

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED APR 6 1976  
DATE ENTERED OCT 3 1976

**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

\*\*

William S. Edsall House

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

305 West Main Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Fort Wayne

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

4th

STATE

Indiana

CODE

018

COUNTY

Allen

CODE

003

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Louise H. Zent et al

STREET & NUMBER

4720 Druid Hills Drive

CITY, TOWN

Fort Wayne

VICINITY OF

STATE

Indiana

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Wayne Township Assessor's Office, City-County Building

STREET & NUMBER

1 Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Fort Wayne

STATE

Indiana

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

In spite of its general state of disrepair, the William S. Edsall house remains very much as it was originally designed and built. Major structural elements are original and much of the detailing appears to be either original or added soon thereafter.

The house was constructed in 1839-40 of brick exterior bearing walls on a stucco-faced stone foundation. It is of a simple rectangular plan, approximately 44' by 20', its long front facing the street. Its front elevation includes a raised basement, central Greek Revival doorway with pilasters and side lights, and nine symmetrically located windows. Gabled ends of the main house are of simple flush brick construction, double chimneys having been set within the house proper. The chimney tops are presently missing. Structurally, the house walls are very sound with the brick and mortar in exceptional condition. Some wood members (doors and windows) are in fair to poor condition.

One feature of the house is the heavy Italianate cornice, which suggests an attempt at "modernization," perhaps in the 1870's. All of the roof structural members appear to be original. However, large 12" beam plates on north and south walls appear to have been raised approximately 18' on a 12' brick coursing. Also, roof rafters do not extend beyond the beam plate, indicating that perhaps all of the eave overhang was added after original construction. Presently, the north and south beam plates are disconnected from the central cross beam and are pushing out the top of the brick coursing

On the south and rear side of the house are two adjacent additions, both full two-story, brick bearing walls on stone foundations, each with its own gable, creating a double gabled rear elevation. There is a straight vertical joint between the main house and each addition.

The east addition, approximately 16' by 19', is the earlier of the two, dating between 1856 and 1867. On the east elevation of this addition is a Greek Revival doorway and transom with stone pediment, and the top part of a window also with a stone pediment. On the south elevation of this addition two windows were blocked by further additions to the house. Structurally, the east addition is fair.

The west addition is believed to have been built between 1869 and 1873. Bricks used for construction of this addition are noticeably different from those used in the main house and east addition. This addition is of poor construction, the foundation having settled, creating large cracks that run the full height of the addition.

Along with the main house and its two additions on the lot are two other buildings, both one-story brick load bearing construction. The building immediately south of the two additions is a large garage that runs the full east-west width of the lot. The other is a corner grocery/bar that occupies the northeast corner of the property. Both appear to have been constructed in the early 1900's. While these two buildings do connect into the main house and its additions for roof joist support, and also cover over several windows in the additions, they do not seem to have caused any structural modifications to the house.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

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The interior of the main house has a classical Georgian plan, with central entry and stairhall running the full depth of the house, on both floors, and flanked on each side by a living room. Presumably, the small doorway on the first floor rear hall wall is the original rear exit of the house. Directly above, on the stair landing, was a large window which has been filled in. The stair case, while in poor condition, is largely intact. However, the hand railing has been removed, with the exception of the newel post.

The gable end wall of each of the four main rooms has a centrally located fireplace, in three rooms flanked on each side by a full length closet-cupboard which occupies space created by placing chimneys within the house. On each of the opposing north and south walls of each room were located two evenly spaced windows. Only those of the north elevation remain intact; the ones facing south were either converted into doorways or were filled in.

Some evidence indicates that the basement originally contained the kitchen. Both basement fireplaces remain, in modified state, and one shows evidence of a bake oven. As in the rooms above, there are twin built-in cupboard/closets on either side of the fireplaces. The windows in the basement are half-height.

The interior woodwork of the main house, especially that of the first floor, is typical Greek Revival. Three of the four fireplace mantles remain. Most of the window frames of the north elevation are also intact; some woodwork from interior doorways has been removed. In simpler form, woodwork of the two additions is related to that of the main house, second floor. Also there is evidence that at some point in time there was a stairway leading to the second floor located along the west wall of the east addition.

The William S. Edsall house is typical of northern Indiana Federal and Greek Revival architecture of the early to mid-nineteenth century. Even the Italianate cornice does not distract from the original simple classical design of the house. Considering both the exterior and interior, the house remains a representative and remarkably intact specimen of early Fort Wayne architecture.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1839-40, 1856-67  
1869-73

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Of the handful of Federal-Greek Revival structures remaining in Fort Wayne, the Edsall house is outstanding for its retention of original characteristics and structural soundness. Its architecture and its first owner are representative of the period when this frontier village evolved into a prosperous city, with the development of canals, railroads and industry.

The original owner, William S. Edsall (1809-76) came to Fort Wayne in 1824. He surveyed for the Wabash & Erie Canal (1826-8), served on the first Common Council when Fort Wayne became a city in 1840, was register of the U.S. Land Office at Fort Wayne 1843-7, and Allen County Clerk 1870-4. Most of his life he engaged in various business enterprises; fur trading, mercantile & milling, commission & produce, and contracting for construction of canal, plank road and railroad.

On Edsall's death in 1876 a contemporary said of him:

Perhaps no man who ever lived in Fort Wayne - except the late Judge Hanna - has been more intimately connected with the growth of the city, and with all of the great improvements which have made her a thriving and populous town... a sketch of his life is really a sketch of Fort Wayne from the time that she was a mere Indian trading post. (Fort Wayne Daily Sentinel, 1 Dec. 1876)

6. In 1833 Edsall bought lots in Ewing's addition and began construction of a home. The house was completed by 1840, and part of it may have been used for the Land Office when he was register. Edsall raised his family in the house until one of his many financial reverses forced him to sell in 1865. When he bought back the house in 1874, he celebrated his "homecoming" with an immense party of "old settlers" he had known in the early days. This gathering at Edsall's house, which he had just "fitted up and furnished throughout in the most elegant style", symbolized the long association of both the man and his home with an era of history then closing. (Fort Wayne Daily Sentinel, 16 Apr. 1874)

The house passed from the family after Edsall's death in 1876. It served for a very brief period as the first home of the Fort Wayne City Hospital in 1878. Recent research indicates the main part of the house is the oldest structure remaining in central Fort Wayne. It was always a residence until the last few years, when it served as a warehouse; it is now vacant. Commercial structures surround it, and it is in a block destined for redevelopment by the city for a senior citizen complex. ARCH, the local preservation organization, is strongly urging the city to integrate the Edsall house into its total plan.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See attached continuation sheet)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 655920 4549040  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B           
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C           
D           
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Willa Cramton, Joe Wood, Karen Anderson

ORGANIZATION

Edsall House Committee

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

1919 Kenwood Avenue

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Fort Wayne

STATE

Indiana

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   

LOCAL X

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

March 30, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ACTING DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 10/8/76

DATE 9/30/76