

Rectangular: Polygonal: 

# Restarting the County Survey Program

By Amy Ward, Survey Coordinator  
Indiana DNR, Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology



**Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology (DHPA)** staff have begun to resurvey counties as part of the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory, also known as the county survey. The county survey program was initiated nearly 50 years ago in response to the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The purpose of this program was to locate, identify and evaluate the cultural resources throughout the state that are at least 50 years old and could potentially be included in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

At the program's inception, DHPA inventoried counties with the help of preservation partners such as Indiana Landmarks (formerly known as Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana). Surveyors assign one of four ratings to each property:

- **Non-Contributing** (only included in historic districts, these properties are not eligible for NRHP);
- **Contributing** (meets basic inventory criteria, and may be part of a historic district);
- **Notable** (further research may reveal that individual property is eligible for NRHP); or
- **Outstanding** (individual property has enough historic or architectural significance, is listed or may be eligible for listing in NRHP).

Structures that were built in the 20<sup>th</sup> century didn't meet the threshold when the first surveys were completed but are now eligible to be included.

Currently, DHPA is revisiting surveyed areas, as well as looking at the immense number of resources that were constructed during the post-war boom era. There are vast acres of suburban sprawl built from the 1940s through the 1980s that have come of historic age. These resources are not only expansive in size and acreage but also in the wide diversity of the types of resources to be inventoried. Shopping malls, diners, roller rinks, bowling alleys, drive-in theaters and other food and entertainment locations as well as the signs that advertise them are among the resources captured in new surveys.



While the initial survey recorded all resources that were at least 40 years old, the survey today is more targeted due to the sheer volume of individual resources that have become historic. Current surveys focus more on historic districts and individual properties that have retained their overall historic character and may be eligible for listing in the NRHP. Field surveyors still drive all roads to identify resources that are at least 40 years old and evaluate the individual resources and historic districts. In addition, all the resources that were previously surveyed are reevaluated with fresh perspectives. For example, historic farmsteads with all agricultural buildings intact might warrant more than just a "Contributing" rating due to the wholesale loss of this type in Indiana. Conversely, an architect-designed Ranch house that is mostly unchanged since its construction might also warrant a higher "Notable" or even "Outstanding" rating. The Multiple Property Documentation Form *Residential Planning and Development in Indiana, 1940-1973* is crucial to how DHPA identifies significant post-war housing.

The county survey program, while daunting, is an exciting opportunity to capture the breath of Indiana's built landscape. It is a comprehensive inventory of diverse architectural styles, events important to Indiana's history, and physical spaces associated with significant persons. DHPA completed the resurvey of Morgan County in 2025 which had more than 3,000 properties included. We are now focused on the large population centers of Johnson and Marion Counties which will boast tens of thousands of properties surveyed. For these large urban areas, the inventory also serves as an important preservation tool, ensuring historic resources are considered during the development of state or federal funded projects.



**Visit the DHPA website to learn more about the County Survey program and how the information we record is used by various government agencies and the public:**  
[dnr.IN.gov/historic-preservation/county-survey-program](http://dnr.IN.gov/historic-preservation/county-survey-program).

Material: ASPHALT

Features: -

#### Porches

Front:

Side:

Back:

Notes: -

#### Openings:

fixed window, multilight transoms, two light transoms, orig wood and multilight doors, covered transoms, steel multilight casement windows in addition