

**AN ORDINANCE DESIGNATING AND APPROVING
A LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT – DIFFENDERFER
HOUSE – 215 W. DeWald Street.**

WHEREAS, the Common Council of the City of Fort Wayne, Indiana, by passage of Ordinance Number G-06-08 has established Chapter 151 of the City of Fort Wayne, Indiana Code of Ordinances entitled “Historic Preservation and Protection Districts;” and

WHEREAS, Section 151.030 of Chapter 151 provides procedures by which areas may be designated as “Local Historic Districts;” and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 151.030 of Chapter 151,

DIFFENDERFER HOUSE – 215 W. DeWald Street

is designated as a Local Historic District.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF FORT WAYNE, INDIANA:**

SECTION 1. That the Diffenderfer House – 215 W. DeWald Street is hereby designated a Local Historic District, in compliance with Section 151.030 of the City of Fort Wayne, Indiana Code of Ordinances.

SECTION 2. The map submitted herewith as Exhibit “A” is approved and it is noted that all legal steps have been taken by the Historic Preservation Commission pursuant to Section 151.030 of Chapter 151 of the City of Fort Wayne, Indiana Code of Ordinances.

SECTION 3. That this Ordinance be in effect from and after its passage and any
and all necessary approval by the Mayor.

Council Member

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY

Carol Helton, City Attorney

**DIFFENDERFER HOUSE
PROPOSED LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT**

215 West DeWald Street



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Created May 19, 2021
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**STAFF REVIEW OF
LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT PETITION**



Petitioner: Yolande Y. Black, owner

Case No.: HPC 5-24-21-LHD-1

Subject Property: 215 W. DeWald Street (33 W DeWald—pre-1902 address)

Historic Name: Diffenderfer House

Legal Description: Lot 156 Williams Addition

Date of Review: May 24, 2021

Cultural Resources Survey Information (SHAARD):

Rating:	Outstanding	Style:	Queen Anne/Shingle Style
Construction Date:	c.1886	Architect/Builder:	Wing & Mahurin/unknown
Condition:	Good	Integrity:	Slightly altered
Use:	Residential		

Reason for Application:

Recognizing the architectural and historical significance of this property to the Fort Wayne community, the owner, Yolande Black, prepared a "Petition for Historic Property or District Designation." The completed petition was signed and submitted to the Historic Preservation Commission on March 29. The petition requests local historic district designation of the Diffenderfer House at 215 W. DeWald Street.

Staff Comments:

Criteria for Local Historic Designation:

Section 151.030 (titled Local Historic Districts) of the Fort Wayne Historic Preservation and Protection ordinance allows for the designation of historic districts. The ordinance provides that:

A local historic district shall not be established unless the proposed map includes a building, groups of buildings, structures, sites, objects, streetscapes, or neighborhoods which meet at least one of the following criteria:

- (1) Are associated with the events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- (2) Are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- (3) Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, that represent the work of a master, possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; and/or
- (4) Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history.

In applying the criteria set forth in the ordinance, historic preservation staff has determined that the Diffenderfer House meets one of the four possible criteria for Local Historic Designation. The house is significant under Criterion three (3) under the area of architecture. It is an outstanding local example of the Queen Anne style, with influence of the Shingle Style. The Diffenderfer House, built c.1886, is attributed to prominent Fort Wayne architects Wing & Mahurin. The attribution is based on other known Wing & Mahurin designs, and in particular the unusual and prominent chimney on the façade. The property also contains a 26x33 detached wood-frame garage, built c.1980.

Description (Please see the accompanying photos):

The Williams Addition (Lots 154-159 inclusive) was recorded November 17, 1884; at the time the surrounding area was (for the most part) previously platted. The developed area of the city had extended south beyond DeWald Street, but the Williams family had held onto land near Creighton Avenue, where they continued to plat lots for several years. Ten years later, in 1894, the Williams family sold the private Williams Park to developer Louis Curdes, who thus completed the platting and development of the Williams-Woodland Park area, immediately south of Creighton Avenue.

Development of this area was extended for an unusually long period of time, but when the lots were fully platted houses were quickly built to complete the neighborhood. A major factor was the convenient location of the city trolley lines that extended north-south on Calhoun Street and west on Creighton Avenue from Calhoun Street. To avoid the trolley lines, nearby Harrison Street was also a direct route to downtown. The area was not mapped by Sanborn Fire Insurance maps until 1902, however city directories show that the house was in place and occupied by the Diffenderfer family by 1887.

Based primarily on the evidence in the city directories, the Diffenderfer House was built c.1886. This date also places the design of the house, comparatively, within the time context of similar known works of Wing & Mahurin. The house is located on the south side of West DeWald Street between S. Harrison Street and Webster Street. The property is located directly across the street from St. Patrick's Catholic Church, and the St. Patrick's Square Historic District, eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

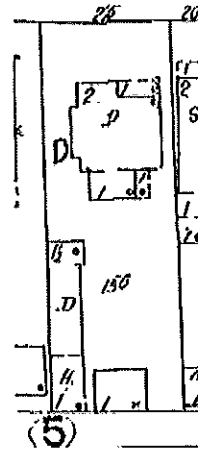
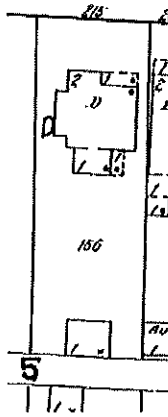
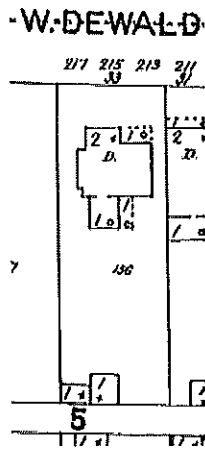
The Diffenderfer House is a fine example of the Queen Anne style with influences from the Shingle style. As a result of the most recent Fort Wayne and Allen County cultural resources inventory, the house was affirmed by the SHPO as individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The Diffenderfer House has asymmetrical massing, with a cross gable roof and a prominent gabled dormer on the façade. The side gable has clipped gables on the east and west ends, and the eaves extend further where they cover decorative fish scale siding in the gables. The front porch is both recessed and it extends forward to align with a massive, decorative chimney on the façade. The porch roof is integral with the slope of the side gable.

The unusual red-brick chimney is the primary feature of the house. It is centered on the façade and it has similar characteristics to large boiler chimneys on much later Art Deco institutional buildings. The chimney has an elaborate corbeled brick design; a corbeled circle is located between the first and second floors, with vertical "streamers" that extend both up and down the height of the chimney structure. The top of the chimney is also quite unusual for the mid-1880s time period; the vertical streamers at the top are terminated without a cap, creating a striking ribbed texture with an Art Deco character. This chimney design is the diagnostic element that sparks the attribution of the house to Wing & Mahurin. The owners have placed a "B" for "Black" within the corbeled circle.

The Diffenderfer House uses a variety of wood siding, semi-rough-cut shingles, and smooth fish scale siding on various wall surfaces. The front cross gable is finished with fish scale shingles; a rectangular window or vent was removed from this gable wall and the opening was filled. This pedimented gable is trimmed with decorative moldings and bullseyes that visually reinforce the corbeled brick circle in the chimney. The end walls beneath the clipped gables on the east and west are also covered with fish scale shingles, as well as the front walls of the dormer. The pedimented gable of the dormer contains a half-circle "wagon wheel," embellished with bullseyes. There is a distinctive belt course between floors, where the wood shingles flare above the belt. At the Northwest corner of the house a cut-a-way corner is also sheltered by the flared belt course. Cut-a-way corners on the west side of the house support a larger box structure beneath the clipped cross gable. One knee brace serves to support the cantilevered box.

The front porch roof is supported by narrow wood posts that are radiused at the top to meet the narrow box beam. The posts also feature incised bands that resemble applied moldings. The porch roof is visually supported by a dense row of approximately 18 small and narrow corbels. The porch is finished with decorative bullseyes. There is no balustrade. The offset front door is narrow and topped by a transom. There is a wood door and an appropriate screen door. To the right of the door is a small window to help light the entry hall. The windows are typical one-over-one double hung sash with simple wood rim. There is a band of four windows on the front, first floor that light the parlor. A large window in the dormer is surrounded at the edges by large stained-glass panes.

The rear of the house is substantially blocked from public view by a side-gable garage, built c.1980. The garage is located parallel to the alley. Although it is no longer present, the Sanborn Fire Insurance map of 1957 shows a separate dwelling located behind the house, and along the west lot line. Based on aerial photos and city directory listings, HPC staff would estimate the separate house was there from c.1930 into the mid-1960s.



Architectural Significance:

The Diffenderfer House is an outstanding example of the Queen Anne style with influences from the Shingle style. While there are larger examples of the architectural style in Fort Wayne, the Diffenderfer House stands out for its many fine details. The details found on its front porch are among the finest in Fort Wayne, particularly for such a small porch. The extensive use of shingle siding is an influence of the shingle style, yet the massing of the house is more Queen Anne in character. The semi-rough-cut shingles may be an appropriate early alteration to the house.

The Queen Anne style marks the height of Victorian-era architectural exuberance in the United States. Though loosely based on Medieval English architecture, the Queen Anne style owes its true character to the development of balloon frame construction and America's late 19th century industrial and railroad expansion. Wire nails, pre-cut lumber in standardized sizes, and building components such as doors, windows, siding, and decorative millwork were factory-produced and shipped by rail to builders across the country.

Consistent with its fine quality, the house is attributed to the architectural firm of Wing & Mahurin. John F. Wing and Marshall S. Mahurin formed this partnership in Fort Wayne in 1882, under the name J.F. Wing & Co., as an outgrowth of the firm of T.J. Tolan and Son. In 1886 the firm was reorganized and became Wing & Mahurin, Architects & Superintendents. The two quickly made a name for themselves and were soon established as the premier architectural firm in Fort Wayne. The firm specialized in the popular Richardsonian Romanesque, Queen Anne, and Neoclassical styles of architecture, and designed many public and private buildings throughout Indiana and Ohio. They remained partners until 1907.

The Diffenderfer House retains excellent historic integrity and reflects these architectural trends and the outstanding work of Wing & Mahurin.

Historical Background:

William Alcorn Diffenderfer bought lot 156 of Williams Addition in 1884, however it does not appear that he built the house for himself. The 1887 and later Fort Wayne City Directories show Benjamin O. and Isabella Diffenderfer as the owners. However, Benjamin O. Diffenderfer passed away February 21, 1889. In subsequent years Isabella Diffenderfer was listed as the owner, and her will indicates she owned the house. Isabella left the house to her son William Alcorn Diffenderfer. Despite not apparently owning the house until his mother's death in 1911, William A. Diffenderfer and his family also lived in the home from its construction to approximately 1918.

The house has benefitted from the care of long-time homeowners. Christian and Ida Schwarze owned the house from about c.1919 to 1971. Steve and Yolande Black have owned the house from 1976 to present.

Staff Recommendations:

For the reasons stated above, staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) should approve the petition, recommend the Diffenderfer House for Local Historic Designation, and submit a historic district map for City Council approval. Further, staff recommends that any motion to recommend Local Historic Designation by the Commission must refer to specific boundaries that are clearly identifiable or identified on a map (such as the legal description).

Staff further recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission should **consider** if the property is threatened and shall be declared to be under interim protection under the Historic Preservation and Protection Ordinance; however, **staff does not recommend interim protection** for this property.

If the property is placed under Interim Protection, the Commission shall, by personal delivery or first-class mail, provide the owner or occupant of the building, structure or site with a written notice of the declaration within two (2) working days. The written notice must:

- (1) Cite the authority of the Commission to put the building, structure, or site under interim protection under this section;
- (2) Explain the effect of putting the building, structure, or site under interim protection; and,
- (3) Indicate that the interim protection is temporary.

Procedural Notes:

If Local Historic District Designation is recommended for the Diffenderfer House by the HPC, the Commission's recommendation and a map of the recommended historic district is then forwarded to the Fort Wayne City Council. The City Council makes the final determination of whether to create a Local Historic District. If a new local historic district is subsequently approved by City Council and the Mayor, the map establishing boundaries of the local historic district will be recorded in the Office of the Allen County Recorder. In addition, the owner(s) of the property in the local historic district will be notified by mail of the designation within 60 days following approval by City Council. All designations shall also be recorded on a map and/or mapping system maintained by the organization(s) for land use management that serve(s) the City of Fort Wayne.

A building, structure, or site, placed under interim protection by the HPC, remains under interim protection until the historic district map is approved in an ordinance or rejected by the City Council. While a building, structure, or site is under interim protection under this section:

- (1) The building, structure, or site may not be demolished or moved; and,
- (2) The exterior appearance of the building, structure, or site may not be conspicuously changed by addition, reconstruction, or alteration.

Bibliography:

Allen County Recorder's Office. Williams Addition (Lots 154-159 inclusive) plat, available at <http://inallen.fidlar.com/WebSenseCustom/Details.aspx> [Accessed May 18, 2021].

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Griswold, Bert J. The Pictorial History of Fort Wayne, Indiana, Volume II Biographical. Robert O. Law Co., Chicago, 1917.

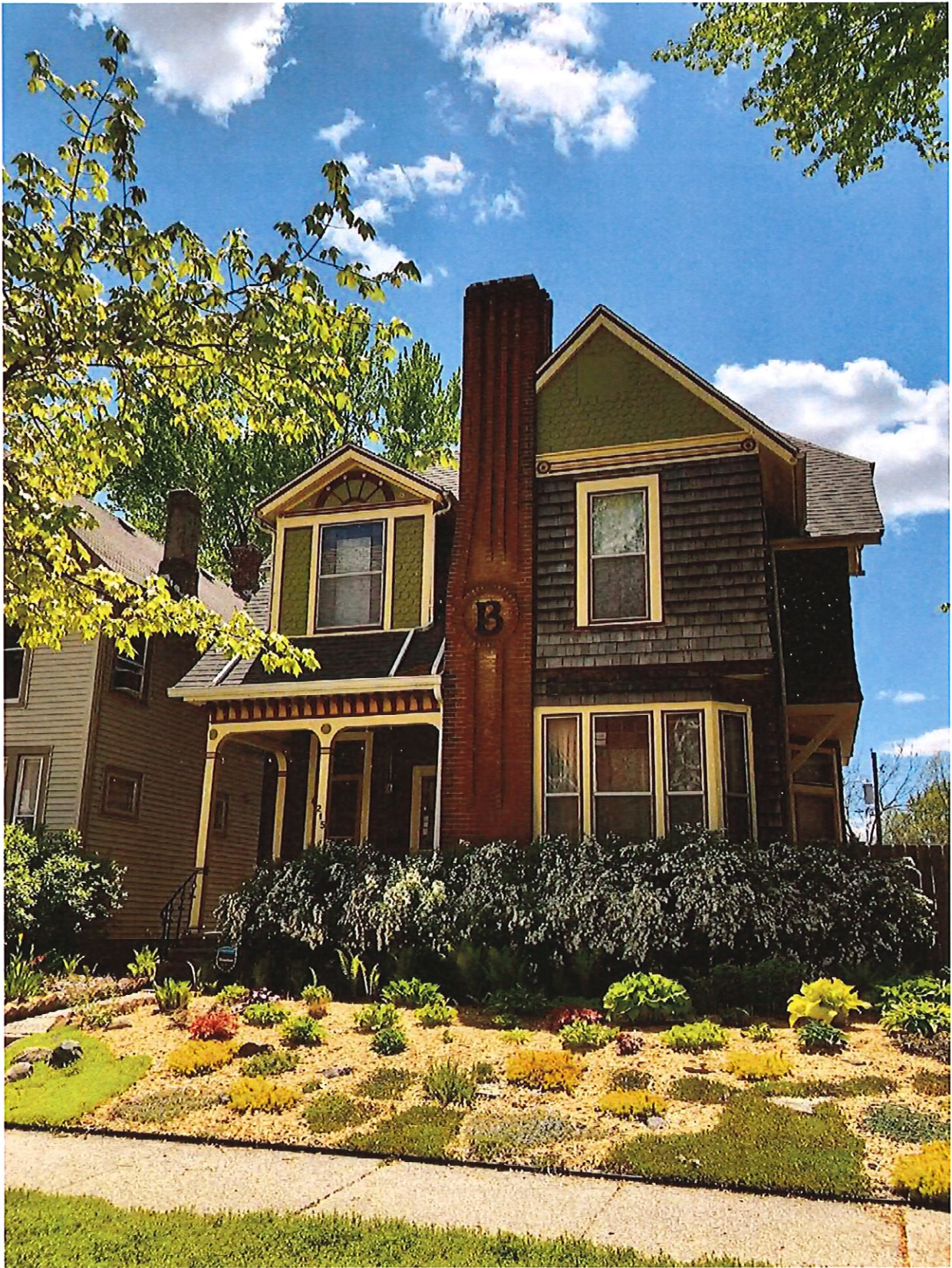
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Sanborn Map Co. Insurance Maps of Fort Wayne, Indiana. New York, 1902, 1918, and 1957.









COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING & POLICY

Thomas C. Henry, Mayor

City of Fort Wayne
Community Development
200 East Berry Street, Suite 320
Fort Wayne, IN 46802
260 427-1127 fwcommunitydevelopment.org

MEMO

To: Fort Wayne Common Council
From: Creager Smith, Historic Preservation Planner; Community Development
Date: June 15, 2021
Re: Local Historic District Designation: Diffenderfer House

Fort Wayne's Historic Preservation and Protection Ordinance was established to preserve and protect those historically or architecturally worthy structures, sites, and districts which impart a distinct aesthetic quality to the city and which serve as visible reminders of the historic heritage of the city. To assist in achieving this goal, criteria are set forth in the ordinance for the establishment of multiple and single property historic districts.

Pursuant to Chapter 151 of the municipal code, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) held a public hearing on May 24, 2021, and voted to recommend designation of the following property as a local historic district:

Diffenderfer House
215 W. DeWald Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana

The Diffenderfer House is significant in the area of local architecture as an outstanding example of the Queen Anne/Shingle Style architectural style in Fort Wayne, built c.1886.

Recognizing the architectural and historical significance of this property to the Fort Wayne community, the owner, Yolande Black, prepared a "Petition for Historic Property or District Designation."

Local historic designation requires that the Fort Wayne Historic Preservation Commission review any future conspicuous exterior changes to the property. This does not affect regular repair and maintenance procedures that do not involve a conspicuous exterior change, nor does it mean that buildings/structures cannot be altered or demolished, or that new buildings cannot be constructed. Local designation also has no jurisdiction over use.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that the Fort Wayne Common Council adopt the attached ordinance amendment in recognition of the historic value of the property and to afford its protection for future generations.

Attached, please find the required map of the proposed district as well as the full review detailing its significance. Please contact me at 427-2161, creager.smith@cityoffortwayne.org, if you have questions.

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