

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91000789 Date Listed:6/28/91

Edinburgh Historic District
Property Name:

Johnson
County:

IN
State:

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patrick Andrus
Signature of the Keeper

7/3/91
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

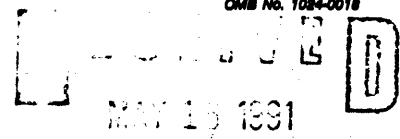
There is no acreage figure provided for the district. Paul Diebold with the IN SHPO says that the figure is 9 acres. The form is officially amended to include this information.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

787

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 18). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property Edinburgh Commercial Historic District
historic name Downtown Edinburgh, 081-181-4100
other names/site number _____

2. Location
street & number See continuation sheet N/A | not for publication
city, town Edinburgh N/A | vicinity
state IN code IN county Johnson code 081 zip code 46124

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>48</u>	<u>5</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>48</u>	<u>5</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Patrick R. Klaber _____ Date 4-19-91
Signature of certifying official
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Patrick Andrews _____ Date 6/28/91
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE: Department Store, Specialty Store, Financial Institution Professional
SOCIAL: meeting hall

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE: Specialty Store, Financial Institution, Professional, Business
DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling
GOVERNMENT: City Hall, correctional facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Romanesque, Italianate
LATE 19th & EARLY 20th CENTURY
AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Craftsman

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
walls BRICK
METAL: cast iron
roof ASPHALT
other STONE: limestone
WOOD: weatherboard

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The community of Edinburgh is located in the southeast corner of Johnson County in south-central Indiana. The town of about 5,000 people is sited adjacent to the confluence of Sugar Creek and the Big Blue River. The Edinburgh Commercial Historic District is found in the heart of the town, and it covers about two and one-half square blocks.

Platted on level terrain, the area is organized using the common orthogonal grid. The plat itself is fairly unremarkable, with the exception that east-west streets are dominant in width and are designated by similar names (e.g. - Main Cross Street, Center Cross Street). The district centers around the corner of Main Cross and Walnut Streets, following along both sides of Main Cross Street. The commercial buildings of the area front closely to the street and abut one another. Most buildings in the district are narrow, two-story shed-roofed, masonry buildings. Several three-story buildings are found along Main Cross Street. With three exceptions (121 West Main Cross Street, The Mooney House, 112 West Main Cross Street and the Toner House, 112 South Walnut Street), the buildings in the district were intended for commercial purposes. Brick is the predominant building material in the district. Cast-iron storefronts provide display areas. Many are altered, but retain enough fabric to be accurately restored. Sheet metal window hood molds and cornices ornament several buildings. Other buildings feature stone lintels and sills.

Because many buildings were erected almost simultaneously, the district is remarkably cohesive. The two most often seen architectural styles in downtown Edinburgh are a simplified variant of Romanesque Revival featuring round arched openings with corbel tables or arcaded parapets. 112, 114, 116, 188, 120, 122, 124, and 126 East Main Cross represent this type (photos 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20). The commercial Italianate style is also frequently encountered. These buildings have sheet metal window hoods and bracketed cornices. 110 East Main Cross Street (photo 14) is one example.

There are 53 buildings in the district, all but five are contributing to the district by virtue of their age, basic integrity, and architecture. Two non-contributing buildings clearly fall outside of the period of significance of the district. The Post Office, 102 South Walnut Street, and the Indiana Bell Telephone building, 109 South Walnut Street, were both built in about 1970.

See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE
TRANSPORTATION
ARCHITECTURE
GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

C. 1854-1941

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Mesker, George L. & Company

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Edinburch Commercial Historic District is locally significant under Criteria A and C in the areas of transportation, commerce, government, and architecture. Downtown Edinburch was an important commercial center for southern Johnson County as well as portions of Shelby, Brown, and Bartholomew counties, which it closely borders. Its location along several important transportation routes directly affected the development of the district, and several properties directly associated with transportation are located in the district. Architecturally, the district is remarkably cohesive in massing, style, and ornamentation. Fine examples of nineteenth century commercial architecture are found in the district; several retain characteristic iron storefronts. The period of significance reflects the earliest known building in the district (c.1854) and its continuous local significance to the 50 year cut off date (1941).

The contexts of transportation and commerce for Edinburch (as for much of Indiana) are closely intertwined. Edinburch was settled in 1821, making it the oldest town in the county. Louis Bishop and Alexander Thompson platted the town in 1822. Thompson had been hired by merchants from Salem, Indiana to scout out a favorable trading post site in the area. Central Indiana had just been opened to settlement by the Treaty of St. Mary's (1818). Thompson selected a strategic site near the confluence of the Blue River and Sugar Creek, and erected a log cabin at 121 East Main Cross Street (not extant) to serve as a warehouse. Flatboats were able to ply these waterways, making the settlement an important trading post in the region for a number of years. Dubbed "Edinburch" by Thompson in 1822, the community grew slowly at first.¹ By 1828, the Madison State Road had reached Edinburch (roughly following present day U. S. 31). The route connected Indianapolis, Greenwood, Franklin, Columbus, Vernon, and Madison, Indiana. It entered Edinburch along Main Cross Street in the district. Stagecoaches ran along the road, which had a stop in Edinburch. This reinforced the development of the district as a trading point from which goods shipped on the Ohio River could reach central Indiana.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Banta, David Demaree. A Historical Sketch of Johnson County, Indiana.
Chicago: J. H. Beers & Co., 1881.

Bergen, John V. Illustrated Historical Atlas of Johnson County, Indiana,
1820-1900. Indianapolis: William Burford Printing Co., 1984.

Branigan, Elba. History of Johnson County, Indiana. Indianapolis:
B. F. Bowen, 1972.

History of Johnson County, Indiana.
Chicago: Brandt & Fuller, 1888.

Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory. Johnson County Interim
Report. Indianapolis: Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, 1985.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Indiana Historic Sites and
Structures Inventory

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property _____

UTM References

A

1	6	5	8	8	9	4	0	4	3	5	6	4	5	0
Zone	Easting	Northing												

C

1	6	5	8	9	2	5	0	4	3	5	6	2	8	0
Zone	Easting	Northing												

B

1	6	5	8	9	2	5	0	4	3	5	6	4	5	0
Zone	Easting	Northing												

D

1	6	5	8	8	9	4	0	4	3	5	6	2	8	0
Zone	Easting	Northing												

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point on the east curb line of Main Street where the north property line of 114 West Main Cross Street would intersect it, follow east along the rear (north) property line of 114-112 East Main Cross Street. Continue across the alley between Main and Walnut Streets to the east curb line of said alley.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary is figured to include the largest contiguous area associated with the themes of commerce, transportation, government, and architecture in Edinburg. The boundaries suggested in the Johnson County Interim Report were largely followed.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John Said, Angelia Pendleton, Economic Development Department

organization Town of Edinburgh date 3-13-89

street & number 131 E. Main Cross street telephone 812/526-2993

city or town Edinburgh state IN zip code 46124

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2. LOCATION, continued

Roughly bounded by the alley north of Main Cross Street on the north, Thompson Street on the south, the Conrail tracks on the east, and Main Street on the west.

6. FUNCTION, continued

Historic Function:

GOVERNMENT: city hall, correctional facility

RECREATION AND CULTURE: theatre

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related, road-related

DOMESTIC: hotel

7. ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION, continued

LATE 19th and 20th CENTURY REVIVALS: classical revival

MATERIALS, continued

METAL: aluminum

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Both appear in photo 10. The other three at 207, 209 and 211 East Main Cross currently display no historic features, although they date from c.1892 (Refer to narrative for Photo 26).

The following photographs are representative views of the Edinburgh Commercial Historic District.

Photo 1 - looking south down Main Street from just north of Main Cross Street.

As shown here, the area south of the district is residential.

Photo 2 - Edinburgh Interurban Depot, 114 West Main Cross Street.

The Interstate Public Service Company built this simple one-story building in 1919 for use as a depot and substation. It is a rectangular brick building capped by a hip roof. Large overhead doors and a platform line the west wall. The south elevation has a horizontal window placed high on the wall to the west. Toward the center is a large opening which has been boarded over. To the right of this is a door flanked by two one-over-one windows. Wilbur Oil Company now occupies the building.

Photo 3 - looking east down Main Cross Street from Main Street.

The width of Main Cross Street is apparent in this picture. To the left foreground is the c.1865 Mooney House, which predates most of the commercial development surround it. The Mooney House is a five bay I-House with modest Greek Revival detailing. The central entry with sidelights is sheltered by a small balcony. Aluminum siding covers the walls. The first two story building to the right (119 West Main Cross Street) was built in about 1880 and served as a livery for many years.

Photo 4 - A. C. Thompson Building (Danner Building), 101-103 West Main Cross Street.

Alfred C. Thompson, son of Edinburgh co-founder Alexander Thompson, had this building erected in 1854. Alfred operated a dry

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goods business here until 1870, when he turned the business over to his son, Edward C. Thompson, and devoted his attention to banking. The Masonic Lodge and Independent Order of Odd Fellows met on the third floor.

The Danner Building is a blocky, three-story brick building with two principal facades. It has some Greek Revival detailing, such as its dentiled cornice and entablature lintels. Along Main Cross Street, the facade has large storefront areas on the first story. Some cast-iron elements remain in place, but the storefront appears to have been altered. Prism glass transoms remain from an early (c.1900?) remodeling. The upper floors have good integrity. The Main Cross Street facade has six bays on the second and third floors. Windows are one-over-one double hung sash with stone sills and lintels. The lintels have a simple entablature-like profile. Brick dentils crown the building.

The storefront partially wraps around to the east facade, which has seven bays on the upper stories. A used furniture store now operates out of the Danner Building.

Just west of the Danner Building is a small, one story commercial building. It has cast-iron lintels with rosettes and simple brick corbelling. This c.1892 building contributes to the district. It originally housed a farm implements business.

Photo 5 - A. C. Thompson Bank, 100 West Main Cross Street.

Alfred Thompson had this building erected in 1872 for his banking enterprise, A. C. Thompson and Company. It remained a family business until 1932, when the Great Depression forced it to close briefly.

During the late 1880s, the local Post Office was located in the side storefront.

The A. C. Thompson Bank is a two and one-half story brick building with modest Italianate features. The four bay storefront includes a recessed corner entry. This storefront dates from a recent rehabilitation. The six bay second floor has symmetrically placed two-over-two double hung windows, with segmental pediments and

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stone lintels. The upper story has a frieze of recessed brick panels with oculus vents. The corner clock dates from before 1940. The Summit Bank has a branch office in the building; a drive-through teller window is located on the west elevation.

Photo 6 - 101 East Main Cross Street.

A pharmacy, under various owners, has occupied the corner bay of this building since its completion in 1870. The Schaffer family has operated a drug store here for the past 55 years. It is a brick, two story commercial building with Romanesque Revival elements. The first story features an original cast-iron storefront manufactured by George L. Mesker and Company (The front is now mostly covered by boarding, but the name plate and supports are visible along the bottom). The second floor has round arched windows with corbelled hoods. The parapet along Main Cross Street has corbelled pilasters and sawtooth patterned stringcourses. Brick pilasters divide the west elevation.

Photo 7 - Looking north down North Walnut Street from the alley north of Main Cross Street. This view shows that the streetscape changes abruptly to residential as one leaves the district to the north.

Photo 8 - Looking south down Walnut Street from alley north of Main Cross Street.

This is the heart of the district.

Photo 9 - 107 South Walnut Street.

This three bay brick building has segmental arched openings on the first floor. The central entry has been modified with a newer door. The flanking windows are intact, including original kick panels. The first floor of 107 South Walnut Street appears to date from the late 1800s, while the upper floor was added in the early 1900s. The second floor has three six-over-six windows. A harness shop was located here from c.1886-c.1899.

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Photo 10 - Looking north down Walnut Street from just north of Thompson Street.

Two modern non-contributing buildings in the district are visible to the left and right. To the left is the U. S. Post Office branch built in c.1970. Just visible to the right is the Indiana Bell office, also from c.1970. Both are one story, flat roofed modern style buildings clad in brick.

Photos 11 and 12 - 111 South Walnut Street, Masonic Temple.

Built in 1915, the Masonic Temple is one of few twentieth century buildings located in the district. It is also the only Neo-Classical Revival building in the area. The temple is a two-story, rectangular brick building. The ground floor walls have channeled or banded brick work. The Walnut Street elevation has two rectangular openings flanking a large, multiple coursed round arched opening with a stone keystone. A limestone string course caps the first story. The second story is articulated by simplified Doric pilasters. Corner pilasters are wider and are paneled. Three windows are found on the second story of the Walnut Street side. All the second floor windows are double-hung surmounted by two square transoms, set within segmental arches with projecting brick hood molds. The first story along Thompson Street has a blocked storefront opening and several small windows. Three windows are located at an intermediate level, just under the stone stringcourse. The second floor on this side has seven bays. The parapet on all sides has been substantially rebuilt.

The lodge moved from their long-time meeting hall (since 1885) on the third floor of the Thompson Building (Photo 4) in 1915 upon completion of this building. The Van Doren & Co. Carriage Works formerly occupied the site. Act 1 Theatre now uses the building.

Photo 13 - Looking south down Walnut Street from Thompson Street.

South of Thompson Street, property use quickly converts to residential.

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Photo 14 - Independent Order of Odd Fellows Hall, 110 East Main Cross Street.

The Local Odd Fellows chapter hired builders Downs and McLain to erect this handsome two-story brick Italianate structure in 1888. It replaced a one story building on this site. A furniture store and U. S. Post Office branch occupied portions of this building during the late 1800s/early 1900s. The Odd Fellows still maintain space in the upper floor, and a hardware store occupies the first floor.

The I.O.O.F. building retains support elements from its original Mesker & Company cast-iron storefront, though the transom area has been blocked. A metal cornice with brackets divides the first and second floors. Six tall one-over-one double hung sash windows mark the second floor. Fanciful sheet metal window hoods consisting of broken pediments with oversized keystones cap the windows. A wide sheet metal entablature with paneled frieze, alternating scroll brackets and modillions, and cornice completes the building.

Photo 15 - 112 East Main Cross Street

Built in c.1886 as an investment property by Alexander Pruitt, this two-story brick building was first occupied by a hardware and stove store and later by a bowling alley. In design, the building exhibits some Romanesque Revival influence. As does 110 East Main Cross, this building retains its Mesker & Company cast-iron storefront, although the glazing and door appear to be later replacements. Three one-over-one round arched windows are placed on the second floor. The parapet, which may have been shortened, features corbeled pilasters.

Photo 16 - Arch Alley, 114 East Main Cross Street

Though altered by the relocation of its second floor windows, this building retains enough integrity to contribute to the district. Originally, the storefront had three arches. In c.1914, a cast iron front altered the right two arches, leaving the alley arch. about 1940, the present carrara glass front was installed. The distinctive corbeled round arches remain intact, but the window

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openings are infilled. Horizontal steel sash casement windows were then added to the facade (c.1940?). The upper facade retains its characteristic blind arcade. The western bay of building originally had a covered walkway running the length of the building (hence the name Arch Alley). This feature was lost to later rehabilitations.

Barrett Jewelry has occupied the building since about 1914, but originally a dry goods store was located on the first floor (c.1886) and later (c.1892), a confectionary was housed there. A local playhouse known as Pruitt's Hall occupied the second floor for many years.

Photo 17 - 116 East Main Cross Street

Built in about 1870 as one unit of a three-part building, a saloon located here in the late 1800s. The storefront has been altered or obscured by newer low brick wall and vertical metal siding over the transom. The original metal storefront cornice remains in place. On the second floor, the fenestration has been altered, but the three tall round arched openings with corbeled brick work are intact. A brick stringcourse marks the upper facade. Above this runs a segmental arched blind arcade inset with oculi.

Photo 18 - 118-120 East Main Cross Street

Shown here are the other two units of the building shown in Photo 17. A saddle shop and saloon were located in this section in the 1880s, but a notions store replaced the saloon during the 1890s. The detailing on both units is nearly identical to 116 East Main Cross, except that the oculi in the parapet are larger. The six-over-six double hung sash on the second floor of 120 East Main Cross give a good indication of the original fenestration on the building. Both storefronts are obscured by vertical wood siding, metal doors, and small picture windows. The second floor windows of 118 East Main Cross have been blocked in and a picture window has been added. A restaurant now occupies 118; 120 is vacant.

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Photo 19 - 122 East Main Cross Street

This two story brick building exhibits more Italianate style elements than most other facades in the district. Upon completion in c.1870, a jewelry store and doctor's office rented space here. The storefront has been altered by the introduction of a brick wall with central entry and small windows. An additional entry (probably to the upper floor) stands to the left. The second floor has three round arched windows with corbeled arches. The two-over-two sash have recently been boarded shut. A large sheet metal entablature with narrow paneled frieze, scroll brackets, and cornice.

Visible to the right in this photo is the Mesker & Company cast-iron front of 124 East Main Cross Street.

Photo 20 - 126 East Main Cross Street

One of two buildings in downtown Edinburgh which features a historic masonry storefront is 126 E. Main Cross (the other is 109 E. Main Cross). Built in 1870, this structure is also among the most intact in the district. The brick storefront has three large round arched openings - a double-leaf door flanked by large fixed windows, each with a lunette transom. The second floor has three round arched two-over-two double hung windows with corbeled arches. The parapet has a blind arcade. A grocery and photo studio occupied this building which is now vacant.

Photo 21 - 131 East Main Cross Street

Both 131 and 129 East Main Cross Street feature Mesker & Company cast-iron storefronts, although 131 displays the front to its best advantage. Just below the second story is a double beltcourse of sawtooth-laid brick. Round arched windows with corbel work mark the second story. Shutters block two of the windows, while the center one has a later rectangular window. The eastern bay of 129 (visible to the extreme right) probably shows the original two-over-two window configuration for this building. The parapet has corbeled pilasters and an oculus vent in each bay. A saloon operated here during the 1800s. The Edinburgh Economic Development Office rehabilitated the building in 1988 and is now located there.

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Photo 22 - Central Hotel/Toner House, 201-205 East Main Cross Street

Jacob Toner, a prominent entrepreneur and builder in Edinburgh, erected this structure in 1855. Originally intended as a commercial block, its long term use as a hotel began early in its history. In 1862, the name of the hostelry changed from Central Hotel to the Toner House. P. Charlton acquired the hotel in 1870, followed by Fred C. Cartwright in 1875. In 1879, the establishment was known as the Commercial Hotel. From 1884 to 1892, Mr. & Mrs. Coleman ran the business under the name Central Hotel. It remained a hotel, under various owners, well into the 1900s. The hotel was a favorite place for many "drummers" (sales representatives) who came to call on local merchants. An optometrist, offices, and apartments occupy the building.

The Central/Hotel Toner House is a three story brick edifice which anchors the eastern edge of the district. The storefront display area appears to be a later (c.1890?) modification to the building. It consists of metal lintels and vertical supports. At the Holland/East Main Cross Street corner, a cast-iron column supports the diagonal recessed entry. Prism glass transoms run across the entire front. The display area wraps around to the Holland Street side. Five openings with stone sills and lintels are found on the second and third stories of the north facade. Most windows are now one-over-one, but originally were probably six-over-six. The west facade has seven bays. The cast-iron balcony dates from at least 1886. Most windows on the third story are boarded shut. A simple brick cornice completes the building.

Photo 23 - 102 South Holland Street

102 South Holland Street is a good example of the Italianate style. Shortly after its construction (c.1890) it was a saloon. It is a two story masonry building with a four bay cast-iron storefront. The entries and glazing have been altered by the application of vertical boards. A cornice marks the top of the storefront. Four segmental arched windows fill the second story. The windows have sheet metal hoods with decorative springers and keystones. A bracketed entablature of sheet metal caps the facade.

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To the left and right are more typical infill buildings found on the side streets. In scale, they contribute to the district, since they retain basic integrity and date from about 1900.

Photo 24 - Edinburgh Town Hall, 107 South Holland Street

In 1920, a series of small houses, a printing office, and the town jail were cleared from this site for the construction of Town Hall. The building is set back from Holland Street about 25 feet in order to allow parking in front. Although modest in scale and detailing, the rectilinear brick patterning on the main facade is generally indicative of the Craftsman Style. The warm brick and straight forward detailing give the building a low-key, accessible appearance.

The main facade has large windows in the center with doors located at either end. A one-story section stands to the north. The second story features tapestry face brick punctured by five six-over-one wood windows. Brick work on this elevation includes header panels under the windows, a large border with stone corner tablets, and soldier coursing. Aluminum awnings have been added to some windows. The rest of the building has minimal detailing, and it extends a full block to the rear. Edinburgh's local government is still headquartered here.

Photo 25 - Looking west down Main Cross Street from Holland Street

The overall uniform height, massing, and architectural vocabulary are evident in this view.

Photo 26 - Looking east down Main Cross Street from between Holland and the railroad tracks.

The streetscape quickly changes to residential as one crosses the tracks east of the district. To the extreme right are a series of three one-story brick buildings erected in about 1892. Now obscured by a false mansard roof, they originally featured segmental arched openings and corbeled cornices. In the 1890s, 207 and 209 housed the local Post Office branch. Though rated non-contributing, these buildings should be included in the district, since removal of the low roof would reveal the arches and cornice and render them contributing.

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Access to natural power sources also helped Edinburgh's development. As early as 1827, James Thompson (son of Alexander) erected a flour mill and saw mill on the Blue River near town. A distillery and a tannery followed in 1835 and 1837 respectively. Hominy mills were constructed in 1857, a woolen mill was added in 1863. These early industries created not only capital from which to develop other enterprises, but a surplus of goods which fostered trade.

Edinburgh's growth remained modest until 1845. In that year, Indiana's first railroad, the Indianapolis and Madison Line, reached the town.² Authorized by the 1836 Internal Improvements Act, the railroad paralleled the Madison State Road. Until 1847, the line did not reach Indianapolis. This made Edinburgh the most important end point of the railway for several years. By the 1850s, Franklin and especially Indianapolis had outstripped Edinburgh's importance as a rail center. During this brief era Edinburgh was the primary transportation and commerce center in Johnson County as well as parts of Shelby, Brown, and Bartholomew counties. Even well after the 1850s, Edinburgh remained an important trade and travel stop, though its significance was limited to surrounding townships.

The arrival of the Madison and Indianapolis line dramatically affected Edinburgh. In 1845, the population of the town was 250, but by 1850, the figure reached 490. Population doubled again by 1858 (1,500) and substantially increased by 1870 (2,500). Growth leveled off near 2,000 after 1880. With the railroad came new opportunities for commerce. Farmers found a quick, direct route to southern markets for hogs and grain (which could be processed in town). Merchants were attracted to the town since it offered a steady stream of travelers and farmers who needed goods and services.

Illustrative of the early and dramatic prosperity of Edinburgh from its connection to the railroad are the A. C. Thompson Building, 101-103 West Main Cross Street (1854) and the Toner House/Central Hotel, 201-205 East Main Cross Street (1855). Both are impressive, three story buildings.

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Edinburgh earned a niche in the economy of the four county area during the 1860s, 70s, and 80s. A. C. Thompson's Bank at 100 West Main Cross was built in 1872, providing capital for investment. Dry goods merchants and other businesses catered to farmers and others in the vicinity.

Prominent businesses in the district were operated by the town's leading citizens. The Thompson family is one example. John A. Thompson, grandson of Edinburgh co-founder Alexander Thompson, owned the mill built by his father and a bank (located in the district but burned in 1968). Alfred C. Thompson, Alexander's son, had the building at 101-103 West Main Cross erected in 1854 for his dry goods business. In 1870, this business was passed on to his son Edward, and A. C. erected the Thompson Bank at 100 West Main Cross shortly after this. The bank remained in the family at least until 1932.

Jacob Toner erected 205 East Main Cross in c.1855. Toner was prominent as an industrialist and builder. He operated both hominy and flour mills in Edinburgh. Toner is credited with erecting a number of houses in Edinburgh, said to be distinguished by their special woodwork.

Alexander Pruitt was the son of an early settler, Pleasant Pruitt. The Pruitts manufactured brick and ran a lumber mill east of town. Doors and sashes made by the Pruitts are thought to have been used in the district. Alexander is associated with 112 and 114 East Main Cross Street.

Another form of rail transport, the interurban, also brought persons to Edinburgh. The interurbans were light, electric powered cars which were intended as quick and cheap transportation between cities. Interurbans had regular stops in the country, allowing people to come to town to do business in an efficient manner. The Indianapolis, Columbus, and Southern interurban (after 1912, known as Interstate Public Service Company) completed tracks from Columbus to Indianapolis in 1902. Through downtown Edinburgh, the line followed Main Cross Street from Main to Kyle Streets, directly through the district. Representing this mode of transportation is the Edinburgh Interurban Depot, built in 1919

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(114 West Main Cross Street). The Edinburgh Depot was also a substation (power plant) for the line. It is the only rail-related building left in town. The Interstate Public Service Company discontinued passenger service in 1941, and concentrated on providing electrical service. It was the parent company of present-day PSI (Public Service Indiana).

In the 1800s, horse-drawn wagons and buggies provided an important source of local transportation. Those who came to town via the Madison Road or local gravel roads contributed to the development of Edinburgh. Others who had arrived by rail needed local transportation. The livery was an essential link in this travel network. Representing this mode of travel is a large, well-detailed building at 119 West Main Cross, built in about 1880 and used as a livery. Many liveries once occupied the edges of the district, especially along Thompson Street. This building is the only one known to have survived. As noted in the description, several buildings in the district also had harness or saddle shops.

Automobile travel also had a dramatic effect on the district: it continued the trend of Indianapolis and Franklin as major transportation centers, and isolated Edinburgh. U.S. 31 by-passed the town in the 1920s and directly competed with the railroad. The town saw little new development during this period. In fact, one of the few buildings erected during the early 1900s is perhaps prophetic of the new era: the service station at 200 East Main Cross Street. It is an English Cottage style building dating from c.1930. With the completion of I-65 in the 1960s, downtown Edinburgh lost even more economic vitality. Essentially, the automobile insured that the town would remain nineteenth century in character.

Incorporated as a town in 1835, Edinburgh's city government consisted of a board of trustees, marshall, clerk, treasurer, and attorney during the 1800s. Apparently, no central home for the local government existed before the construction of the current City Hall (107 South Holland Street) in c.1920. The town's jail had been located on the site. The present building has local significance in the area of government/politics because it has been the home of Edinburgh's government since its construction.

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The architectural significance of the district lies mainly with its cohesive array of 1800s commercial architecture. Similar districts exist in Franklin and Greenwood, but owing to the dynamics of transportation, these districts continued to develop well into the 1900s. Commercial districts in both Franklin and Greenwood therefore include a number of 1900s buildings interspersed with older structures. Edinburgh, on the other hand, experienced little redevelopment during the 1900s, so that its architecture reflects the appearance of a post Civil War commercial center.

The cohesive quality of the district is due both to the relatively sudden burst of prosperity brought by the arrival of the railroad in 1845 and to several large fires in 1840 and 1850.³ By 1868, many had been replaced, while in 1888, another wave of construction followed.⁴ A local variant of Romanesque Revival seems to have been most popular with builders. Elements of this type include round arched windows crowned by corbeled arches, brick belt coursing, and tall parapets enriched with pilasters or blind arcades. Several good examples of cast-iron storefronts remain in the district, as noted in the description.

Today, Edinburgh is approaching another chapter in its history as the rapid growth of the Indianapolis metropolitan area during the 1980s is beginning to be felt here. The Edinburgh Economic Development Department hopes to play a crucial role in the revitalization of downtown Edinburgh. By sponsoring this nomination, the city hopes to rekindle interest in its historic resources. The city also has initiated a facade rehabilitation program for buildings in the district. Plans are underway for several buildings at this date.

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Footnotes

1. Edinburgh was named for the town of the same name in Thompson's native country, Scotland. At first, the final "H" appeared as part of the name, but after 1850 both "Edinburg" and "Edinburgh" were commonly interchanged. Finally, in 1977, the U. S. Post Office officially recognized the spelling "Edinburgh".
2. An earlier railroad existed in Shelbyville. It was built in 1834, used horse traction, and ran for one mile. Since it did not connect any villages or towns it was not really transportation but was more for entertainment.
3. The 1840 conflagration struck along Main Cross; the 1850 fire hit the corner of Main Cross and Walnut.
4. In 1868, a local gazetter noted that the "burnt district (has) been rebuilt, with good brick buildings." (Bergen, pp. 93-4). In 1888, the History of Johnson County, Indiana, noted that "others (buildings) are now in course of erection. ..and still others are contemplated..." (p.544).

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Verbal Boundary (continued)

Thence turn north along the east curb line of said alley to the south curb line of the alley between Main Cross and Center Cross Streets. Thence turn east along the south curb line of said alley and follow east, crossing Walnut Street and continuing until the west curb line of Holland Street is reached. Thence turn south along the west curb of Holland Street and follow for about 75', until a point intersected by the north property line of 200 East Main Cross Street is reached. Thence turn east, crossing Holland Street, along the north property line of 200 East Main Cross Street and follow this line until the west right-of-way line of the Conrail right-of-way is encountered. Thence turn south/southeast, following the west right-of-way line of the Conrail right-of-way to a point intersected by the north curb line of the alley between East Main Cross and Thompson Streets. Thence turn west and follow the north curb line of said alley to the west curb line of the alley between Walnut and Holland Streets. Thence turn south along the west curb line of said alley and follow until the north curb line of Thompson Street is reached. Thence turn west and follow until the east curb line of South Walnut Street is reached. Thence turn north along the east curb line of South Walnut Street to a point intersected by the south lot line of 112 South Walnut Street. Thence turn west, crossing South Walnut Street, following the south lot line of 112 South Walnut Street to the east curb line of the alley between Main and Walnut Streets. Thence turn north along the east curb line of said alley until the north curb line of the alley between Main Cross and Thompson Streets is reached. Thence turn west along the north curb line of said alley and follow until the east curb line of Main Street is reached. Thence turn north along the east curb line of Main Street to the point of origin.

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Boundary Justification (continued)

The only exception is that the boundary swings south along Walnut Street to pick up three contributing buildings, including the Masonic Temple. As shown in photos 1, 7, 13, and 26, residential areas closely abut the district on all sides, providing clear boundaries.

Where possible, the boundary cuts away vacant lots and non-contributing buildings. In other cases, vacant areas are legally part of larger lots including buildings, so they could not be removed from the district. Lots behind 110-100 West Main Cross and 100-110 East Main Cross Streets are examples of this. The non-contributing buildings at 207-211 East Main Cross Street should be retained in the district. These buildings were recently rehabilitated, obscuring their historic features. Upon removal of the fake mansard roof, the historic facades would be reexposed, making the buildings contributing to the district.

