

**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.

**1. Name of Property**Historic name: St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

**2. Location**Street & number: 4200 Alder Street.City or town: East Chicago State: IN County: LakeNot 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:

XA \_\_\_\_B xC \_\_\_\_D\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title:\_\_\_\_\_  
DateIndiana DNR-Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official:\_\_\_\_\_  
Date\_\_\_\_\_  
Title :\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church  
Name of Property

Lake County, IN  
County and State

---

#### 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

---

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

---

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☒
- Public – Local ☐
- Public – State ☐
- Public – Federal ☐

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church

Name of Property

Lake County, IN

County and State

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☒

District

☐

Site

☐

Structure

☐

Object

☐

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

0

buildings

0

0

sites

0

0

structures

2

0

objects

3

0

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

---

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION: religious facility

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION: religious facility

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church  
Name of Property

Lake County, IN  
County and State

---

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE  
walls: BRICK  
WOOD: Weatherboard  
roof: SYNTHETICS: Rubber  
other:

### 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

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church is a Neo-expressionist example of religious architecture by a prominent mid-20<sup>th</sup> century African American architect from East Chicago. The African Methodist Episcopal congregation organized in 1916 and constructed a building at 140<sup>th</sup> and Deodar Streets in 1917. The congregation contacted Wendell Campbell to design a new house of worship that was built in 1973. The building features a two-story block with classrooms, fellowship hall, and offices and a remarkable sanctuary Campbell likened to hands folded in prayer with a multi-folded plate roof that is expressed inside the sanctuary.

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church  
Name of Property

Lake County, IN  
County and State

## Narrative Description

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church was constructed in 1973 between the Sunnyside and Prairie Park neighborhoods of East Chicago a block south of U. S. Highway 12/Cesar Chavez Memorial Drive. The building is located on Prairie Park Unit Lot No. 4 on the southwest corner of the intersection of Alder Street and Jeorse Circle where mid-20<sup>th</sup> century development includes housing to the south, Washington Elementary School to the east, the East Chicago Public Library Main Branch on the northeast corner, and the East Chicago Police Department to the north. Angled parking is located along Alder Street east of the building and a parking lot with a drive to Jeorse Circle is west of the building.

The building is positioned facing slightly northeast with the sanctuary fronting Jeorse Circle (photo 01). Entrances from the parking lot and parking on Alder Street are located in a glass foyer connecting the sanctuary and office/classroom block. A large concrete terrace with steps down to the parking lot is off the west side of the foyer (photo 08). A sidewalk is off the east side that leads to Alder Street (photo 04). A tall aluminum cross is located in the west terrace (seen in photo 09). A brick and metal sign is located in the northeast corner of the site. These two features date to the construction of the building and are considered contributing objects. A concrete service drive is behind the building to the south (photo 10). Simple landscaping with a few ornamental trees and shaped evergreen shrubs is around the perimeter of the building.

The building is composed in three sections: the glass foyer, the sanctuary with folded plate roof; a two-story block, composed of dark orange/brown colored brick that contains offices, classrooms, restrooms; and a large fellowship hall. The three parts will be described individually.

The glass foyer is one-story and features a tall pair of glass and metal doors centered in its east and west walls (middle of photo 04). Large metal windows flank the doors and compose the remaining width of the wall. The wall is recessed slightly below a stucco soffit and a brick wall that extends up to meet the height of the parapet of the office/classroom block. It is capped with limestone. The foyer is a tall, simple space, undivided, that has a recessed row of four wood doors with narrow, vertical windows, that lead into the sanctuary to the north and stairs that lead up to the office/classroom area and down to the restrooms and fellowship hall to the south. It has a terrazzo floor and drywall ceiling. See photos 16-17.

The office/classroom block is two-stories with each a half-story above or below the foyer. The block projects from the foyer slightly to the east and more extensively to the west. It is all brick and has a limestone parapet cap. The east façade of the block is void of any windows and only features letters spelling ST. MARK FELLOWSHIP HALL centered on the brick wall (left half of photo 04). The block's west wall is also void of any windows. The west wall features a wide middle bay that projects forward approximately four feet (left side of photo 10). It is flanked by steel doors with a concrete landing on the north side and a concrete landing with steps on the south side. The long south wall of the block features a wainscot of wood planks except for the far east end which has a brick retaining wall and higher grade (right side of photo 10). A recessed

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church

Name of Property

Lake County, IN

County and State

entry with steel door is west of the retaining wall. Three large metal leader boxes with plastic downspouts drain the flat roof on this side of the building.

The interior of the block is arranged with hallways that lead from the stairs from the foyer to the south (photo 22, upper level). The upper level has two large rooms off each side of the hallway for the pastor's and associate pastor's offices, secretary's office (photo 24), and meeting room (photo 23). A bathroom is off the associate pastor's office. An exit staircase to the lower level is at the south end of the hallway. The lower level has men's and women's toilet rooms off the east side of the hallway (right side of photo 18) and a nursery in the southeast corner of the hallway. A mechanical room and kitchen are located off the west side of the hallway. An exit staircase from the upper level is at the south end of the hallway. The hallway turns to the west and leads into a two-story fellowship hall. A coat room is on the south side of the hallway as it turns (photo 19). The fellowship hall features a stage at its west end (photo 20). The stage is flanked by steps that lead outside and narrower steps that lead up to the stage in its north and south ends.

The finishes throughout the office/classroom block are carpet on the upper level and vinyl tiles on the lower level. Most of the walls throughout the block are drywall in the upper level and concrete block in the lower level and fellowship hall (photo 21). The ceilings are composed of suspended metal grids with acoustic tiles except in the fellowship hall which features exposed metal trusses. The doors throughout are solid wood and have been painted (photo 22). A row of closet doors is along the north wall of the meeting room (photo 23). The stage has a wood floor and curtains. The stairs have metal pipe railings.

The sanctuary is the most expressive section of the church. The exterior features folded plate walls and roof covered with a white membrane over insulated panels. The east and west walls have a low-slung roof that extends down to the ground between which are five bays that project forward. The bays are composed of two upside-down, V-shaped walls of vertical planks topped by eight aluminum clerestory lites (photo 03). The front (north) wall of the sanctuary is canted forward and similar in composition to the bays but features one wide bay composed of two walls covered with vertical planks (photo 06). A band of fourteen aluminum clerestory windows extend around the perimeter of the bay. Aluminum and glass doors with side-lites flank the bay. From the front façade, the roof that extends down appears hipped on its outside lower corners and gabled at the top. The portion of the roof that returns into the bay forms a wall that is white, like the membrane covering the roof. This façade features wood fascia that outlines the roof. The south wall that adjoins the glass foyer has a similar composition to the north wall, except that it is brick and rectangular and has a band of twelve aluminum clerestory windows that extends around the perimeter of the brick wall (photo 02).

The sanctuary has a concrete floor that slopes gradually to the north where a raised platform is located (photos 11-12). The platform is six-sided but elongated in the middle with steps down into the nave (photos 13-14). The platform steps up to form a choir loft with pews at the back; it is enclosed with low drywall walls capped with wood. Steps flank the platform and lead outside to the north. The wall behind the platform is covered with wood planks and features panels that

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church

Name of Property

Lake County, IN

County and State

form a cross in the negative space (left/top of photo 13). The wood altar and lectern are stylized with tapered bases (seen in photo 14). A wood prayer railing is around the front edge of the platform.

The nave is composed of two rows of wood pews with fabric seats and backs. The pews angle inward toward the altar and podium of the platform (photo 11). The nave has a center aisle and outer aisles that feature concrete curbs (covered with carpet, see right side of photo 12) against the outside walls. The two-sided bays that project outward on the exterior form niche-like features behind the curb. The niches are covered with vertical wood planks topped by clerestory windows. The niches have boxlike wood features at the top of the wall that enclose uplighting. The back wall of the sanctuary is also covered with vertical wood planks and trimmed with a band of clerestory windows (photo 15). The wall has a row of four doors in the center that leads to the foyer. Flanking the row of doors are vertical bands with a louvered wood door at the bottom and wood louvers above, to the top of the wall, just below the clerestory windows. The doors and louvers are painted black and access mechanical closets.

The floor of the nave and platform are carpeted. Carpet also covers the aisle curbs and extends up the outside walls the height of the concrete foundation which is exposed inside the sanctuary due to the slope of the floor. The walls are covered with varnished vertical wood planks. The light fixtures are limited to indirect lighting in boxes and behind plank walls. The ceiling is expressive of the folded nature of the roof and is covered with a white panel. Construction documents for the building could not be found, so the composition of the ceiling and roof are understood based on the finished product exposed, which appears to be a form of insulated panels attached to an interior, skeletal metal frame. A bronze plaque with the names of the church, 1973, pastor and board of trustees is just outside the sanctuary in the foyer. It also carries the name of the architectural firm of Campbell and Macsai Architects, Inc.

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church  
Name of Property

Lake County, IN  
County and State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ 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



St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church

Name of Property

Lake County, IN

County and State

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

ETHNIC HERITAGE

**Period of Significance**

1973

**Significant Dates**

**Significant Person (last name, first name)**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder (last name, first name)**

Campbell, Wendell

Campbell & Macsai, Inc.

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church

Name of Property

Lake County, IN

County and State

### Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance is limited to the year the church was constructed, in 1973, though the congregation was organized in 1916 at another location. The church continues active use by the congregation.

### Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Criteria consideration A is marked due to the ownership of the building by a church congregation for purposes of holding religious services. The building warrants listing on the National Register due to its unique architecture and its association with both an historically African American congregation and designed by a notable Black architect of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

**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.)

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C/architecture due to its unusual, unique form that expresses the form of praying hands with multi-folded plate walls and roof. The design, constructed in 1973, relies on modern building materials and the use of natural light to highlight its distinctive, sculptural form. The building is also eligible under criterion A/ethnic heritage. The building was constructed for an African American congregation in East Chicago by a prominent Black, Chicago area architect, Wendell Campbell, who was a native of East Chicago.

---

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

#### ARCHITECTURE

St. Mark A.M.E. Zion Church is an architectural anomaly with regard to classification or style. It is best described as expressionistic in its form, that is, to express the architect's design inspiration of folded hands in prayer. The design clearly has moved away from Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Modern architecture and the International Style. It should be noted that the architect, Wendell J. Campbell, studied under Mies van der Rohe at the Illinois Institute of Technology. It also defies classification in either the Organic or Deconstructivist movements. The building has certain hallmarks of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century design such as a multi-folded plate roof, bands of ribbon windows, and planes of materials. But in all three of these, the application is not comparable to other buildings in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century design.

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church

Name of Property

Lake County, IN

County and State

St. Mark A.M.E. Zion Church has a figural, or sculptural appearance, as an object of art rather than a building. The design, exclusive to the sanctuary section, discards the vertical nature of walls as simple planes and instead folds the walls, covered by vertical wood planks, into plates to form bays and pitches them slightly outward at the base (photos 01-03). These are topped with bands of ribbon windows, but not horizontally, rather they follow the upside-down, V-shaped bays from the foundation upward, forming V-shaped clerestory bands in each bay. This is executed in greater scale on the front wall (north-facing) of the sanctuary (photos 06-07).

The roof has an organic form with multiple folds mimicking the fingers of two hands clasped together in prayer (photo 09). The image also recalls a giant tent stretched over a structure and strapped to the ground between the bays. The prominence of the roof is also seen in how the wide front wall is almost enveloped by the roof as it folds over the front gable and descends in hips flanking the pitched wall (photo 06). This creative execution of the folded roof and bays, which form niche-like features inside the sanctuary, has a dramatic effect inside the nave (photos 11-14). All elements work in unison to create a grand vaulted space, dramatically lit with natural light, but intimate in its feeling of protection/shelter with a forward-focus toward the altar (photo 11). Campbell continued the use of vertical planks inside the building on the walls clad with planks on the exterior. This gives the design an “honest” feeling of wall planes constructed in a simple, consistent form, topped with glass, and then sheltered beneath folded white plates.

St. Mark’s form evokes images of the United States Air Force Academy Cadet Chapel in Colorado Springs. The chapel was completed in 1962 and was designed by Walter Netsch of Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill of Chicago. The building is iconic and not unlike St. Mark’s, it has a similarly multi-plated roof and uses dramatic natural light. Campbell’s other notable church is Trinity Church of Christ in Chicago, which is a large, multi-sided building with octagonal nave, two-stories in height with balcony seating around the center. While still impressive, it lacks the sculptural component that Campbell employed in designing St. Mark’s. In St. Mark’s design inspiration, Campbell was in-step with works by internationally renowned architects such as Alvar Aalto, Louis Kahn, and Eliel Saarinen of the 1950s-1960s, before Post-Modernism changed the architectural language back to archetypal forms.

#### *Architect Wendell Jerome Campbell*

Wendell Campbell certainly would have been known by members of St. Mark A.M.E. Zion. Campbell had already become a prominent architect in East Chicago by the late 1960s. Campbell was born in East Chicago on April 27, 1927. His father was a building contractor and Campbell gained experience in the construction field through assisting his father. Campbell’s time in high school was marked by protests against racial inequality, which included his protest in the American Theater in East Chicago and at Washington High School for its policy of not allowing Black students to swim with white students.<sup>1</sup> Three months after graduating from high school as a National Honor Society scholar, he was drafted in 1945 into the army during World War II. After the war, he received a full tuition scholarship from Commonwealth Edison in 1957 and

---

<sup>1</sup> “Architect Built Upon Strong Foundation” *The Times* 20 July 2008. Pg. A15, Col. 1

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church

Lake County, IN

Name of Property

County and State

graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Architecture and Urban Planning from Illinois Institute of Technology, having studied under Mies van der Rohe.

Campbell experienced racial prejudice after college as he sought employment which led him to work as an urban planner for affordable housing projects for the Purdue-Calumet Development Foundation. In 1966, he became president of Campbell & Mascai (through 1975), an architectural and urban planning firm, then founded Wendell Campbell Associates, Inc. The name would later change to Campbell Tiu Campbell for his partner and daughter who joined the firm. During the late 1960s into the early 1970s, Campbell designed several projects in East Chicago. These included three large neighborhood centers that featured reading rooms, library, health offices, daycare facilities, senior citizens room, and a multi-purpose auditorium in 1970.<sup>2</sup> In 1971, Campbell designed the East Chicago Rehabilitation and Convalescence Center on McCook Avenue<sup>3</sup> and four large apartment complexes for the Puerto Rican Civic Rights Club.<sup>4</sup> One of Campbell's most distinguished East Chicago projects was the ten-story James Hunter Manor, a building on Indiana Harbor constructed for elderly housing in 1970. Campbell received the Distinguished Building Award from the Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry and the Chicago Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, which included candidates from the entire Chicago metropolitan area.<sup>5</sup>

Wendell Campbell's design for St. Mark A.M.E. Zion Church, completed in 1973, was revolutionary to the field of architecture and remains one of his most iconic works. Campbell designed the building in a mid-century development of large public lots at an intersection that included the police station, Washington School, and the main branch of the East Chicago Public Library. The new church was designed to be sculptural, like an object rather than a building, and expressive in Campbell's form inspired by folded hands in prayer. The multiple folds in the walls and roof are expressive of individual fingers of two hands when clasped together in prayer (photos 01, 11). The form, while unique, is not unlike the United States Air Force Academy Cadet Chapel in Colorado Springs. The building was completed in 1962 and designed by Walter Netsch of Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill of Chicago.

Some of Campbell's other notable works are found in Chicago and include the McCormick Place expansion, DuSable Museum of African American History, Bronzeville Military Academy, the Metcalf Federal Building, Trinity United Church of Christ, restoration of the Michigan Avenue drawbridge, Genesis Convention Center (Gary), and redevelopment plans for Chicago, Gary, and Milwaukee.<sup>6</sup>

In 1971, seeing how it was difficult for minority architects to excel in their industry, Campbell co-founded and became the first president of the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) which had 22 chapters in 2008. It was stated that Campbell knew the pitfalls young

<sup>2</sup> "Officials Urge Bond Issue" *The Times* 1 Oct 1970. Section B, Pg. 1. Col. 3

<sup>3</sup> "East Chicago Gains Big Nursing Center" *The Times* 11 July 1971. Section B, Pg. 1. Cols.3-4

<sup>4</sup> "EC Puerto Rican Club Plans New Home Complex" *The Times* 28 Nov 1971. Section B, Pg. 1. Cols. 1-2

<sup>5</sup> "Top Honor Earned by EC Architect" *The Times* 23 April 1970. Section B, Pg. 2. Cols. 1-2

<sup>6</sup> "Campbell set examples for minority entrepreneurs" *The Times* 16 July 2008. Section E, Pg. 1. Cols. 2-5

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church

Name of Property

Lake County, IN

County and State

minority architects would experience<sup>7</sup> and opened the doors for other minorities who pursued careers in architecture<sup>8</sup>. Campbell received the Whitney Young Medal of Honor by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1972 and became a fellow of the AIA in 1979.<sup>9</sup>

Wendell Campbell died on July 9, 2008.

### *ETHNIC HERITAGE*

St. Mark A.M.E. Zion Church was constructed for a historically Black congregation in 1973 and designed by a nationally known Black architect, Wendell J. Campbell, in an expressive form that makes it one of the East Chicago native's most iconic works that identify Campbell as a master in his profession as an architect.

#### *Origins of St. Mark A.M.E. Zion Church*

The American Methodist Episcopal Zion Church formally organized in 1820 when racial segregation of the Methodist Church in America became too intolerant to bear by the growing Black population who adhered to Methodism but were denied access to churches. The Methodist General Conference in 1800 had already decided to establish a separate body for African American members. This was formalized by Black leaders, formerly associated with John Street Church in New York City, in 1820 with the establishment of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. The new denomination established its own rules and disciplines and grew throughout the Northeast, then moved into the Midwest and Canada. The Michigan-Canada Conference of the A.M.E. Zion Church was established with the assistance of Bishop Thomas Lomax in 1877, and then the Michigan Conference, which included Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois, was established separately by Bishop George Lincoln Blackwell in 1904. From the Michigan Conference, Blackwell established the Chicago District and planted A.M.E. Zion churches in South Bend and Gary, Indiana, and Chicago, Illinois.

Northwest Indiana, with its massive harbors, steel mills, and other manufacturing industries created a demand for labor in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was at this time, prior to World War I, that many Blacks in southern states who had been engaged in farming were leaving the South to find employment in the industrialized North. In 1900, there were 54 Blacks living in Lake County. By 1906, partially due to the founding of United States Steel Corporation, the Black population of Lake County had grown to almost 500. East Chicago had grown from 1,255 total population in 1890, to over 3,400 in 1900, and then exploded to over 19,000 in 1910.<sup>10</sup> In 1920, East Chicago's population was 35,967; Blacks numbered 1,424.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> "Helped Launch National Minority Architects Group" *Chicago Tribune* 15 July 2008. Section 2, Pg. 5. Cols. 1-3

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> "Wendell Campbell: A Black Architect who paved the way for others" Atomic Ranch: <https://www.atomic-ranch.com/architecture-design/wendell-campbell/>

<sup>10</sup> Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910 Abstract for Indiana, pg. 588

<sup>11</sup> Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920 Bulletin, pg. 17

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church

Lake County, IN

Name of Property

County and State

The origins of St. Mark A.M.E. Zion Church are tied to this great migration of African Americans from the South to East Chicago. Mr. Shelly Howard moved to East Chicago from Alabama in the early 1910s, then called for his brother, Reverend James Howard, to move north to East Chicago. Reverend Howard arrived in 1916 and became the first pastor of a small group of Zionites, most of whom he knew from Alabama. The small group had been meeting under Reverend Shepherd Marion. At first, the congregants met in the old brickyard quarters of East Chicago, then moved to a storefront in the 1600 block of Broadway Street. They moved again to the old Union Hall near the city's fire station at 35<sup>th</sup> and Deodar Streets, at which time they began planning to purchase land and construct a church building.

The congregation purchased a lot on the corner of 140<sup>th</sup> and Deodar Streets and began construction on a brick church building in 1917. The cornerstone was laid by Bishop George Lincoln Blackwell and the church was named St. Mark A.M.E. Zion. Once the basement level was finished, the congregation moved into the space and began holding services. Shortly after, the upper level containing the sanctuary was completed. The simple brick, gable-front church with tower is extant at 3939 Deodar Street and is used by the Second Baptist Church congregation. Early members of the church recalled two pot-bellied stoves heated the building, one in the basement and the other for the main level. Coal was gathered to help heat the church on the way to service by those who walked crossing over the railroad tracks. The church also had a small, tall organ used for music as well as a senior choir, established in 1920. The Missionary Society was also established during the early years and a parsonage was constructed by the church in 1921. Reverend James Howard's pastorage with the church came to a close in 1924. He was followed by Reverend David Prince, then by Reverend Lott Powell, who had a focus on youth programs, through 1931.

While the Great Depression had a tremendous impact on employment in Northwest Indiana, St. Mark A.M.E. Zion Church continued to grow under the pastorage of Reverend Frederick Van Buren, who arrived in 1931 after pastoring Zion churches in South Bend and Chicago. Reverend Van Buren expanded several programs and committees of the congregation and was a pioneer in the city's civil rights movement and served in civic leadership roles. By 1933, the congregation of St. Mark's had reached over 200 members. Reverend Van Buren started a Sunday morning graduation program for Black students of the community because they were not allowed to participate fully in public high school graduation ceremonies. Van Buren is credited for breaking down barriers to Black students in East Chicago Public Schools including making graduation exercises more integrated and recruited the first Black baccalaureate speaker. Van Buren was also the first Black president of the East Chicago Ministerial Association. St. Mark's grew during the 1930s to reach a membership of over 300 by 1941 at which time the church began to consider plans for expanding its facilities at its original site. This was undertaken in 1949, the same year that Van Buren retired due to ill health.

Reverend Van Buren was followed by Reverend Thomas Jefferson Tripp who came to St. Mark's from a church in the Ohio Conference in 1949. Under Tripp's pastorage, the congregation continued to grow to the extent that it became apparent a new facility would have to be constructed. A building committee was established in 1962 and fundraising was carried out

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church

Lake County, IN

Name of Property

County and State

in earnest throughout the 1960s. In 1969, the church contracted with Wendell Campbell, an architect who was a native of East Chicago with a practice in the city, to design a new building. Land was purchased in Prairie Park, a new subdivision of the city, approximately a quarter mile southeast of the original St. Mark A.M.E. Zion Church. Reverend Tripp was transferred to Bethlehem A.M.E. Zion Church in Gary in 1970, leaving a capital campaign that amassed \$75,000 in the church building fund.<sup>12</sup> A groundbreaking ceremony was held on November 29, 1970.

Newspaper articles during construction of the church in 1972-1973 stated the building was “rising in splendor and magnificence” and would seat 600 and cost \$600,000 to construct.<sup>13</sup> St. Mark A.M.E. Zion held their first services in the building, described as “functional design” on May 20, 1973. The church’s four choirs participated in the event, which was attended by Bishop William Hilliard, from Detroit, representing the Michigan Conference. The church pastor, Reverend St. Clair Williams, and other area clergy participated in the opening service. The building committee chair, Josephine Riggings, as well as the chair of the board of trustees, Eugene Jacques, and chair of the board of stewards, Arnold Ransom, were recognized.<sup>14</sup>

---

### Developmental History/Additional historic context information

---

<sup>12</sup> The origins narrative is derived from St. Mark AME Zion’s “First 72 Years” self-published history, 1988

<sup>13</sup> “Designer’s Dream” *The Times* 25 Aug 1972 Pg. 9B. Col. 1/ “St. Marks” *The Times* 1 June 1973. Pg. 14. Col. 1

<sup>14</sup> “New St. Marks to Open” *The Times* 18 May 1973. Pg. 18. Cols. 3-6

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church  
Name of Property

Lake County, IN  
County and State

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

“50 Years: The Founders” NOMA: <https://www.noma.net/noma-founder-03-wendell-campbell/>; accessed August 22, 2023.

“Architect Built Upon Strong Foundation” *The Times* 20 July 2008. Pg. A15, Col. 1

“Campbell set examples for minority entrepreneurs” *The Times* 16 July 2008. Section E, Pg. 1. Cols. 2-5

“Designer’s Dream” *The Times* 25 Aug 1972 Pg. 9B. Col. 1

“East Chicago Gains Big Nursing Center” *The Times* 11 July 1971. Section B, Pg. 1. Cols.3-4

“EC Puerto Rican Club Plans New Home Complex” *The Times* 28 Nov 1971. Section B, Pg. 1. Cols. 1-2

Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920 Bulletin, pg. 17

“Helped Launch National Minority Architects Group” *Chicago Tribune* 15 July 2008. Section 2, Pg. 5. Cols. 1-3

McAlester, Virginia. A Field Guide to American Houses: Second Edition. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013.

“New St. Marks to Open” *The Times* 18 May 1973. Pg. 18. Cols. 3-6

“Officials Urge Bond Issue” *The Times* 1 Oct 1970. Section B. Pg. 1. Col. 3

“Oral History of Wendell J. Campbell” (2005) Art Institute of Chicago:  
<https://artic.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/caohp/id/26351/>; accessed August 22, 2023

“Remembering a Gentle Giant: Wendell Campbell” AIA:  
[https://info.aia.org/aiarchitect/thisweek08/0725/0725n\\_wendell.htm](https://info.aia.org/aiarchitect/thisweek08/0725/0725n_wendell.htm); accessed August 22, 2023.

St. Mark AME Zion First 72 Years Edited by McDonald, Jo Anne, self-published history, 1988

“St. Marks” *The Times* 1 June 1973. Pg. 14. Col. 1

Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910 Abstract for Indiana, pg. 588

“Top Honor Earned by EC Architect” *The Times* 23 April 1970. Section B, Pg. 2. Cols. 1-2



St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church  
Name of Property

Lake County, IN  
County and State

“Wendell Campbell: A Black Architect who paved the way for others” Atomic Ranch:  
<https://www.atomic-ranch.com/architecture-design/wendell-campbell/>

Wodehouse, Lawrence. A History of Western Architecture. Mountain View (CA), Mayfield Publishing Company, 1989.

---

**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** Less than one acre

Use the UTM system

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church

Lake County, IN

Name of Property

County and State

1. Zone: 16T	Easting: 463139	Northing: 4609578
2. Zone: 16T	Easting: 463139	Northing: 4609498
3. Zone: 16T	Easting: 463028	Northing: 4609513
4. Zone: 16T	Easting: 463062	Northing: 4609587

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

The property being listed is known as Prairie Park Unit No. 4 (or lot 4) of the Prairie Park subdivision to the city of East Chicago. From the southwest corner of Alder Street and Jeorse Circle, on the west side of Alder Street, face south and continue in a line approximately 300' to the south property line of 4200 Alder Street, then turn west and follow the south property line which joins with the north side of Joy Lane and arcs to the north, approximately 300' to the west property line of 4200 Alder Street. Turn slightly northeast and follow the west property line approximately 240' to the south side of Jeorse Circle, then turn southeast and follow the south side of Jeorse Circle, which arcs slightly to the east, to the west side of Alder Street, or the place of beginning.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The property defined in the boundaries is the lot that was purchased by the congregation and on which St. Mark A.M.E. Zion Church was constructed in 1973.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Kurt West Garner  
organization: St. Mark AME Zion Church  
street & number: 12954 6<sup>th</sup> Road  
city or town: Plymouth state: IN zip code: 46563  
e-mail: kwgarner@kwgarner.com  
telephone: 574-780-1423  
date: August 25, 2023

---

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church

Name of Property

Lake County, IN

County and State

- **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 3000x2000 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

Name of Property: St. Mark A.M.E. Zion Church

City or Vicinity: East Chicago

County: Lake State: Indiana

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: March 7, 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southwest at front of church from Alder Street and Jeorse Circle

1 of 24.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northwest from the east entry sidewalk

2 of 24.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking west at exterior sanctuary wall detail

3 of 24.

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church

Lake County, IN

Name of Property

County and State

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southwest at foyer and office/classroom block

4 of 24.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northwest at church from Alder Street

5 of 24.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking south at front of church from Jeorse Circle

6 of 24.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southwest at front of church from Jeorse Circle

7 of 24.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking east at church from parking lot on west side of building

8 of 24.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northeast at west side entry terrace and aluminum cross

9 of 24.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northeast at back of church from parking lot

10 of 24.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking north inside sanctuary from foyer

11 of 24.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northwest inside sanctuary from back of nave

12 of 24.

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church

Name of Property

Lake County, IN

County and State

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northeast across the front of the sanctuary toward altar

13 of 24.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking toward back of sanctuary from choir loft

14 of 24.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southeast at back of sanctuary from nave

15 of 24.

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

16 of 24.

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

17 of 24.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking north from lower level toward foyer

18 of 24.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southwest at coat room in lower level hallway

19 of 24.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking west at stage in fellowship hall

20 of 24.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southeast in fellowship hall

21 of 24.

St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church

Lake County, IN

Name of Property

County and State

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking south in upper level hallway

22 of 24.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northeast in meeting room in upper level

23 of 24.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northwest in secretary's office in upper level

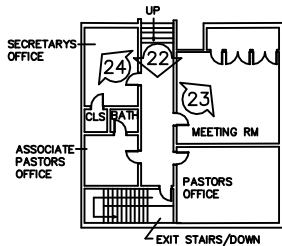
24 of 24.

**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.).

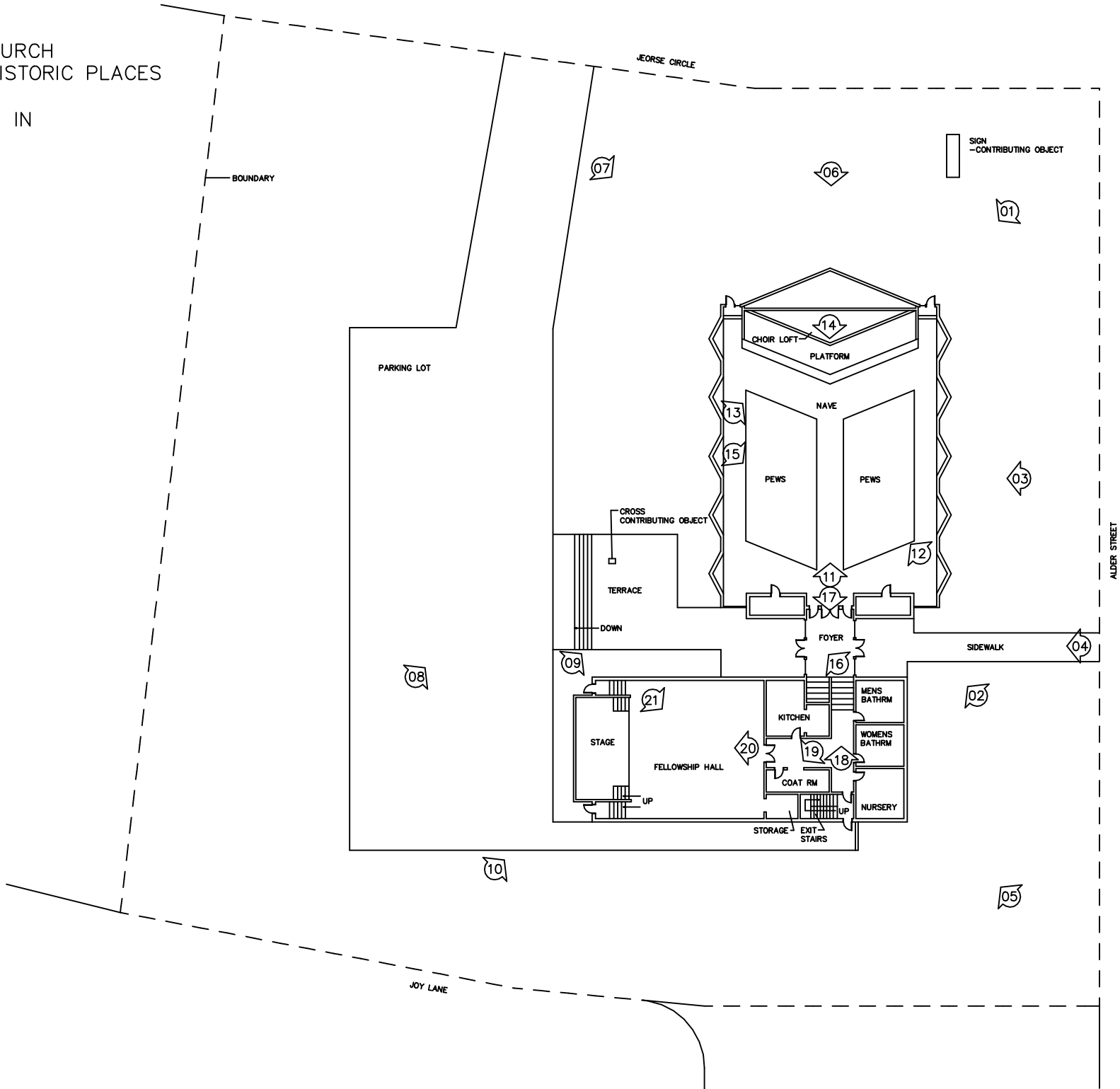
**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

ST. MARK A.M.E. ZION CHURCH  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
4200 ALDER STREET  
EAST CHICAGO, LAKE CO., IN  
SITE/BUILDING PLANS

00 = PHOTOGRAPHS



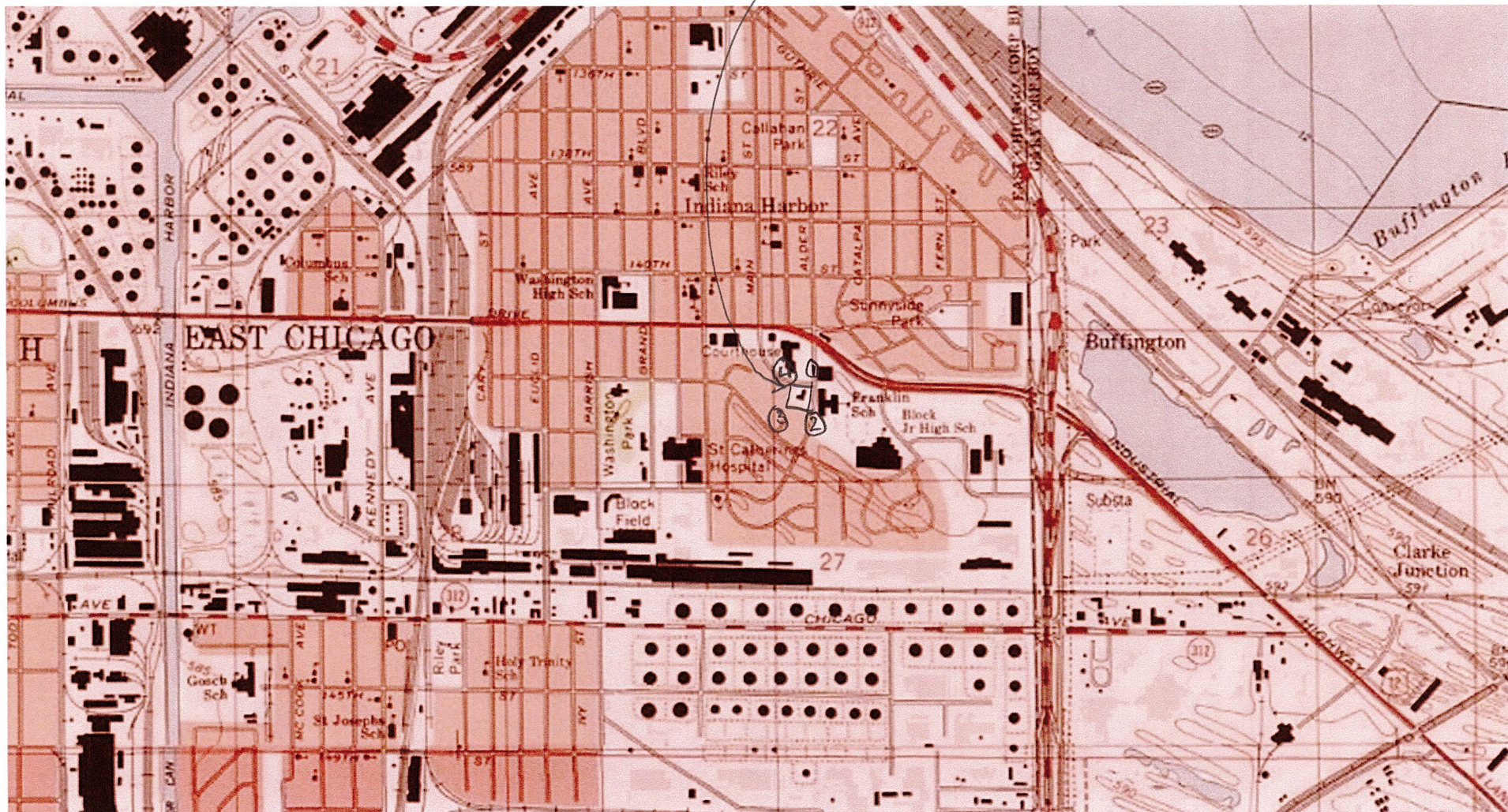
UPPER LEVEL PLAN INSET





① 16T 463139 4609578  
② 16T 463139 4609498  
③ 16T 463028 4609513  
④ 16T 463062 4609587

ST. MARK A.M.E. ZION CHURCH  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EAST CHICAGO, LAKE CO. IN







IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0001



IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0002



IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0003



IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0004





IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0005



IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0006



IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0007



IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0008





IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0009



IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0010



IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0011



IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0012





IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0013



IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0014



IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0015



IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0016





IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0017



IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0018



IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0019



IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0020





IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0021



IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0022



IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0023



IN\_LakeCounty\_StMarkAMEZionChurch\_0024