

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

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Irishtown Commercial Historic District

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

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

## 2. Location

Street & number: East side of Fairfield Avenue between Taylor and Walnut Streets

City or town: Fort Wayne State: IN County: Allen

Not For Publication: ☐

Vicinity: ☐

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

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

\_\_\_\_ national \_\_\_\_ statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

xA \_\_\_\_B xC \_\_\_\_D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

Indiana DNR-Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register  
☐ removed from the National Register  
☐ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

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**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☐

District

☒

Site

☐

Structure

☐

Object

☐

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

11

Noncontributing

1

buildings

0

0

sites

0

0

structures

0

0

objects

11

1

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

COMMERCE/TRADE: department store

COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

COMMERCE/TRADE: department store

COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

LATE VICTORIAN: Romanesque

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

OTHER: Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century Functional

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

foundation: BRICK  
walls: BRICK  
CERAMIC TILE  
CONCRETE  
roof: ASPHALT  
other: STONE: Limestone

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

### Summary Paragraph

The Irishtown Commercial Historic District is a one-block neighborhood commercial node of a dozen buildings on Fairfield Avenue on Fort Wayne's near south side. The district features mostly two-story brick commercial buildings constructed during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and first decades of the 20th century. The buildings are examples of Italianate, Romanesque, and Neoclassical styles. Two simple mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, one-story buildings are also part of the district and are composed of glazed tile and limestone ashlar. The storefronts have evolved over the 20<sup>th</sup> century but retain the general design they have always had, with one exception (2024 Fairfield). The south storefront was filled in with stone veneer, c. 1954.

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## Narrative Description

The Irishtown Commercial Historic District developed as a neighborhood commercial node on Fort Wayne's near south side serving a fairly large neighborhood of homes constructed during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While a few other commercial buildings were also part of this small commercial district, those have for the most part been razed or altered. This group of a dozen buildings fronts the west side of Fairfield Avenue, east of the alley paralleling Fairfield, between Taylor and Walnut Streets, and includes one building on the northwest corner of Taylor and Fairfield. The buildings have good integrity and date from about 1868-1950 (photos 01 and 06).

Eight of the buildings are two-story, brick buildings constructed in the Italianate, Romanesque Revival, and Neoclassical styles. One of these is a two-story brick carriage house near the alley, a rare building given its commercial setting. Four of the buildings are more contemporary, mid-20<sup>th</sup> century one-story buildings composed of glazed tile block, limestone ashlar, or concrete block. Only one of the buildings is considered non-contributing. It is a large, one-story building behind 2008 Fairfield Avenue and is designated as such because it was built c. 1980 (photo 08).

*Beginning at the north end of the district, heading south on Fairfield Avenue.*

1934/1936 Fairfield. Fairfield Fruit Market/Scott's Grocery, 1946. Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century Functional. Contributing. Right side of photos 01 and 02.

The one-story building is composed of glazed, tan-colored block with short parapets and a flat roof. The building has two large aluminum display windows, on the front (east) and south side (covered with wood), and a pair of aluminum storefront entry doors on the north side of the building. The building features a cutaway corner entry on its southeast corner, but this is covered with wood. It addresses the corner in a similar way as the building flanking the south side of Taylor Street with its cutaway corner. This corner grocery building has a non-historic, c. 1975 mansard-like canopy covered in wood shakes that wraps its front façade.

This building was constructed in 1946 as the Fairfield Fruit Market Grocery, which had been located in a building on the east side of Fairfield Avenue during the early 1940s. The market was purchased by 1955 by Donald G. Scott, the founder of what would become a regional chain of grocery stores. Scott named the market Scott's Foodlane Grocery, later dropping Foodlane (an association of stores) in the name after which it was known as Scott's Grocery, part of a larger chain of groceries by the same name through 2007 when it was purchased by the Kroger grocery chain.

2002 Fairfield. J. S. Embury Building, c. 1868. Italianate. Contributing  
Middle of photo 01; second from right in photo 02.

The two-story, corner brick building's facade features a storefront with a raised step and cutaway northeast corner on the first story and three windows on the second story. The storefront features a large metal display window facing Fairfield and the cutaway corner entry features an aluminum

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entry door with side-lites. Transoms composed of prism glass are above the display window and entry. A steel pipe column supports the second story over the cutaway entry.

The second story windows are 1/1 wood windows with stone sills and cast metal pediment hoods composed of volutes flanking an acanthus leaf in the center. Four of these windows are in the second story's Taylor Street façade. A single window (covered with wood) and entry door (filled with concrete block) are in the first story's Taylor Street façade and feature the same metal hoods. A large rectangular opening is in the east end of the first story (Taylor Street/north façade), but is covered with wood. The building's brick cornice features a projecting brick beltcourse at the bottom and a row of brick dentils at the top.

This building was constructed about 1868 for James S. Embry who operated a grocery store in the corner storefront. The 1868-69 city directory indicates that Embry was a dealer in groceries at this corner and lived on the opposite, north corner of the intersection. By 1878, the storefront had become a meat market operated by William H. Hunting. Food markets of one form or another continued in the building until about 1912 when a saloon opened in the storefront, then after 1920, it was used as a tire and automotive shop into the 1940s. In 1942, it was known as Reliable Vulcanized Works, relating to tire repair. By 1950, the storefront was used to sell Alasco storm windows, an acronym for Aluminum Storm Window Company.

2004 Fairfield. Zimmerman-Quinn-Korn Building/Fairfield Tap, c. 1877. Italianate.

Contributing. Second from left side of photo 02.

This two-story brick building has features that match the building at 2002 Fairfield. A modern metal staircase entry door is in the north end of the façade. A tall wood transom is above the door. A wide storefront with a central, recessed entry composes the remaining first story. The storefront is composed of large metal display windows on a concrete base. The recessed entry has cutaway corners topped with metal display windows. The entry door is a modern aluminum storefront door with a short, modern transom. A wide transom composed of prism glass block extends the full width of the façade except over the staircase entry.

The second story features a lower half covered with pressed metal in a brick pattern. The second story has three 1/1 wood windows that have stone sills and hoods that match the building at 2002 Fairfield. The building's brick cornice also matches the cornice at 2002 Fairfield.

This building was constructed by 1877 when the storefront featured a shoe store owned by Anton (Anthony) Zimmerman. Zimmerman was born in Germany in 1839 and was naturalized as an American citizen in 1854. Census records in 1870, 1880, and 1900 indicate that he was also a grocer, retired by 1900, with a store on Main Street. The Zimmermans lived at 3504 Fairfield Avenue. During the 1880s, a shop that sold notions, fancy goods, and millinery items was located here and operated by Miss Mary Emma Quinn. A grocery store and meat market followed in the 1890s-1912, owned by the Korn family, at which time the extant historic storefront was likely created. Successor groceries and meat markets followed until the 1930s when a restaurant known as the Fairfield Tap opened in the storefront. The restaurant remained at this location and maintained that name into the late 1960s.

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2006 Fairfield. Halter-Schroeder-Whiteman Building, c. 1916. Neoclassical. Contributing  
Photo 03

The two-story brick building has storefronts that flank a central staircase entry on the first story and its second story is composed of glazed terra-cotta/tan-colored brick. The storefronts are modern interpretations of the original storefronts with wide display windows with wood panels below the windows. The entries are located within the former staircase entry which is composed of a modern aluminum storefront door and short transom. The transom area over the display windows is covered with wood and is topped with a wood cornice board.

The second story features raised, brick quoining on its corners and two sill courses composed of brick aligned with the stone sills of the second story windows. There are four 1/1 wood second story windows with stone sills and jack arches with projecting voussoirs. A projecting beltcourse of soldier brick is between the arches. Four projecting, enframed panels of brick in a basketweave pattern are above the windows. The brick cornice is composed of a row of dentils in a projecting beltcourse composed of four courses of brick topped with a row of brick corbels.

The building was constructed by 1916 and through most of its first fifty years featured groceries, bakeries, or delis in its two storefronts. Edward and Catherine Halter operated a grocery store in the north storefront beginning in 1916, a use maintained in the storefront into the 1950s under a variety of owners and names including Frank's Grocery (1940s) and Don Conley's Grocery (1950s). By 1960, the storefront featured the Fairfield Laundry. The south storefront first featured a deli and confectionary, owned by Frederick Schroeder, who was born of German parentage. By the 1920s, Henry and Eva Whiteman owned the deli, then named Whiteman's Deli, and lived in an apartment on the second floor of the building. By the 1940s, the storefront was used as a bakery, operated by Edward Richard. It was known as Fairfield Bakery by 1960.

2008/2010 Fairfield. Gruber-Stellhorn-Schultz Building, c. 1894. Romanesque Revival.  
Contributing. Right side of photo 04.

The two-story brick building features two remodeled storefronts on the first story and a second story divided into two sections with three windows in each section. The storefronts are flanked by pilasters of white-colored brick. The north storefront features an aluminum storefront entry door and short transom in its north end and three large metal display windows set on a base covered with black ceramic tile. The transom area is covered with wood. The south storefront features a modern metal staircase entry door with transom covered with wood in its north end. The entry, composed of an aluminum entry door and transom, is recessed with cutaway corners in the center of the storefront. It is flanked by large metal display windows set on a base covered with black ceramic tile. The transom area is covered with wood. A tall cornice board extends across the storefronts.

The second story has a clear division into two sections but designed with the same features. Each section has a projecting stone sill course and three 1/1 wood windows. The windows have stone hoods and a stone beltcourse between the tops of the windows across the façade. The stone hoods are trimmed with heavily rusticated stone. Wide panels of staggered rows of sawtooth-

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patterned brickwork extend over the tops of the windows in each section and the brick cornice is composed of rows of tall corbels.

This building was constructed about 1894 and for many years, the north storefront featured a hardware store, and the south storefront featured a drugstore. The hardware store was first owned by Joseph L. Gruber, then was jointly owned by Gruber and John H. Stellhorn by 1903. At that time, the hardware store was known as J. H. Stellhorn & Company which supplied a variety of metal products, like tinware, as well as common hardware supplies. The partnership dissolved under mutual consent in 1910. The hardware store continued under that name, or simply Stellhorn Hardware, at this location until Stellhorn constructed a new building in 1950 just south of this location at 2018 Fairfield Avenue. After that time, this storefront became Mike's Furniture Mart. The south storefront first featured a drugstore owned by William H. Schultz during the 1890s, then Frederick Lindeman by 1900. It continued as a pharmacy into the 1960s, operating under the name William Criswell Drugs during the 1940s, then as Fairfield Pharmacy during the 1950s-1960s.

2008 Fairfield (rear). Modern commercial building, c. 1980. Non-contributing

Photo 08

The one-story concrete block building is located behind 2008 Fairfield. It features a large metal garage door in its north façade and a steel service door in its west (alley) facade. It has a gabled roof covered with asphalt shingles. Clapboards cover the west gable wall. The building is connected to the front building with an enclosed vestibule.

2012/2014 Fairfield. Kabisch-Grosvenor Building, c. 1904. Romanesque Revival. Contributing  
Left side of photo 04

This two-story brick building has storefront and second story details that match the building at 2008/2010 Fairfield. The first story has two storefronts flanked by pilasters of white-colored brick. The north storefront is narrower than the south storefront and features what appears to be an original wood panel under a modern metal display window. A modern aluminum storefront entry door and transom is at the south end of this storefront. The transom area is covered with wood. The south storefront features recessed storefront and staircase entry doors in its south end. The entry doors are wood with full windows with wood transoms (covered with wood) above. A wood pilaster with a recessed panel design is between the two doors. These features appear to be original or early. Two large metal display windows set on a base covered with black ceramic tiles are north of the recessed entries. The transom area is covered with wood. A tall cornice board extends across the storefronts.

The second story has the same masonry design features as 2008/2010 Fairfield with three windows in the south half and a pair of slightly narrower 1/1 windows in the north end. A wide panel of sawtooth-patterned brickwork extends over the tops of the windows and the brick cornice is composed of rows of tall corbels.

The narrow, north storefront of this building was occupied by John H. Kabisch, a barber, who had worked in a small frame building located at this site which was razed to construct this building. Kabisch worked as a barber from this location into the mid-1940s. Kabisch was born to



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German parentage and had been working as a barber since he was at least 18 years old. After Kabisch retired, and into the 1960s, the small storefront featured a radio repair and camera shop owned by Julian S. Stalk. It was known as the Fairfield Radio & Camera Service store by 1960. The south storefront featured a plumbing business owned by brothers, William and Sidney Grosvenor, whose parents were born in England. The partnership changed in 1910 with George Niebel joining Sidney Grosvenor. The plumbing business remained at this location into the 1940s but afterward became the home of Fairfield Cleaners during the 1950s-1960s.

2018 Fairfield. Stellhorn Hardware Building, 1950. Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century Functional. Contributing Second from right side of photo 05.

This one-story building features a narrow storefront and parapet wall composed of smooth-cut, randomly coursed limestone ashlar. The storefront features a slightly recessed entry near its north end and a row of four tall aluminum-framed display windows south of the entry. The display windows gradually recess inward to the entry, composed of an aluminum door and transom. A narrow aluminum display window is north of the entry. The display windows have stone sills. A flat metal canopy extends across the top of the storefront. The building is long and narrow, with concrete block walls extending nearly to the alley behind this building. It features windows composed of glass block on three sides, and a steel service door fronting the alley. A large glass block window faces the alley. The north wall has glass block windows; however, they are covered by the adjacent non-contributing building.

This building was constructed in 1950 for Stellhorn Hardware, a business that began in the north storefront of the building at 2008/2010 Fairfield Avenue. Originally, it was a partnership between John H. Stellhorn and Joseph L. Gruber, the founder, by 1903. Stellhorn was the sole owner by 1910. While ownership changed to Robert and Joan Freiburger by the time this building was constructed, and changed again to Roger Swisher, the hardware continued to operate under the name Stellhorn Hardware until 2017.

2020/2022 Fairfield. John G. & Marguerite Zuber Building, c. 1899/c. 1910/c. 1954. Italianate. Contributing. Middle of photo 05.

While this building and the south adjacent building at 2024 appears to be one, two-story brick building with matching features, they demonstrate an evolution of buildings between about 1887 and 1910, then they were unified with a storefront about 1954. The building at 2020 Fairfield (c. 1899) was expanded about 1910 to include 2022 Fairfield. This combination will be described first. The first story features two storefronts, each with their own storefront entry and staircase entry doors. The north end of the north storefront features a wood staircase entry door with full window and a short transom covered with wood. The storefront entry, composed of an aluminum storefront door and transom, is recessed in its south end. Two aluminum display windows are between the entry and staircase doors. The south storefront features a wood staircase door with full window in its north end. An aluminum storefront door and transom is south of the staircase door. Two large aluminum display windows are south of the entry door. The storefront walls are composed of smooth-cut, randomly coursed limestone ashlar. The windows have stone sills and the transom area above the display windows is covered with metal. The storefront dates to about 1954 except for the staircase doors which appear to be early or original. A tall metal frieze extends across the top of the storefronts.

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The second story is divided into two sections, each above a storefront below, flanked by brick quoining. Each section has a 1/1 wood window with stone sill and lintel in its north half. The south half features a three-sided oriel bay with cutaway corners. The bays have narrow 1/1 wood windows in their side walls and a wide 1/1 wood window in their front wall. Recessed panels are below each of the bay's windows, and the bottom of each oriel bay is finished with decorative pressed metal. The bays feature a cornice with dentils and a metal roof. The building's brick parapet is composed of a row of corbels and is topped by a metal cornice.

John G. Zuber was born about 1864 in Ohio to parents of Swiss origin. Zuber owned a small shoe shop north of this building, which was razed. He located his store in the north storefront and operated it as both a shoe store and at times, a dry goods store into the 1920s. John and his wife, Marguerite Zuber, lived in an apartment on the second floor until their deaths. In 1927, the storefront was leased to a Kroger Grocery chain store. By the 1940s, the north storefront featured a beauty shop, under the name Yager Barber & Beauty Shop. Then by 1950, it became a restaurant known as the Modern Grill. Cardone's Italian & Pizza Restaurant followed by 1955, owned by William and Mary Cardone, who expanded it into the south storefront. The south storefront first featured a milliner shop owned by Julia Breimeier, likely into the 1920s. By 1927, F. D. Yager & Sons had a barber shop and billiards hall in the storefront, co-locating it with Yager's beauty shop to the north. By the early 1940s, the storefront featured Modern Market Groceries & Meats, which seems to follow the same nomenclature as the Modern Grill, which operated in the north storefront during this time. The Cardones expanded their restaurant into this space from the north storefront by 1960.

2020 Fairfield (rear). Zuber Carriage House, c. 1899. Contributing  
Left side of photo 07.

The two-story brick building, at the back of the lot against the alley, features segmental arched door and window openings, with stone sills. These are almost all covered with wood. The east façade features three doorways (two in the north half and one in the south half). There is evidence the north door opening originally entered directly into an interior privy. The center door opening would have provided access to the carriage house. The south door is a metal service door. This door opening was originally a window. The second story features two windows covered with wood. The south façade features a window centered in the first story, also covered with wood. The back (west façade) features a wide opening on the first story, filled in with clapboards and a metal door with a steel lintel overhead. The second story features a hay hatch opening with segmental arch composed of three courses of brick. The hatch features a wood door, hinged, centered in the façade. The building has front and side parapets capped with clay tiles. This building served the Zuber family who resided in the second story of the building at 2020 Fairfield Avenue.

2022 Fairfield (rear). Storage building, c. 1950. Contributing  
Right side of photo 07 (in shadow).

A small, one-story ceramic block building is at the rear of 2022 Fairfield. It appears attached, but it has a separate foundation from the enclosed two-story porch on the back of the front building.

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The building has stepped parapet walls on the north and south sides and a metal door in the east wall. This building served the restaurants that occupied the front building.

2024 Fairfield. Kabisch-Zuber Building, c. 1887/c. 1910/c. 1954. Italianate. Contributing  
Left side of photo 05.

This two-story brick building started as a one-story brick building but was remodeled c. 1910 to add a second story. It now also appears as a corner building because of the demolition of a south-adjacent, one-story building (the former building's roof flashing line is visible on the south wall of this building). This building has features matching those of the building at 2020/2022 Fairfield. Its first story storefront, however, was covered by limestone ashlar during the remodel of the adjacent building about 1954. The upper part, where the transom would be located, has been filled with concrete block.

The second story features a 1/1 window in its north half and an oriel bay in its south half, matching those on the north-adjacent building. Its brick parapet and cornice also match. This building has three former window openings, two tall and two short, near the center of its second story/south façade. These are covered with wood. Two brick chimneys also rise above the parapet on the south façade.

The back (west façade) of this building and the north-adjacent building has a continuous historic two-story wood porch, enclosed with non-historic vertical wood planks. Each of the second-floor apartments has an individual door for access to the porch. There is no evidence there were ever stairs from the porch for secondary egress.

The original one-story portion of this building was home to Rudolph Kabisch's meat market, a business he shared with his son, Frederick. John Kabisch, the barber, was another of Rudolph's sons. Rudolph Kabisch and his wife, Catherine Ellet, were both born in Germany and immigrated to the United States in 1850. A newspaper article stated that Kabish, the butcher, was constructing this building in 1887.<sup>1</sup> A meat market continued at this location through the 1920s. By the 1930s, the storefront featured the Fairfield Bakery, and in the 1950s, it was home to a heating contractor under the name Bryant Gas Equipment Company. During the late 1950s though 1960s, it was a laundry business that operated under the name Nite & Day Laundromat. It was during the 1950s that the storefront was enclosed with stone and the main entrance was made in the back of the building.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ft. Wayne Daily News*. 22 Aug 1887. Pg. 2, col. 2

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

### Criteria Considerations

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

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

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

**Period of Significance**

c. 1868-c. 1954

**Significant Dates**

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

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

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

**Cultural Affiliation**

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

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

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

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### **Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance begins c. 1868 when the first commercial building was constructed in the district at 2002 Fairfield Avenue. Construction of additional buildings continued during the remainder of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through about 1916. Two additional buildings were constructed about 1946 and 1950, demonstrating the role commerce continued to play in the small district. The period of significance ends about 1954 when the storefronts on the buildings at 2020/2022 and 2024 Fairfield Avenue were remodeled to match stylistically with the adjacent building constructed in 1950.

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

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Irishtown Commercial Historic District is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places using criterion A under commerce as the area of significance. The small district supported needs of the residential area that developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century on Fort Wayne's near south side. Multiple at-grade rail lines, the Wabash Railroad roundhouse and maintenance yard, and heavy industrial uses separated the Irishtown area from downtown shops. Even after the massive 1912-1914 rail line elevation project was complete, the stores in the district continued to offer essential goods and services. The small collection of buildings also exhibits styles popular during this period, making the district eligible using criterion C under architecture as the area of significance. Though the examples are few in number, three styles are represented in the district: Italianate, Romanesque Revival, and Neoclassical.

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

#### **ARCHITECTURE**

The Irishtown Commercial Historic District, even in its limited number of buildings, is a locally-significant representation of styles popular during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Those styles, Italianate, Romanesque Revival, and Neoclassical, are evident in its most prominent, two-story buildings. These are described in further detail below. In more limited numbers are the district's mid-20<sup>th</sup> century architecture represented by two one-story buildings at 1934/1936 and 2018 Fairfield Avenue. The building at 1934/1936 Fairfield Avenue (right side of photos 01 and 02) is composed of glazed tile block and was constructed about 1946. It is interesting to note its cutaway southeast corner addressing the intersection of Taylor and Fairfield. The other building at 2018 Fairfield Avenue (second from right side of photo 05) was built in 1950 with smooth-cut, randomly coursed limestone ashlar and sleek aluminum-framed display windows. It is the most stylized building constructed during this late period of commercial development in the district. It also seemed to influence the c. 1954 remodeling of storefronts immediately to its south that are constructed with similar materials.

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### *Italianate Style*

The Italianate style was popular between 1850 and 1880, particularly in Midwestern towns where the expansion of railroads brought wealth to communities and created a building boom during the period. The style traces its roots to England as part of the Picturesque Movement; the movement rejected formal classical ideas of art and architecture that were popular for 200 years. The Picturesque Movement emphasized rambling informal Italian farmhouses, but as the style entered the United States it was often modified and embellished into a truly Americanized style. The first Italianate house was constructed in the United States in the late 1830s. The style was popularized by house pattern books by Andrew Jackson Downing during the middle part of the 1800s, but its popularity began to wane as it began to be replaced by the Queen Anne Style in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By the mid-1800s, flat-roofed Italianate buildings, resembling Italian palazzi were the dominant form of commercial building in the U. S. Many featured cast iron storefronts and features, which could be adapted to other styles.

Four buildings, that essentially appear as just two because of matching details, at each end of the block, are examples of the Italianate style. The two adjacent buildings at 2002 and 2004 Fairfield Avenue (photo 02), built about 1868 and 1877, have some matching features. Most identifiable with the style are the cast metal window hoods and simple brick cornice. Of note are the storefronts. The building at 2002 Fairfield Avenue features a cutaway corner storefront and the building at 2004 Fairfield Avenue features what appears to be a fairly early 20<sup>th</sup> century storefront, yet intact. Both storefronts feature transoms composed of prism, or pressed lens glass tile. The other two buildings, also adjacent to each other using Italianate design are located at 2020/2022 and 2024 Fairfield Avenue (photo 05). They also have matching design elements. The second stories feature oriel bays with nicely detailed cornices at the eaves and rows of corbels that support the parapet and metal cornice. The second story also features quoining, which is interesting to note its similarity to the building constructed at 2006 Fairfield Avenue. This indicates the style of this building is somewhat transitional between Italianate, possibly Queen Anne, and even exhibits Neoclassical elements. The first story storefronts of 2020/2022 and 2024 Fairfield Avenue were modified c. 1954 with a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century appearance of random-coursed limestone ashlar and aluminum windows.

### *Romanesque Revival Style*

The Romanesque Revival style was made popular by architect Henry H. Richardson, particularly on public buildings located along the east coast. Buildings in the style often have large, rusticated stone blocks or belt courses for their wall construction. Wide arched windows and towers or turrets were also frequently used. The two side-by-side buildings that share common features of this style are located at 2008/2010 and 2012/2014. They were built c. 1894 and c. 1904 (photo 04). While not exceptional examples of this style, the two buildings feature stone banding, square-topped windows, and some rusticated stone trim that are elements of the style. The repetition of windows, panels of brickwork on the top of the buildings, and the tall parapet with elongated corbels, also exhibit the simple use of the style.

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### *Neoclassical Style*

The Neoclassical style emerged at the turn of the new century and continued into the 1930s in American cities. Several events and trends fed the movement toward Classicism. Planners of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 embraced classicism for most of the fair's major buildings. The style coincided with America's political and economic rise, as well as the coming of age of American cities. By the late 1910s and into the 1920s, as a robust American economy permitted, the style was being executed with greater attention to classical styling. The building at 2006 Fairfield Avenue (photo 03), built about 1916, represents this style through its symmetrical façade and second story details. The second story features projecting brick quoins that flank the façade, flat stone arches with projecting voussoirs over the second story windows, and nicely detailed brick panels and parapet.

Also, of note are architectural features that convey the residential use of the buildings' second stories. The buildings at 2020 and 2024 Fairfield feature a historic two-story porch on the rear of the buildings. While the porch is enclosed with non-historic wood planks, the construction of the porch permitted access from each second-floor apartment to outdoor space. The most notable resource related to residential use is the brick carriage house constructed behind 2020 Fairfield for the personal use of John and Marguerite Zuber, who constructed the building about 1899. The Zubers built the buildings fronting Fairfield Avenue and lived in the northern-most second story apartment. Carriage buildings in non-residential settings such as this small commercial node are a rarity in Indiana.

## COMMERCE

The Irishtown Commercial Historic District is an example of commercial development in service to neighborhoods removed from the central commercial districts of large cities. Fort Wayne's growth during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century fanned out from the central business area, following corridors leading from the center of the city outward to developing residential neighborhoods. By the late 1890s and early 1900s, streetcar and interurban lines further undergirded these corridors and neighborhoods, however, easy access of some basic services were still desired by residents. While many of these commercial nodes had access by streetcar lines, Irishtown developed without such an amenity, further demonstrating its significance to neighborhood residents.

This area lining Fairfield Avenue featured a commercial node that was well-positioned more than a dozen blocks from the central business district of the city. It served a residential area that grew out of the post-Civil War period and was further separated by the Pittsburg, Ft. Wayne & Chicago Railroad corridor between it and the original plat of Fort Wayne. Multiple smaller plat additions were made to the city in the immediate Irishtown area, including Nindes 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition, where the district is located (photos 01 and 06). Two larger additions were created to the south, southeast, and southwest by the 1880s. These were Fairfield's Addition (southwest) and William's Addition (southeast). Much of this area remains residential in nature today and includes homes built primarily during the 1870s into the 1910s. Williams Woodland Park



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Historic District, which composes a large part of William's Addition, was built between 1874 and 1940. The Beechwood Historic District, west of Williams Woodland Park, is composed of a portion of the Fairfield Addition and was built between 1894-1914, at which time a replat occurred and additional housing was developed up to about 1940. The east side of Fairfield across from the district as defined was historically a mix of small brick commercial buildings and frame houses. The inconsistency with the west side was a result of differing plats on each side of Fairfield Avenue, with blocks of different sizes that did not correspond with each other, and streets with differing names that did not align. In 1964, the city razed the remaining buildings on the east side of Fairfield to construct a wishbone-shaped connector to speed traffic flow to and from Taylor Street to eastbound Williams Street and westbound Masterson. The connector was intended to help ease traffic to and from the massive General Electric industrial campus just to the west. The city recently removed the wishbone and installed a park known as Irishtown Plaza, creating half-hourglass-shaped green space.

Irishtown's roots are older, though, than the prevailing development that occurred in this part of Fort Wayne during the post-Civil War era into the early 1900s. Irishtown, or Irish Town, was so named due to the number of Irish immigrants who arrived in Fort Wayne to work on the Wabash & Erie Canal in the late 1830s-1840s.<sup>2</sup> The name is mentioned in a 1912 newspaper article which shows rough boundaries, mostly east and northeast of this district.<sup>3</sup> Many of these same immigrants or their descendants became laborers in the expansive railroad yards and supporting shops during the 1850s-1860s north of the district. The east/west path of the railroad created a boundary between a small neighborhood of Irish immigrant homes and the older part of the city to the north. A Catholic school was organized for children of many of these immigrants in 1886, and St. Patrick's Catholic Church was built 1890-1891 a few blocks east of the district on South Harrison Street. By the 1860s, though, many German immigrant families, some of whom were also Catholic, settled in this area south of the railroad tracks. Many of these German names are associated with some of the first commercial establishments in the Irishtown Commercial Historic District. Especially for purchase of daily or weekly necessities, the rail and industrial barriers between Irishtown and downtown helped create the need and opportunity for commercial development in the area. The Pennsylvania Railroad elevated the main east-west line between 1912-1914, spurring development on the south side.

The residential development period expanding from around the district and south parallels the commercial development period of the Irishtown Commercial Historic District, from about 1868 to 1916, when most of its buildings were constructed. While a few other commercial buildings had been part of this neighborhood commercial node during this period, the extant buildings within the proposed district form a good concentration of commercial buildings with significant integrity (photos 01 and 06). Later construction of buildings in 1946 and 1950, and storefront remodelings that occurred in the 1950s further demonstrate the commercial vitality that the district enjoyed (right side of photo 02 and photo 05). By this time, many of the stores located in the district used the name Fairfield as a way to enhance the public's knowledge of their locations. It would not be until the late part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that commerce changed in the

<sup>2</sup> "Irish Canal Diggers Built Prosperity" *Ft. Wayne News-Sentinel*. [egen.fortwayne.com/ns/projects/history/canal](http://egen.fortwayne.com/ns/projects/history/canal)

<sup>3</sup> "Do you know how your part of town got its name?" *Ft. Wayne News-Sentinel*. 10 Aug 1912. Pg. 9 (full page)

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district, largely due to suburbanization of both residential and commercial developments. This was fueled by easier access to automobiles and general mobilization of the population by this time.

The historic district's composition of commercial establishments demonstrates the types of goods that were needed, often for convenience, by people living in this area of Fort Wayne's near south side. Groceries and meat markets seem to have most populated storefronts in the district. Four of the district's buildings served as groceries or meat markets during the late 1860s through 1930s, such as the J. S. Embry Building (2002 Fairfield, middle of photo 01), Korn Grocery (2004 Fairfield, second from left side of photo 02), the Halter Grocery (2006 Fairfield, photo 03), and the Kroger Grocery chain store that opened a location at 2020 Fairfield in the Zuber Building (middle of photo 05). A grocery store continued to operate from the storefront at 2006 Fairfield into the 1950s (photo 03). By then, the Fairfield Fruit Market Grocery constructed a building at 1934/1936 Fairfield Avenue (right side of photos 01 and 02). The store had relocated from a site on the east side of Fairfield to this northwest corner location of Taylor and Fairfield in 1946. This building would become the originator of the Scott's Grocery Store chain, owned by Donald Scott beginning about 1955.

Another important commercial enterprise needed for convenience was the neighborhood drugstore. This was satisfied by a drugstore that opened about 1894 at 2010 Fairfield Avenue by William Schultz (right side of photo 04, south storefront). Schultz operated the drugstore into the early 1900s, after which time several other owners conducted a drugstore trade from the storefront into the 1940s. By the 1950s and into the 1960s, the drugstore was known as the Fairfield Pharmacy. A similar situation evolved with the need for the convenience of a neighborhood hardware. In the storefront adjacent to the pharmacy, Joseph Gruber began a hardware store by about 1894 at 2008 Fairfield Avenue (right side of photo 04, north storefront). He was joined by John H. Stellhorn, who after 1910, was the sole owner of Stellhorn Hardware. The hardware store continued at this location until the second owners, who kept the Stellhorn name, built a one-story building in the district at 2018 Fairfield Avenue in 1950 (second from right side of photo 05). The hardware remained in business under the same name until it closed in 2017.

There were two shoe stores that operated in the district at different times. One was located at 2004 Fairfield Avenue (second from left side of photo 02) and owned by Anton (Anthony) Zimmerman during the late 1870s. The other was owned by John Zuber at 2020 Fairfield Avenue (middle of photo 05), which opened about 1899 and continued into the 1920s; Zuber also offered other dry goods at his store. While dry goods stores were becoming less common in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the emerging need of rubber tire repair is evidenced in the district when a tire repair, or vulcanizing shop opened at 2002 Fairfield in the early 1900s (middle of photo 02). Another emerging service/repair and sales need was for radios and cameras. The Fairfield Radio and Camera Service Store opened in the north storefront at 2012 Fairfield Avenue by the 1940s and continued at that location into the 1960s (middle of photo 04).

The district also contained neighborhood restaurants, bars, and bakeries in three of the buildings. Schroeder's delicatessen and confectionary shop opened by 1916 in the south storefront of 2006

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Fairfield Avenue (photo 03); it operated into the 1920s, after which time the Whitemans purchased it and ran it as a deli into the 1940s. During the 1940s, it became a bakery and was operating under the name Fairfield Bakery into the 1960s. The Modern Grill Restaurant opened at 2020 Fairfield Avenue by 1950 (middle of photo 05). By the 1960s, Cardones Italian & Pizza Restaurant opened in the storefront and expanded into the storefront to the south at 2022 Fairfield Avenue. During the 1930s, a neighborhood bar and restaurant opened at 2004 Fairfield Avenue (second from left side of photo 02). Named the Fairfield Tap, the bar continued in operation into the late 1960s.

Cleaners, laundries, and laundromats were also numerous in the district during the 1940s-1960s. Fairfield Cleaners operated from 2014 Fairfield during the 1950s-1960s (left side of photo 04), and should not be confused with Fairfield Laundry, which operated from the north storefront at 2006 Fairfield by 1960 (photo 03). The Nite & Day Laundromat operated from 2024 Fairfield, also during the 1950s-1960s (left side of photo 05).

Other conveniences required in neighborhood commercial nodes were of personal care services, such as barbers and beauty shops. One of the oldest running businesses in the district was John Kabisch's barber shop that was in the north storefront at 2014 Fairfield Avenue (left side of photo 04). Kabisch began working as a barber when he was 18 years old, originally working in a small frame house in the 1890s which was replaced by this building where he continued his barber shop into the 1940s. Another barber and beauty shop were kept by the Yager family in the storefronts at 2020 and 2022 Fairfield Avenue. A beauty shop was located at 2020 Fairfield Avenue while a barber shop and billiards hall were located at 2022 Fairfield (the middle building in photo 05).

Plumbing and heating mechanical contractors were also located in the district's storefronts. The Grosvenor brothers opened a plumbing business by 1904 at 2014 Fairfield Avenue; it continued at this location into the 1940s (left side of photo 04). A heating contractor and equipment sales store under the name Bryant Gas Supplies opened by the 1950s at 2024 Fairfield Avenue (left side of photo 05).

Today the Irishtown Commercial Historic District hosts businesses not unlike those located here during the late 1800s and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Restaurants, a thrift store, and a boutique shop with novelties and other items can be found in the north half of the district. A vacuum sales and service store is located at the north end of the district in the former grocery store building (right side of photo 02) and personal services are offered for self-healing in the former Stellhorn Hardware building in the south half of the district (second from right side of photo 05). Several second story apartments also continue to provide housing as they did when they were originally constructed. While common in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century second stories, none of the second floors appear to have served as lodge halls or offices.

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**Developmental History/Additional historic context information**

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

“Do you know how your part of town got its name?” *Ft. Wayne News-Sentinel*. 10 Aug 1912.

*Ft. Wayne Daily News*. 22 Aug 1887. Pg. 2, col. 2.

Irish Canal Diggers Built Prosperity” *Ft. Wayne News-Sentinel*.  
[egen.fortwayne.com/ns/projects/history/canal](http://egen.fortwayne.com/ns/projects/history/canal)

Polk’s Fort Wayne (IN) City Directories. R. L. Polk Publisher, Detroit. 1942, 1946, 1950, 1952-53, 1954, 1960.

Sanborn Maps: Fort Wayne, IN: 1890 (sheet 34); 1902 (sheet 62); 1919 Volume II (sheet 171).

Smith, Creager, Planner, Fort Wayne Historic Preservation & Culture. IN-SHPO Determination of Eligibility Request for Fairfield Hill. Creager Smith’s extensive research in the early history of building dates and commercial enterprises located in the buildings was based on Sanborn maps and early city directories.

U. S. Federal Census: Fort Wayne, IN: 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920.

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### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

### Primary location of additional data:

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

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☐ University

☐ Other

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

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** N/A

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre

Use the UTM system

### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

- |             |                 |                   |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 16 | Easting: 655813 | Northing: 4547898 |
| 2. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 3. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 4. Zone:    | Easting :       | Northing:         |

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

Beginning on the west edge of Fairfield Avenue, at the north property line of 1934/1936 Fairfield Avenue, face south and follow a line with the west curbline of Fairfield Avenue, crossing Taylor Street, to the south property line of 2024 Fairfield Avenue. Turn west and follow the south property line of 2024 Fairfield Avenue to the east edge of the north/south alley west of Fairfield Avenue. Turn north and follow the east edge of the alley, crossing Taylor Street, to the north property line of 1934/1936 Fairfield Avenue. Turn east and follow the north property line to the west curb of Fairfield Avenue, or the place of beginning.

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

The boundaries include a concentration of extant commercial buildings with greatest integrity that represent the commercial node that developed on Fairfield Avenue to support

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the surrounding late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> neighborhoods that developed on Fort Wayne's near south side.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kurt West Garner  
organization: City of Fort Wayne  
street & number: 12954 6<sup>th</sup> Road  
city or town: Plymouth state: IN zip code: 46563  
e-mail: kwgarner@kwgarner.com  
telephone: 574-780-1423  
date: April 7, 2025

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## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

## Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 at 300 pip (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

## Photo Log

Name of Property: Irishtown Commercial Historic District

City or Vicinity: Fort Wayne

County: Allen State: Indiana

Irishtown Commercial Historic District

Name of Property

Allen County, IN

County and State

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: April 1, 2025

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southwest into district from the north end on Fairfield Ave.

1 of 8.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northwest out of district from mid-block on Fairfield Ave.

2 of 8.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking west at 2006 Fairfield Ave.

3 of 8.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking west at 2008/2010 and 2012/2014 Fairfield Ave.

4 of 8.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northwest at (left to right) 2024, 2022/2020, and 2018 Fairfield Ave.

5 of 8.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking north into district from the south end on Fairfield Ave.

6 of 8.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking north at rear buildings of (left to right) 2020 and 2022 Fairfield Ave.

7 of 8.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southeast at rear building of 2008 Fairfield Ave. (non-contributing)

8 of 8.

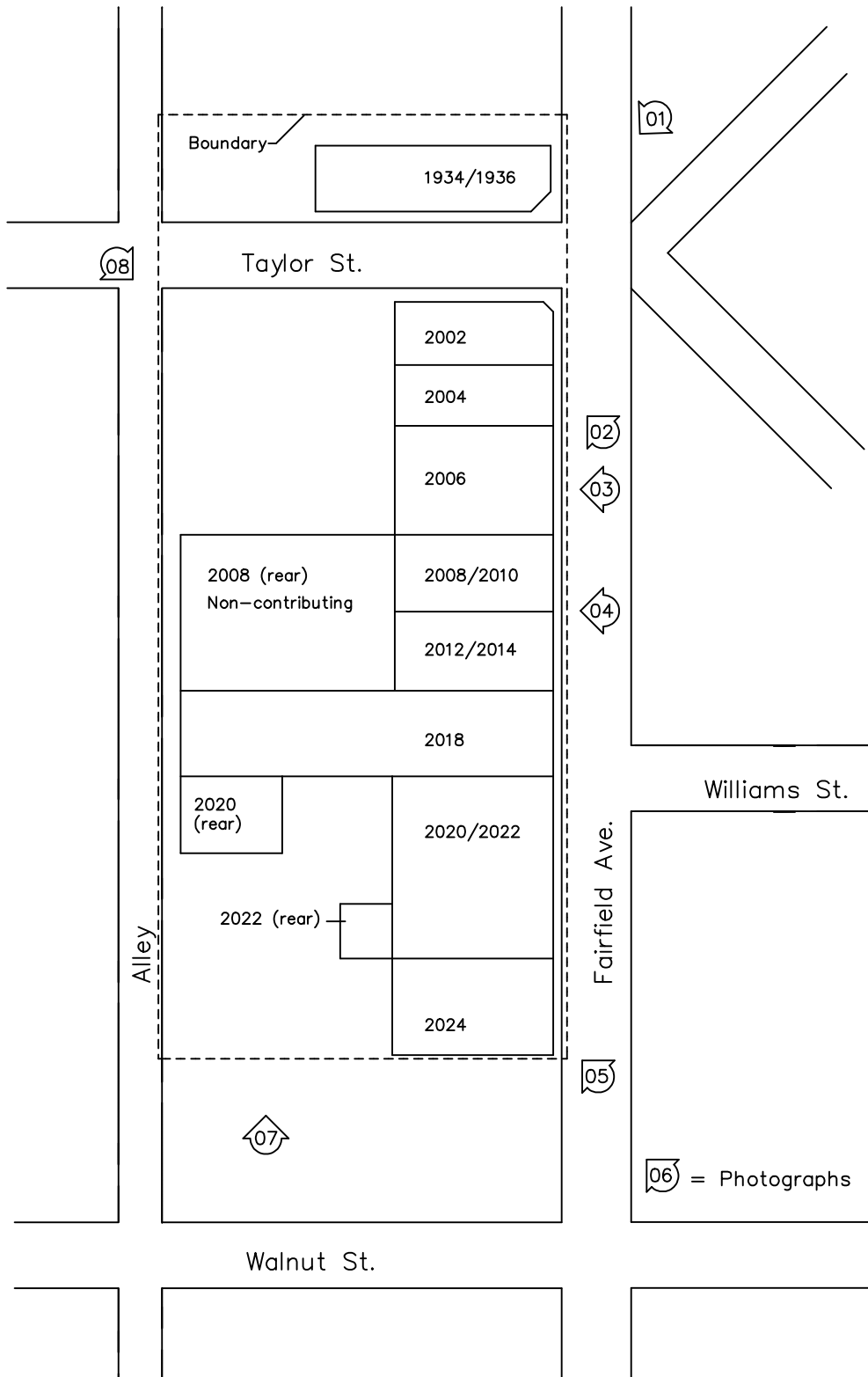
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

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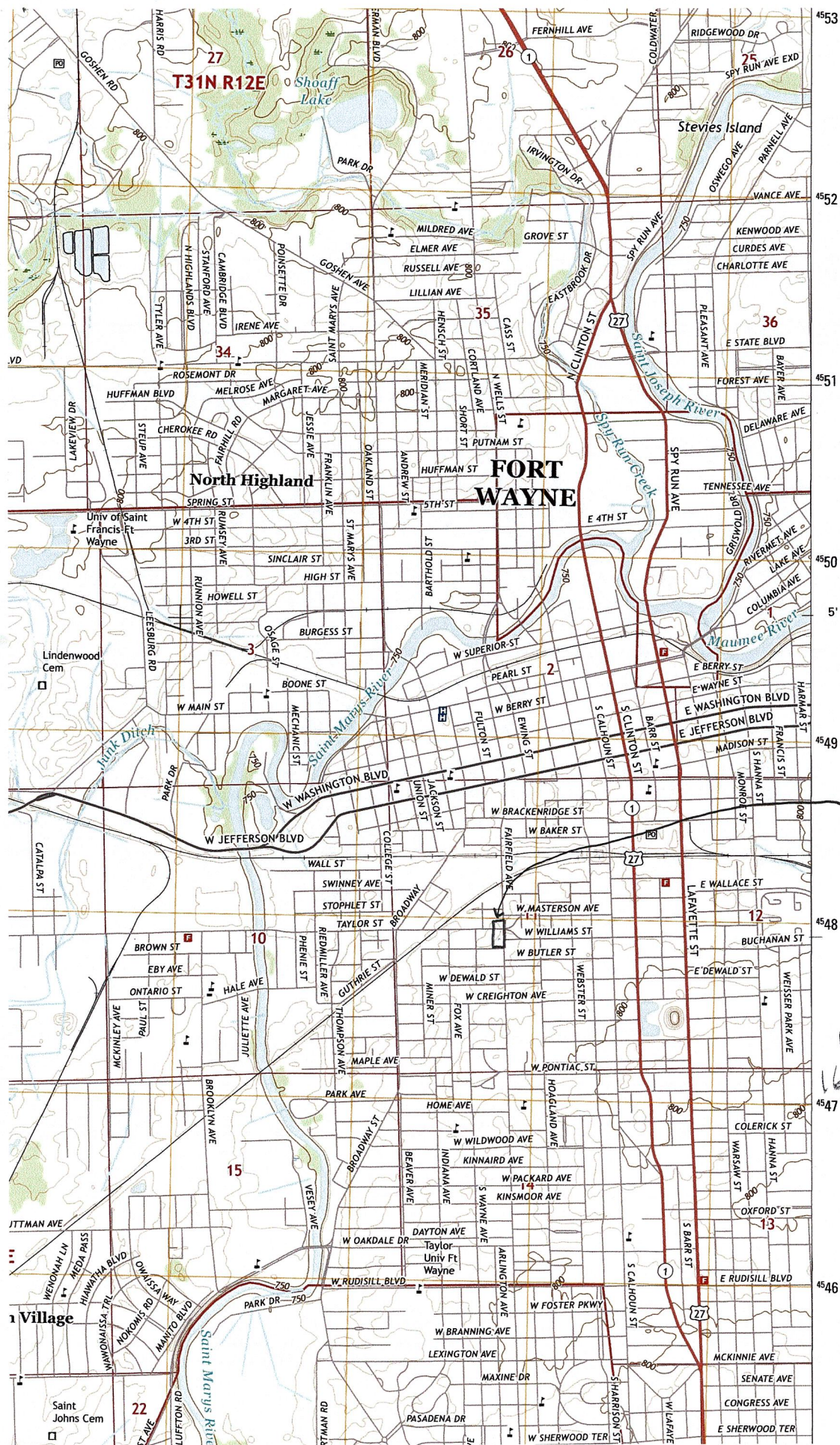
**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form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





IRISHTOWN COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT  
National Register of Historic Places  
Fort Wayne, IN

11 Contributing Buildings  
1 Non-contributing Building



/ KISIMTOUW HISTORIC  
 DISTRICT  
 NATIONAL REGISTER OF  
 HISTORIC PLACES  
 FT. WAYNE,  
 ALLEN CO. IN  
 NAD 83 UTM  
 655813  
 4547898





IN\_AllenCounty\_IrishtownCommercialHistoricDistrict\_0001



IN\_AllenCounty\_IrishtownCommercialHistoricDistrict\_0002



IN\_AllenCounty\_IrishtownCommercialHistoricDistrict\_0003



IN\_AllenCounty\_IrishtownCommercialHistoricDistrict\_0004





IN\_AllenCounty\_IrishtownCommercialHistoricDistrict\_0005



IN\_AllenCounty\_IrishtownCommercialHistoricDistrict\_0007