

## DUBOIS COUNTY

# Ferdinand Historic District

Ferdinand, 1840-1971

Architecture, Commerce,  
and Community Planning and Development  
Listed November 20, 2024

The town of Ferdinand was founded in 1840 by Father Joseph Kundek and named in honor of Emperor Ferdinand I of Austria. Largely settled by German-speaking Catholics, the town took on the appearance of an Austrian village with brick commercial buildings and residences with the landmark St. Ferdinand Catholic Church built of stone perched on the parish square overlooking the village. Ferdinand was established and platted with the parish square as the primary organizing element in its plat and street grid, which is unusual in Indiana.

Kundek platted the town in 1840, and it was incorporated in 1905. Ferdinand was considered the center of Ferdinand Township's church, school, and commercial life. This was largely true because of the population's ubiquitous descent from German Catholics that worshipped at Ferdinand.

As Main Street grew in importance to travelers, lodging and transportation accommodations such as hotels, liverys, and later service stations and garages appeared along Main Street. Development of early-to-mid-20<sup>th</sup> century housing occurred in the district to house workers employed with the town's foundry, milling, and manufacturing operations. The district retains a main street commercial area that includes banks as well as several other commercial buildings and the town's post office. A former public school and a grand church and rectory are located on the parish square and are part of the St. Ferdinand Parish National Register Historic District. The district's residential architecture is predominantly represented by vernacular design, with a few notable styles including Italianate, Queen Anne, Craftsman/Chalet, Prairie, Bungalow, Colonial Revival Cottage, American Small House, and Modern.



Taken from the "Preservation at the Crossroads Newsletter from February 2025.