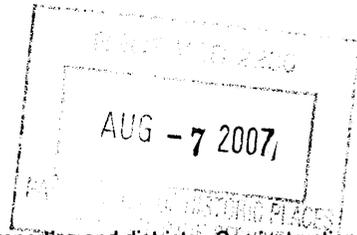


**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

NPS COPY 979

**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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Sheridan Downtown Commercial Historic District  
other names/site number 057-587-17001-046

**2. Location**

roughly includes both sides of Main Street from East 2nd to the old  
street & number Monon Railroad right-of-way N/A  not for publication  
city or town Sheridan N/A  vicinity  
state Indiana code IN county Hamilton code 057 zip code 46069

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
[Signature] 8/2/07  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
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 for additional comments.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the 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:) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action  
Patricia Andrews 9/20/2007

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
 (Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
 (Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
38	6	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
39	6	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Business  
 COMMERCE/TRADE: Specialty Store  
 COMMERCE/TRADE: Department Store  
 EDUCATION: Library  
 GOVERNMENT: Post Office  
 RELIGION: Religious Facility

**Current Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Business  
 COMMERCE/TRADE: Specialty Store  
 COMMERCE/TRADE: Warehouse  
 COMMERCE/TRADE: Professional  
 GOVERNMENT: Post Office  
 RELIGION: Religious Facility

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
 (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate  
 LATE VICTORIAN: Romanesque  
 19th & 20th c. AMER.: Bungalow/Craftsma  
 MODERN: Moderne

**Materials**  
 (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK  
 walls BRICK  
 STONE: Limestone  
 roof ASPHALT  
 other METAL: cast iron  
 METAL: steel

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

c.1886-1956

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Dick, Hugh S.

Bond, Charles Austin

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Documentation checkboxes: preliminary determination, previously listed, determined eligible, designated landmark, recorded by survey, recorded by engineering.

Primary location of additional data:

- Location checkboxes: State Historic Preservation Office, Other State agency, Federal agency, Local government, University, Other.

Name of repository:

Sheridan Historical Society

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 11 acres

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	566300	4443050	3	16	566470	4443050
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	16	566500	4442610	4	16	566310	4442640

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Glory-June Greiff

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date 11-21-2006

street & number 1753 South Talbot telephone 317/ 637-6163

city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46225

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name various

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

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**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. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Sheridan Downtown Commercial District

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Establishing a resource count and numbering the buildings proved to be extremely difficult. The practice in Sheridan is to assign a single number to contiguous properties that historically were two or more separate buildings, but much later were linked into one business with one owner. Visually they clearly remain separate buildings, however. (Conversely, there are single commercial buildings--still visually one building--that have divided ownership.)

*Each listing below reflects one individual building.* Numbers in brackets, however, are not actually in use. There are 38 contributing buildings and 6 non-contributing buildings, along with one contributing structure: the brick paving on East Fifth Street.

The non-contributing buildings are more recent constructions (1960 or later), with the exceptions of 401 and 403 Main, which are ca. 1890s but extremely altered.

South Main, west side

east side

200	C		
[204-]206	C		
208	C		
210	NC		
214	C		
300	C	301	C
302-304	C	[303]	C
306	C	305	C
308	C	307	C
310	C	311-313	C
		315	C
		319	C
322	C	321-323	C
		325	C
400	C	401	NC
404	NC	403	NC
406	C		
408	C		
410	C		
412	C		
414	C	415-419	C
500	C	501	C
[502]	C	[503]	C
504	NC		
506	NC		
508	C		
516	C		
518	C		
[520]	C		

Third Street, West

107	C
104	C

Fourth Street

104 East	C
107 West	C

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Sheridan Downtown Commercial District

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**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

The small town of Sheridan lies within Adams Township near the northwest corner of Hamilton County. Off to the north and west is largely open farmland, but considerable development has recently encroached upon the south and to a lesser degree on the east. The downtown commercial area lies in the northwest part of town, stretching along Main Street from north of the former Monon railroad right-of-way on the south to Pioneer Hill, the site of the George Boxley Cabin (listed in the National Register in 2005) on the north. Despite a disastrous fire on the south end of downtown in 1913, a surprising amount of late nineteenth century fabric has survived, chiefly, as one might expect, toward the north end.

The Sheridan Downtown Historic District encompasses approximately four blocks along Main Street (photo 1). While there are several post-World War II intrusions and vacant lots where once historic buildings stood, the district contains a good mix of commercial and civic structures dating from the 1880s into the 1930s. Italianate, Romanesque, and Craftsman are the dominant styles. The west side of the street (e.g., photos 2,6,7,16) is in general more intact than the east side, and the district includes a few additional buildings not on Main, two on West Third Street and two on Fourth Street, one west and one east.

A fine example of an Italianate commercial building--and apparently the earliest surviving one--marks the far north end of the district at 200-202 North Main. The H. J. Thistlethwaite Building (photo 2), identified with a carved tablet ("H. J. THISTLETHWAITE/1886") beneath its cornice line, is a two-story brick (painted on its main east facade) structure with hipped roof and overhang, formerly with brackets that are now gone. The segmental-arched window openings all around contain one-over-one doublehung sashes. At street level, the north half of the six-bay main north facade has a storefront entrance surmounted by a steel I-beam with rosettes, which may not be original but is nonetheless very early. Large two-pane plate glass windows flank the recessed entrance, which has a single-light door surmounted with a large fixed single-pane window. The south half at street level has three round arches, the center of which is the entrance, containing a single-light door topped with a four-pane fanlight. The two flanking arches contain large four-pane shop windows with wood kick panels that rest on stone bases beneath. At the west end of the six-bay north elevation is an arched entrance, which served the opera house on the second floor. A peeling ghost sign with two to three layers of advertising graces the east end of the north elevation. One half touts some

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illegible services or business of "Thistlethwaite's" and the other the joys of a "Henry George 5-cent Cigar."

Two less ornate buildings from the 1880s continue the line southward from the Thistlethwaite Building; both exhibit modest ornamentation in the form of corbelling and dentils at the cornice line. The south half of the block originally contained dwellings from the earliest days of the town, the last of which disappeared in the early twentieth century. A Carnegie library, 214 South Main (photo 3), still in use for its original purpose but soon to be vacated, stands on the northwest corner of Third and Main. A fine example of a Craftsman building with some Prairie influence, the one-and-a-half story library is brown brick, with the basement level below the projecting water table a darker color than the main story. The steeply pitched hipped roof is of reproduction tile. The broad overhang, with exposed rafter tails beneath, is supported with pairs of solid knee-braces. The raised basement has paired windows with soldier brick lintels all around; each window features a four-section limestone "springer" block. The main east facade features two round-arched windows with six-light casements, each topped with a split fanlight, each segment having four lights. A slightly projecting beltcourse of rowlock brick at springer height unites the arches. These flank the main entrance which boasts its original wooden ten-light double doors, with sidelights. A broad stairway gives access to the doors, which are sheltered by a tiled shed roof supported with a pair of solid knee braces on each side. The south elevation has similar windows to those on the east, with a smaller arched window on each side; the north elevation has only the smaller arched windows (four). Each window arch has small stone springers and a limestone sill. The west elevation, which is the rear, has a service entrance into the lower level and a small rectangular three-over-one doublehung sash window.

Immediately west of the library is the only church within the district, the First Christian Church, 107 West Third (photo 4), constructed in 1910-1911 on the spot where its predecessor, built in 1886, had stood. The red brick building is two-and-a-half stories resting on a raised basement of dressed concrete block. Both the east and west elevations, as well as the main south facade, feature a massive centered limestone pediment, now painted, above the second story. Each pediment features a bracketed projecting cornice and architrave surrounding a brick tympanum. Within the tympanum on the south is a lunette-shaped limestone inset inscribed "FIRST/CHRISTIAN CHURCH." Below the parapet the attic level displays square recessed panels in the brick. The main facade has a round arched double-door (replacements) entrance with a stained glass fanlight and

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Sheridan Downtown Commercial District

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flanked by round arched windows with stained glass. A modern triple-arched canopy of bent plywood shelters the entrance, which is flanked with two-story Doric pilasters with limestone capitals and bases. Here, and similarly on the east and west elevations, the pilasters visually support the pediment. All other windows (all with stained glass) are rectangular with limestone sills, most topped with flat arches with pronounced limestone keystones and accents. The cornerstone on the east is inscribed "HUGH S. DICK/ARCH'T & SUPT." The cornerstone on the west is inscribed "FIRST/CHRISTIAN CHURCH/1886-1910". The west elevation is similar to the east except for the centered double-door entrance. The water table is "cast stone" (a type of concrete) but all other trim is limestone. On the rear, off the northeast corner, is a newer, unobtrusive two-story addition of red brick with simplified limestone accents recalling those on the original building.

South across Third Street is the site of the Higbee Buggy Company (photo 5), although little if any of the original building, which was a frame structure, remains. Successive additions were constructed in the early twentieth century, extending the two-story brick building west to Ohio Street. More recently, remodeling has obscured or removed many historic details, so this building borders, but is not actually in, the district.

Returning to Main Street, the west side of the 300 block features a line of two-story and one-story buildings built just before or around the turn of the twentieth century. At the south end of the block is the building constructed in 1914 for the American State Bank at 322 South Main (photo 6). The two-story red brick building features an impressive facade of tan brick with mottled terra cotta trim, including an oversized terra cotta cornice with a terra cotta-topped parapet above it, and, beneath, five terra cotta roundels flanked by two decorative tablets. The recessed windows have terra cotta sills and lintels and are separated by brick pilasters, which have terra cotta bases and decorative caps with an egg-and-dart pattern. Between the first and second stories, positioned between the pilasters, are six terra cotta tablets with festoons. The entrance is topped by a projecting terra cotta pediment supported by scrolled brackets. The window openings appear to be original but the windows themselves are tinted replacements. The main facade has a granite water table which does not continue around the building.

The east side of the 300 block (photo 7) is dominated by the 1890s-era Stanley Brothers building, 301 Main, on the north of a row of more modest circa 1900 buildings. The massive pressed metal facade of 301 Main

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masks the fact it is only a two-story structure like its neighbors. Centered at the top at the cornice line is "STANLEY BROS" flanked on each side by a row of six square medallions. The projecting cornice, decorated with dentils, is supported by four ornamented brackets; beneath the brackets is a frieze of florets. A total of eight Corinthian-like engaged columns surround and separate each of the four second floor windows, which are doublehung, one-over-one, and which do not appear to be original. The first floor storefront was remodeled in the 1920s or 1930s with panels of Carrara glass and, apart from those panels on either side, is entirely plate glass with a recessed entrance in the center. There is an aluminum overhang above the first floor that continues northward onto the next building. Above the overhang, a single piece of corrugated sheet metal likely hides more of the metal facade or possibly a transom. Window openings on the north elevation are segmental-arched; there are twelve on the second level. The building has a hipped roof, largely hidden by the huge cornice supported from behind by brick walls slanting down to the actual roof line.

South of the alley in this block, the buildings range in age from the 1890s to the 1930s, the oldest being at the south end (photo 8). The two-story Elliot's Drugstore building, 325 South Main, was rebuilt from what little remained of it after a fire in 1913, then later remodeled after World War II. The structure retains a portion of its pre-fire facade: the rounded corner on the southwest and the dentilled cornice on the west. On the second floor the original segmental arched window openings with rusticated limestone sills are still present and are flanked by recessed brick panels. The original wood frames are still extant, although the windows themselves have been replaced. The corner bay features a blank rectangular panel instead of a window opening (which it never had). Raised pilaster strips with limestone accents separate the bays and extend to the parapet. Below the parapet, which is heavily corbelled, are recessed horizontal panels. At some point in the postwar years the storefronts on the west and the corner were greatly remodeled and filled in with brick punctuated with small bay windows, sheltered with a shingled shed roof over the first floor. The entrance likely was originally in the corner bay; there is now a single-door entrance on the west, just south of the bay window. Faint traces of a ghost sign remain on the south elevation, which was reconstructed after the fire. It contains six bays of common brick; the second story has six small segmental arched window openings containing replacement metal casements. Aligned directly beneath five of these on the first story is a high-set oculus window. The easternmost arched opening does not have an oculus below it, but slightly to the west is a

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single-door entrance with a two-light fixed transom.

South across Fourth Street and east on the other side of the alley is the former Central Indiana Telephone Company building, 104 East Fourth (1909, photo 9), long since converted into apartments. The two-story dark red brick building over a raised basement features a cornice ornamented with brick corbelling and stone coping. The window openings are segmental arches coursed with double rowlocks; the sills are concrete. Most of the windows have been replaced, except for the large wooden two-over-two doublehung sash on the first floor of the north facade. On the northwest is an entrance in a chamfered corner bay edged by open-toothed brick. Above the single door (above a transom now covered) is a stone tablet carved with "CENTRAL INDIANA/1909/TELEPHONE CO." The ground level entrance on the east side of the north facade is arched, but that feature is obscured by an awning.

Westward on Fourth Street, on the north side, is the post office, 107 West Fourth (photos 10,11), built 1939-40, a fine example of one built late in the New Deal era, in contrast to the earlier--and more numerous--Georgian Revival styled buildings influenced by the opening of Historic Williamsburg. Standing on the northeast corner of Ohio and Fourth streets, this one is more influenced by the International Style and Art Moderne. A square building two stories high and faced entirely with limestone, the post office has a recessed porch the entire length of the main south facade with six metal columns and broad concrete stairs. The entrance is through a single door with sidelights. Originally the five bays featured full-length, two-story metal framed windows, which are now covered at the second floor level and at the bottom. There are now replacement one-over-one metal sashes in the openings that remain. The two-story windows were consistent on the east and west elevations and these have been altered in the same manner. At the cornice on the south facade are metal letters spelling out UNITED STATES POST OFFICE/SHERIDAN INDIANA. Immediately above the entrance is a metal medallion featuring a stylized eagle. On the west end of the south facade is a limestone tablet inscribed "JAMES A. FARLEY/POSTMASTER GENERAL/JOHN M. CARMODY/ FEDERAL WORKS ADMINISTRATION/W. ENGLEBERT REYNOLDS/ COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS/LOUIS A. SIMON/SUPERVISING ARCHITECT/NEAL A. MELICK/SUPERVISING ENGINEER/1939."

Across Fourth Street on the southwest corner of Main, is the impressive former Golden Rule general merchandise building. 400 South Main

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(photos 6, 11, 12) is a Romanesque-inspired three-story brick structure. On the southeast and northeast corners of the building are quoins of alternating dressed and rusticated limestone. The main east facade is heavily ornamented with limestone and a band of decorative red terra cotta above the first story and third story. Between the first and second, and the second and third, stories are cast iron inserts forming a continuous band. The center segment is ornamented with five florets, flanked by plain recessed rectangular segments, in turn flanked by segments with three florets, and flanked at each end by plain recessed rectangles. All the large window openings on the main facade above the first floor are now bricked. Vertical bands of rusticated stone flank the two outer bays on either side. The large round-arched openings (bricked) on the third story feature limestone voussoirs edged with a dressed stone dentilled archivolt. The elaborately banded parapet on the east facade features in the center a small stone-accented arch, above which was once a curved stone slab inscribed with the store's name. Originally the parapet was stepped and accented with stone finials, but it has since been evened out, the finials and inscribed tablet removed. On either side of the arch is a horizontal line of stone ornamentation that is more or less replicated in brick on the north elevation. The first story of the main facade, all too typically, has been altered and is partly obscured by a large awning.<sup>1</sup> But most of the original window openings with their segmental arches, and indeed, the original one-over-one doublehung sashes, survive on the other elevations, notably on the six-bay north elevation that faces Fourth Street.

The west side of the 400 block of Main (photo 13) features a two-story Italianate commercial block constructed in 1888. The line continues with additional similar buildings of the same vintage and a three-story former hotel, and is anchored farther to the south by the magnificent former Farmers National Bank at [502] South Main (photos 14-15). The two-story yellow brick building retains on the south elevation its one-over-one doublehung sashes in openings with flat-arched lintels. The building boasts a stunning cream terra cotta facade on the east. Its cornice, decorated with egg-and-dart and dentil moldings, is topped with a large balustrade. The cornice with its decorative molding continues around the corner over the easternmost bay on the south elevation, but the balustrade and other terra cotta elements do not. Below the cornice, above the recessed entrance, the frieze proclaims "FARMER'S[sic] NATIONAL BANK" in raised letters. This is flanked by small tablets, each with a design

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<sup>1</sup> Although the present awning is rigid, the building originally featured a canvas awning of equal size that similarly obscured the first floor.

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depicting a shield nestled in acanthus leaves. The recessed entrance is two stories high, flanked by large fluted Ionic columns *in antis* that rest on the granite water table. The huge second story window opening is mostly covered. Above the single-door entrance surround, which has a decorative pattern of projecting disks, is a projecting lintel supported by brackets. The door is no longer used, as this building is now part of the hardware store in a two-story building of similar vintage on the immediate north. Across Main Street, the east side of the 400 block was once a solid wall of commercial structures, but this block has suffered the loss of several buildings.

South of the bank building past a one-story postwar block and a much remodeled older building is the southernmost string of historic buildings in the district (photo 16), marked by the former City Hall (508 South Main) on the southwest corner of Main and Jaycees (formerly Cora) streets. It is a plain two-and-a-half story brown brick building with stone sills, a tile parapet, and some modest corbelling at the cornice line and above the attic-story windows (now bricked in); 'CITY HALL' is inscribed in a stone tablet at the attic level. The garage door opening on the east facade (originally providing shelter for a fire truck) is flanked by two doors with transoms that are now covered. The windows, mostly all covered (some are bricked), have concrete sills, and there is a ca.1920 one-story concrete block addition on the rear (west). All these buildings on the west side of the 500 block were built in the decade after the 1913 fire; this is the area where it had begun.

Opposite the former bank building is Fifth Street, which, as all the downtown streets were at one time, is still surfaced with brick (see photo 17). Most of the east side of the 500 block is not included in the district, as it is mostly vacant or severely altered.

#### **NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Sheridan Downtown Commercial Historic District is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its architecture, representative of prominent commercial and civic styles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The district is significant under Criterion A in the area of commerce. Several buildings remain that attest to the commercial boom precipitated by the coming of the Monon Railroad in 1882 and the subsequent discovery of natural gas that created a thriving agricultural and commercial center that survived even into the post-World

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Sheridan Downtown Commercial District

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War II decades. Even though it came relatively late to the scene, Sheridan toward the end of the nineteenth century became the second largest town in Hamilton County (the county seat, Noblesville, was the largest) and maintained that position for several decades. In part this was due to its relative isolation in the northwest part of the county. Sheridan seemed in an advantageous position on the state road, but more important was the town's location on an important railroad that linked Indianapolis to northern Indiana and to Chicago. The bulk of Hamilton County's population lay in the eastern half and was split among several towns, most of which had origins in the 1830s, including Cicero, Arcadia, Atlanta, and Noblesville. All of these towns were on the first railroad that had entered Hamilton County almost thirty years earlier, the Indianapolis, Peru & Chicago, in 1854. All, too, were in the midst of natural gas fields where entrepreneurs drilled a myriad of wells in the 1880s. Thus while those towns boomed along with Sheridan, the wealth was divided amongst them. Sheridan, in contrast, blossomed in its isolation in the far corner of the county, and because of it, retained its importance after the other towns' stars faded. The district's period of significance--well illustrated by its architecture that features representative examples of many of the prevailing styles and building types--is 1886 to 1957. The first date denotes what appears to be the earliest building in the district and coincides nicely with the construction boom stimulated by the railroad's coming to town. Although the latter date is in part arbitrary because of the fifty-year limit, it also marks about the time that Sheridan's fortunes would have begun slowly to decline because of the same forces that affected thousands of other small agricultural commercial centers across the nation.

The origins of Sheridan, nee Millwood, are vague, owing partly to the loss of all the town's records in 1913, when a disastrous fire destroyed several buildings, the town hall among them. Decades in which layers of myth were piled upon a thin foundation of fact have even caused the town to celebrate its major anniversaries in years that, from existing evidence, appear to be inappropriate. Sheridan's upcoming Sesquicentennial is to be celebrated in 2010, but there is no documentation to support the contention that Egbert Higbee started the town in 1860. Higbee, born in Ohio but brought to Adams Township as a child, did lay out a town he called Millwood and in April 1866 filed his small plat, oriented in an east-west direction along the south side of the Lafayette-Noblesville state road. For about two years prior to his town being recorded, Higbee had been busily buying up land for the purpose along the state road, which was designated as Main Street. As soon as he filed his plat, Higbee

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immediately began to sell off lots to enterprising merchants and a few mill owners and the little village got its start. Higbee himself built a mill, and laid out additions to his original plat, which was only two-and-a-half blocks divided into twenty lots. His initial town plan, though, was succeeded by one that placed Main Street in a north-south direction and was clearly established by the 1880s. (What Higbee had designated as Main Street is present day Second Street; his "West Street" became Main.) Just when this occurred, or whether it simply evolved, is unclear. Very early on, at least as early as 1870, Caswell Boxley subdivided the south edge of his land, which adjoined Higbee's plat across the state road, and laid out his own plat of Millwood immediately north and extending west of Higbee's. Boxley was the son of George Boxley, the first settler in the township, whose cabin, built about 1828 and listed in the National Register in 2005, survives on a hill at the north edge of downtown. Caswell had purchased his father's land in 1859, six years before the latter died. After the town was squared away, Caswell Boxley built a large Italianate dwelling immediately south of the family cabin that faced the state road and had a fine prospect of the growing village. The house was destroyed by arson in 1997.

In a few years the hamlet of Millwood applied for a post office and was granted one on January 30, 1871. However, since there was already an existing post office in a village of the same name in Kosciusko County, this Millwood was rechristened Sheridan, in honor of the Civil War general. The town had something of an identity crisis for a few years as some people continued to call it Millwood while others used the new name of Sheridan, even in official records. Its location on the state road connecting Noblesville and Lafayette was a good site for an agricultural center. Also, a district school had been built in the area in the early 1850s, and Higbee had deliberately located his plat adjacent to it. Still, growth was slow. The state road, laid out in the 1830s, was a southward rerouting of the old Lafayette Trace, which remained the preferred route of many, at least those in the northern half of the county. On it, a few miles to the northeast, Boxleytown (later, Boxley) had been founded in 1836 and continued to thrive as a small commercial and agricultural center, and as a well known rest stop for travelers.

All changed with the coming through Sheridan of what became known as the Monon Railroad in 1882, which stimulated a commercial and industrial boom. Boxley soon was eclipsed by Sheridan's success. Several significant buildings from that early period survive at the north end of the district, notably the H. J. Thistlethwaite Building, constructed in 1886.

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This building contained an opera house and a lodge room, and retail spaces on the first floor. Apart from this and a few other exceptions, the majority of retail establishments on Main Street were between Third and Fifth streets, closer to the railroad. North of Second was primarily residential, and south of Fifth there were still a number of dwellings as well.

Industry soon clustered along the railroad toward the south end of Main Street; none of those early buildings survive, but some of their descendant businesses do. (None of these are in the historic district.) The railroad passed through Sheridan at a sharp angle from northwest to southeast and it soon was lined with various mills and factories, especially toward the south and southeast. The buzzing town of Sheridan incorporated in 1886. The subsequent discovery of natural gas on West Third Street in 1888 boosted the town's growth even further, as several additional industries chose to locate there. Sheridan's movers and shakers eagerly expanded their holdings to take advantage of this inexpensive fuel, which unfortunately, as in the several other gas boom counties of Indiana, soon ran out.<sup>2</sup> But for a time, Sheridan even boasted a glass factory, along with a large brick works, the Thistlethwaite Tile and Brick plant west of Main where the state road turned northward, and several smaller brick manufacturers, along with numerous other industries.

Despite the waning gas supply, several industries remained, most of which were related to agriculture. Sheridan around the turn of the twentieth century had become the second largest town in the county with a thriving commercial district along Main Street containing a large variety of retail establishments, banks, several hotels, lodges-- still sharing the street with scattered dwellings. Many of these commercial buildings survive, such as the Italianate former hotel building at 414 Main.

Among the most impressive commercial buildings from this boom period was the Golden Rule general merchandise store at the southwest corner of Fourth and Main, a full three stories high, its Romanesque-influenced facade lavish with decorative terra cotta and bands of rock-faced

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<sup>2</sup> Indiana's natural gas field, or "Gas Belt," as it was christened, extended over parts of nineteen counties in east central Indiana and was the largest known in the world at the time. The first successful well drilled in the state was in 1886; prospecting and drilling continued for another ten years as industries flocked to Indiana to take advantage of the cheap fuel coupled with a good system of interconnecting railroads. Neither the developers nor the industries practiced conservation; as a result the supply was exhausted in less than twenty years. Some industries, such as Ball Brothers in Muncie, converted their manufacturing processes to other fuels and remained in the state, but other simply closed or moved on.

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limestone. The dry goods store of Stanley Brothers, a block to the north at the southeast corner of Third and Main, was only two stories, but its pressed metal facade with an oversized cornice made it appear almost as tall as the Golden Rule building. Both were constructed in the 1890s.

In 1911, the town applied to Andrew Carnegie for funds to build a library, even before acquiring a site upon which to build it. The industrialist complied with \$12,500, and the town purchased property at the northwest corner of Third and Main, the former site of town planner Egbert Higbee's home. The result was a fine Craftsman library designed by architect Charles Austin Bond of Carmel, completed in 1912. Adjacent to the library on the west, the First Christian Church, located at that spot since 1886, had just completed an impressive new edifice designed by local carpenter and architect Hugh S. Dick (1855-1936), replacing its older, simpler structure with one more suited to the twentieth century.

The great conflagration of 1913 destroyed much of the south end of downtown and resulted in considerable changes in the rest of the district afterward. The town hall, which had stood on the east side of Main south of Fifth Street, was destroyed. After the fire, the town constructed a new brick building at the southwest corner of Main and Cora (present Jaycee) streets, previously the site of a wooden livery stable that burned. The brick building survives, but the town offices have moved into a much-remodeled structure in the next block north. Over about the next fifteen years, scattered houses on Main Street disappeared, replaced by commercial buildings. Only the far north end of Main Street retained its residential character (along with later plats south of the railroad). Several new businesses appeared, including a number of movie houses, although even before the fire, Sheridan had boasted more than one nickelodeon. Only one theater building survives, and it is no longer recognizable as such. The Hippodrome Theater was remodeled in 1920 from a retail building at 315 Main Street constructed three years earlier. The theater operated until about 1959. Nothing of its former interior remains, for it first was converted into a dime store and today houses a shop and warehouse dealing in antique motorcycle parts. Another type of business that thrived in the interwar years was the automobile dealership, serving the farm families of the area with basic Chevrolets and Fords. Typically for an agricultural center, there had been several downtown over time, but little evidence of any of these remains.

The last bank of several such institutions that had been established in town, the newly formed American State Bank of Sheridan, built its

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headquarters in 1914 on the northwest corner of Main and Fourth. Until very recently, the building still housed a bank, which in 2006 moved its operations into a new suburban building on the east side of town. The Farmers National Bank of Sheridan had been organized in 1902; after the 1913 fire the company constructed a beautiful terra cotta-clad structure near Fifth and Main to house its operations. While it still stands, today it is part of the adjacent hardware store. No banks currently do business downtown.

The post office in Sheridan initially was established within a general store on Second Street (the state road) east of Main Street. There were a number of other locations, among them the east side of Main north of Fifth Street and a building on the west side north of the American State Bank, from which the post office moved into its New Deal-funded building in 1940. Despite the covering of the full length window openings, the post office still maintains its Art Moderne identity, so typical of late New Deal architecture, including the stylized eagle above the grand main entrance.

The state road on which Millwood/Sheridan had been platted dwindled in importance--it was not even completely graveled until 1909--but certainly remained a useful farm-to-market road for the region for many decades and into the present. Indiana began establishing and numbering state routes in the late 1920s, and by the mid-1930s, the old nineteenth century state road was resurrected as State Road 38, and a new State Road 47 that, using existing regional routes, linked the federal highways 31 and 41, grazed the southern edge of Sheridan. Neither 38 nor 47 were major roads, but served more as connectors. SR47 bypassed Sheridan's downtown by several blocks, although SR38 remains routed through the heart of downtown today. The fact that Sheridan remained on state roads, even lesser ones, perhaps aided its survival, although such has not helped many another town.

In the decades after World War II, other commercial areas developed, some along State Road 38 as it entered Sheridan from the east, and later, along State Road 47 on the south edge of town. Nevertheless, downtown Sheridan retained its character and its businesses for many years. Some historic buildings were demolished to make for more modern structures, others succumbed to fire. Several of the newer freestanding structures tended to be erected with considerable space for parking or to serve the functional purpose of the business. Still, a substantial portion of the historic fabric remains intact. These buildings, constructed over a period of over fifty years (late 1880s-1930s), represent the predominant

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commercial styles and building types of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They stand as a three-dimensional historic document of Sheridan's commercial boom resulting from the coming of the Monon Railroad and to a lesser degree the subsequent discovery of natural gas in the 1880s. These factors helped to create a thriving agricultural, commercial, and indeed, industrial center--the second largest town in the county--that survived well into the post-World War II era. For these reasons the Sheridan Downtown Commercial Historic District is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its architecture and under Criterion A in the area of commerce.

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Starting at the southwest corner of Second Street and Main Street, proceed southward down the west side of Main Street to the south edge of Third Street; proceed east from this point to the west side of the alley east of Main Street. From this point proceed southward along the alley to the south edge of Fourth Street, then east to the east property line of 104 East Fourth Street. From this point proceed south to the extension of the south property line of 403 South Main Street, then west along said line and its extension to the east side of Main Street. From this point proceed south to the westward extension of the north property line of 415 Main street and head due east to the west side of the alley east of Main. Proceed south down the alley to the south property line of [503] Main Street, then east along said property line to the west side of Main Street. From this point proceed south down Main Street, then westward to a point five feet south of the south end of [520] Main; from there follow the angle of the building northwestward to the alley west of Main. Proceed northward up this alley to the north side of Fourth Street, then westward to the east side of Ohio Street, then north to the north property line of 107 East Fourth Street, then east along said property line to the east side of the alley west of Main. Proceed north to the north side of Third Street, then west to the east side of Ohio Street. Proceed north to the north property line of 107 West Third Street, then east along said property line to the east side of the alley west of Main. Proceed north up this alley to the south side of Second Street and thence eastward to point of origin.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

Contains the surviving portion of Sheridan's historic downtown commercial buildings.

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**PHOTOGRAPHS**

The following information is the same for all photographs:

1. Sheridan Downtown Commercial District
2. Hamilton County IN
3. Glory-June Greiff
5. Negatives on file w/Historian-at-Large, 1753 South Talbott, Indianapolis IN 46225

Individual photographs:

4. July 2006
6. looking S down Main Street from Third Street
7. photo 1
  
4. September 2006
6. looking WSW at 200 & 206 Main Street from Second Street
7. photo 2
  
4. April 2006
6. looking WNW at 214 Main Street from intersection Third & Main
7. photo 3
  
4. May 2006
6. looking NW at 107 West Third from alley between Main & Ohio
7. photo 4
  
4. May 2006
6. looking SE at 108 West Third from W of Ohio Street
7. photo 5
  
4. July 2006
6. looking SW at S end 300 block & 400 block Main, west side
7. photo 6
  
4. July 2006
6. looking SE at N end 300 block Main, east side
7. photo 7
  
4. July 2006
6. looking ENE at NE corner Main and Fourth streets
7. photo 8

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4. May 2006

6. looking SW across Fourth Street at 104 East Fourth

7. photo 9

4. July 2006

6. looking NE across Ohio & Fourth at 107 West Fourth

7. photo 10

4. September 2006

6. looking ESE from Ohio Street toward Main Street

7. photo 11

4. July 2006

6. looking WSW at 400 Main Street

7. photo 12

4. July 2006

6. looking SW at W side 400 block Main Street

7. photo 13

4. July 2006

6. looking WNW from Fifth Street at S end 400 block Main

7. photo 14

4. July 2006

6. looking NW at facade of former Farmers National Bank

7. photo 15

4. July 2006

6. looking SW at 508 through 518 Main Street (west side)

7. photo 16

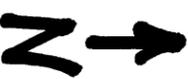
4. September 2006

6. looking ENE at Fifth Street & 501 Fifth

7. photo 17

SHERIDAN DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

E 2ND ST

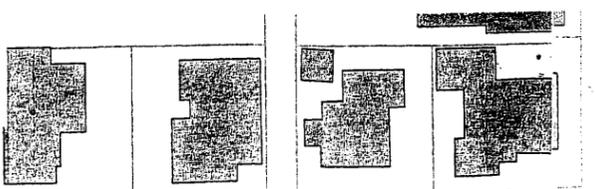


INDICATES DISTRICT BOUNDARY

INDICATES NON-COURTDATE

DT INDICATES PHOTO VANTAGE PAIR

INDICATES STUDY AREAS



5

S OHIO ST

