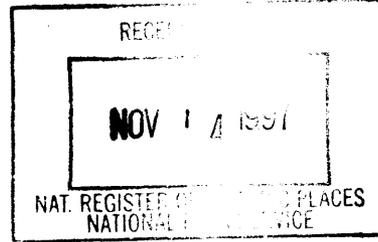


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



1540

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Colonial Gardens Commercial Historic District

other names/site number 141-597-38750

2. Location

street & number 2919-3027 Mishawaka Ave. N/A not for publication

city or town South Bend N/A vicinity

state Indiana code IN county St. Joseph code 141 zip code 46615

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Edson H. Beall

Date of Action

12/15/97

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

- building, district, site, structure, object

Table with 3 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing, and Resource Type (buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total). Values: 4, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0, 4, 1.

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Specialty Store, Restaurant, RECREATION/CULTURE: Theater

COMMERCE/TRADE: Specialty Store, Restaurant, Professional, Business

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

19th & 20th c. REVIVALS: Classical Revival

foundation: BRICK, walls: BRICK, roof: ASPHALT, other: TERRA COTTA

Narrative Description

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

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.)

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE _____

COMMERCE _____

Period of Significance

1925-1947 _____

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Schneider, W.W. _____

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Historic Preservation commission of South Bend
& St. Joseph County

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

COLONIAL GARDENS COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

St. Joseph County IN

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Colonial Gardens Commercial District takes up less than two blocks on the north side of Mishawaka Avenue in River Park, a part of South Bend that once was a separate town between the former and the city of Mishawaka to the east. The district is part of a larger strip of mostly small commercial buildings built from the 1920s through the 1980s that begins east of Pottawotamie Park. East of the district is a residential stretch with an occasional commercial building. To the north is the Colonial Gardens residential subdivision, consisting of relatively modest dwellings built in a variety of styles prevalent in the 1920s and 1930s, altered over the years with siding changes, porch enclosures, and additions. The houses of this subdivision are similar to those of the surrounding area, most of which was developed around the same time.

The diminutive historic district is comprised of five commercial buildings that take up the east end of the 2900 block (see photo 1) and most of the 3000 block (see photo 2) of the north side of Mishawaka Avenue. The four contributing buildings are all of tan brick embellished with terra cotta ornamentation, all constructed within about a year's time and designed by the same architect. W.W. Schneider was clearly influenced by the popular Revival styles of the time, chiefly Classical and Spanish Baroque. The westernmost building, 2919-2925 Mishawaka (see photo 1), is of one story with four storefronts marked above by decorative parapets. The former River Park Theatre at 2931 Mishawaka (photo 3) originally included two storefronts flanking the theater entrance, which are now enclosed (the eastward one is bricked). The theater sign above the marquee dates to probably the 1950s. While the interior lobby is intact (ca. 1960s), the theater itself has been gutted and turned into a commercial photography studio. East across 30th Street, past a modern former gas station (now an auto repair shop), is the Colonial (photo 4), a one-story building with four storefronts adorned with green terra cotta medallions. Four urns trimmed with green festoons grace the parapet, and below it "COLONIAL" in a terra cotta tablet is centered on the facade. The easternmost building of the district is 3021-3027 Mishawaka (see photo 2), which displays cartouches, medallions, and a festooned shield on its facade. The two-story building contains four storefronts with apartments above.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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COLONIAL GARDENS COMMERCIAL DISTRICT St. Joseph County IN

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Colonial Gardens Commercial District contains within two blocks a particularly fine collection of four terra cotta-ornamented buildings typical of the 1920s, each different but all of the same color and material and of similar design, all by the same architect. These multiple-storefront buildings were specifically constructed to house various commercial enterprises that would provide services to the Colonial Gardens residences immediately north in the subdivision, as well as the River Park area as a whole. Reflective of the use of terra cotta so prevalent in the 1920s, the Colonial Gardens Commercial District is eligible under Criterion A (in the area of commerce) and Criterion C (in the area of architecture).

By the time the subdivision known as Colonial Gardens was developed in the 1920s, River Park had been annexed by South Bend. The area that became River Park had first begun to be platted in 1892 and was incorporated as a town eight years later. By 1910 most River Park residents believed annexation by either South Bend or Mishawaka would offer more benefits than remaining independent, and in November of that year the little town (the population was just under 1600) became part of South Bend. Nevertheless, to this day River Park retains a distinct identity.

In the early 1920s two local real estate development companies, Colpaert and, to a lesser degree, Whitcomb and Keller, began to build and sell houses in the new Colonial Gardens subdivision north of Mishawaka Avenue on what had been a scrubby expanse of sandy soil, land once belonging to Clement Studebaker. Starting in 1925, Colpaert built visually unified commercial blocks along the north side of 2900 and 3000 Mishawaka. Designed by South Bend architect W.W. Schneider, the two sets of tan brick, terra cotta-trimmed buildings were separated by 30th Street and a filling station on the northeast corner built in 1924, since replaced by a more recent structure. The Chicago, South Bend and Northern Indiana Railway ran along Mishawaka Avenue; Colonial Gardens filled in rapidly. Entrepreneurs quickly purchased the commercial buildings and opened a variety of stores and services. Businesses thrived.

The earliest businesses offered virtually everything a shopper would ordinarily need or desire, including a furniture store, radio shop, and hardware store for the convenience of the new homeowners. There were

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Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3

COLONIAL GARDENS COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

St. Joseph County IN

grocery stores, a butcher shop, a bakery, a confectionery; also a dime store, a cigar shop, and restaurants. A dentist located in the theater building; there was a beauty salon and even a funeral parlor. The River Park Theatre opened in 1927 and remained a prime attraction for the neighborhood for sixty years, continuously owned by the same family, the Vogels. The theater building was purchased in 1987 and converted into a commercial photography studio by the current owners, who retained the facade and the lobby. Although owners changed and locations shifted about, the types of basic goods and services offered in these shops remained essentially the same into the 1960s. Today the businesses occupying these buildings tend to be of a more specialized nature; they include two appliance shops, a supplier of athletic equipment, a video rental center, an employment agency, and a pub at 3013 Mishawaka, which evolved from a tavern opened in the 1930s.

W[alter] W. Schneider, born in Chattanooga, Tennessee in 1868, arrived in South Bend in 1896, where he practiced architecture for several decades. Besides the Colonial Gardens commercial buildings, he designed countless residences and several lodge halls. Among his most notable extant works is the Natatorium on West Washington Street, completed in 1922. Schneider designed a commercial block about the same time with some similar terra cotta motifs to those in Colonial Gardens that still stands at 507-511 South Michigan on the edge of downtown South Bend. Schneider died in 1965 and is buried in Riverview Cemetery.

The Colonial Gardens Historic District remains today as visually distinct and impressive as when its contributing buildings were constructed over seventy years ago.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9, 10 Page 4

COLONIAL GARDENS COMMERCIAL DISTRICT St. Joseph County IN

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Nuner Junior High School. Big Little Village: A Tail [sic] of South Bend. South Bend 1939.

Polk, R.L., Pub. South Bend City Directory. Indianapolis 1928-1955.

Witwer, J.B. "Address to River Park Business Men's [sic] Meeting and Banquet." Nuner School, 2 December 1926.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

Bounded on the south by the center of Mishawaka Avenue, on the west by the west side of 2919-2925 Mishawaka, on the north by the alley paralleling Mishawaka Avenue, and on the east by the east side of 3021-3027 Mishawaka.

Boundary Justification

Includes all the extant historic commercial resources that were constructed within the Colonial Gardens subdivision on its southern edge.

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MISTAWAKA AVENUE

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30th STREET

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