

LOUIS G. DESCHLER COMPANY BUILDING  
135 South Illinois Street

HABS No. IN-256

Indianapolis  
Marion County  
Indiana

HABS  
IND  
49-IND,  
48-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
Northeast Region  
Philadelphia Support Office  
U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, P.A. 19106

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Location: 135 South Illinois Street  
Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana

USGS Indianapolis West, Indiana Quadrangle  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:  
16.571960.4401810

Significance: Visually and architecturally, the Louis G. Deschler Company Building is a significant structure in the Indianapolis Union Station - Wholesale District. The rich architectural details of the Louis G. Deschler Company Building contrast in style to that of its neighbors to the north, both of which were built during the decade following the Civil War. The appearance of the facade is due to the apparent artistic sense of the owner who seemed to be aware of the value of having surroundings appropriate to the clientele which he wished to attract. The individualization of the building with the name and date of the founding of the business was another attempt to add to the respectability of the business and its owner.

Description: The facade of this three-story, brick commercial building bears the strong imprint of the German Renaissance Revival. The west facade includes elaborately carved limestone details associated with the building's original owner and use. The first floor facade is clad entirely in limestone panels and contains an arch topped storefront opening trimmed with a rounded molding. The wood and glass storefront, complete with base, doors, display windows and transoms, was reconstructed during the 1984-85 rehabilitation. Spanning the storefront opening at the transom height is a cast iron bar with "WHOLESALE AND RETAIL CIGARIST" in raised letters. Inscribed above the arch molding is "LOUIS G. DESCHLER", the name of the original owner. The first floor cladding is capped by a projecting stringcourse containing four Zwerge or dwarf figures. The impish figures are depicted tamping, lighting, smoking and cleaning pipes. Above the stringcourse, the second and third floor windows are grouped in a central composition detailed in limestone. The contrast of the stone against the brown brick wall is further accented by quoin work. The single light windows, three per floor, are the original, wood pivot sash; flat topped on the second floor and pointed arched on the third floor. An elaborately festooned panel

located between the second and third floor proclaims the wares of the original business with the inscribed "CIGARS & TOBACCOS". A bracketed stone cornice caps the third floor windows and forms the base of the stepped gable. The brick faced gable contains a carved tablet with an owl and heraldic shield bearing the inscription of "EST 1883" and three horizontal stone bands. The stepped limestone coping forms a finial at the gable's peak. The sloping surfaces of the gable and a rooftop penthouse are covered with clay tiles.

History:

The Louis G. Deschler Company Building was designed by noted local architect, Adolf Scherrer. Erected in 1906-07 by the J.A. Schumacher Company, contractor, it served as the headquarters of Deschler's local chain of cigar stores. Deschler (1865-1924) began his business in 1883. By 1919, his company had ten retail cigar and tobacco stores in Indianapolis, Lafayette and Bloomington, a cigar factory employing 100 people and seven traveling salesmen. Deschler was a stock holder and director of the Indiana Hotel Company which built and owned the Claypool Hotel. He was also a member of the Indianapolis Maennerchor which constructed its landmark German Renaissance Revival style building in 1905-06 designed by Adolf Scherrer. The Louis G. Deschler Company Building was inspired by the Maennerchor Building, sharing its design and material features. Deschler's store was in close proximity to Union Station and surrounding hotels and restaurants. After 1926, the building served as a retail store and wholesale office for a paint company and a barber supply company until 1949, at which time it became a bar and restaurant. This use continued until the building was rehabilitated in 1984-85 for residential and commercial use.

The building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on July 14, 1982 as part of the Indianapolis Union Station - Wholesale District. This project was undertaken by the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission (IHPC) in compliance with the Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as a mitigative effort before partial demolition.

Sources:

Indianapolis Wholesale District. National Register

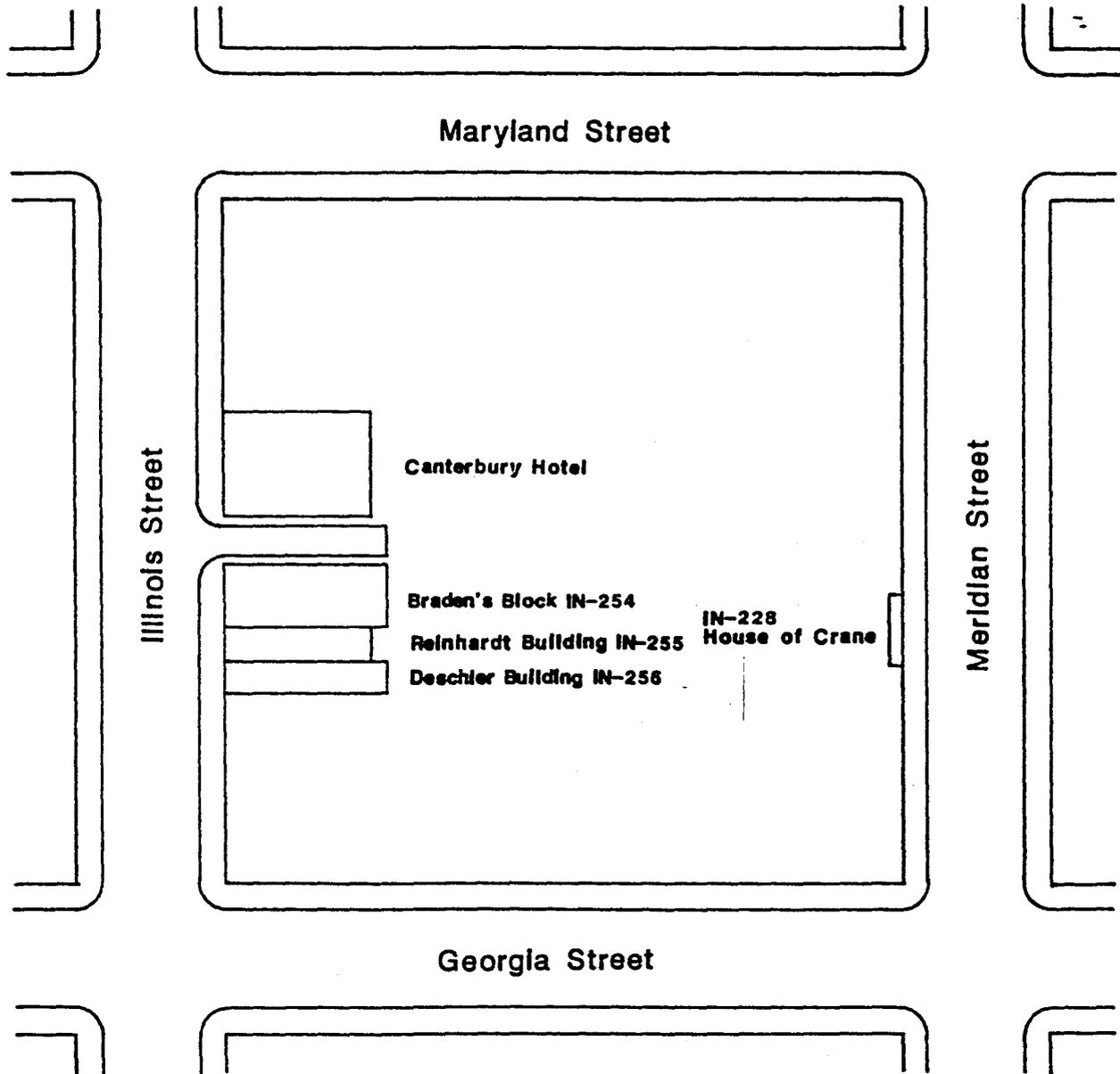
of Historic Places nomination form, 1982.

Louis G. Deschler Company Building. Historic  
Preservation Certification Application - Part 1  
form, 1982.

"Wholesale District Historic Area Plan,"  
Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission, 1990.

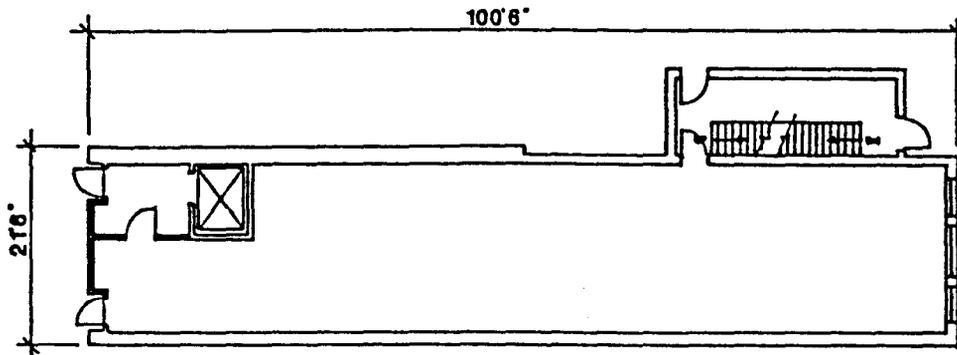
Historian:

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June, 1994

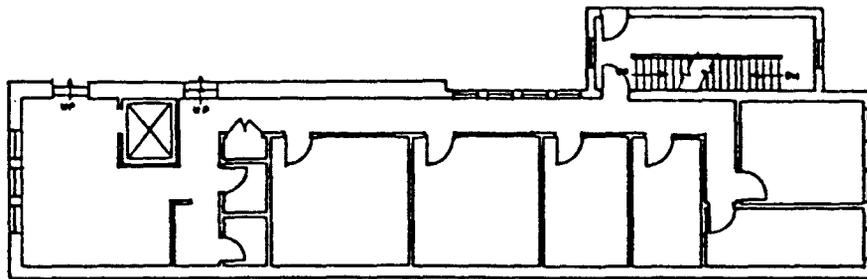


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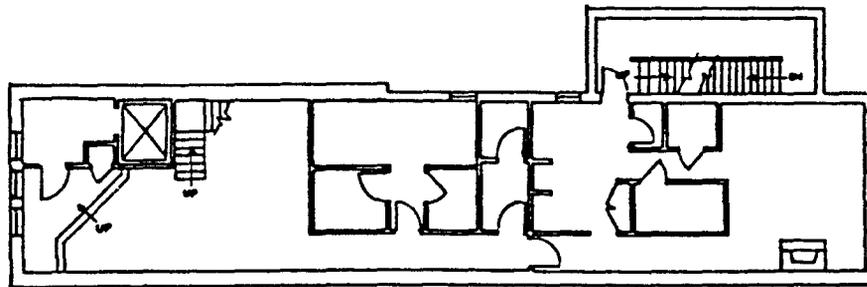
Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana



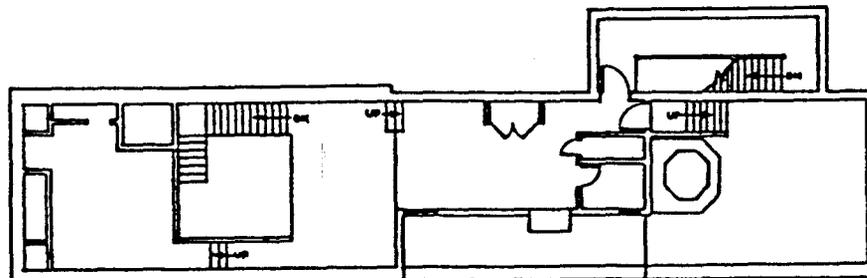
First Floor



Second Floor



Third Floor



Fourth Floor