

56-713

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: Connersville Downtown Historic District

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: Roughly bounded by Eastern Avenue on the east, East and West 4<sup>th</sup> Street on the south, Grand Avenue of the west and West and East 9<sup>th</sup> Street on the north.

City or town: Connersville State: IN County: Fayette

Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination    request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets    does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

   national    statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A    B X C    D

Paul C. Duml

1.19.2017

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

Indiana DNR-Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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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

#### 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:)

*For Edson H. Beall*

Signature of the Keeper

*3.7.16*  
Date of Action

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☒

Public – Local

☒

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☒

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☐

District

☒

Site

☐



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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MID-19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY: Greek Revival

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

: Romanesque

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> AND 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS: Classical Revival

: Tudor Revival

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial

: Bungalow/Craftsman

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

foundation: BRICK

walls: WOOD

STONE: Limestone

roof: ASPHALT

other: METAL: Cast Iron

### 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

The district is a collection of commercial and residential properties contained within a rectangular-shaped amalgam of eight city blocks generally oriented along an axis northeast-southwest. Within the district are a majority of the lots from the original plat of John Conner when he first arrived to permanently settle in 1813; his first mill operated just to the northeast of the district along a fork of the Whitewater River. The district includes the oldest buildings extant, dating from the 1840s that are physical reminders of the city's heritage, specifically the Conner/Heineman House and the Whitewater Canal House, headquarters of the inheritor of the original canal-building authority. The district demonstrates architectural styles ranging from the 1840s (Greek Revival) through the last decades of the nineteenth century (Italianate, Romanesque, and Queen Anne) into the early twentieth century (Commercial, Prairie, Classical Revival, Tudor Revival, and Bungalow). The resources include multiple methods of construction and materials common to the period of significance 1813-1965 from wood frame to more substantial brick and concrete block. The property retains its historic integrity with 90 total resources, 72 contributing and 16 non-contributing.

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### **Narrative Description**

In determining whether an individual resource within the district was “contributing” or “non-contributing” several factors were considered. Primarily, in this case, significant changes/alterations to the façade in materials or fenestration arbitrarily gained the resource a non-contributing rating. An example of this is visible in photograph 9. This building, before the changes were implemented, happened to be a two-story, brick, Victorian Queen Anne-style residence. At some time in its history a Tudor style addition and a more modern addition masked much of the original façade and robbed the original of any architectural significance relative to the district. A more subtle degree of alteration, such as shown at 513 Central Avenue, rendered buildings non-contributing. The building at 513 Central is from the period of significance, but, a pent roof structure and residential-scale alterations to the front façade make the building non-contributing. It appears that a well-executed rehabilitation could render this building contributing, since early materials appear to exist underneath at least the parapet area. Next door, 521 Central is non-contributing, because like several other buildings, it is too recent to be from within the period of significance. Since the district includes both residential and commercial/civic architecture, alterations were viewed with regard to use and intent. For example, contributing commercial properties might have altered storefronts, but, they usually retain materials, windows (or window openings/surrounds), and cornice treatments. Residential properties, on the other hand, might be entirely sided with artificial materials (118 E. 7<sup>th</sup>) and still retain porches, window openings, and overall design elements that contribute to the architectural and historical importance of the district. Overall, the first criterion applied to any resource in any district is a consideration of the visible impact or non-impact the resource has on the majority of the resources; more simply put “does it fit?”

The Connersville Downtown Historic District is located in Connersville, Fayette County, Indiana. The district is a collection of eight city blocks, mixed commercial and residential, bounded by 8<sup>th</sup> Street on the north, Eastern Avenue on the east, the east-west alley between Central and Eastern Avenues halfway between East 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets on the south, and Grand Avenue on the west. Rectangular in shape, the district contains most of the remaining and significant buildings from the earliest days of the period of significance, 1813 – 1965, and the heyday of Connersville’s heritage in the development of an automotive industry.

The district includes the land that John Conner established as his original plat and the collection of original log cabins constructed near his trading post. Unlike other county seats in Indiana, Conner, as the first plat holder, did not donate land to the settlement for a “courthouse square” but did designate a space for the “public square” near the present-day corner of East 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Eastern Avenue. The original log cabins and the first stores in the settlement occupied lots nearest the bend in the Whitewater River where Eastern Avenue crosses East 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets. Laid out in the traditional grid-iron pattern, the district can almost count the now-extinct Whitewater Canal as one of its boundaries. The canal, converted to a below-ground component of the city’s sewer system in the 1960s, remained a presence in the streetscape of the downtown

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for more than a century. Grand Avenue, along the west boundary of the district, marks the original trace of the canal's route.<sup>1</sup>

The present inventory of the district includes buildings from as early as the 1840s through the 1950s, many of which correlate with Connersville's periods of greatest growth and importance in the county. The Whitewater Canal House, 1843, symbolizes, even today, the progressive spirit of the entire state of Indiana during its canal-building era of the 1830s-1850s. The Victorian commercial buildings in the 400 block of Central Avenue (photograph 1) demonstrate that same spirit in the post-Civil War period. Scattered throughout the district are other examples that demonstrate the downtown district's importance in the regional community in the density of its banks and commercial buildings that supported local citizens and rural communities with financial needs and the necessities of life.

The district demonstrates architectural styles ranging from the 1840s (Greek Revival and Federal) through the last decades of the nineteenth century (Italianate, Romanesque, and Queen Anne) into the early twentieth century (Commercial, Prairie, Classical Revival, Tudor Revival, and Bungalow) common to the period of significance 1813-1965 from wood frame to more substantial brick and concrete block. The property retains its historic integrity with 89 total resources, 66 contributing and 23 non-contributing.

Information regarding the historical occupiers of selected buildings gathered from numerous city directories and the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century to mid-point in the 1950s. Addresses with annotations such as – 430 Rear or 536 South – indicate the buildings separately possess historical architectural integrity but currently are identified with another contiguous building as a single tax property. The accompanying map is also annotated with a suffix to the primary address (R), (S), or (N).

1) 126 East Court Street  
c. 1910 Commercial

Contributing – Photograph 2

This two-story rectangular building is constructed with concrete block walls and a gable end roof sheathed with composite asbestos shingle. A smaller lean-to structure extends from the east elevation for the entire length of the main building. Windows in the main building are fixed-sash and glazed either three by three or four by four. A door opening minus the door is located between the windows in the south elevation and a double-door, likely for delivery is located in the lean-to portion of the structure. A portion of original brick paving is visible in front of the building. The west elevation has double delivery doors and a mixed set of windows and openings.

At one time, this building housed a number of viable businesses in a very old section of the district. One of the earliest businesses noted in the city directories was Harry Cain, a roofer and tinsmith. Cain and his sons occupied the building and a smaller structure on the south side of Court Street for many years. In the mid-1930s, William Boomershine, a blacksmith, used part of the building; Cain & Sons worked out of another building across the street.

2) 321 and 325 Eastern Avenue  
c. 1860 Greek Revival

Contributing – Photograph 3

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<sup>1</sup> Heinemann, J.L., *The Indian Trail Down the Whitewater Valley: Some Primitive Indiana History of the Connersville Neighborhood* (Indianapolis: Krieg Brothers, 1912), page 25.

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These two separate houses are obviously the work and result of a singular construction effort and demonstrate identical architectural design characteristics in the main elements of the houses. Constructed of brick, painted in the case of 325, and rising two-stories, the homes remain in exceptional condition for their age. The facades are three-bay, delineated by four square pilasters, which extend from the foundation upward to the frieze board that wraps the entire roof-wall junction. The window openings in both stories are large and rectangular, have stone lintels and sills, but are glazed differently in each house. The windows in 321 Eastern Avenue are modern, fixed-sash, and glazed six by three; the window units in 325 Eastern Avenue are double-hung and glazed four over four. The entry door openings and surrounds in both homes are identical. Situated in the lower right corner of the facades, the surrounds consist of a large projecting lintel supported by narrow, fluted Greek Doric columns; a small transom separates the bottom of lintel from the top of the door opening. The door on 321 Eastern Avenue is modern and glazed in the same pattern as the windows; the door on 325 Eastern Avenue is also modern with a single glazed light in its center. The roofs are side-gabled and low in pitch; chimneys rise above the ridges of both over the south elevations.

3) 108-110 West 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
1877 Italianate

Claypool Block

Contributing – Photograph 4

This three-bay, two and one-half story painted brick building demonstrates many of the design characteristics of the style normally seen in homes of the period. The three vertical sections of the façade consist of large three bay sections on either side of a narrow center bay that contains the entry door to the upper floors of the interior. The flank bays contain a single, recessed entry door, a window on each side of the door, window openings in the second story, and a single semi-circular window in the half story. The door and window openings in the ground floor are architecturally distinguished by round arched hoods with keystones above each that are supported (visually) by chamfered pilasters on each side of the openings. The second story window openings are similarly detailed entablature-like with segmental arch hoods; the two small ventilation openings in the half story are detailed with round arched hoods. In the center of the half story and directly below the prominent projecting, bracketed entablature is the name of the building “Claypool Block” in raised letters. The identification device is detailed with a pediment-influenced hood. The hoods throughout the building are painted a contrasting blue color against the pale yellow paint of the main. The elaborate entablature includes large brackets, paneled frieze, large dentils, and cornice. Portions of the façade, on the ground floor and in the window openings of the second story are insensitively covered with modern T-111 siding. Irrespective of this diminishing effect the building retains a high level of architectural integrity.

4) 430 (Rear) East 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
c. 1900 Commercial

Contributing – Photograph 5

This two-story, painted brick building once contained a number of small storefronts, visually discernible by the metal pilasters, on the ground floor and living quarters on the second; now it contains apartments. The ground floor is divided into thirteen separate bays that retain the original metal Hetherington & Berner pilasters but the storefronts are now covered with wooden paneling. Hetherington & Berner (H&B) of Indianapolis manufactured many types of metal work used in the construction of buildings of the period. Other buildings in the district contain H&B metal work. The ground and second floors are visually separated by a wide intermediate



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metal lintel and cornice that extends across the full width of the façade at the top of the pilasters. The second story has four distinct sections defined by flat brick pilasters that extend from the lower cornice to a corbeled brick frieze. The left-most bay of the second story contains a three-sided oriel window and two double-hung windows; the other bays of this story each have two double-hung windows. The window units are glazed one-over-one and the top and bottom of each window opening, minus those in the bay window, have stone lintels and sills. A decorative metal cornice above the corbeled frieze caps the building facade.

Now an extension of 430 Central Avenue this building housed a pool hall and cigar shop operated by J. A. Remington in the 1910s and 20s. Small businesses such as a barbershop occupied other storefronts. Remington lived in a house in the district, 415 Eastern Avenue, for many years. The cigar store Remington started in 1896 closed its doors in January 1955.

5) 111 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street      Whitewater Canal House      Contributing – Photograph 6  
1842 Greek Revival

This building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a single property. Constructed by the Whitewater Valley Canal Company as its headquarters, the two-story painted brick building is a well-preserved example of the style that continues to evince a sense of solidity and imperviousness to the dangers of every day cares that was supposed to assure its backers that nothing could go wrong with the enterprise; the building retains the image but the enterprise failed in its original purpose. The façade is dominated by the large pediment of the gable roof that is supported by four massive columns. Typical of the style, the fenestration pattern has two window openings in the first story with the entry door in the right-most corner. The upper story has a course of three evenly-spaced openings extending across the façade. The window units are double-hung and glazed six-over-six. A tall brick chimney, on the east elevation, extends upward from the foundation to above the ridge of the roof. A small one-story addition is attached to the south elevation.

6) 419 Eastern Avenue      Contributing – Photograph 7  
c. 1900 Queen Anne

This two-story painted brick house is the northern-most of three identical houses (415, 417, and 419 Eastern Avenue) built at the same and likely by the same builder. There have been minor changes made to each, overtime, but the basic architectural detail and design are the same. The façade consists of a full-width front porch resting on a stone foundation which supports wooden turned posts that support a hipped roof. The support posts on all three are replacements of some kind. The façade has two bays, the one of the right projects forward of the one on the left. The left bay contains the entry door and a single window in the first and second stories. The right bay contains a large window at porch level and a single window unit in the second story. The windows are uniformly double-hung and glazed one-over-one. A shingled gable, with a vent in the middle, caps the right bay while the rest of the roof profile is a standard hipped design. Low profile gables are located on the other slopes of the roof. Short chimneys penetrate each of the composite-shingled roofs at the midpoint of the ridge.

Prior to 1900, a cluster of what appear to be shotgun-style cottages occupied the present location of these three homes. After construction of the current houses they served as homes for a varied population such a clothier (Harry Guttman), a high school teacher, a butcher, an engineer at McFarlan Motors, and other employees of numerous automotive manufacturers.



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Guttman later opened several other enterprises and moved “uptown” to a newer section of the city.

7) 118 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street

Contributing – Photograph 8

c. 1920 Bungalow

This two-story wooden frame building is unusual for the style which normally one-story and without gabled addition in the rear. The clipped roof in the façade, the pattern of fenestration, and the full-width front porch with its battered support columns are typical of the style and period. The exterior walls are sheathed with an asbestos shingle material. The concrete deck of the porch is supported on a block foundation; the balustrade, which includes soldier course panels, is brick and supports the battered wooden columns holding up the shed roof. The entry door, which is original, is centered in the façade and flanked by two double-hung windows. Above the entry, in the second story, is a paired window unit; window units throughout are glazed one-over-one. The roof is covered with composite asphalt shingle and a short brick chimney is situated midpoint in the roof ridge. The house’s deep eaves have exposed rafters.

One of the first residents of this house was Emma J. Moore, a widow. By 1916, Mrs. Moore shared the quarters with Ernest Mullen and his wife; Ernest worked as a trimmer for the Connersville Buggy Company. In the 1920s, Walter LaValley, a carpenter, lived in the house. In the 1930s, the house became the American Beauty Shoppe operated by Jack Newell accompanied by his wife Josephine. Fannie Walker, the owner/operator of Fannie Walker’s downtown restaurant, shared the building. The American Beauty Shoppe remained in business until the mid-1950s.

8) 635 Eastern Avenue

Non-contributing – Photograph 9

c. 1890/1920 Multi-style

A Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows a single Queen Anne-style home at this location circa 1890. In the intervening years, a 1923 Tudor Revival-style building was grafted to the western elevation of the original and with other modern additions since then the result is a non-contributing resource that retains no significance to the fabric of the district.

9) 124 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street

Contributing – Photograph 10

c. 1925 Tudor Revival

This one-story brick home is the only example of the style in the district. The ornamentation and architectural detailing is eye-catching for such a small structure. The façade has an entry door on the right corner of the elevation and various sized window units to the left of the door. The windows are typically metal-sash casements; the center unit has a fixed transom light with two operating sashes. The smaller single sash units that flank the center are constructed similarly. Ornate stone label lintels draw the eye to the otherwise plain windows. All windows have brick rowlock sills. The entry door is centered in a small steeply-pitched gable; the door surround is recessed, round arched, and lined with chamfered stone blocks. The door, accessed by two concrete steps that have metal handrails, is arched and has a round light in the upper half. The side-gabled roof, sheathed with slate, has decorative parapets that include stone coping and a decorative chimney-like device. Two low gable dormers are centered in the forward slope of the roof. The roof surface to the rear of the gable portion is flat with sidewalls topped with terra cotta coping. A short brick chimney is visible behind the roof ridge.

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First appearing in the city directory in the early 1930s, the building served as the office for Dr. Albert F. Gregg, a local general physician. Sometime in the early 1940s, Dr. Francis B. Mountain and his wife lived in the building and the rear section served as his office.

10) 408-414 Central Avenue  
c. 1875 Italianate

Contributing – Photograph 11

The façade of this two-story brick building has five sections, a narrow center bay containing an arched entry door and stairs to access the upper story and two sections on either side of the center. The street-level storefronts (4) are physically and visually divided by fluted metal pilasters that extend from the building's foundation upward to the intermediate metal beam cornice that separates the two stories. The cornice extends across the full width of the façade. The beam has decorative acanthus-leaf brackets and a plain frieze. Two of the four storefronts are marginally modified with modern materials, easily reversed, but the other two would require significant retrofit to return them to original functional arrangements. The original storefronts typically had a recessed entry door flanked with large single-glazed window units and large transom lights to illuminate the interior of the shops. Above the intermediate cornice is a band of thirteen tall round-arched window openings embellished with archivolt hoods, with decorative keystones in a floral motif, that are painted white to contrast with the exterior wall. The window units are double-hung and glazed four-over-one. Above each window opening between the crown and the projecting bracketed cornice is a band of ventilation openings covered with intricately pierced panels.

An engraving from an 1875 historical atlas shows an original façade that closely resembles the present with the exceptions noted above. Businesses housed in J.M. Huston's Brick Block included fire insurance agents, a stationary and wallpaper store, a homeopathic physician's office, and a job printing establishment.<sup>2</sup>

11) 601 Central Avenue  
c. 1930 Commercial/Craftsman

Contributing – Photograph 12

One-story, with decorative stone accents embellishing the exterior brick walls, this building occupies a corner of an active intersection in the district; it once contained the local J.C. Penney store. The exterior brick walls are various shades of terra-cotta hue in standard horizontal courses interspersed with panels of basket-weave-pattern bricks in the same colors. The window units in the façade are typical storefront configurations with metal sashes and single-glazing. The left section of the two-section façade has a series of fixed-sash transom lights located directly above the large window units. Modern awnings obscure a portion of the storefront windows. Small stone blocks in the form of "X"s grace the exterior wall above the transom lights in each bay. The south elevation contains a series of flat brick pilasters that divide the wall surface into nine bays; a separate bay adjacent to the façade has the same configuration of window units, etc., as the façade. The stone parapet, that caps the building, is formed of shallow-pitched pediments with smaller pediments between that create a crenellated appearance. A shallow cornice, below the parapet, extends across the façade and the south elevation.

The original frame building located on this busy corner, across from the McFarlan Hotel, contained a restaurant and a collection of other small businesses including Albert Brown's

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<sup>2</sup> Higgins Belden & Company, *An Illustrated Historical Atlas of Fayette County, Ind.*, Chicago, 1875, page 33.

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taxicab service. The J.C. Penney Company acquired the site in the early 1930s and constructed the current building which served the community through the end of the period of significance.

12) 701 Eastern Avenue  
c. 1920 Commercial

Contributing – Photograph 13

L-shaped and virtually unchanged from its original image, this one-story brick building was once the home of the Connersville Lumber Company that serviced the core of downtown. The east and west portion of the building is painted and the east-facing (short) leg of the “L” is the original buff brick. Windows throughout are storefront-style, metal fixed-sash, and single-glazed. One window opening in the smallest section has been closed with glass block. Green metal awnings over two of the storefront windows and over the personnel doors provide shade to the interior and add a decorative contrast to any otherwise monotonous wall surface. Doors are a combination of single personnel and roll-up. Two roll-up doors in each leg of the “L” offer access to vehicles; the doors vary in size and material but all have lights at mid-height. A band of projecting bricks extends around the exterior walls of the building directly below a low green-painted plain coping.

13) 420-422 Central Avenue  
c. 1890 Italianate

Contributing – Photograph 14

Sharing exterior walls with other two-story, brick commercial buildings in the center of the district, this building demonstrates many of the typical architectural and spatial characteristics of its type and period. The façade below the intermediate metal bracketed cornice has received modern modifications such as a veneer brick exterior and modern window units with metal sash and single glazing; however, the basic fenestration and door placement remain. Above the intermediate cornice, the exterior brick of the façade is painted either red or tan. The base colors differentiate the two separate addresses of the same building. The segmental-arch hoods and sills of the window surrounds are painted a contrasting cream color. The four double-hung window units are glazed two-over-two. Above the window openings and capping the building is a cream-color-painted metal frieze and projecting cornice supported with large brackets and modillions.

From its checkered past as a saloon called Johnnie Pigman’s Place in 1904, this building progressed through a varied career with less notoriety. For a time, 420 Central remained a saloon but 422 Central Avenue became the City Bakery owned and operated by the Mettel Brothers; it remained the City Bakery until the mid-1930s when the Schoenholtz family began baking on the premises. After the early 1920s, 420 Central Avenue transitioned to an office for an electrical contractor and eventually became home to the Lodge Café. The stability of this location for business appears to have been noteworthy because several small businesses, like the Mancini fruit and vegetable store, remained for decades; Mancini’s son finally joined the business. The Corner Hardware at 430 Central Avenue is another example of a long-surviving member of the neighborhood.

14) 618 Central Avenue  
1901 Commercial

Contributing – Photograph 15

Tall, broad, and substantial looking, this three-story brick building captures/demonstrates a number of architectural influences. The façade is two-part in the first floor and three-part above

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a massive metal structural I-beam that physically and visually separates the first and second stories. Originally, the first story typically contained two storefronts with the large single-glazed window units, metal-sashed and single-glazed. The recessed, centrally located (in the bay) entry door provided access to the interior. A fixed transom extended across the width of the storefront above the large window units. Now the left storefront is modified but the spatial arrangement of the storefronts remains. The south (right) storefront retains the original luxfer-type prism glass transom. Above the structural member, the façade presents a three-part appearance with three bays left and right of a narrow central bay. The large bays are delineated by a raised molded frame of brick, capturing three bays of the second and third floors. Third floor windows have transoms with gauged brick flat arch above. The center bay window at the third floor, above the date tablet, has a multi-coursed arch with keystone. A sheet metal cornice with dentil course completes the façade.

15) 416 Central Avenue  
c. 1875 Italianate

Contributing – Photograph 16

Once housing the Citizens Bank, this three-story brick building is singularly tall and angular relative to others in this busy block of commercial buildings. The first story is dedicated to the typical storefront configuration of a large single-glazed window unit flanked on either side by entry doors leading to that interior space and interior spaces of the other stories. Above the large window unit and the entry doors is a transom light that extends across the full width of the façade. The transom is constructed of single square panes of prism glass contained in five separate frames. Between the transom and the upper two stories of the façade is a narrow intermediate cornice with dentil detailing. The exterior surface of the upper stories of the façade is veneered with simulated stone block. The three ranks of tall window openings in the upper stories are topped with bracketed hoods. The double-hung sashes are glazed one-over-one. The façade is topped with a dentil-detailed, bracketed cornice.

An engraving from an 1875 historical atlas includes this building next door (across the alley) from J.M. Huston's Brick Block.

16) 123-127 East 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
c. 1905 Craftsman

Contributing – Photograph 17

Two-story and substantial in construction, the façade of this four-unit apartment house is dominated by the two-story, full-width front porch. The lower deck of the porch is supported on a rusticated block foundation; the same block construction is used throughout on the exterior walls. Four cast-concrete columns support the upper deck and four wooden columns support the frieze of the porch roof. The lower balustrade is solid block capped with a flat concrete railing. The upper balustrade is wooden with short, square, wooden balusters. Window units in both stories are double-hung and single-glazed. The entry doors in the first story are paneled painted white and have semi-circular divided lights in the upper portion. The door to the upper units is centered in the façade and is identical to that already described. The doors accessing the upper porch deck are wooden; screen doors on each provide ventilation to the interiors of the upper units. The truncated hip roof has a flat deck.

The earliest notation of this address in the city directory merely lists the building as the Johnson Flats, obviously small apartments. In time it included the names of the residents which proved to be a varied collection of folks including the categories widows, married couples, and

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singles. The occupations ran the gamut from manager of a local five and dime store to a lawyer to a loan collector to the secretary for the local A.F. & A.M. lodge. In the mid-1920s the name changed to the current Victoria Apartments from Johnson Flats.

17) 401 Central Avenue      Fayette County Courthouse      Contributing – Photographs 18/19  
1849/1890/1960

The Fayette County Courthouse is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a single property. The present multi-story courthouse is a combination of two separate structures and a massive addition to the west elevation in a space once occupied by the city hall. The present structure subsumed the earlier, original Greek Revival building (1849 - John Elder architect) in 1890. W.S. Kaufman was the architect for the Romanesque Revival 1890 remodeling. The rock-faced limestone foundation supports exterior brick walls. Window openings are defined by red granite lintels and sills. The southeast corner of the structure includes a three-story tower, a conical roof, a metal cornice separating arched ventilation openings from the base of the roof, and clocks installed in the east, north, and south elevations. The east elevation (of the main block) contains the entry to the oldest part of the building. Window units are double-hung and glazed one-over-one. After the major modifications of the 1890s, the courthouse continued to change by the addition of a modern wing to the north elevation in the 1960s, and lastly, the massive wing added to the west elevation in the early 2000s.

18) 536 Central Avenue      Contributing – Photograph 20  
c. 1915 Classical Revival

Two-story and massive in appearance compared to some of its neighbors, the historic Fayette Bank and Trust Company (currently US Bank) commands this corner of downtown central business district. The façade and north elevation are surfaced with a veneer limestone treatment over a typical red brick exterior walls. The narrow bays that flank the main central bay each contain a narrow rectangular fixed-sash, single-glazed window unit at street level. The central bay contains the entry door with an ornately detailed classical surround. A large and multi-paned clerestory window directly above the surround provides light to the interior. On either side of the recessed entry point are massive fluted Greek Doric limestone columns in antis. The current double entry doors are modern metal with single-glazed panels; a single-glazed transom light is located above the doors. The door surround, original, is detailed with rosettes along each side and on the lintel, brackets supporting a low profile pediment topped with a scallop shell detail. Between the full-width cornice that wraps around to the north elevation and the inscribed "Fayette Bank and Trust", above the recessed entry, is a band course of triglyphs that enhances the Doric classical image. A narrow projecting cornice overhangs the band course and unadorned exterior wall surface extends upward to the cap of the building.

The band course of triglyphs extends around the corner of the façade to the rear corner of the north elevation. The north elevation also has a set of three very large fixed-sash window units, glazed three-by-three, that are arranged across the elevation immediately above a series of smaller fixed-sash windows at street level. The large windows are visually and physically separated by four flat pilasters finished with Doric capitals.

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19) 121 East Court Street  
1926 Commercial

Contributing – Photograph 21

This one-story rusticated concrete block building replaced an earlier wooden frame building that also housed many different businesses. The north elevation contains a large vehicle door, two large single-glazed display windows, and a single personnel entry door at the extreme margin of the façade. Three single-glazed windows extend across the attic area forward wall directly above the display windows. The exterior wall is capped with a stepped parapet; the same parapet adorns the top of the south exterior wall. Along both the east and west exterior walls are located four window openings and equipment doors at the southeast and southwest corners. The shingled roof is moderately pitched.

The earlier frame building occupying this location housed a blacksmith shop operated by Charles Ready. When the current building replaced the earlier it took the form of a garage dedicated to repair and maintenance of motor vehicles operated under the ownership of Thomas Grey, Jacob Mettel, and James Gillespie. This Mettel was likely kin to the Mettel Bothers that ran the City Bakery but there is no direct between the businesses. Around 1927, the building became the home of De Camp Auto Sales, involved in selling Studebaker cars. The history from the late 1920s is foggy but by the early 1940s the building functioned as a training facility for the McQuay-Norris automotive company that specialized in the manufacture of piston rings, valves, and bearings. Its main factory was located on Western Avenue, outside the district. Ernie Weyl sold Studebaker cars from the premises in the 1950s; by 1955 he moved to Western Avenue and a new manufacturing firm moved in to produce stainless steel parts for cars.

This building had two identifiable residents during its early life. One was the Ready Machine Tool & Die Company; Clarence Ready was the owner of the business at the time. Car parts manufacturer McQuay-Norris also used the building as a training facility for workers employed at their main plant on Western Avenue.

20) 131 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street      Conner/Heinemann Building      Contributing – Photograph 22  
c. 1820/1860

This two-story residence/commercial building is really three separate elements joined tighter over time to result in the current structure. The first element is the two-story frame, gable-end building on the left of the façade that was constructed by John Conner as his store. The storefront is obviously not from the first construction but the single-glazed display windows on either side of the recessed entry door likely appeared in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The double-hung window units in the second story are glazed six-over-six. The exterior walls throughout are sided modern material. The narrow area above the display windows and the first story portion of the east elevation are sided with T-111 wooden siding. The second story of the east elevation contains six evenly distributed double-hung window units all glazed six-over-six. A red brick chimney rises above the ridge of this moderately-pitched roof.

The west wing of the building has brick exterior walls painted a cream color. The façade of the wing is dominated by four single-glazed display windows and a recessed entry way in the right corner. Immediately above the display windows is a painted sign “The Glass House Antiques.” The four double-hung window units in the second story are glazed six-over-six. A frieze board below the slightly projecting cornice marks the roof-wall junction. A brick chimney is centered in the ridge of the low-pitched roof. In the ell of the combined building formed by the

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original and wing is a one-story brick, gable-end addition with no particular architectural significance.

21) 801 Central Avenue US Post Office Contributing – Photograph 23  
1910 Beaux-Arts/Neoclassical Revival

The federal government built the Connersville post office in 1910 to the designs of James Knox Taylor, supervising architect for the Treasury Department. The square building rests on a raised basement of granite and limestone smooth ashlar walls. The Central Avenue façade has slightly projecting corner entry pavilions with outward curving steps. The Beaux-Arts neoclassical façade has seven bays with a story and-a-half tall cavetto-recessed round arches. The entry corners have double doors, while the five middle bays house tripartite double-hung windows. All openings have arched transoms divided by mullions into a ring of three narrow lites and a central round arch panel. The arched openings have scrolled keystones (the corner bay keystones feature a spread-winged eagle relief on top). A full classical entablature with balustrade surmounts the flat-roofed building. The sides of the post office are similarly detailed and finished, but middle bays have rectangular windows. The rear elevation (the west side) contains a loading dock.

22) 800 Central Avenue Contributing – Photograph 24  
1904 Romanesque Revival/Victorian Gothic

This central-plan church has walls of rock-faced limestone in alternating narrow and wide courses. Gables radiate north, south, and west from the octagonal roofed core. Each parapeted gable has a massive smooth-dressed arch framing a large, pointed arch, stained glass window above rectangular double-hung units. A two-story-plus-basement level education wing with gable roof extends to the east.

**Resources**

<u>Address</u>	<u>C/NC</u>	<u>Comment</u>
<b>East 8<sup>th</sup> Street (SS)</b>		
1. 123-127	C	
<b>East 7<sup>th</sup> Street (NS)</b>		
2. 118	C	
<b>West 7<sup>th</sup> Street (SS)</b>		
3. 115-117	C	
<b>West 6<sup>th</sup> Street (NS)</b>		
4. 124	N/C	
5. 130	N/C	
6. 132-134	N/C	
<b>East 6<sup>th</sup> Street (NS)</b>		
7. 124	C	
8. 126	N/C	
<b>East 6<sup>th</sup> (SS)</b>		
9. 536 (Rear)	C	
<b>West 5<sup>th</sup> Street (NS)</b>		
10. 114	N/C	



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- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 11. 108-110                            | C   |
| <b>East 5<sup>th</sup> Street (NS)</b> |     |
| 12. 110-114                            | C   |
| 13. 128                                | N/C |
| 14. 132                                | C   |
| <b>East 5<sup>th</sup> Street (SS)</b> |     |
| 15. 430 (Rear)                         | C   |
| 16. 131                                | C   |
| <b>Court Street – East (NS)</b>        |     |
| 17. 126                                | C   |
| <b>Court Street – East (SS)</b>        |     |
| 18. 121                                | C   |
| 19. 408 (Rear)                         | C   |
| <b>East 4<sup>th</sup> Street (NS)</b> |     |
| 20. 404 (Rear)                         | C   |
| 21. 126                                | C   |
| <b>East 4<sup>th</sup> Street (SS)</b> |     |
| 22. 115                                | C   |
| 23. 119-121                            | C   |
| 24. 127                                | C   |
| <b>Grand Avenue (ES)</b>               |     |
| 25. 610                                | C   |
| <b>Central Avenue (WS)</b>             |     |
| 26. 503-505                            | C   |
| 27. 513                                | N/C |
| 28. 521                                | N/C |
| 29. 531                                | N/C |
| 30. 601                                | C   |
| 31. 601 (North)                        | C   |
| 32. 621                                | C   |
| 33. 623-625                            | C   |
| 34. 627                                | C   |
| 35. 629-631                            | C   |
| 36. 633-635                            | C   |
| 37. 711                                | N/C |
| 38. 729                                | C   |
| 39. 801                                | C   |
| 40. 815                                | C   |
| 41. 825                                | C   |
| <b>Central Avenue (ES)</b>             |     |
| 42. 318                                | C   |
| 43. 324                                | C   |
| 44. 326                                | C   |
| 45. 400-402                            | C   |
| 46. 404                                | C   |

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47. 408-414	C
48. 416	C
49. 418	C
50. 420-422	C
51. 424-426	C
52. 430 (South)	C
53. 430	C
54. 504	N/C
55. 518-520	C
56. 522	C
57. 526	C
58. 536 (South)	C
59. 536	C
60. 600-602	C
61. 604-606	C
62. 608	C
63. 612	C
64. 616	C
65. 618-620	C
66. 622	C
67. 624	N/C
68. 630	N/C
69. 700	C
70. 730	C
71. 800	C
72. 814	C
<b>Eastern Avenue (WS)</b>	
73. 321	C
74. 325	C
75. 415	C
76. 417	C
77. 419	C
78. 423	C
79. 425	C
80. 515	N/C
81. 517	C
82. 535	N/C
83. 615	C
84. 635	N/C
85. 701	C
86. 721	C
87. 725	C
88. 733	C

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

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TRANSPORTATION

INDUSTRY

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

**Period of Significance**

1813-1965

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1813

1845

\_\_\_\_\_

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

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

Kaufman, William

Taylor, James Knox

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance captures the period of Connersville's settlement, growth as a transshipment point of the Whitewater Canal, the expansion of its industrial base and its heritage as the commercial and financial center of the county's business world. The 1813 date of the community's plat, which shaped its physical development, begins the period of significance. The period of significance extends to the fifty-year mark since the commercial and industrial activities that were significant to the city were on-going

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

**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.)

The Connersville Downtown Historic District is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association, at statewide and local levels, with events that made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Indiana's history; i.e., settlement, canal-building, transportation infrastructure establishment and development, and the automotive industry as a significant contributor to the state's industrial heritage. The period of significance includes the primary years of settlement, community and industrial development, and all the threads of Connersville's heritage fabric.

The Connersville Downtown Historic District is also eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its embodiment of distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction in the residential and commercial buildings whose architectural styles span the years from 1843 to 1965.

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

As the flow of settlers into southeast Indiana Territory increased after 1811, John Conner, an early interpreter, decided to transition into an entrepreneur. He platted the original settlement of Connersville in 1813, before statehood in 1816 and before Fayette County's organization in 1819; his plat included 62 lots. The plat, generally located between the present day Central Avenue and the Whitewater River included a public square. The plat's northeast/southwest axis oriented Connersville to its first important transportation route, the Whitewater River. Eventually a number of log cabins, a fort, and Harlan's Store became part of the settlement. By 1820, Sample's Hotel/Inn occupied part of a lot now identified as the southwest corner of the intersection of East 5<sup>th</sup> Street and the eastern boundary of the district, Eastern Avenue.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Heinemann, C.F.L., *In the Year of 1850 in the Village of Connersville George Heinemann Founded a Grocery* (Connersville, IN: Self-published, 1922), page 3.

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In 1836, the Indiana General Assembly undertook a massive improvement program that sought to propel the young state into the transportation revolution that was building in the United States. Based on the unequivocal success of the Erie Canal, Indiana planned to construct a state-wide canal system designed to provide its citizens with the means to ship excess goods out to other markets along the east coast and import the many necessities not yet available to the growing population. The full development plan included roads, railroads, and canals. One of the canals planned and begun in 1836 was the Whitewater Canal envisioned to collect and transport the produce grown in the Whitewater Valley downstream to the Ohio River and ultimately Cincinnati, Ohio, the major population and commercial center in the region.

With the arrival of the canal in 1845, Connersville entered a boom period as a commercial transshipment point for goods passing in both directions up and down the Whitewater Valley. As farmers increased their yields and reached excess production the canal offered ready access to the markets in Harrison and Cincinnati, Ohio, and in some cases, north through the Ohio canal system to the Great Lakes. Conversely, goods moving along the canal through the countryside enabled local communities to expand their commercial influence and brought manufactured tools, equipment, cloth, dinnerware, etc. to distant farms in this rapidly growing corner of the state.

One of the foremost reminders of the earliest years of Connersville's history and a resource in the historic district is George H. Heineman's store at the southwest corner of present-day East 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Eastern Avenue. The historical importance of the store gains prominence as the early location of John Conner's store (not his trading post). Home to several different commercial endeavors, the corner (and its building) is also remembered as the place John Sample's Inn served as the first local hotel and the settlement's post office 1820-1835. Others occupied the location and building until George Heineman bought the building in 1854. The original building is the gable-end structure to the east of the brick extension on the west elevation that Heineman built as a family residence (photograph 22). Other buildings linked to the settlement and canal periods in the district include the row houses at 324 and 326 Central; the store building at 400-402 Central; the Canal House at 111 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street; the I-houses at 119-121 and 126 East 4<sup>th</sup>; and the two identical houses at 321 and 325 Eastern, not to mention many of the other buildings that were remodeled like the courthouse.<sup>4</sup>

Although the Whitewater Canal never fulfilled expectations, it continued to serve the Whitewater Valley and its commercial centers for a number of years. Water from the canal served local communities, up and downstream, as a source of power wherever mills could tap into the flow.

Another thread in the fabric of Connersville's heritage came to town in the mid-1850s. The manufacture of horse-drawn buggies became a thriving industry in Connersville prior to the Civil War. The availability of transportation means to ship out the products and a ready supply of wood fostered many wood-based industries. An early entry into the transportation industry in Connersville opened for business in 1857. After establishing a business along the National Road near Cambridge City, J.B. McFarlan moved to Connersville in 1857 to the corner of West 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Grand Avenue (in the district) near a turning basin of the Whitewater Canal. McFarlan concentrated the business on the building of light-duty wheeled vehicles. As his business

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pages 40-41.

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prospered he bought more land along West 6<sup>th</sup> Street and expanded his operation to Central Avenue.

The coming of the Civil War hastened the arrival of the railroad to Connersville in 1862. Built along the tow path through town after the canal's demise, the railroad opened the region to more markets during and after the war. Grand Avenue, the western boundary of the district parallels the route of the historic railroad and the tracks of the current Whitewater Valley Railroad tracks follow the historic canal route south to Metamora.

After the Civil War as money became available from a growing number of local banks, the density of manufacturing enterprises increased significantly during these last decades of the nineteenth century. McFarlan's carriage factory, early on the scene, soon had competitors to challenge its efforts. The Connersville Buggy Company (near the district's north boundary) organized in the mid-1880s and the Rex Buggy Company appeared in 1898. The availability of raw materials and a growing workforce spawned a number of furniture/cabinet manufacturers like the Cooley-Morrison Furniture Manufacturers (located on West 7<sup>th</sup> Street at the time) and later the location of the Connersville Cabinet Company.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the idea and actuality of automobiles entered the minds of Indiana entrepreneurs; the automobile would bring about change in Connersville's industrial landscape as no other in its history. During its life span the industrial park, established in 1886, hosted many different firms but most had a direct connection to building transportation means, either in their entirety or parts and assemblies for a larger machine, starting with carriage parts and later the burgeoning automobile industry. Just a partial list includes McFarlan's Carriage Company, Ansted Axle & Spring Company, Lexington Motor Company, E.L. Cord's company, and Stant Manufacturing, the pioneer in temperature gauges and radiator caps for cars. During the 1920s and 1930s, the firm also produced hood ornaments for Ford, Lincoln, Packard, Pierce Arrow, and Auburn automobiles.<sup>5</sup>

The 1920s ushered into Connersville a boom period in manufacturing. Car manufacturing continued to grow at a steady pace. Shifts in the industry caused change as businesses expanded and either were acquired by other firms or relocated to consolidate operations. The Wainwright Company, a foundry and machine shop combination, changed ownership and became a part of the McQuay-Norris Company that produced water pumps, cylinder sleeves, and piston pins for larger firms. The small building at 121 Court Street, in the district, once housed a training facility for workers at McQuay-Norris's larger plant on Western Avenue (photograph 22). The buildings at 610 Grand and 815 North Central Avenues housed sales facilities for automobiles. The Grand Avenue building housed a sales room for Studebaker cars for many years; it exists now as a sale room for cars under the same family ownership for over 50 years. The North Central Avenue location was the first sales office of the Inland Motor Company that sold Lexington cars. It opened for business in 1916 and continued in that capacity until circa 1924; it later housed a BF Goodrich franchise tire and parts dealer. The Stant Company moved west of the canal to a larger plant to increase its production of theft-proof locks for car radiators and gas tank caps. Along with the good times attendant to a booming economy, Connersville enjoyed some measure of recognition in several fields. The Lexington Motor Car Company won a Pike's Peak Hill (road

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<sup>5</sup> Smith, *Connersville: A Pictorial History*, pages 80-91; "Claypool Speaks Good Word for Connersville," *Indianapolis Star*, 17 August 1911, page 6; "Connersville Has Many Industries," *Indianapolis News*, 25 May 1905, page 2.



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climb) trophy competition in 1924; the Central Manufacturing Corporation became a major supplier to the Cord Corporation, McFarlan and other car builders raced their cars at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, and talking pictures came to a theater downtown in 1929.<sup>6</sup>

Although the success of the automobile eventually cost the railroads their place in transportation's hierarchy, the contribution of rails to Connersville, cannot be ignored. After the first railroad arrived in Connersville in the 1860s and by the end of the decade, a connection to Hamilton, Ohio, created a straight route to a major market. The Whitewater Valley Railroad laid its tracks along the towpath of the defunct canal. The primary lines servicing Connersville changed names many times during the later-nineteenth-century railroad consolidation period but the Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton Railroad carried the bulk of passengers and freight east and west for many years. Eventually, the Big Four Railroad established a north-south route; name changes occurred almost annually but the tracks stayed the same. Like its big brother, the interurban served Connersville for the first three decades of the twentieth century. Transporting people and things between Indianapolis and Connersville and many smaller stops along the route, the interurban provided relatively inexpensive transportation until it too succumbed to wheeled vehicles in the form of a scheduled bus service in 1932-34.<sup>7</sup>

The Great Depression had a telling effect on the industrial landscape of Connersville. Although the community may have been later than some to feel its effect, the automobile manufacturers experienced the downturn in a number of ways. First, markets for the products of their assembly lines (cars/parts/bodies/subassemblies) started to dry up as disposable income throughout the United States diminished. Next, some activities in Connersville consolidated their operations with others to save on overhead and to deal with the crisis of bankruptcy that plagued industry at the time but other firms took advantage of the turmoil and diversified or changed products completely to survive. Those affected by the downturn included the Roots Blower Company and the Auburn/Cord car manufacturers. E.L. Cord, a major force in the auto industry, consolidated many smaller companies just prior to September 1929 and formed the Cord Corporation, doing business in Connersville. Surprisingly, Cord stopped falling profits in 1930 and for the next years Auburn's fortunes continued to flourish. Connersville had jobs for as many as 2,500 workers at one time in this period. By 1934 against all commonsense during the height of the Depression, Cord decided to begin production of his newest auto, the eight-cylinder, hand-soldered-body Cord coupe and sedan that have become collector's items. Car sales finally stalled in the late 1930s, Cord operations in Connersville idled, and one of its plants limped along on its earlier entry into the sink, refrigerator, and kitchen cabinet manufacturing activity. After several years of court proceedings the end result of the Depression turmoil in Connersville gave birth to a new entity called the Auburn Central Manufacturing Corporation that filed articles of incorporation in 1940.<sup>8</sup>

The 1940s witnessed many changes in Connersville and the world. The United States entered the Second World War in December 1941. The manufacturing base established many decades before geared up for support of the war effort. Especially noteworthy proved to be the efforts of Central Manufacturing, later Auburn Central and then later American Central, which

<sup>6</sup> Smith, *Connersville: A Pictorial History*, pages 79, and 82-83; Connersville City Directories 1914- 1935; *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* 1913 and 1919, *passim*.

<sup>7</sup> Smith, *Connersville: A Pictorial History*, page 31; *A Family and Community History*, page 91.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*.

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produced nearly 500,000 bodies for the army's workhorse the jeep. It also produced the trailer that accompanied the prime mover everywhere and in every theater of the war

Connersville's 1950s were much as those experienced around the country. Businesses grew, changed, and some closed their doors. Philco announced in 1953 that would expand its plant capacity and the number of employees would likely reach 3000 workers. Remington's cigar store closed in 1955. Many of the smaller successful home-owned industries were absorbed by larger enterprises, again taking advantage of the presence of a skilled work force and established physical plants. Roots-Connersville Blower Company celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> year of production. Finally, Connersville celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1963.<sup>9</sup>

The expansion of industries in Connersville fostered a complex mingling of residential, commercial, and industrial uses in the district. The earliest Sanborn Map for Connersville, 1887, shows all three functions within one block of the courthouse. The map also shows that Central Avenue was becoming the commercial corridor of the city, even though half of several blocks between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets were still occupied by row houses or free-standing, single-family homes.

The description section notes many business uses in the district. The array of goods and services in Connersville easily surpassed those of any other town in the county by the 1870s. Connersville had a population of 6,836 by 1900 and aside from the much larger Richmond (18,226 in 1900), it was the largest commercial center in the Whitewater Valley. Connersville kept its retail sector busy well into the twentieth-century, attracting national chains such as JC Penney (photograph 12).

In summary, Connersville and its Downtown Historic District have led an active life. From the earliest years as a site of a trading center and eventual transshipment point on the Whitewater Canal to its dynamic involvement in the industrial heritage of Indiana and the nation to its reputation as "Little Detroit" because of the local economy's immersion in the automotive industry, the city and its downtown commercial center has provided the housing, banking, entertainment, and transportation needs of the county and in some cases the region.<sup>10</sup>

## Architecture

Connersville's Downtown Historic District contains an inventory of physical resources that define the boom periods of its economic and its commercial history. From the Greek Revival grandeur of the old Whitewater Canal Headquarters on East 4<sup>th</sup> Street to the Victorian excesses in ornamental displays of the Claypool building and the busyness of the storefront facade of the 400 block of Central Avenue to the utilitarian façade of the building at 701 Eastern Avenue, the visitor to the district can view the physical evidence of Connersville's architectural heritage.

Along with these examples of a specific period or styles are those buildings that evoke an understanding of the evolution of the community, economically and architecturally. The Canal House and its high style of the times, the row houses along the 300 block of Central Avenue, the

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<sup>9</sup> *A Family and Community History*, pages 151-152; "Philco Plans New Plant," *Indianapolis Times*, 5 January 1953; Smith, *Connersville: A Pictorial History*, pages 52-58.

<sup>10</sup> *A Family and Community History*, pages 86-87; Smith, *Connersville: A Pictorial History*, page 172; Notes by Henry Blommel, 1964 at <http://www.connersvillechamberofcommerce.com>; "Industry Aglow at Connersville," *Indianapolis Star*, 2 June 1929, Part 2, page 1.

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more simple vernacular characteristics of the Heinemann building's original design harken to the earliest days of Connersville's transportation heritage and the substantial economy that burgeoned from this early start. The I-houses along Eastern Avenue speak to the development of a construction industry now able to produce and construct safer brick buildings that would begin to overshadow the simple wooden structures susceptible to fires and other disasters. The massive brick courthouse is a daunting example of this transition. The fine commercial buildings along the Central Avenue corridor starting with the Italianate commercial block (408-414), moving north to the Farmers and Merchants Trust Company and its less ornate example of the Italianate style and on to the series of small commercial buildings in the 500 block, the observer garners visual proof of the architectural stylistic changes of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Italianate, Romanesque, and Queen Anne). Three churches in the district offer insight into Connersville's long period of stability and growth. The First United Presbyterian Church (c.1870/c.1890), First United Methodist Church (c.1895), and the Central Christian Church (c.1900), are all impressive variations in Romanesque Revival, built by congregations that formed in Connersville during the canal era. Commercial buildings in the Classical Revival style like the bank at 536 Central, and the Tudor Revival home at 124 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street added artistic appeal to a normally vernacular inventory of places to work and live. The Federal government's services found official expression in the U.S. Post Office at 8<sup>th</sup> and Central, a good example of City Beautiful-Beaux Arts classicism that guided Federal building design during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The coming of the automobile industry to Connersville, circa 1910, greatly expanded the inventory of buildings, but mostly outside the district. The small vernacular industrial buildings at Court Street, 121, 126, and Central 408 (R) are examples of the few remaining manufacturing shops that supported the automotive industry. The building at 815 North Central once sold Lexington cars under the name Inland Motor Company. Though limited in number, buildings from the post-war era mark the district. The local YMCA built a new facility in 1949 at 825 Central, today it is the Boys and Girls Club. It is a sedate but formal example of Modernism, with dressed limestone panels and entry frame contrasting with red brick walls. Taken as a whole, the district encapsulates examples of the economic and architectural vitality that create the historic significance of Connersville from the early-1800s to the mid-1900s.

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**Developmental History/Additional historic context information**

Connersville's settlement starts well before the advent of Indiana's statehood. John Conner and his brother were conspicuously present in the early days of the 1800s as traders, interpreters, and go-between agents for the government officials and the American Indians living on the not-yet-acquired contested lands. The land around Connersville opened for official American settlement in 1811 with sales of parcels from the land office in Cincinnati, Ohio. John Conner moved into the Indiana Territory around 1802-03 and opened a trading post north of Connersville near Cedar Grove, Indiana. Absent for long periods of time, Conner arranged to have a nearby acquaintance manage the enterprise during his extended periods of interaction with the American Indians and the U.S. government.<sup>11</sup>

The settlement grew steadily but slowly for the next decade plus. Farmers around Connersville cleared their fields, grew crops, and brought their wheat to Conner's gristmill north of the original plat near the west bank of the Whitewater River. One benefit of its significant

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<sup>11</sup> *An Illustrated & Historical Atlas of Fayette County, Indiana* (Chicago: Higgins and Belden, 1875), page 8

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drop in elevation along the watercourse was the velocity of water available to turn many different mills that would eventually drive Connersville's economy. The magnitude of elevation change proves to be a blessing and a curse.<sup>12</sup>

The general objective of the General Assembly's Mammoth Improvement Plan was to establish a transportation infrastructure to support Indiana's future development. Canal boats moving grain and stock out of the Whitewater Valley insured an inflow of revenue. On return trips up the valley, canal boats would bring goods from Cincinnati and transport settlers to their new homes. Interestingly, the general route of this new canal shadowed an old Indian trace from near Muncie down state in a southeasterly direction towards the Ohio state line near Cincinnati. John Conner regularly traveled this trace in his trading days; it is not by accident that his trading post (and his ultimate plat of Connersville) straddled this same avenue of commerce.<sup>13</sup>

Financial disaster, rampant in the national banking system in the late 1830s, changed the course of history in Indiana and especially the Whitewater Valley. The Panic of 1837 followed by a four-year economic depression forced the General Assembly to pare down its grand transportation system to the barest essentials. A method used to achieve this goal was a classification of projects which required a single project would be completed BEFORE starting another. For example, the state would finish the Whitewater Canal before beginning a new railroad venture. The scheme looked good on paper but little resulted under its aegis. The Whitewater Canal became the property of a private company in 1842 and the new owner completed the state's work to Laurel in 1844 and Connersville in 1845; the new Whitewater Valley Canal Company built its headquarters in downtown Connersville in 1842 on East 4<sup>th</sup> Street (photograph 5).<sup>14</sup>

Connersville, with some of the first local stores and numerous canal basins, was integral to this expansion of settlement. The basin served as a loading and unloading point for people and things by taking the canal boats out of the main stream traffic. Eventually the location of the main basin in Connersville, west of city hall in the mid-1850s, approximated the later location of the local railroad depot. In addition to putting significant funds in the owners of the canal boats, this transportation resource opened opportunities for other endeavors. In the late 1840s and early 1850s, pork packers, flour millers, and a new stove manufacturer, Gephart Stove Foundry, made use of the canal to move their products out to regional markets. Ancillary businesses like cooperages for pork and floor packing, woolen mills for weaving material for cloth goods, and general merchandisers supporting the additional work force strengthened the local economy.<sup>15</sup>

All of this commerce wrought another major addition to the downtown streetscape. Business needs funds for paying its suppliers, buying raw materials, paying workers, and expanding for the future. Connersville's early banks, established in the mid-1850s, supplied these services to business and individual customers. The Fayette Bank set up shop on Central

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<sup>12</sup> Heinemann, J.L., *The Indian Trail down the Whitewater Valley: Some Primitive Indiana History of the Connersville Neighborhood* (Indianapolis: Krieg Brothers, 1912), page 25.

<sup>13</sup> Warner, John P. *The Influence of the Wabash and Erie Canal on the Development of Two Northern Indiana Communities 1830-1860* (Indianapolis: Master's Thesis, 1996), 10-13; Heinemann, *The Indian Trail Down the Whitewater Valley*, pages 6-9; Smith, Harry M., *Connersville: A Pictorial History* (St. Louis: G. Bradley Publishing Company, 1992), pages 24-25.

<sup>14</sup> Warner, *The Influence of the Wabash and Erie Canal*, page 14; Smith, *Connersville: A Pictorial History*, pages 24-25.

<sup>15</sup> Smith, *Connersville: A Pictorial History*, pages 26-27.

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Avenue between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Streets, the Bank of Connersville operated out of the back of Frybarger's store on the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Central Avenue; a farmer's bank opened in 1857.<sup>16</sup> Today, while the names have changed somewhat, the financial heart of the business and personal finance world remains in downtown Connersville.

Transportation, in many forms, is woven throughout the history of Connersville. Although the longevity of the Whitewater Canal failed to meet expectations of supporters, its presence and its proximity to Cincinnati, established Connersville as a regional transportation resource that did have durability. Mentioned earlier, the rapid and extensive changes in elevation along the Whitewater Canal's route proved a blessing and a curse. The rapid drop in topographical elevation, 491 feet over its length, provided velocity to the flow for use by commerce but it also proved a destructive factor to dams, weirs, aqueducts, and all manner of canal-related structures when spring rains caused flood conditions. The yearly need to repair or rebuild these structures eventually caused the demise of the canal in its entirety as a transportation means; portions remained viable for other uses for decades. As one source notes, hydraulic companies shared "... the entire volume of the west fork [of the Whitewater River and its water to the canal] and a fall of 40 feet..." These companies charged users a fee of seventy-five cents to a \$1.33 a day for powering their mills.<sup>17</sup>

Eventually, the need for more space for the business to grow forced the McFarlan Carriage Company to move north and west across the canal.<sup>18</sup> This scenario proved true for many of Connersville's early enterprises; they collectively developed along the canal downtown and then the exigencies of growth forced movement west, south and north of downtown.

Fayette County, Indiana did its part during the Civil War. The county furnished men for artillery, infantry and cavalry units to the extent that the final accounting demonstrated that three out of five men resident in the county between 1861-1856 served the Union. These participants included officers, enlisted soldiers, and three surgeons. One of the surgeons, Vincent Gregg, may well have been related to a one-time resident of the district (1930s), Dr. Albert F. Gregg, who maintained a medical office on East 6<sup>th</sup> Street. In the 1960s Grand Avenue was widened to its current width and physical evidence of the canal disappeared. Upon the return of the veterans of the war, Connersville set about the business of business and the farmland that lay fallow for the war years once again produced the grains and stock necessary for recovery.<sup>19</sup>

Recovery required the expansion of the economy which in turn brought about the growth of the banking and service industries to provide housing for visiting entrepreneurs. In 1865, after a number of reorganizations of an earlier banking house started in 1857, the National Bank of Connersville opened its doors in downtown Connersville. Two local businessmen operated the Farmers' Bank in the community starting in the late 1860s; a consortium of businessmen established the Citizens' Bank in 1870. The Farmers & Merchants Trust Company set up business in a building immediately north of J.M. Huston's Brick Block in the 400 block of Central Avenue (photograph 15). A privately-held bank owned by J.B. McFarlan, located in his McFarlan Building at the corner of Central Avenue and 6<sup>th</sup> Street, welcomed customers in 1893.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid, page 30.

<sup>17</sup> *An Illustrated & Historical Atlas of Fayette County Ind.*, pages 8-10.

<sup>18</sup> *A Family and Community History of Connersville and Fayette County, Indiana* (Evansville, IN: M.T. Publishing Company, 2012), pages 88-89

<sup>19</sup> Smith, *Connersville: A Pictorial History*, pages 32-37; *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps*, 1892, 1913, 1919, and 1929.

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The block became famous not for the bank but for the grand accommodations of the McFarlan Hotel and its Blue Room that hosted folks for fine dining and large gatherings. In competition with McFarlan, in Connersville's late-nineteenth-century streetscape, were the Grand Hotel on West 5<sup>th</sup> Street and the Palace Hotel on East 4<sup>th</sup> Street, all locations in the current historic district. All of this commercial activity is best summarized in a local motto from the period that stated, "More industries, increased population, and every citizen a property owner." Obviously the population increased as the period 1890-1906 witnessed almost a doubling in the number of Connersville's citizens.<sup>20</sup>

Space constraints required a number of factories to site outside the boundaries of the district – Indiana Furniture, Munk and Roberts, and Connersville Furniture to mention a few – but their money no doubt resided in the banks in the district. With an eye to the future, the Connersville Land and Improvement Company established the state's first industrial park, north and west of the downtown area, in 1886.<sup>21</sup>

The industrialization of Connersville's economy had a special component that entered its evolution in the person of two brothers named Roots, Francis M. and Philander, Ohioans both. They came to Connersville well before the industrial surge of the late nineteenth century but their contribution extends well past the end of the period of significance. The woolen mill they owned along the canal developed problems transmitting water power from the wheel to the machinery inside. In an effort to increase the efficiency of their waterwheel (by experimenting with the shape of the vanes), they found/discovered/developed a concept later known as the Roots Principle. Basically, they came up with a lobed, positive-displacement pump that greatly increased the volume of fluids or air moving through any system. The brothers established a plant in Connersville to manufacture their Roots blowers for use all over the world. Later used for moving air into blast furnaces, the principle, applied to many industrial tasks, found modern use in superchargers for various types of engines and compressors.

The transition from horse drawn transportation to motor cars may have been preordained with the discovery of oil and its many uses, but Connersville's place in the automobile world required a lot of hard work and financial backing. McFarlan's entry into car making seems a logical step in the process. Other car manufacturers such as Lexington, after moving up from Kentucky, built the Ansted and the Howard. Central Manufacturing, an old established firm building parts for carriages, moved into the modern age with the manufacture of auto bodies for many different firms including the Cord Corporation. Another buggy manufacturer, the Rex Manufacturing Company built the Empire car for a number of years then shifted production to building refrigerators as electricity's availability and a need for new consumer items created viable markets in the 1920s. A logical question pursued at this point is "Why Connersville?" and a logical answer would be the availability of a trained, abundant workforce that included many specialists in the form of metal and wood working skills and the physical components (buildings and machinery) transferable to the automobile industry. The buggy builders and their facilities transitioned well into automotive work. Turning and shaping wooden spokes for wagon wheels

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<sup>20</sup> Fayette County and Connersville –the "Garden City of Indiana." *The Indianan* III (1899): 65-71; Smith, *Connersville: A Pictorial History*, pages 70-17; Schwartz, Julius F, Rev., *Pen and Camera of the Progressive City of Connersville Indiana* (Connersville, IN: no publisher, 1906), page 105.

<sup>21</sup> Smith, *Connersville: A Pictorial History*, pages 60-62; Indiana Historic Sites & Structures Inventory, *Fayette County Interim Report* (Indianapolis: Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 1981), pages 16-17.

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required much the same skills as the wheel-making skills for the first automobile wheels. Metal-working skills are easily applied to castings for car engines vice metal hardware for holding wagons together or forging axles for the same. In addition the availability of railroad lines to move the car parts/sub-assemblies or end units to ready markets made Connersville the “right” place to do business.<sup>22</sup>

In the first decades of the twentieth century, concurrent with this economic boom in Connersville, Indiana and the United States had to contend with the upheaval and sadness of the First World War. Fayette County did its share and shouldering the burden of the war and, per capita, the county furnished more men than any other county in the state. Manufacturers such as McFarlan, Roots, Lexington, and Stant shifted some production to fill wartime contracts for the government. Local citizens did their part through bond drives and rationing. When servicemen returned to Connersville and the county they found a thriving economy with lots of jobs available and the future of the automotive industry bright.<sup>23</sup>

In 1931, Roots Blower and the Connersville Blower Company, a main competitor, were purchased by a larger firm and this consolidation resulted in the Roots-Connersville Blower Company that added centrifugal compressors to its product line. Another example of change brought about by the Depression was the evolution of the Auburn Automobile Company as part of Connersville’s history. Central Manufacturing Company, Connersville’s earliest large car manufacturer, built the closed bodies for Auburn cars for a number of years in the 1920s, when it was under the direction/ownership of E.L. Cord.

During the decade of the 1940s, Rex Manufacturing, once buggy builders, became a subsidiary of Philco Corporation. Roots-Connersville Blower Company became part of Dresser Industries, the Metal Plating Corporation (zinc plating and anodizing) started up in 1946, and National Metal Products Company, a maker of casket parts, expanded its business facilities to service a growing market. An article in the *Indianapolis Star* in June 1950 lists an impressive number of “humming industrial plants,” employing nearly 7,200 workers and notes that the plants are busier than during WWII. The particulars on the list are a continuation of the same names that appear throughout Connersville’s industrial period; some names are slightly different but the parent companies are readily identifiable.<sup>24</sup> Connersville’s 1950s were much as those experienced around the country. Businesses grew, changed, and some closed their doors. Philco announced in 1953 that would expand its plant capacity and the number of employees would likely reach 3000 workers. Remington’s cigar store closed in 1955. Many of the smaller successful home-owned industries were absorbed by larger enterprises, again taking advantage of the presence of a skilled work force and established physical plants. Roots-Connersville Blower Company celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> year of production. Finally, Connersville celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1963.<sup>25</sup>

In summary, Connersville and its Downtown Historic District have led an active life. From the years as the site of a frontier trading center to a transshipment point on the Whitewater Canal to its dynamic involvement in the industrial heritage of Indiana and the nation, to its

<sup>22</sup> “Connersville Business Men Know How to Boost,” *Indianapolis Star*, 5 October 1913, Magazine Section.

<sup>23</sup> Smith, *Connersville: A Pictorial History*, pages 96-97.

<sup>24</sup> *A Family and Community History*, passim; “Connersville Today Would Amaze Folks,” *Indianapolis Star*, 1 June 1950, page 26.

<sup>25</sup> *A Family and Community History*, pages 151-152; “Philco Plans New Plant,” *Indianapolis Times*, 5 January 1953; Smith, *Connersville: A Pictorial History*, pages 52-58.



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reputation as “Little Detroit” because of the local economy’s immersion in the automotive industry Connersville’s past speaks for itself. Evidence of its capacity to produce quality goods, be it cars, jeeps, or household appliances, speaks well of the character of its workers and the spirit of the community. Connersville, with its commercial center, has provided housing for workers, the financial infrastructure for banking, the facilities for entertainment, and transportation means to support the county and in some cases the region.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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*An Illustrated & Historical Atlas of Fayette County, Indiana.* Chicago: Higgins and Belden, 1875.

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Indiana Historic Sites & Structures Inventory. *Fayette County Interim Report.* Indianapolis: Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 1981.

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Warner, John P. *The Influence of the Wabash and Erie Canal on the Development of Two Northern Indiana Communities 1830-1860*. Indianapolis: Master's Thesis, 1996.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** 041 131 26001-1548

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Approx. 35 acres

Use the UTM system

**UTM References** USGS Connersville Quadrangle 1:24,000

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

Connersville Downtown Historic District

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Name of Property

- |             |                 |                   |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 16 | Easting: 659749 | Northing: 4390132 |
| 2. Zone: 16 | Easting: 660014 | Northing: 4389987 |
| 3. Zone: 16 | Easting: 659684 | Northing: 4389371 |
| 4. Zone: 16 | Easting: 659463 | Northing: 4389532 |

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

From the start point at the southeast corner of the intersection of East 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Central Avenue proceed north across East 4<sup>th</sup> Street to the north curb of East 4<sup>th</sup> Street; turn west and proceed across Central Avenue along the north curb of East/West 4<sup>th</sup> Street to the intersection of the curb with the east curb of Market Street; turn north and proceed along the east curb of Market Street to the intersection of the curb with the south curb of West 5<sup>th</sup> Street; turn east and proceed approximately 50 meters along the curb; turn north and cross West 5<sup>th</sup> Street and proceed north along the east side of the alley between Central and Grand Avenues to its intersection with West 6<sup>th</sup> Street; cross West 6<sup>th</sup> Street to its north curb; turn west and proceed along the north curb to its intersection with the east curb of Grand Avenue; turn north and proceed along the east curb to its intersection with the alley between West 7<sup>th</sup> and West 6<sup>th</sup> Streets; turn east and proceed along the south edge of the alley to its intersection with the north-south alley between Central and Grand Avenues; turn north and proceed along the east edge of the alley, cross West 7<sup>th</sup> Street, cross West 8<sup>th</sup> Street and proceed along the same alley between Central and Grand Avenues to its intersection with the south curb of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street; turn east and continue along the south curb to its intersection with the west curb of Central Avenue; turn south and proceed along the west curb to its intersection with the alley between West 9<sup>th</sup> and West 8<sup>th</sup> Streets; turn east and cross Central Avenue and proceed east along the south edge of the alley between East 9<sup>th</sup> and East 8<sup>th</sup> Streets to its intersection with the north-south alley between Central and Eastern Avenues; turn south and proceed along the west edge of the alley to its intersection with the north curb of East 8<sup>th</sup> Street; cross East 8<sup>th</sup> Street to the south curb; turn east and continue along the south curb of East 8<sup>th</sup> Street to the southwest corner of the intersection of East 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Eastern Avenue; turn south and proceed along the west curb of Eastern Avenue, cross East 7<sup>th</sup> Street, East 6<sup>th</sup> Street, East 5<sup>th</sup> Street, East 4<sup>th</sup> Street and continue to the intersection of Eastern Avenue and the east-west alley between East 4<sup>th</sup> Street and East 3<sup>rd</sup> Street; turn west and proceed along the north edge of the east-west alley to its intersection with the east curb of Central Avenue; turn north and proceed along the east curb of Central Avenue to the start point at the southeast corner of the intersection of Central Avenue and East 4<sup>th</sup> Street.

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

The boundaries were chosen to incorporate the majority of John Conner's original plat of Connersville, Indiana and include the oldest physical reminders of the settlement and early period of the town's heritage.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

Connersville Downtown Historic District

Fayette County, Indiana  
County and State

Name of Property

name/title: John Warner

organization: \_\_\_\_\_

street & number: 5018 Broadway

Street

city or town: Indianapolis state: IN zip

code: 46205

e-mail: jp\_warner@sbcglobal.net

telephone: 3172835450

date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 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: Connersville Downtown Historic District

City or Vicinity: Connersville

County: Fayette

State: Indiana

Connersville Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Photographer: John Warner

Fayette County, Indiana  
County and State

Dates Photographed: 15 August, 29 September, and 3 November 2014.

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

- 1 of 24. Looking southeast at the 400 block of Central Avenue showing a typical streetscape from the mid- and latter part of the period of significance.
2. Looking northeast at 126 Court Street an example of many of the small industrial buildings that supported the local economy with metal working activities.
  3. Looking southwest at 321 and 325 Eastern Avenue; two buildings remaining from the early period of Connersville's development.
  4. Looking north at the 108-110 West 5<sup>th</sup> Street (the Claypool Building). The Claypool families were early settlers and prominent citizens of Connersville. An example of the upscale buildings constructed at the beginning of one of Connersville's major periods of expansion, the last decades of the nineteenth century.
  5. Looking south-southwest at 107-119 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Once the home of storefront businesses, like the Mecca Café, and apartments in the second story, the building continues to serve the local community with small accommodations at both levels.
  6. Looking southwest at 111 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Likely the oldest extant, unmodified resource in the district, the building once housed the headquarters of the Whitewater Valley Canal administration.
  7. Looking mostly west at 415, 417, and 419 Eastern Avenue at examples of some homes that constituted the backbone of the residential segment of the district in the early years of the twentieth century.
  8. Looking north at 118 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street. Built circa 1920, the house served as a multiple residence and as a place of business, the Beauty Shoppe, for the last four decades of the period of significance.
  9. Looking southwest at 635 Eastern Avenue at what once was a single Italianate home that suffered multiple additions in the 1920s and probably after 1965.
  10. Looking north at 124 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street. The one-story brick building functioned as the office/residence for two medical professionals. It is the only one of its kind in the district.
  11. Looking northeast at 408-414 Central Avenue, one of the finest examples of the period and style remaining in the district. Since its construction circa 1875, the building has predictably housed small storefront businesses at street level and other offices/accommodations on the second story.
  12. Looking northwest at 601 Central Avenue the former home of the J.C. Penney Store that was built in the early 1930s as a replacement for a large frame building that once occupied this corner.
  13. Looking west-northwest at 701 Eastern Avenue an early-twentieth-century commercial building.
  14. Looking east at 420-422 Central Avenue. This small brick building is also visible in the streetscape in photograph 1.

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15. Looking east at 618-620 Central Avenue built in 1901 at the beginning of one of Connersville's periods of boom as the automotive industry began its emergence in the local economy.

16. Looking east at 416 Central Avenue. This tall building appears in a number of historical photographs as the home of the Farmers and Merchants Trust Company founded in 1902.

17. Looking south at 123-127 East 8<sup>th</sup> Street an apartment building containing four separate flats that has been in operation as such since the first decade of the twentieth century.

18. Looking west-northwest at 401 Central Avenue, the Fayette County Courthouse. Remodeled on two separate occasions the eastern portion the building retains its historical façade.

19. Looking southeast at the modern (latest) addition to the courthouse that was constructed on the site of the former city hall.

20. Looking east at 536 Central Avenue that has occupied this corner since the early 1910s. This is one of the few examples of the style in the district.

21. Looking southeast at 121 Court Street that has served in various capacities as a machine shop and fabricator of engine parts since its construction in 1926.

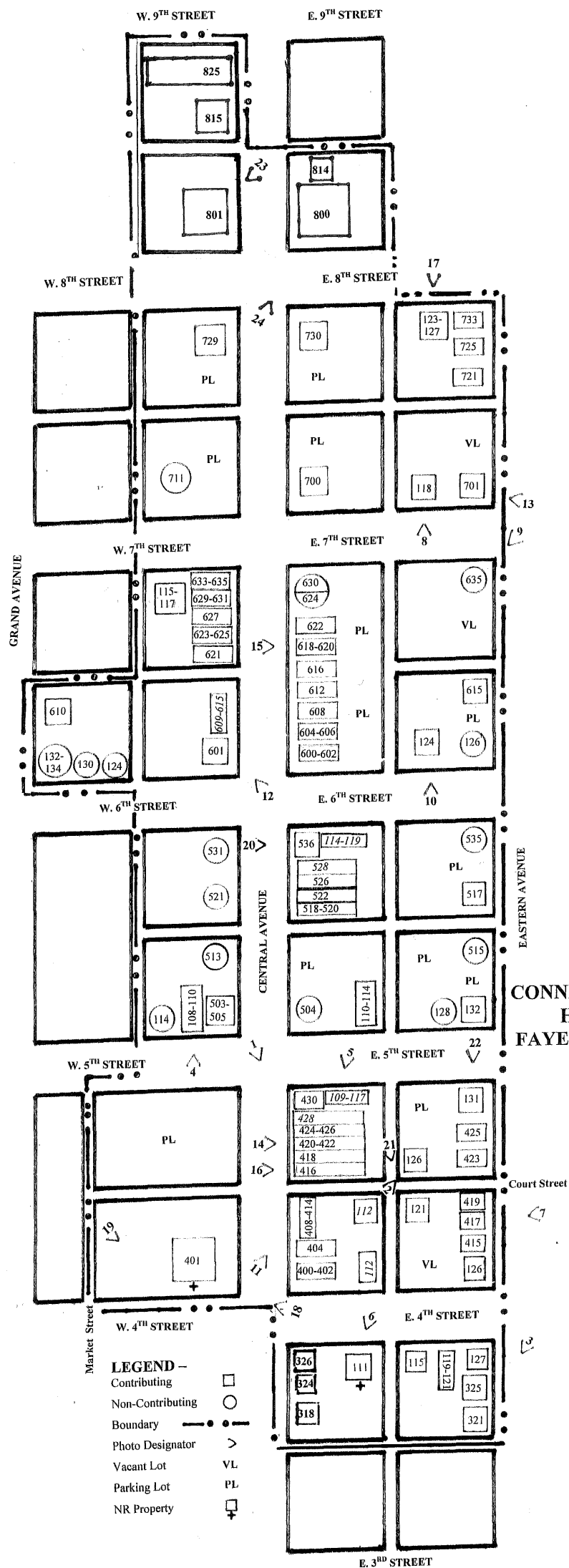
22. Looking south at 131 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street. A combination of two buildings that dates from the 1800s, the building retains much of its original integrity.

23. Looking southwest at the north elevation and the facade of the Connersville post office. The design of the building typifies the neoclassical characteristics viewed in federal buildings of the period.

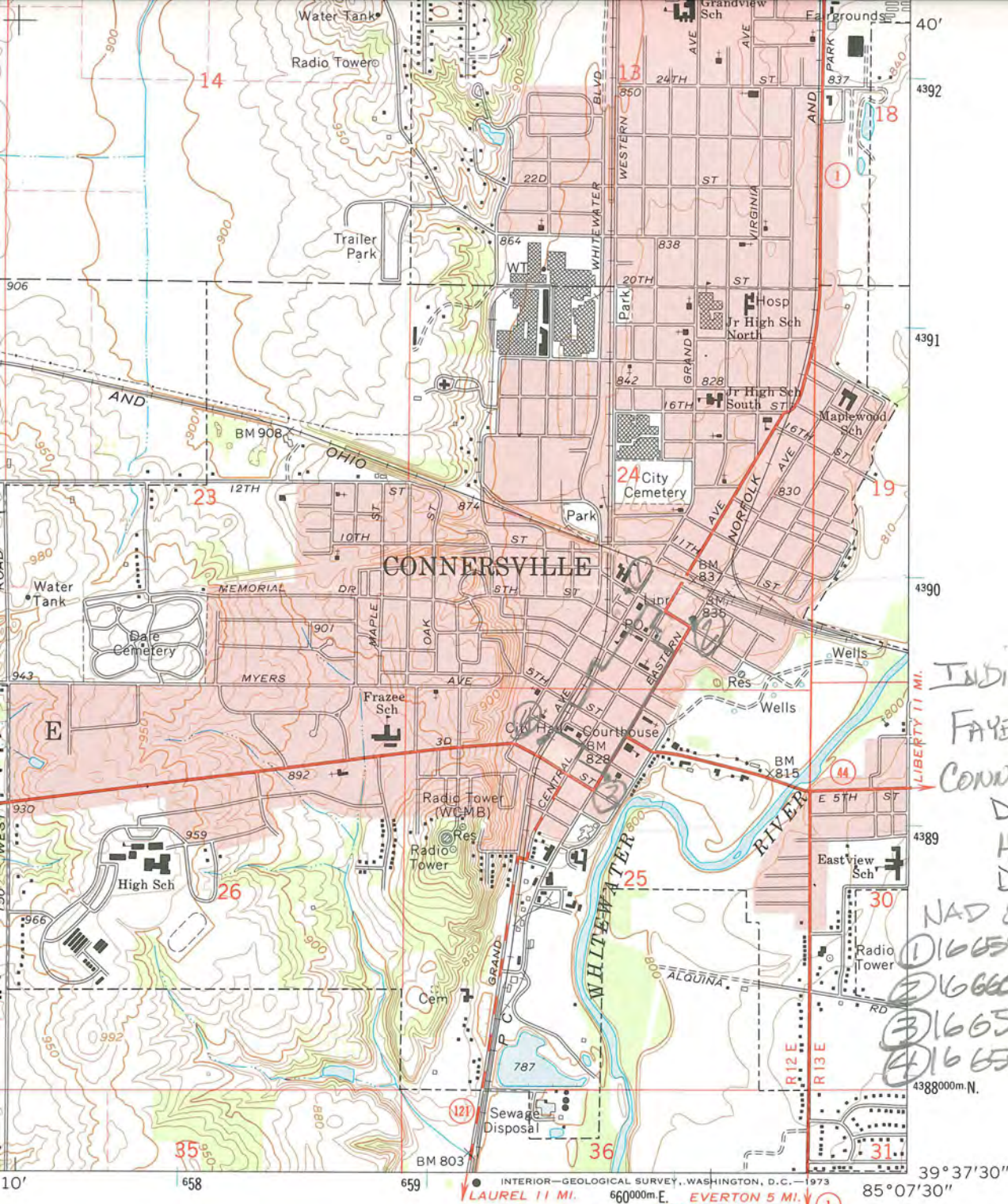
24. Looking northeast at the Central Christian Church that has anchored this location since 1904.

**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.







INDIANA—  
 FAYETTE COUNTY—  
 CONNEERSVILLE  
 DOWNTOWN  
 HISTORIC  
 DISTRICT  
 NAD 83 UTM's  
 ① 16659749 4390132  
 ② 16660014 4389987  
 ③ 16659684 4389371  
 ④ 16659463 4389532  
 4388000m N.

INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D.C.—1973  
 LAUREL 11 MI. 660000m E. EVERTON 5 MI. 1  
 BROOKVILLE 16 MI.

### ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Primary highway,<br>hard surface   | Light-duty road, hard or<br>improved surface |
| Secondary highway,<br>hard surface | Unimproved road                              |
| ○ Interstate Route                 | ○ U. S. Route    ○ State Route               |



CONNEERSVILLE, IND.  
 N3937.5—W8507.5/7.5

1972

AMS 3963 II NW—SERIES V851













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CENTRAL

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ALL AM. METHOD.  
1001 8TH ST. S.E.  
ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.  
505-262-1111

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Date Received: 1/20/2017      Date of Pending List:      Date of 16th Day:      Date of 45th Day: 3/7/2017      Date of Weekly List: 3/16/2017

  X   Accept             Return             Reject        3/7/2017   Date

Reviewer	<u>Edson Beall</u>	Discipline	<u>Historian</u>
Telephone		Date	

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

# DNR

Indiana Department of Natural Resources



Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology • 402 W. Washington Street, W274 • Indianapolis, IN 46204-2739  
Phone 317-232-1646 • Fax 317-232-0693 • [dhpa@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:dhpa@dnr.IN.gov) • [www.IN.gov/dnr/historic](http://www.IN.gov/dnr/historic)

December 9, 2016

Mr. Daniel Delahaye  
U.S. Postal Service, Federal Preservation Officer  
475 L'Enfant Plaza W, SW Room 6670  
Washington, D.C. 20260-1862

**Regarding: U.S. Post Office, 801 Central Ave., in the Connersville Downtown Historic District, roughly bounded by Eastern Ave. on the east, East and West 4th St. on the south, Grand Ave. on the west, and West and East 9th St. on the north, Connersville, Fayette Coun**

The Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology is pleased to inform you that the above mentioned property, in which you have an interest, has been proposed for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The Indiana Historic Preservation Review Board will consider the nomination during their meeting on

**January 18, 2017, 2:00 PM, at Indiana Government Conference Center,  
302 W. Washington Street, Conference Room C, Indianapolis, Indiana**

The meeting is open to the public and you are welcome to attend. We welcome your comments, favorable or unfavorable, regarding the application. Please address written comments to:

**Cameron F. Clark, State Historic Preservation Officer  
Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology  
402 West Washington Street, Room W274  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2739**

**Please send your comments on or before the above meeting date.**

You may call our office at 317-232-1646, or visit our web site at [www.in.gov/dnr/historic](http://www.in.gov/dnr/historic) for more information and a copy of the National Register application form for the property.

### **The National Register of Historic Places**

The National Register is the Federal Government's official list of prehistoric and historic properties worthy of preservation. In Indiana, this program is administered by the Department of Natural Resources, Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology. The criteria used to judge a property's eligibility for the National Register and the results of listing are discussed in the enclosure.

Listing in the National Register provides recognition and assists in preserving our nation's heritage. It does not prevent a private owner from altering, demolishing, or disposing of the property as he wishes, provided that no federal license, permit, or funding is involved. Owners of National Register listed properties that are income-producing are eligible to apply for Federal tax credits for qualified historic rehabilitation efforts. This and other results of listing are explained further on the enclosure. After a National Register application is received by our office, it is processed and considered by the Indiana Historic Preservation Review Board. The board will either reject or approve the nomination of the property to the National Register, based on its merits relative to the criteria included on the enclosure.

### **Private Property Owner Concurrence or Objection**

Owners of private properties nominated to the National Register of Historic Places have an opportunity to concur in or object to listing, in accord with the National Historic Preservation Act and Federal regulations 36 CFR Part 60. Any owner or partial owner of private property who chooses to object to listing shall submit to the State Historic

Preservation Officer a notarized statement certifying that the party is the sole or partial owner of private property, as appropriate, and objects to the listing. For a single privately owned property with one owner, the property will not be listed if the owner objects. For properties with multiple owners, the property will not be listed if a majority of the private property owners object. Each owner or partial owner of private property has one vote regardless of what part of the property or how many properties that party owns. Each owner may vote regardless of whether their property contributes to the significance of the historic district. If you choose to object to the listing of your property, submit a notarized letter of objection to the State Historic Preservation Officer (address above), by the date indicated on the first page of this letter. If the property or district cannot be listed because the owner or a majority of private property owners objects, the State Historic Preservation Officer will submit the nomination to the Keeper of the National Register for a determination of the eligibility of the property for inclusion in the National Register. If the property is then determined eligible for listing, although not formally listed, Federal agencies will be required to allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment before the agency may fund, license, or assist a project which will affect the property.

#### **Public Officials - Your Right to Comment**

Local governments, public agencies, and other interested parties as well as property owners are welcome to comment on this proposed National Register nomination. Comments regarding the significance and eligibility of the property or district for the National Register will be considered by the Indiana Historic Preservation Review Board as well as the State Historic Preservation Officer. To ensure consideration, comments should be sent before the Indiana Historic Preservation Review Board considers this nomination (see page one of this notice for the date of the Review Board meeting and for the address to which comments should be sent).

#### **Indiana Register of Historic Sites and Structures (State Register)**

Unless objections are received within thirty (30) days from the date of this letter, the property indicated in this letter will be listed in the Indiana Register of Historic Sites and Structures, independently of the review board's decision on nomination to the National Register. If objections are received, the board will consider the application at the above referenced meeting, along with the historical, archaeological, architectural, or cultural merits of the property, and any staff comments. The final decision regarding any State Register nomination shall be made by the review board.

Listing in the Indiana Register of Historic Sites and Structures qualifies an owner of private property who has State of Indiana tax liability to apply for certain tax benefits. Programs include the Residential Historic Rehabilitation Credit or the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (for commercial properties). Allotment of credits to operate the program depends on budgeting by the Indiana General Assembly. Contact our office or web site for more information.

Listing in the Indiana Register of Historic Sites and Structures provides protection for the property. All state- funded or state-assisted construction which will adversely impact historic properties owned by the State of Indiana must be reviewed by the Indiana Historic Preservation Review Board. Additionally, if a state-funded or state-assisted project will impact historic properties that are listed on the Indiana Register of Historic Sites and Structures, the project must be reviewed by the Indiana Historic Preservation Review Board. For more information, contact our office or web site.

A copy of the nomination including boundaries and map, and information on the federal and State of Indiana tax credit programs or the State and National Register programs may be obtained by calling 317/232-1646, by writing to the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, 402 West Washington Street, Room W274, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2739, or by visiting our web site, [www.in.gov/dnr/historic](http://www.in.gov/dnr/historic).

Very truly yours,



Cameron F. Clark  
State Historic Preservation Officer

PCD:pcd-IL

Enclosure: Criteria for Evaluation / Results of Listing sheet





Indiana Department  
of Natural Resources

Eric Holcomb, Governor  
Cameron F. Clark, Director

Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology • 402 W. Washington Street, W274 • Indianapolis, IN 46204-2739  
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January 19, 2017

Dr. Stephanie Toothman  
Keeper of the National Register  
National Park Service 2280  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20005



Re: Connersville Downtown Historic District, Fayette County, Indiana

Dear Dr. Toothman,

Enclosed is a National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Connersville Downtown Historic District, Fayette County, Indiana. The Indiana Historic Preservation Review Board reviewed the application and voted to recommend its approval to the National Register of Historic Places.

The enclosed disc contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Connersville Downtown Historic District, (Fayette County, Indiana) to the National Register of Historic Places.

Please address any questions you or your staff may have about this nomination to my National Register staff members, Paul Diebold or Holly Tate.

Sincerely,

Cameron F. Clark  
State Historic Preservation Officer

CFC:PCD:pcd

enclosure: nomination package