northing: 4580750

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

The nominated boundary includes the 22.96 acres historically associated with Villa San Bernardo. The historic district is roughly bounded by Broadway Avenue, Union Street, and Northfield Road in Bedford, Ohio. The nominated historic district includes the following parcels as identified by the Cuyahoga County Auditor: 81418001, 81419002, 81419003, 81419004, 81419005, 81419006, 81419007, 81419008, and 81419010. See Attachment B for parcel and general location maps.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The proposed boundary includes the acreage historically associated with Villa San Bernardo. The boundaries include eleven buildings and the landscaped site, as defined in Section 7.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Nathalie Wright, Historic Preservation Consultant
organization: Judith B. Williams, LLC
street & number: 349 E. Tulane Rd.
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e-mail nwright66@yahoo.com
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date: May 2015

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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.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, 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

Photographer: Nathalie Wright & Judith Williams

Date Photographed: September 5, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1. Motherhouse, Facade, looking northwest
2. Motherhouse, North elevation, looking south
3. Motherhouse, South elevation, looking northwest
4. Motherhouse, South elevation, looking north
5. Motherhouse, Rear elevation, looking southeast
6. Motherhouse, Rear elevation, looking north
7. Motherhouse, Rear elevation, looking south
8. Motherhouse, North & east elevations, looking southwest
9. Motherhouse, 1979 bell tower, looking north
10. Motherhouse, Basement, looking southeast

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11. Motherhouse, Basement, looking west
12. Motherhouse, Basement, stairs, looking west
13. Motherhouse, Basement, looking west
14. Motherhouse, Basement, looking northeast
15. Motherhouse, Basement, looking west
16. Motherhouse, Basement, dining room, looking north
17. Motherhouse, 1st floor, hallway, looking north
18. Motherhouse, 1st floor, vestibule, looking north
19. Motherhouse, 1st floor, office, looking northwest
20. Motherhouse, 1st floor, office, looking south
21. Motherhouse, 1st floor, looking north
22. Motherhouse, 1st floor, looking southeast
23. Motherhouse, 1st floor, library, looking west
24. Motherhouse, 1st floor, vestibule, looking north
25. Motherhouse, 1st floor, chapel, looking west
26. Motherhouse, 1st floor, chapel, looking northwest
27. Motherhouse, 1st floor, conference, looking south
28. Motherhouse, 1st floor, looking south
29. Motherhouse, 2nd floor, looking northeast
30. Motherhouse, 2nd floor, hallway, looking south
31. Motherhouse, 2nd floor, looking north
32. Motherhouse, 2nd floor, hallway, looking north
33. Motherhouse, 2nd floor, lounge, looking northwest
34. Motherhouse, 3rd floor, looking southeast
35. Motherhouse, 3rd floor, hallway, looking north
36. Motherhouse, 3rd floor, looking south
37. Lumen Cordium High School, Façade, looking northeast
38. Lumen Cordium High School, Façade, 2007 addition, looking north
39. Lumen Cordium High School, Façade, looking east
40. Lumen Cordium High School, 1st floor, gym ceiling, looking west
41. Lumen Cordium High School, 1st floor, chapel, looking northwest
42. Lumen Cordium High School, 1st floor, stairs, looking east
43. Shrine, looking northwest
44. Auditorium, Façade, looking south
45. Retreat House, Façade, looking north
46. Garage, looking south
47. Priest's Residence, Façade, looking east
48. Garage/Service Building, looking north
49. Tabor, looking southwest
50. Terrace Garden, looking southeast
51. Terrace Garden, looking northwest
52. Terrace Garden, St. John niche, looking east
53. St. Joseph Garden, looking northwest
54. Way of the Cross hut, looking west

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- 55. Calvary Sculpture, looking north
- 56. World War II Memorial, looking east
- 57. St. Vincent Sculpture, looking north
- 58. Stone wall, looking west
- 59. Pond, looking northwest
- 60. Pond, sculpture, looking west

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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Villa San Bernardo, Cuyahoga County, Ohio
ATTACHMENT A – Historic Images



1931 Motherhouse (also known as Villa San Bernardo) in the foreground and the wooded property behind it.

*Unless otherwise noted, historic photographs are from *75 Years Making God's Love Visible: 1928-2003* by the Vincentian Sisters of Charity.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Villa San Bernardo, Cuyahoga County, Ohio
ATTACHMENT A – Historic Images



1931 Motherhouse with original mansion, 1950s



Motherhouse with 1979 addition

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Villa San Bernardo, Cuyahoga County, Ohio

ATTACHMENT A – Historic Images



New Our Lady of Levocha shrine building, 1951



Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Levocha shrine, 1961

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Villa San Bernardo, Cuyahoga County, Ohio
ATTACHMENT A – Historic Images



Constructing the Terrace Garden, 1930s



St. John niche within the Terrace Garden was a popular picnic spot

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Villa San Bernardo, Cuyahoga County, Ohio

ATTACHMENT A – Historic Images



Calvary Garden was begun in 1939, 2003. Sculptures removed c.2010.



St. Joseph Garden, 2003, statue removed c.2010.



St. Vincent sculpture court, 2003, statue removed c.2010.

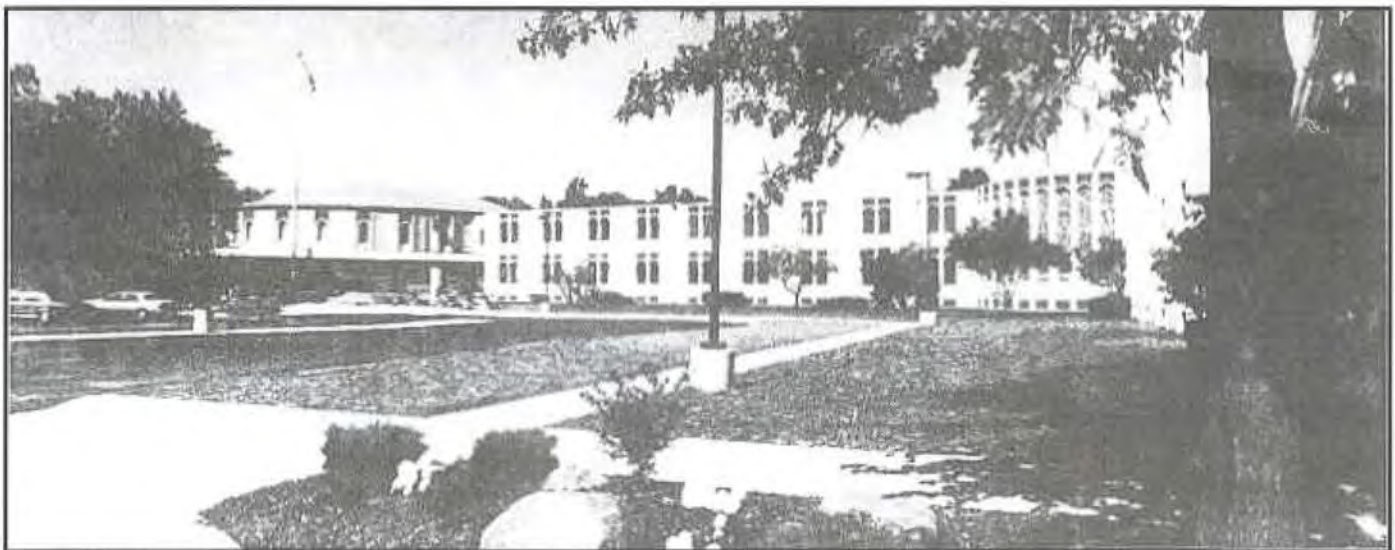
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Villa San Bernardo, Cuyahoga County, Ohio
ATTACHMENT A – Historic Images



Lumen Cordium High School, 1973. Photo from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/25789096@N07/5545536186/>.



Lumen Cordium High School, 1990. Photo from 'Light of Hearts Villas for the Elderly,' *Properties*, Wayne Weber.

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Villa San Bernardo, Cuyahoga County, Ohio
ATTACHMENT B – Maps



Parcel Map. From Cuyahoga County Auditor.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

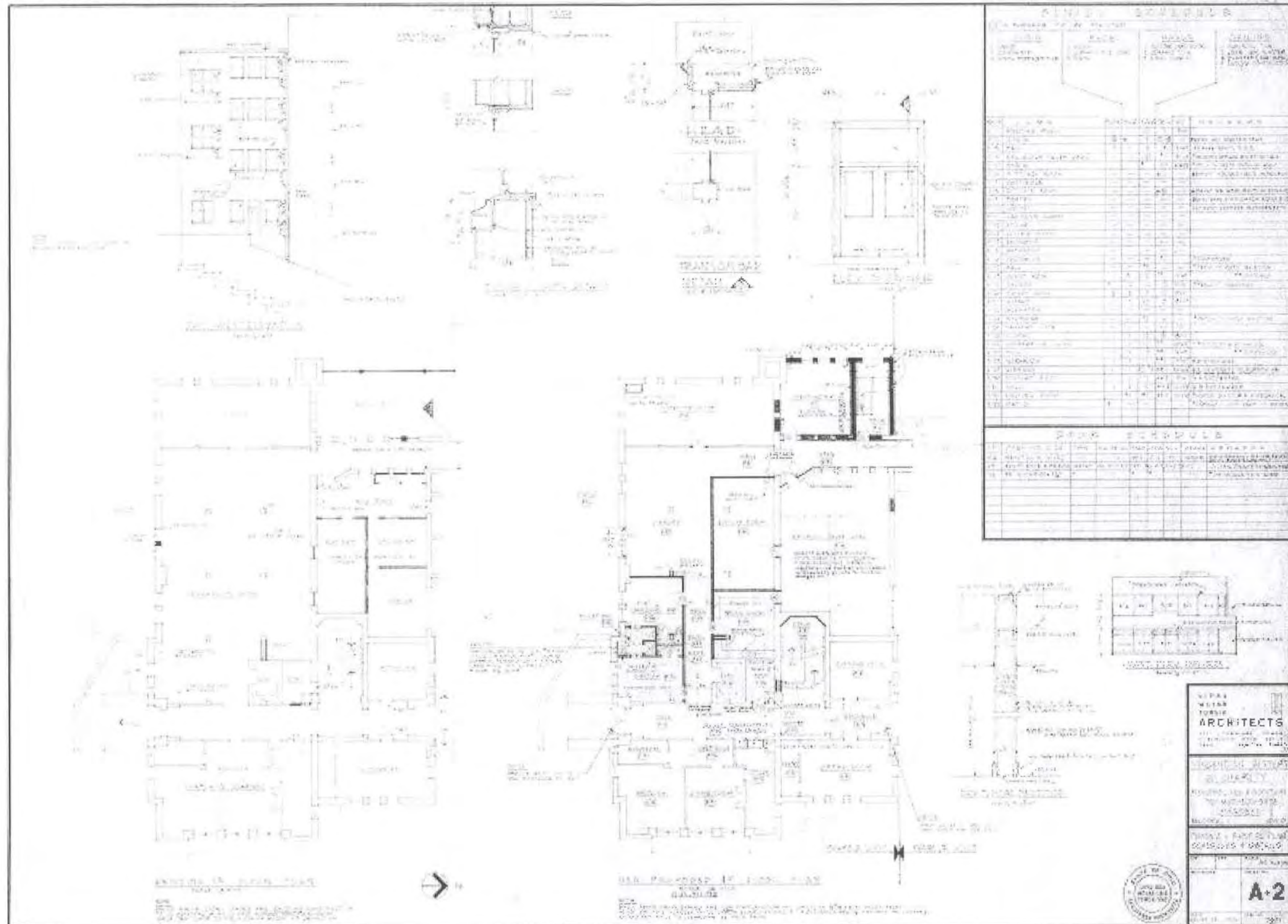
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Villa San Bernardo, Cuyahoga County, Ohio
ATTACHMENT B – Maps

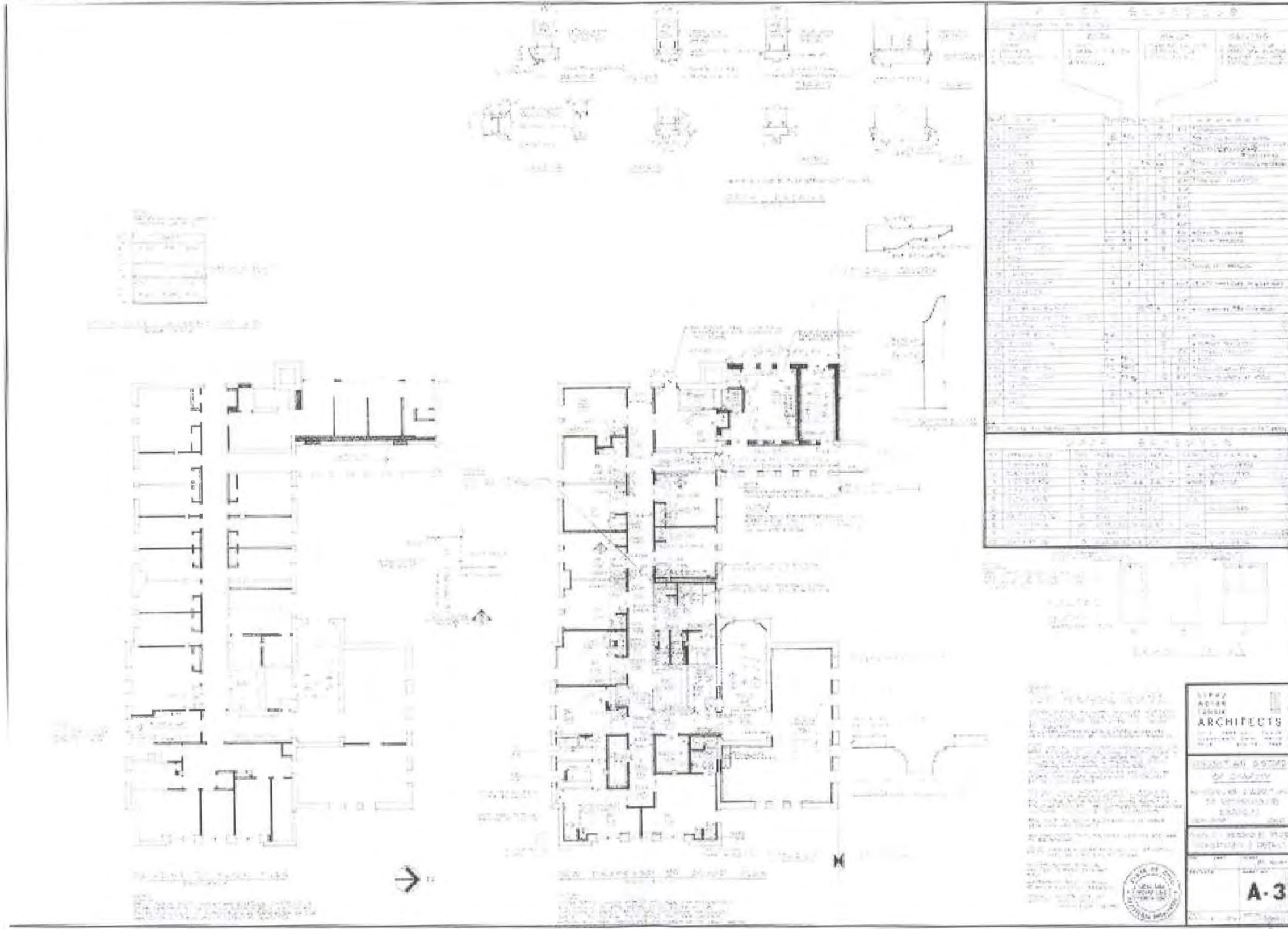


Villa San Bernardo location. From Google Maps.

Villa San Bernardo Historic District,
 Cuyahoga Co., Ohio Motherhouse 1976
 Remodel Floor Plans



Villa San Bernardo Historic District,
 Cuyahoga Co., Ohio Motherhouse 1976
 Remodel Floor Plans



Villa San Bernardo Historic District,
 Cuyahoga Co., Ohio Motherhouse 1976
 Remodel Floor Plans

The image displays architectural floor plans for the Villa San Bernardo Motherhouse remodel. It includes a main floor plan on the left and center, a detailed section on the right, and a schedule of materials on the far right. The main floor plan shows a complex layout of rooms, corridors, and a central courtyard area. The detailed section shows a vertical cross-section of a building, likely a tower or a multi-story structure, with various levels and structural elements. The schedule of materials is a table with multiple columns and rows, detailing the specifications for various materials used in the project.

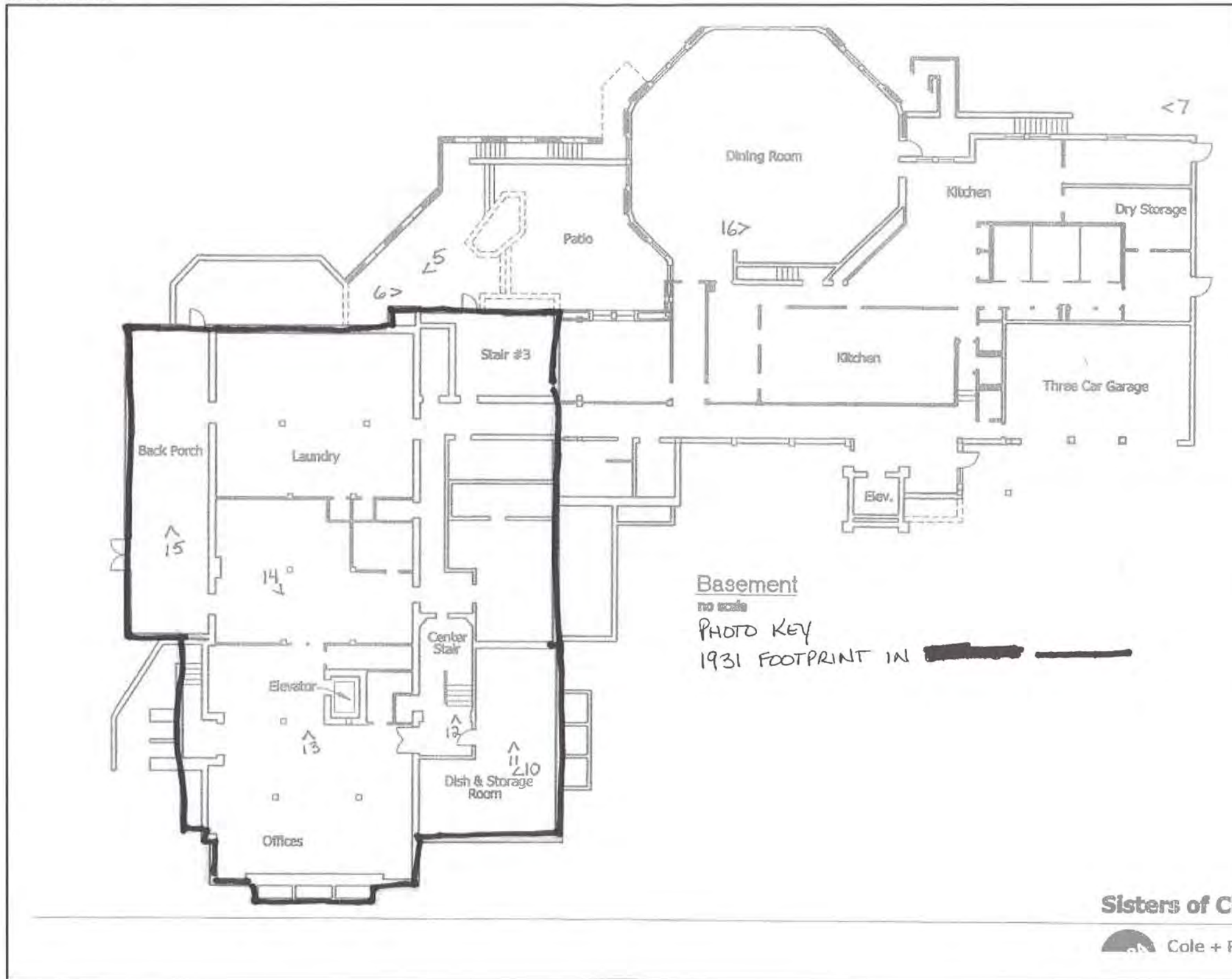
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LARRY
 WEAVER
 ARCHITECTS
 1111 BROADWAY, SUITE 1000
 CLEVELAND, OHIO 44114
 (216) 525-1111

PROJECT NO. 1976-001
 SHEET NO. A-4
 DATE: 1976

A-4

Villa San Bernardo Historic District,
Cuyahoga Co., Ohio PHOTO KEY –
Motherhouse Interior



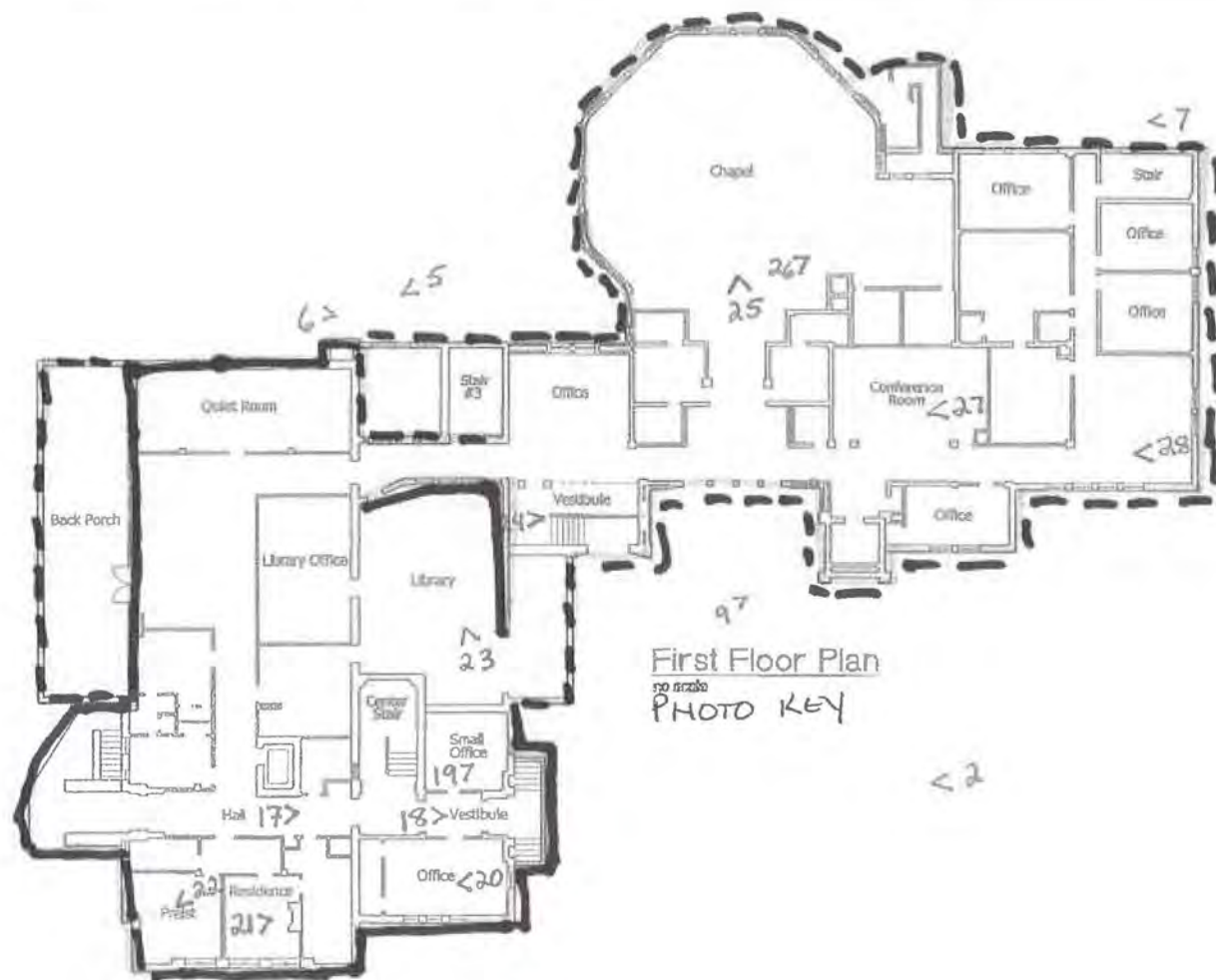
Sisters of Ch

Cole + R

Villa San Bernardo Historic District,
 Cuyahoga Co., Ohio PHOTO KEY –
 Motherhouse Interior

— = 1931
 - - - = 1979

Villa San Bernardo



First Floor Plan
 no scale
 PHOTO KEY

May 2006

Prepared for
 Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati

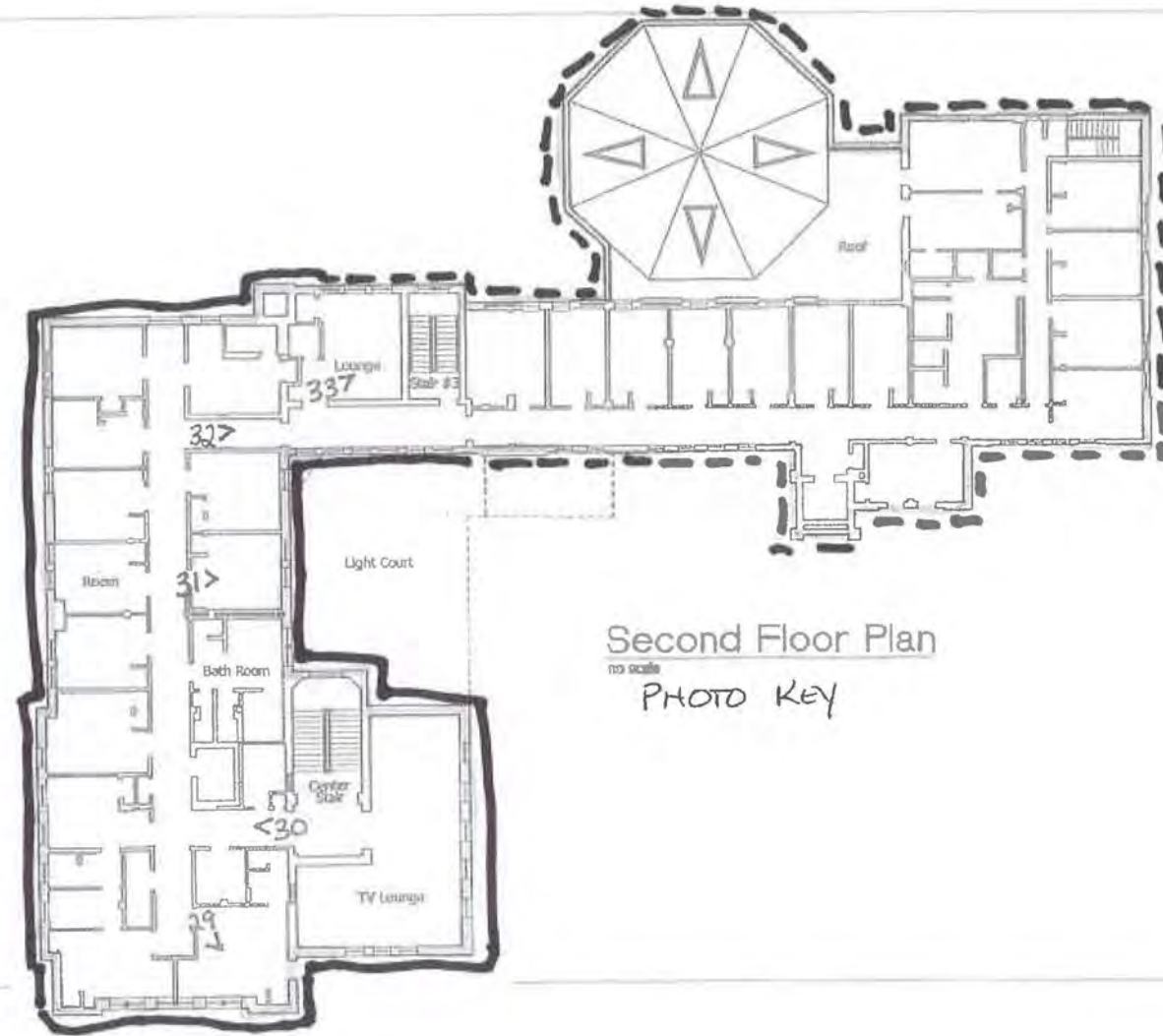
 Cole + Russell Architects
 ARCHITECTS

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Villa San Bernardo Historic District,
Cuyahoga Co., Ohio PHOTO KEY –
Motherhouse Interior

— = 1931
- - - = 1979

Villa San Bernardo



Second Floor Plan
no scale
PHOTO KEY

May 2006

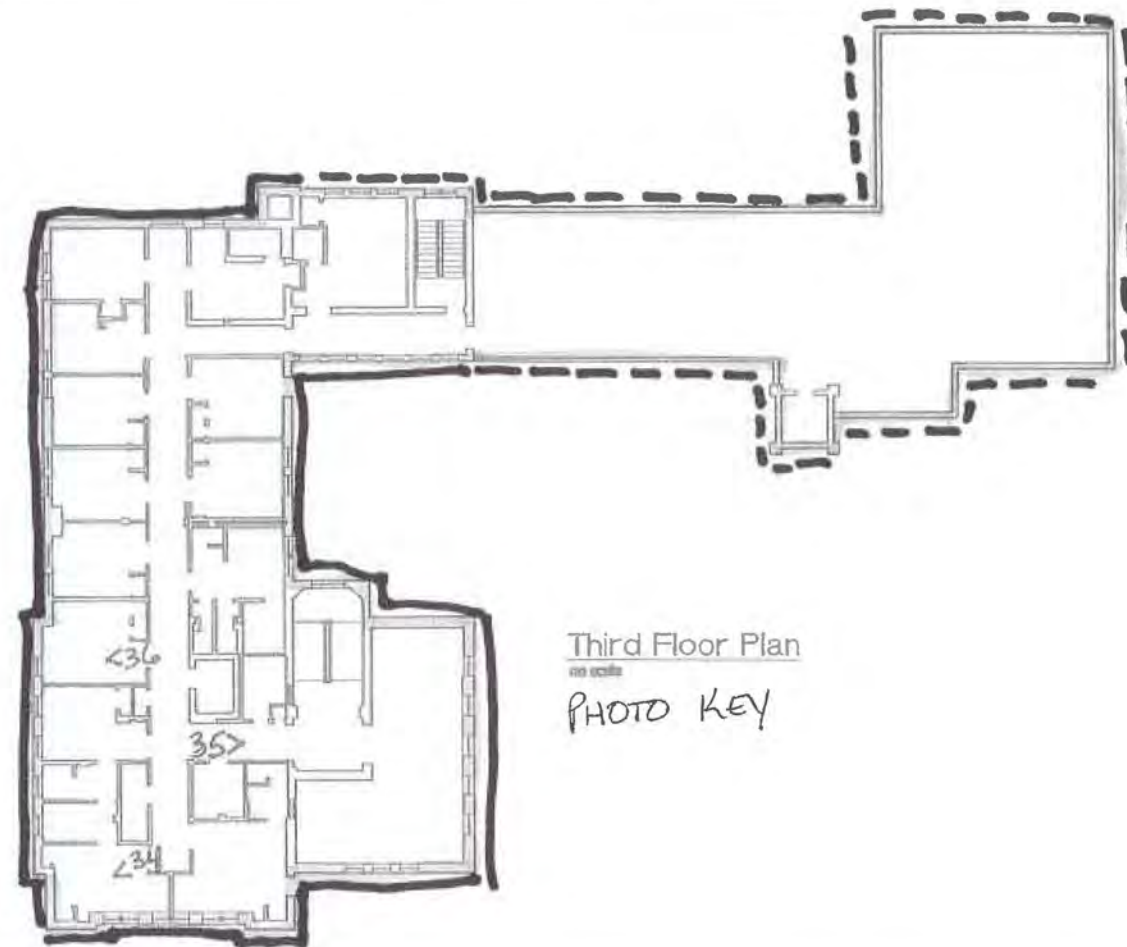
Prepared for
Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati

CRA Cole + Russell Architects

Villa San Bernardo Historic District,
Cuyahoga Co., Ohio PHOTO KEY –
Motherhouse Interior

— = 1931
- - - = 1979

Villa San Bernardo



Third Floor Plan
no scale
PHOTO KEY

May 2006

Prepared for
Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati

 Cole + Russell Architects
ARCHITECTS





































EXIT

























202

202





EXIT







EXIT

















































NO TRAFFIC
STOP





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Villa San Bernardo Historic District
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: OHIO, Cuyahoga

DATE RECEIVED: 7/17/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/19/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/03/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/01/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000559

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 9/1/2015 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A&C
REVIEWER Patrick Andrus DISCIPLINE Historian
TELEPHONE _____ DATE 9/1/2015

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.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NPS TRANSMITTAL CHECK LIST

OHIO HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
800 E. 17th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43211
(614)-298-2000

The following materials are submitted on July 15, 2015
For nomination of the Villa San Bernardo to the National Register of
Historic Places: H.D. Cuyahoga Co, OH

- Original National Register of Historic Places nomination form
 Paper PDF
- Multiple Property Nomination Cover Document
 Paper PDF
- Multiple Property Nomination form
 Paper PDF
- Photographs
 Prints TIFFs
- CD with electronic images
- Original USGS map(s)
 Paper Digital
- Sketch map(s)/Photograph view map(s)/Floor plan(s)
 Paper PDF
- Piece(s) of correspondence
 Paper PDF
- Other _____

COMMENTS:

- Please provide a substantive review of this nomination
- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- The enclosed owner objection(s) do _____ do not _____
Constitute a majority of property owners
- Other: _____



RECEIVED 2280

JUL 17 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

July 13, 2015

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief, National Register
and National Historic Landmark Programs
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl. (2280)
Washington D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed please find five (5) new National Register nominations for Ohio. All appropriate notification procedures have been followed for the new nomination submissions.

NEW NOMINATION

Woodland-Larchmere Commercial Historic District
Villa San Bernardo Historic District
South High School
Bon Air Flats
Mohawk Place Historic District

COUNTY

Cuyahoga
Cuyahoga
Franklin
Hamilton
Hamilton

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the South High School, Franklin County, OH nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

If you have questions or comments about these documents, please contact the National Register staff in the Ohio Historic Preservation Office at (614) 298-2000.

Sincerely,

for A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Bowen".

Lox A. Logan, Jr.
Executive Director and CEO
State Historic Preservation Officer
Ohio History Connection

Enclosures