

RINK'S CLOAK HOUSE BUILDING
(Commercial Building)
29 North Illinois Street
Indianapolis
Marion County
Indiana

HABS No. IN-217

HABS
IND
49-IND,
55-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

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(Commercial Building)

Location: 29 North Illinois Street
Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana

USGS Indianapolis West, Indiana Quadrangle
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates
16.572 000.4402 130

Present Owner: City of Indianapolis
Department of Metropolitan Development
148 East Market Street; Indianapolis, Indiana

Present Occupant
and Use: Vacant

Significance: The Rink's Cloak House Building was constructed in 1910 for Joseph A. Rink, who founded the store twelve years earlier. The store operated in this six-story building until 1940, when it was remodeled for use as a "five and dime" department store until the 1970s. Indianapolis architect Adolf Scherrer utilized Chicago School fenestration and classical detailing in the design of main facade. The building was individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places on September 27, 1984.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The Rink's Cloak House Building (to be referred to below as the Rink Building) was constructed in 1910.
2. Architect: The Rink building was designed by architect Adolf Scherrer (Adolf Scherrer Ledger Book 1904-1914, p. 332, Adolf Scherrer Manuscript Collection, Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis, Indiana). Scherrer (1848-1925) was a native of St. Gaul, Switzerland and was educated in architecture at the Kunstakademie in Vienna. He emigrated in 1870 and arrived in Indianapolis in 1873. That year he entered the employ of established Indianapolis architect Edwin May until May's death in 1880. May died during the construction of the Indiana State Capitol and Scherrer carried the project to its completion as supervising architect. Either on his own or in partnership (with W. Scott Moore, 1889 to 1891 and with his son Anton Scherrer, 1921-1925) Scherrer was responsible for many local school buildings, houses, commercial and institutional buildings including the Maennerchor Building (HABS No. IN-100), Crown Hill Cemetery Gateway (HABS No. IN-57) and Waiting Station (HABS No. IN-56), Independent Turnverein Building, and the Indiana Central State Hospital Pathological Department Building (HABS No. IN-69) (Pioneer Architect of City Is Dead," Indianapolis Star, February 14, 1925; Lee Burns, Early Architects and Builders in Indiana, Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1935; and R.L. Polk & Co., Indianapolis City Directory, 1880-1925).
3. Original and subsequent owners: Joseph A. Rink purchased the property on March 7, 1908 as the site for his 1910 commercial building. After Rink's death in 1923 the property remained in the possession of his two daughters and their trust funds, trustee by Indiana National Bank. Daughter Loretta Rink Hall owned one-third interest in the property as did her sister Marie Rink Madden. The remaining two-sixth interest were equally owned by the Hall Trust and the Madden Trust under the last will and testament of Carrie R. Rink, wife of Joseph A. Rink. The City of Indianapolis purchased the interest from the heirs and trusts on December 17, 1984 (Marion County Recorder's Office, Indianapolis, Indiana).

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4. Builder, Contractor: The name of the Rink Building's builder is unknown.
5. Original plans and construction: The original and remodeling plans have not been located. Bass Photo #86553-F, dated May 8, 1924 records the original appearance of the main elevation (west) of the Rink Building. Bretzman Collection Photo #23093 dated March 7, 1940 records the main elevation after the 1935 remodeling (both photographs are in the possession of the Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis, Indiana). The Sanborn Insurance Maps of Indianapolis, Indiana (1914, I:37) records the building's construction materials as being of "fire proof construction, built 1910, 3 rows [of] protected steel columns each floor, steel frame, brick curtain walls, concrete floors and roof." The map also indicates the twin passenger elevators, the freight elevator and their penthouses on the south wall. The same map, corrected to 1954, indicated that the first and second floors were air conditioned and the presence of exposed steel framing in the attic east of the finished rooms of the sixth floor.
6. Alterations and additions: The Rink Building remained unaltered from 1910 to 1936. That year the first-floor storefront was removed and redesigned. The original storefront provided two narrow recessed entrances with a large display window between them. The recessed entrances were located in the two end bays of the building with a display window between the entrance and the ends of the building. Across the entire front, above the display windows, was a Luxfer prism glass transom band. The 1936 storefront was designed by the local architectural firm of Pierre and Wright ("Rink's to Get Modern Front," Indianapolis Star, May 6, 1936). The 1936 design provided a centered, recessed entrance divided by an octagonal display kiosk. Instead of the transom band a shallow, three-tiered canopy separated the display windows from the carrara glass sign band with attached metal letters spelling "RINK'S." The Pierre and Wright-designed storefront was used by the G.C. Murphy Store until it was again remodeled to its present form with a sheet metal canopy and a storefront, flush with the facade line. The present storefront appears to date from the 1960's with enameled steel panels covering the piers.

The G.C. Murphy 5&10 Store remodeled the interior removing all fixtures and decorative features and adding an Art Deco monumental stairway from the first floor to the basement ("New Buildings on Sites of Razed Landmarks," Indianapolis Times, April 25, 1940).

B. Historical Context:

The Rink building was constructed in 1910 for Joseph A. Rink (1858-1923) who founded Rink's Cloak House in 1888. The enterprise dealt with women's cloaks and in the manufacture of fur garmets (Pictorial and Biographical Memoirs of Indianapolis and Marion County, Indiana, Chicago: Goodspeed Brothers, 1893, pp. 304-05). Rink purchased the lot for the Rink Building in 1908 from the Young Men's Christian Association, which had its hall on this site. The building was completed and opened in 1910 with all six floors in use, including a cold storage for furs, a collection of furs on the second floor, and the millinery department on the third floor. Store furnishings were made of mahogany ("Throongs Visit Opening," Indianapolis Star, October 11, 1910).

The six-story Cloak House was erected to provide expanded space for its rapidly growing women's apparel clientele. In interior design, the building followed the then-new department store plan of placing each retail department of the store on a different floor including millinery, furs, evening gowns, children's wear and beauty salon. By the 1930s, Rink's Cloak House was attracting fashion-conscious ladies from all over the region.

Rink was president of the company and was joined by his brothers in its management. Rink died in 1923, followed by his brother Edward in 1930 and brother Charles in 1932. Joseph A. Rink's widow, Carrie R., sold the company in 1936 and the new ownership headed by Alton Blauner, president, renamed it "Rink's Store, Inc." In 1936 Rink's Store, Inc. signed a fifteen-year lease for the building, leasing it from Mrs. Rink. On May 5, 1936, Rink's Store, Inc. announced that it would remodel the storefront, renovate the first, second and fourth floors, replace elevators and add air conditioning. The local architecture firm of Pierre & Wright was commissioned to design the new front ("Rink's to Get Modern Front," Indianapolis Star, May 6, 1936). By November 5, 1936 the storefront and interior renovation was completed and included the addition of a beauty salon ("Rink's Will Mark 50th Anniversary," Indianapolis Star, November 5, 1936). The first floor contained a millinery

department remodeled and "made attractive with ultramodern fixtures and finished with prima vera, a rare wood which is almost white in color...imported from Africa" ("Rink's, Store for Women, Marked 52nd Anniversery of Its Founding," Indianapolis Star, November 14, 1938).

Despite the investment in the interior remodeling and the new storefront, Rink's Store, Inc. president Alton Blauner announced the dissolution of the firm on December 29, 1939 and the closing of the store "as soon as the present \$500,000 stock can be liquidated," Indianapolis Star, December 30, 1939). By March 1, 1940 the Rink's Cloak House Building was vacant as the stock and store fixtures were sold and removed from the building. The building did not stand idle long; by the end of April 1940 work was in progress to renovate the building as a department store. By that date the interior had been demolished with nothing remaining "but the supporting columns," ("New Buildings Now Rising on Sites of Razed Landmarks," Indianapolis Times, April 25, 1940). The interior was remodeled for retail sales in the basement and first floor. The basement floor was lowered six inches and an opening was cut in the north wall to connect it with the Illinois Building where the G.C. Murphy Store was already established. The remodeling was expected to be completed by July 1, 1940 (Ibid.). The G.C. Murphy Store remained in the Rink Building until the late 1970's and since then has remained vacant.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: The Rink Building was built in 1910 to house the rapidly growing Rink's Cloak House. It is typical of early turn-of-the century commercial structures with classical elements such as pilasters and entablatures with projecting cornices. The architectural style is influenced by the Chicago School of architecture in the window treatment of one large single pane window flanked by double-hung sash windows. The Luxfer prism glass transoms above the second through fifth-story windows were a popular and practical element in storefront design early in the twentieth century. Due to its skeleton frame construction, the building was noted for its large open spaces. It originally was totally furnished with mahogany interior fixtures designed in the latest style (these are no longer in the building). The structure's exterior remains unaltered, except for the storefront level, and retains much of

its architectural integrity, while many buildings of the same era in the Mile Square have been demolished or extensively altered. The Rink Building is also important for its contribution to the historic commercial character of this part of North Illinois Street (Dale E. Ankrom, "Rink's Women's Apparel Store," National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form, listed September 27, 1984).

2. Condition of fabric: Despite being vacant for a decade, the Rink Building is in good condition with only minor moisture problems and peeling paint finishes.

B. Description of exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The Rink Building is a six-story structure 71'-3" wide and 120'-0" long. The main (west) facade is six stories tall and divided into four equal bays which are expressed on each floor. The building occupies the full lot from Illinois Street east to the alley. The basement projects west under the sidewalk one full bay making its length 135'-0". It is bounded to the north by the Illinois Building and to the south by the Rost Building (Centre Venture, "Building Description for Circle Centre Mall," Indianapolis, Indiana, February 8, 1988, revised July 15, 1988, typewritten & unpublished).
2. Foundation:

The poured concrete foundation is unexposed.
3. Walls: The principal (west) elevation faces North Illinois Street. It is clad with glass, sheet metal, and limestone. On the first floor enameled metal panels have been attached over the columns and fascia. The center column at the first floor only is false. Between the panels are storefront windows and display windows. A sheet metal canopy protects the entrance and first floor for its full width. The second floor is divided into eight equal-sized glass openings framed by limestone and a stamped sheet metal spandrel band. The third through sixth floors have five limestone pilasters expressing the bays for their full height with stamped copper spandrels between at each floor. At the top a stamped copper cornice projects over the sidewalk approximately four feet. The columns and spandrels are backed by brick.

The east elevation consists of red brick pilasters with brick spandrels. A metal panel structure attached to the wall between second and third floors encloses a roller conveyor and hoist (Ibid.). A recessed metal door opens onto the alley Bird Street.

The south elevation is exposed above the third-floor level. This elevation is faced with red brick and is blank except for six windows. A weathered paint-on-brick ghost sign at the fifth and sixth floors levels was painted in 1940 advertising ("Shop at Murphy's."

4. Structural systems, framing: The Rink Building is of steel frame construction. It is four bays wide and seven bays deep. On floors two through six the primary structural beams appear to be at each column line in the north-south direction and at the center column line in the east-west direction (Ibid.).
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The storefront provides two entrances into the building. These glass doors with aluminum sash were probably from a 1960's remodeling. The northern most doorway is double-leaf and the southern most is single leaf. The east elevation, facing the alley Bird Street is a flush sheet metal door.
 - b. Windows: The main (west) facade has three different window types. The first floor storefront has plate glass display windows, probably from the 1960's. The historic second floor windows are intact with eight, large, wood-sash, single-pane windows surmounted by Luxfer prism glass transoms. The third through sixth floors are the Chicago Style type with a large center window flanked by two, narrower double-hung windows in each bay. The windows on the third, fourth and fifth floors have Luxfer prism glass transoms. The sixth floor windows are identical to those below except for the absence of the transoms.

The east elevation has double-hung, hollow-steel windows in virtually every bay in groups of threes with terra cotta lintels and limestone sills. The basement and the first and second floor windows are protected by steel bars. The south elevation has similar windows only on the fifth and sixth floor near the stairwell. The south elevation windows do not have terra cotta lintels.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof slopes from west to east covered by a built-up composition roofing material.
- b. Cornice: The building is capped by a deep ornate stamped copper cornice. Atop the cornice, five finials are positioned in line with the five pilasters of the upper stories. Cresting spans the five finials. A cartouche with an embossed "R" is below each of the finials on the face of the cornice is above the limestone bracketed freize (Centre Venture).
- c. Penthouses and mechanical equipment: Two brick penthouses are located on the south wall of the building above the elevator shafts. Between the two penthouses is a steel stairs, frame and platform supporting the air condensers. Air intake and exhaust vents are located along the north and south walls.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Except for the second and sixth floors, all of the floors of the Rink Building including the basement are open and free of room partitions. Three rows of columns punctuate the floor plan. The wooden stairway is located on the south wall in the second through sixth floors. Extensive partitions dating from the 1940 remodeling divide the second floor into offices, employee rooms and two large restrooms. The sixth floor has usable floor space only in its western half as the sloping roof (from west front to east rear) renders the eastern half unusable. The western half is divided into storage rooms and a large insulated vault for fur storage.
2. Stairways: There are two primary stairs which provide circulation in the Rink Building. A steel stair is located in the southeast corner of the building, it has steel pipe handrails and is enclosed with clay tile and plaster walls and equipped with steel doors and frames. The exception to this is the sixth floor which has a 3'-0" x 3'-0" wood door. this stair services all levels of the building, including the roof. A wood frame stair with wood treads, risers, and handrails is located near the center of the south wall. It is enclosed with wood stud and plaster walls and wood doors. This stair connects the first through sixth floors at various locations along the south wall. An open monumental stair with a terrazzo finish and a decorative Art Deco metal handrail in the northeast corner of the building connects the basement and first floors (Centre Venture).

3. **Flooring:** The flooring materials for the street and basement levels are terrazzo and vinyl tile on concrete. The upper floors except for the second and sixth floors have tongue and groove hardwood flooring laid on wood subflooring directly applied to the structural slab (National Register). The flooring of the second floor is sheet linoleum with terrazzo in the restrooms. The sixth floor has exposed, bare concrete floors.
4. **Wall and ceiling finishes:** Plaster walls columns and ceilings are found throughout the Rink Building. A suspended acoustical tile ceiling on the first floor obscures the surviving decorative moulded plaster ceiling dating from 1910. The plastered walls and columns of the basement and first floor served as retail space and are covered with paneling and peg board. Mirror panels cover the walls of the stairway from the first floor to the basement.
5. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and doors:** The only historical doors and doorways are those serving the enclosed wooden stairway on the south wall, and on the sixth floor. These few elements are simple in design and void of ornamentation. The doors leading from the enclosed southwest stairwell are also historical and are paneled and covered with sheet metal.
 - b. **Windows:** The window trim around the front (west) windows is minimal consisting of a strip of moulding under the sill. From around east and south side windows are plain void of ornamentation.
6. **Decorative features and trim:** No decorative features or trim has survived the 1940 remodeling except for portions of the moulded plaster ceiling on the first floor.
7. **Hardware:** Surviving door hardware is void of ornamentation following simple classical lines. Mechanical hardware for the operation of transom windows on the west elevation has survived. The 1940 Art Deco metal railing and newel post leads from the first floor to the basement.
8. **Mechanical equipment:**
 - a. **Heating and air conditioning, ventilation :** The building is heated with gas-fired air handling units located in the

basement and on the fourth floor. The cooling was primarily handled by two rooftop units. The electrical service is located in and near the mechanical room on the east end of the basement (centre Venture). Non-functioning cast-iron radiators are located on some of the upper floors.

- b. Lighting: No decorative light fixtures have survived. The retail area in the basement and first floor and the offices on the second floor are illuminated by fluorescent lights. The remaining floors are illuminated by a series of single bare bulb suspended from the ceilings.
 - c. Plumbing: The plumbing fixtures date from the 1940 remodeling. Restroom facilities are located on the second, fourth and fifth floors in the northeast corner of the building. Restrooms include toilets and sinks.
 - d. Conveyor system: A roller type freight conveyor system in the two eastern bays connect the third through fifth floors inside the building. The same system is outside on the east wall between third and second floors. An open chute on the north wall connects the third floor and fifth floor (Centre Venture).
 - e. Elevators: A freight elevator adjacent to the southwest corner stairs is the only source of mechanized vertical transportation. It services the basement through fifth floors with an equipment penthouse on the roof. A set of two steel "cage" type passenger elevators are located at the sixth floor. The shaft has been closed below the fifth floor and converted to usable space. The equipment penthouse is on the roof (Centre Venture).
9. Original furnishings: No store furnishings remain in the building. All Rink fixtures have been removed. The only element remaining is the insulated, cold-storage fur vault on the sixth floor. It is sealed with a "Stevenson's Door - Fastens & Tightens Itself," patented April 10, 1906.
- D. Site: The Rink Building straddles Lots 2 and 3 of City Square 55 in the first block of North Illinois Street on the north. It is flanked on the north by the ten-story, commercial-office Illinois Building of 1925 situated on the southeast corner of Illinois and West Market Streets. To the south is the three-story Art Deco Styled facade Rost Jewelry Co. Building (HABS No. IN-216). Directly across Illinois

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Street is the white, eight-story, terra-cotta faced, William H. Block & Company Department Store Building, built in 1911 and remodeled in the 1930's with an Art Deco first floor and entrances. The first block of North Illinois has historically been a dense and busy commercial business area.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: Architectural drawings for the construction of the 1910 Rink Building and its 1936 and 1940 remodelings have not been located. The Sanborn Insurance Maps of Indianapolis, Indiana of 1914 provides some construction information as noted in Part I above.
- B. Historic views: Two historic photographs from the collections of Indiana Historical Society Library document the Rink Building in with its original 1910 first-floor storefront and its 1936 storefront. These two photos show that except for the storefront level, the main facade of the Rink Building has not been altered since its construction. The present storefront is the third one for the Rink Building dating from the 1960's. Bass Photo #86553-F is dated May 8, 1924 and illustrates the original storefront and the Bretzman Collection photograph of March 7, 1940 depicts the 1936 storefront after the Rink's firm ended its operation. Visible in this photograph are the "Going Out of Business" and "Fixtures for Sale" signs in the windows. This photograph also illustrates the Art Deco styling of the updated storefront signage and display windows. Another Bass photo from the Indiana Historical Society (#247203-F) was taken on September 4, 1940 and shows the Rink Building in use as part of the C.G. Murphy 5 & 10 Store, utilizing the 1936 storefront.
- C. Bibliography

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Ankrom, Dale E. "Rink's Womens [sic] Apparel Store." National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, listed September 27, 1984. N.B.: Although the building is listed in the National Register under this name, further research has failed to prove that this name is an authentic historical name.

Centre Venture, "Building Description for Circle Centre Mall." Indianapolis, Indiana, February 8, 1988, revised July 15, 1988. (typewritten & unpublished)

Deed Books, Marion County Recorder's Office, Indianapolis,
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Collection, Adolf Scherrer Ledger Book 1904-1914.

Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission, "Washington
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Register of Historic Places." Indianapolis, Indiana, April
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2. Secondary and published sources:

a. Books

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Sanborn Map Company. Insurance Maps of Indianapolis,
Indiana. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1914, and 1914
corrected to 1954.

Sanborn-Perris Map Company. Insurance Maps of Indianapolis,
Indiana. New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Company, 1898
corrected to 1913.

b. Newspapers

"Edward D. Pierre, Noted Architect," Indianapolis News,
March 29, 1971.

"New Buildings Now Rising on Sites of Razed Landmarks,"
Indianapolis Times, April 25, 1940.

"Pioneer Architect of City Is Dead," Indianapolis Star,
February 14, 1925.

"Rink's Announces Firm Dissolution," Indianapolis Star,
December 30, 1939.

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"Rink's Store for Women, Marked 52nd Anniversary of Its
Founding," Indianapolis Star, November 14, 1938.

"Rink's to Get Modern Front," Indianapolis Star, May 6,
1936.

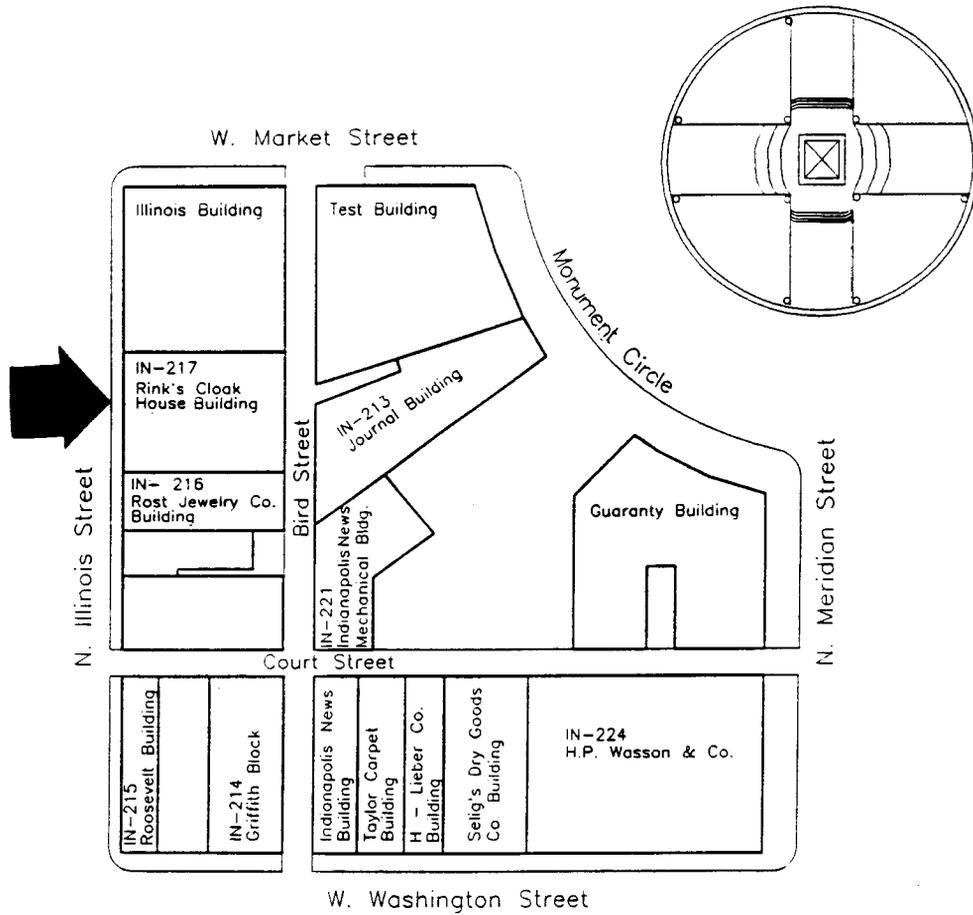
"Throngs Visit Opening," Indianapolis Star, October 11,
1910.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Indianapolis Historic preservation Commission in compliance with Executive Order 11593 and a Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic preservation as a mitigative effort before demolition.

Prepared by William L. Selm
Historian
Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission
June 1990

SITE PLAN



INDIANAPOLIS, IN.
CITY SQUARE 55

DIVISION OF PLANING JUNE, 1990

