

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



1. Name

historic

and/or common St. Joseph Historic District

2. Location

*Roughly bounded by Canal Ave., Front, Sicker,*  
*4th, and Pacific Sts.*

street & number see map not for publication

city, town St. Joseph vicinity of congressional district 5th-Thomas Jerry Huckaby

state La. code 22 county Tensas Parish code 107

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple ownership

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Tensas Parish Courthouse

street & number

city, town St. Joseph state La.

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title La. Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1980  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records La. State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge state La.

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The St. Joseph Historic District contains 99 buildings which comprises the Mississippi River levee town of St. Joseph as it existed 50 years ago. The district boundaries encompass the town as far as it extended at that time with one exception. The area east of Second Street, which consists of 7 lots (see maps), was excluded because in the last ten years it has been redeveloped with a group of brick ranch houses and a large modern brick church and parish house.

The district consists of 3 main elements:

1. The Main Street Corridor: This is St. Joseph's major thoroughfare. <sup>(Main Rd.)</sup> It runs back from the levee and is flanked by 2 tightly packed rows of 1 and 2 story, mainly turn-of-the-century commercial buildings. One block in these commercial buildings gives way to residences on large treed lots.

2. The Courthouse Green: The classical style, domed Courthouse (#99) is set at the head of a broad axial green avenue (now somewhat overgrown in parts) which has an approach road to the Courthouse on each side (general view #13). The green is flanked mainly by residences on large well treed lots. Opposite the Courthouse on the northwest corner of the green is the graceful Carpenter Gothic Episcopal Church (#16). At the opposite end of the green to the Courthouse is the 2 story pedimented Masonic Hall (general view #13).

3. Second Street: These two areas are linked by a late nineteenth and early twentieth century residential area which presents an almost continuous streetscape along the west side of Second Street (see maps).

### COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

Although the handsome 3 bay Greek Revival Post Office (#43) dates from circa 1850, most of the 22 commercial buildings in the Main Street corridor date from the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. Nine of them are set in an impressive continuous row along the north side of Main Street (#s 18-26, see general view #4). For the most part these are simple parapeted brick buildings with corbel tables and unornamented iron galleries. The fire house (#20) with its hood molded arches and elaborate blind arcaded parapet is the only exception. Although 5 of the buildings on the south side of Main Street are intrusions, they are low in scale and innocuous. The impressive buildings across the street and the 2½ story parish library (#36), which is an 1850 plantation house, easily dominate them (see general view #5).

Most of the old commercial buildings have undergone some replacement of glass, but for the most part their fenestration patterns are intact.

### RESIDENCES

The residential areas have a suburban scale and density with much foliage. Aside from a handful of 2½ story houses and bungalows, the residences are predominantly raised cottages of 3 or 5 bays with pitched roofs. Most early examples have simple Greek Revival details (#71). Later examples often have some Queen Anne applique, a bay window or a gable, a curving gallery, or a turreted form (#4, #95). Turn of the century examples tend to be more regular in massing and some have Colonial Revival details (#69).

CONTINUED

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Afro-American history
	<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

**Specific dates** \_\_\_\_\_ **Builder/Architect** \_\_\_\_\_

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)** Criteria A and C

The St. Joseph Historic District is significant in the area of architecture as probably the most intact late nineteenth-early twentieth century river levee town in Louisiana north of Natchez, Mississippi. It has a greater concentration and number of historic buildings than any other town along the Louisiana side of the river.

In addition, St. Joseph is significant in the area of city planning. The use of an axial green running from the levee to the Courthouse shows a level of Baroque city planning almost unknown in small towns in Louisiana, most of which grew on an expanding grid.

St. Joseph is significant in the area of politics/government because it has been the Tensas parish seat since the parish was created in 1843. The first parish courthouse was constructed in 1853 and is no longer extant. The present courthouse was built in 1906.

The St. Joseph Courthouse Square is significant in the area of black history because it is the site of an event which led to a nationally publicized and federally investigated race riot in nearby Waterproof in 1878. Some 36 blacks were killed as a result.

One of the initial indications that the South was truly unreconstructed was the violence and fraud that attended the autumn elections of 1878. In Louisiana United States Congressional seats, as well as various local offices, were involved. The most widely publicized of the pre-election riots occurred at Waterproof and was precipitated by a meeting of black Republicans at the St. Joseph Courthouse (not the present one).

Tensas Parish was a Republican stronghold during Reconstruction because about 90% of its population was black. After Reconstruction ended, the white Republicans of Tensas Parish, because of the ruthless tactics used by Democrats to crush opposition, either abstained from politics or deserted their party and joined the Democratic ranks. Despite the large Republican majority in the parish, no white man would accept nomination on the Republican ticket for fear of incurring Democratic wrath.

The vast majority of Tensas Republicans, however, were black and it was this group, or at least a portion of it, that decided to "stand up" to the Democrats. The blacks were led by Alfred Fairfax, a black Baptist preacher, aspirant for Congress, and the leader of black Republicans in Tensas. Despite warnings from the Democratic party, Fairfax was determined to hold a parish Republican nominating convention. When the convention assembled at the St. Joseph Courthouse, it was composed entirely of blacks. The blacks who attended had been so frightened by Democratic threats that they met beforehand, armed themselves heavily, rode to the courthouse as a group, nominated their candidates, and disbanded.

This defiance and the fact that the blacks were armed produced considerable alarm among the parish's heavily outnumbered whites. Neighboring parishes and Mississippians responded to the Tensas Democrats' call for assistance in putting down this latest attempt at "Negro rule."

The first priority was to take care of Fairfax, who lived in nearby Waterproof. Conflicting stories of what happened at this point reached the U.S. Justice Department in a matter of days, and it will probably never be known exactly what transpired. Suffice

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Hair, William Ivy. Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest: Louisiana Politics, 1877-1900. Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1969.

Webb, Allie Bayne Windham. "A History of Negro Voting in Louisiana, 1876-1906." Ph.D. dissertation, LSU, 1962.

CONTINUED  
**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**  
**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

# 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property approx. 80 acres  
 Quadrangle name St. Joseph, LA.

Quadrangle scale 1:62,500

**UMT References**

A	<u>115</u>	<u>66681010</u>	<u>3531291010</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>115</u>	<u>66681510</u>	<u>3531171510</u>
E	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
G	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>

B	<u>115</u>	<u>661721010</u>	<u>3531251010</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	<u>115</u>	<u>66631010</u>	<u>3531211010</u>
F	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
H	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

See continuation sheet for item 10.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mayor Whitfield Jones

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date August-September 1980

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town St. Joseph state La. 71366

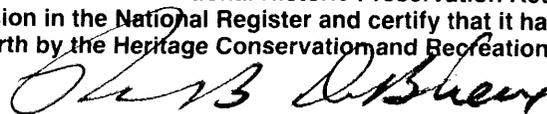
# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national     state     local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

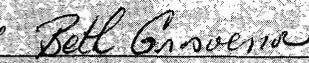


title Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer

date 10/7/80

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register



Keeper of the National Register

date 12/10/80

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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NOV 12 1980  
DATE ENTERED

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

St. Joseph  
CONTINUATION SHEET Historic District ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

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## INVENTORY BREAKDOWN ACCORDING TO PERIODS

1830 - 1860	8 buildings	8%
1860 - 1900	44 buildings	44%
1900 - 1930	20 buildings	20%
intrusions	27 buildings	27%
	<u>99 buildings</u>	

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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St. Joseph

**CONTINUATION SHEET** Historic District ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

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8. Statement of Significance (Continued)

it to say, that it seems as if a band of whites, led by one Captain John Peck of Sicily Island, visited Fairfax's residence in Waterproof. As Captain Peck walked onto the porch he was fatally shot, and in the ensuing violence 3 or 4 blacks were killed. This event caused further concern among area whites, and they banded together in groups to patrol the vicinity. Blacks, who were understandably frightened, also gathered together to protect themselves. Given these conditions, violence was seemingly inevitable. It erupted when a white posse spotted a group of blacks near Waterproof. It seems to be uncertain as to which group began the violence. About 36 blacks were killed as a result of these disturbances. Fairfax, who had escaped unharmed, wrote a letter to President Hayes enumerating the blacks who had been killed, the President turned the matter over to the Justice Department, and the affair was investigated.

Although the riot itself occurred at Waterproof, it was caused by events at the St. Joseph Courthouse Square. Since the courthouse itself is no longer extant, the courthouse square is being nominated as a historic site. Also, there is nothing left in Waterproof to reflect this important episode in Louisiana's turbulent racial history.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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DATE ENTERED

St. Joseph  
**CONTINUATION SHEET** Historic District ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

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9. Bibliography (Continued)

Harrison, James P. "'78 in Tensas." Recollections by a participant in the Waterproof incident, written in 1938.

New York Times. October 18, November 4, 1878 and January 8, 9, 1879.

Brasseaux, Carl A., Conrad, Glenn R., and Robinson, R. Warren. The Courthouses of Louisiana. Lafayette: University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1977.

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

### Verbal Boundary Description

See attached Boundary Map. This map supercedes all other visual material submitted with this application as a definitive statement of the district's boundaries. In general, the boundaries follow the property lines. In some cases, the boundaries cut across a particular property to conform to the lot lines of adjacent properties. This was done with property #'s 6-22, 29, and the "L" side lot of # 1. In no case does the boundary line cut through a building.

### Boundary Justification

Boundaries were drawn to encompass the extent of the town as it existed in the 1920's. Older residents report that until the 1960's there was nothing but open fields beyond the district boundaries. As has already been mentioned, the lots for properties 6-22 are not fully within the district boundaries. The rear portions of these lots were cut out because in most cases modern brick tract houses have been built upon them.

In addition, certain lots east of Second Street (see map) have not been included within the district. This area was excluded from the district because it has no historic character left and therefore, it makes no contribution to the district. It is presently occupied by five modern ranch houses and a modern church and parsonage.

BUILDING INVENTORY FOR PROPOSED HISTORIC DISTRICT  
ST. JOSEPH, LOUISIANA:

- 1 c. 1890. One story hip roof frame house with semi-octagonal bay. Front and side galleries with Eastlake turned posts.
- 2 c. 1900. One story hip roof frame house. Square post front and side galleries.
- 3 c. 1900. One story raised frame house. Queen Anne-Colonial Revival style-center hall plan. Hip roof broken by pediment with semi-circular window. Interior chimneys. Doric columns on front and side galleries.
- 4 c. 1900. 5 bay center hall raised frame house. Square posts on gallery.
- 5 c. 1900. One story frame cottage.
- 6 Brick ranch style intrusion.
- 7 c. 1918. One story frame house. Bungalow style with square post porches.
- 8 c. 1890. One story frame cottage. Turned Eastlake style porch posts.
- 9 1920's frame bungalow.
- 10 c. 1890. One story center hall house. Front and side porches have square posts with jigsaw scroll brackets.
- 11 Story and half center hall brick house c. 1850. Modified in 1940's.
- 12 Small commercial intrusion-filling station.
- 13 Brick intrusion-Post office.
- 14 30's Art Deco style commercial building. Former bank.
- 15 Two commercial intrusions.
- 16
- 17 Commercial intrusion.
- 18 1920's brick store buildings.
- 19 Brick office intrusion.
- 20 c. 1880. Stuccoed brick two story building with good cornice detailing. Beautiful cast iron exterior staircase. First bank building in St. Joseph.

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- 21 Row of late 19th century brick store buildings. 21 has a set-  
22 back second story. 22 is two story with an upstairs gallery.  
23 23, 24, and 25 feature some cast iron pilasters on the facades.  
24  
25  
26
- 27 c. 1910. Story and half Queen Anne bungalow. Semi-circular,  
arched balcony over front porch.
- 28 c. 1900. One story center hall frame house. Semi-octagonal  
bay. Gallery has square posts.
- 29 Modern brick residence. intrusion.
- 30 c. 1840. One story 5 bay center hall frame house. Square Doric  
post gallery with panelled wainscot.
- 31 c. 1870. L shaped one story frame house. Abundant jigsaw scroll-  
work trim. Italinatate columns.
- 32 Modern brick residential-style commercial intrusion.
- 33 c. 1850. One story 5 bay center hall frame house. Simplified  
Ionic columns on gallery and Ionic pilasters on doorway.
- 34 c. 1890. Large one story raised frame house. Elaborate Queen  
Anne "stick-style" galleries with several kinds of turned trim.  
Shingled tower with weathervane.
- 35 c. 1930. Brick store building.
- 36 c. 1850. Large two and half story 5 bay center hall frame building.  
Elaborate Renaissance Revival Gallery with panelled wainscot.
- 37 Small frame office intrusion.
- 38 Small brick office intrusion.
- 39 Small brick office intrusion.
- 40 Large modern store building. Intrusion.
- 41 Intrusion. Stuccoed brick filling station.
- 42 c. 1920. One story frame building. Typical World War I era  
"pattern book" Elizabethan facade.
- 43 c. 1850. One story 3 bay hip roof frame clapboard building.  
Doric post gallery. Unusual pannelled facade. Once served as  
Post Office. Presently attached to later addition #42.

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BUILDING INVENTORY Page 3

- 44 Mid 19th century log cabin much remodelled. Most extant features late 19th century including Renaissance Revival gallery and turreted dormers. Shallow arch fenestration. Scrolled volutes with onion hangers. Rusticated wood facade.
- 45 c. 1880. 2 room frame clapboard building with porch. Servant's house for #44.
- 46 c. 1880. 5 bay center hall raised frame house. Story and half with interior chimneys. Simplified Renaissance Revival gallery.
- 47 1920's frame bungalows.  
48  
49
- 50 Frame residence. intrusion.
- 51 c. 1900. One story frame house. Square post gallery.
- 52 c. 1890. One story frame cottage. Originally servant's house for #34.
- 53 Modern frame residence. Intrusion.
- 54 1920's frame bungalows.  
55
- 56 c. 1900. One story frame house with pyramid roof. Jigsaw bannister and turned Eastlake columns.
- 57 Small frame residential intrusion.
- 58 1920's frame bungalow.
- 59 c. 1890. Two story frame house. Two story semi-octagonal bay. Eastlake porch.
- 60 Small frame intrusion.
- 61 c. 1890. L shaped frame house. Semi-octagonal bay with stained glass trim.
- 62 Brick ranch style intrusion.
- 63 Small frame intrusion.
- 64 c. 1900. Row of 3 rental houses. One story frame construction.  
65 Porches have Eastlake turned posts.  
66
- 67 Brick ranch style intrusion.
- 68 c. 1885. Simple frame construction with clapboard siding. Catholic Church.

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BUILDING INVENTORY Page 4

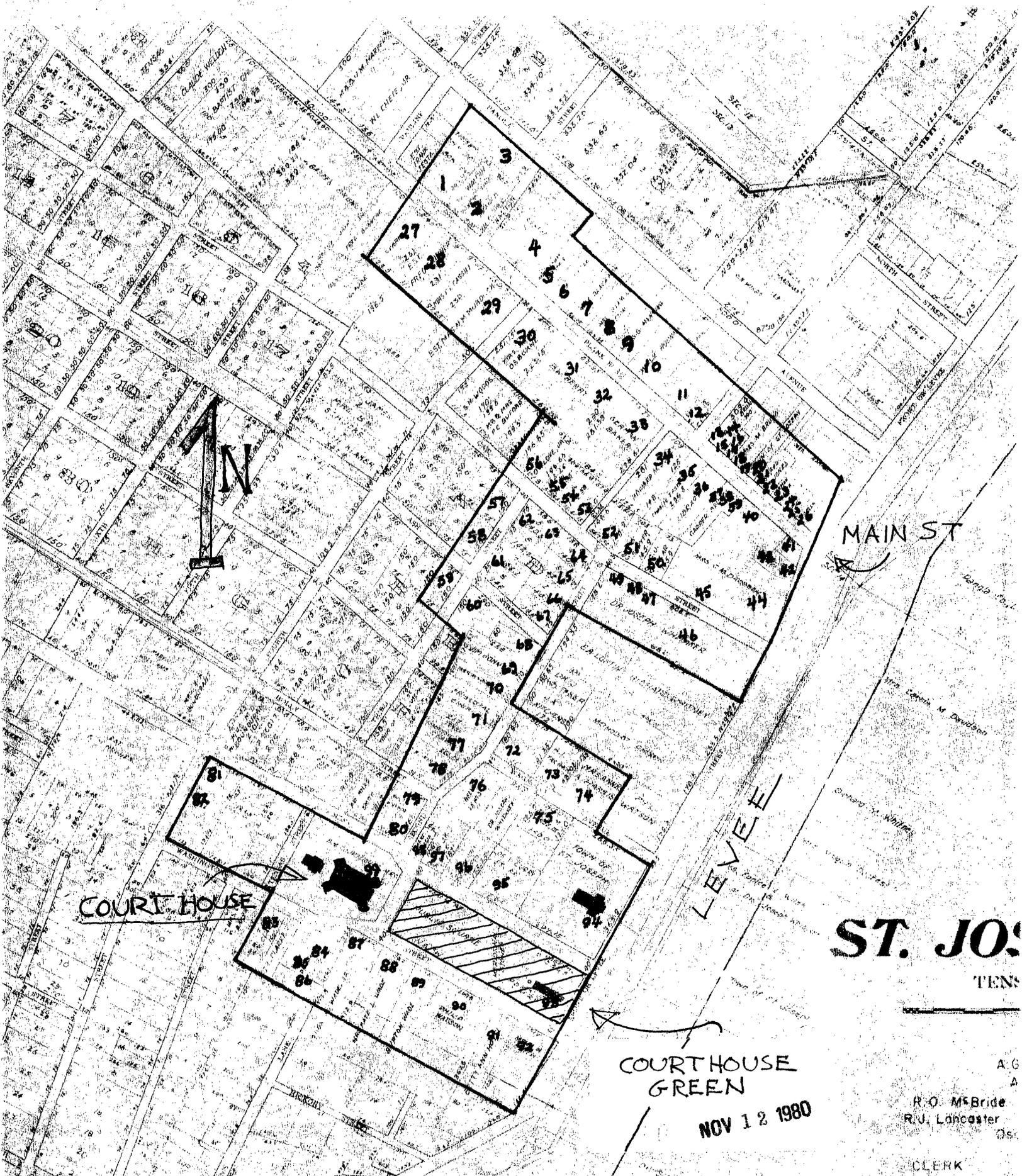
- 69 c. 1900. One story raised Queen Anne-Colonial Revival style frame house. Pyramid roof, semi-octagonal bay. Doric columns.
- 70 c. 1895. Late 19th century double shotgun frame house with Eastlake porch posts.
- 71 1852. Present house is upper frame story of 1852 plantation house. Moved to present site in 1881. 5 bay center hall. Greek Revival gallery. Windows on gallery have Gibb doors.
- 72 c. 1880. L shaped frame house, clapboard siding. Gallery has chamfered columns.
- 73 Brick ranch style intrusion.
- 74 c. 1880. Originally a frame store building on stilts. Moved from levee in late 19th century. Raised frame house. Colonial Revival roofline and portico added in early 1900's.
- 75 Small frame residential intrusion.
- 76 Late 19th century L shaped frame cottage.
- 77 Brick ranch intrusion
- 78 Frame ranch style intrusion.
- 79 Brick residential-style office intrusion.
- 80 c. 1890. Frame clapboard building. Built as and still an attorney's office. Chamfered columns on gallery.
- 81 1905. Presbyterian church. Queen Anne revival frame church with Gothic details. Square plan hall, auditorium-like with sloping floor and featuring a corner platform. Impressive 3 part lancet windows. Corner tower and side gables.
- 82 c. 1900. One story 5 bay frame house. Hip roof. Eastlake columns on gallery.
- 83 c. 1890. Small frame cottage. Eastlake turned post porch.
- 84 1878. Story and half raised frame house. Clapboard siding and rusticated facade. 5 bay center hall plan. Gallery has Italic columns with a wealth of jigsaw trim featuring a Maltese cross motif.
- 85 c. 1880. Original out-building for #84. Small frame building, vertical board and batten construction with slate roof. Housed gas plant for residence.
- 86 c. 1900. Out-building for #84. Turn of the century barn, vertical board palisade construction.

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BUILDING INVENTORY Page 5

- 87 1920's frame bungalow. Now attorney's office.
- 88 c. 1920. Brick house in English medieval style.
- 89 Brick Colonial -style intrusion.
- 90 c. 1920. Brick bungalow.
- 91 c. 1890. Frame house with many additions. (Scheduled for demolition).
- 92 c. 1830. 5 bay center hall one story frame house. Square post gallery. 12 over 12 windows.
- 93 1875. Masonic Hall. Two story frame building with hip roof. Dentil cornice.
- 94 Community House. One story frame community center. 1920's Colonial Revival style portico. Design influenced by the White Pine Series.
- 95 c. 1900. Queen Anne-Colonial Revival raised one story frame house. Slate roof with 2 turretted dormers and a 3rd turret over circular extension of side gallery.
- 96 1872. Episcopal Church. Excellent example of "Carpenter-Gothic" style. Gothic barge board and batten construction. Lancet windows. Central tower and corner turrets. Gothic trefoil trim around cornice.
- 97 1920's frame bungalow, now attorney's office.
- 98 Ell of late 19th century house, presently attorney's office.
- 99 1905. Court House. National Register.

NOV 12 1980



MAIN ST

COURT HOUSE

COURTHOUSE GREEN

ST. JOSEPH  
TENNESSEE

NOV 12 1980

R.O. McBride  
R.U. Lancaster

CLERK  
Brenda Morgan

CHIEF  
R...