

<b>PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM</b> OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION Box 1026 PA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM COMMISSION Harrisburg, PA 17120		7. Local survey organization <b>Erie County Historical Society</b>		1. County <b>ERIE</b>
8. property owners name and address  <b>Multiple</b>		9. tax parcel number / other number <b>Multiple</b>	10. U.T.M. zone easting 	
12. classification site ( ) structure ( ) object ( ) building ( ) in N.R. district yes ( ) no ( )		11. status (other surveys, lists etc.) <b>Historic Resource Survey of Erie City 1980</b>		2. municipality <b>GIRARD</b>
13. date(s) (how determined) 14. period <b>1840 - 1900/</b>		15. style, design or folk type <b>See under #26</b>		
16. architect or engineer		17. contractor or builder		3. street address or specific location <b>Main Street from Academy Street to Bessemer &amp; Lake Erie R.R. Right-of-Way</b>
18. primary building mat./construction		19. original use <b>Commercial/Residential</b>		
20. present use <b>Mixed</b>		21. condition <b>Good</b>		
22. integrity <b>Fair</b>		23. site plan with north arrow  <b>See attached District Map</b>		
24. photo notation		25. file/location		
26. brief description (note unusual features, integrity, environment, threats and associated buildings) <p>The district lies along the east/west axis of Main Street and contains 68 buildings and one a centrally situated object (monument). Eight of the buildings are intrusions. The district divides approximately into a commercial section west of the monument, and a residential/institutional section east of the monument. With the exception of the intrusions, practically all of the buildings within the district were erected in the 19th century. The integrity of the residences is good, however the commercial buildings have suffered considerably from store front alteration.</p> <p>The district displays the usual architectural styles associated with small town 19th century America. Of note are the many fine Greek Revival examples in the residential section. These are well set back from the curb, heightening their visibility. Mixed in are (cont'd.)</p>				
27. history, significance and/or background <p>The borough of Girard which was created in 1846, owed its growth and prosperity to three factors - the Erie Extension of the Pennsylvania Canal, Dan Rice, and at the end of the century the railroad. The opening of the canal coincided almost exactly with the establishment of the town. The engineer's office was located there and maintenance requirements provided employment for the local population. At (cont'd.)</p>				
28. sources of information <b>Various Erie County histories, local government records, canal documents, Dan Rice biography, Bessemer &amp; Lake Erie R.R. history.</b> <small>(continue on back if necessary)</small>			29. prepared by: <b>John R. Claridge</b>	
<small>(continue on back if necessary)</small>			30. date <b>1/87</b>	
			revision(s)	

26. several Gothic Revival examples both residential and institutional (churches). The latter are substantial and of brick construction.

Buildings at the commercial end of the district reflect to some extent the Commercial Italianate style popular during the last half of the 19th century - pilasters, arched windows, decorative cornices, heavy bracketed eaves. This is no longer a uniform streetscape since several gaps were created by late 19th century fires. Replacements have fewer stories and are less elaborate.

27. mid-century Dan Rice made Girard the winter headquarters for his famous circus. In turn, other traveling shows often used the town for the same purpose. Rice's wealth was demonstrated in a number of civic improvements, including the focal Civil War monument.

Upon the collapse of the Elk Creek aqueduct in 1871, operations of the canal ceased but the bed was subsequently converted to a railroad right-of-way. The Bessemer and Lake Erie Railroad did a lot to support the local economy, particularly during the first half of the 20th century. This north/south line connected with the major east/west line just north of the town, making Girard a transshipment point.

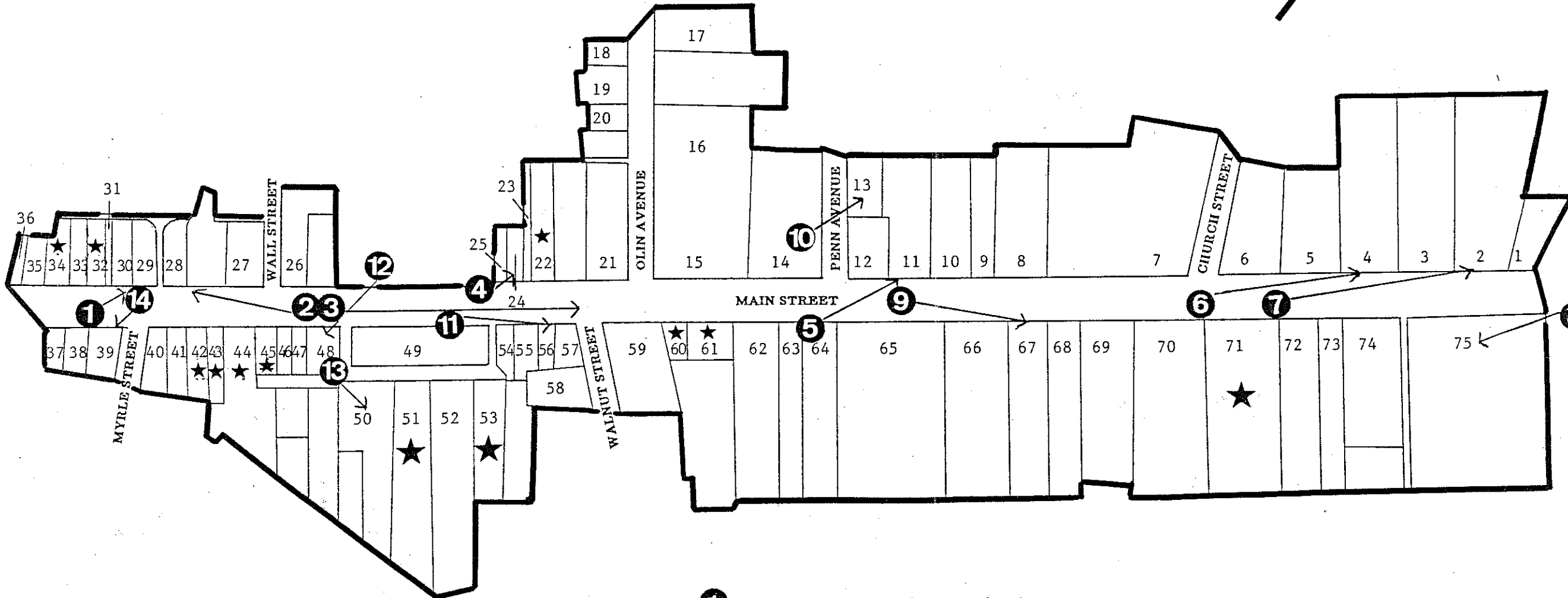
Today Girard's built environment reflects a community which has aged gracefully. By and large Girard has remained fairly static in terms of population and commercial development. Those ubiquitous signs of the modern age - the strip shopping mall and fast food restaurants have only recently appeared upon the scene and are confined to the eastern outskirts. Girard's main street still reflects the tranquility of a past age.

EVALUATION

EVALUATOR(S)

PHOTO SURVEY INDEX MAP  
GIRARD HISTORIC DISTRICT  
GIRARD, PENNSYLVANIA  
ERIE COUNTY

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① Photograph Number and View

★ Non-contributing Resource