Historic Significance

Photo Source: Vegetable Market on Delaware Street, 1905, Indiana Historical Society Collection
HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

City Planning and Development
Carved out of the Northwest Territory, Indiana entered the Union as the nineteenth state in 1816. The city of Indianapolis was founded in 1821 as the state capital, when the Indiana State Legislature sought a central location for the city and appointed a committee to choose the site. Once the site was chosen surveyors Alexander Ralston and Elias Fordham were hired to lay out the city, which was proposed as a grid of north-south and east-west streets in a mile square plat.

This plat was influenced by the Pierre L’Enfant plan for Washington, D.C., which in turn was inspired by the royal residence of Versailles. Since Indianapolis was planned as a state capital, the plat sited the State House Square and the Court House Square equidistant from Circle Street (now Monument Circle), located in the center of the Mile Square. The Governor’s house was to be situated in the circular lot framed by Circle Street, and the four city blocks framing the circle were known as the “Governor’s Square.” Four diagonal streets radiated out from the far corners of the four blocks framing the circle.

All streets of the Mile Square were 90 feet wide with the exception of Washington Street, which was 120 feet wide to accommodate its intended use as the capital’s main street. The sale of lots in the new capital city on October 8, 1821 reveal the street’s importance, as lots fronting it commanded the highest prices. During the city’s infancy Washington Street functioned as the only commercial street, and its importance grew with the coming of the National Road in the 1820s.

The National Road was planned by the federal government as a thoroughfare to connect the eastern seaboard to the new western states. The first leg of the road extended from Cumberland, Maryland to Wheeling, Virginia between 1811 and 1818. Then Congress appropriated $10,000 in 1820 to continue the National Road from Wheeling through Indiana to the Mississippi River. One of the first acts of the state legislature in 1821 was to petition Congress to direct the National Road through the new capital of Indianapolis. Congress agreed, and the surveyors reached Indianapolis on July 5, 1827. By 1834 the National Road extended across the state and guaranteed a future of growth for Indianapolis.

The original plat of the city’s streets and sites for public buildings, along with the National Road connecting Indianapolis to the East and West via Washington Street, shaped the function and character of downtown Indianapolis. With the completion of the National Road and other thoroughfares, and later with the arrival of the first railroad in 1847, the town grew into a city with burgeoning wealth, commerce, manufacturing and a growing population. Accordingly, the business area grew denser and spread beyond Washington Street. During the Civil War era shops, hotels, banks and office buildings began to replace the houses and churches that dotted Circle Street.

Between 1887 and 1902, Monument Circle experienced its most profound transformation with the planning and construction of the Indiana State Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Monument. The Monument was a great source of pride and quickly became the symbol of the City. The circular street was renamed Monument Circle. In 1905, soon

Photo Source: Fidelity Trust Company Building, 1934, Indiana Historical Society Collection
after its dedication, a city ordinance was enacted restricting the height of buildings fronting the Circle to 86 feet.

After the First World War, when the downtown began to rapidly change again, the debate was reopened on Circle height restrictions. Local architect William Earl Russ advocated uniform height, style, and materials in addition to a restricted height for new buildings on the Circle. City planner and landscape architect George E. Kessler recommended a compromise plan, resolving the issue with a new ordinance in 1922. This ordinance permitted buildings fronting the Circle to rise to 108 feet in height, with an additional 42 feet allowed provided the additional footage was set back one foot for each three feet in height, allowing a maximum of 150 feet. Russ’ suggestions and the ordinance had an impact on the redevelopment of the Circle in the following decades.

The following sections describe the diverse uses found within the district and the buildings constructed to accommodate those uses, as they evolved over two centuries of development.

Residential Uses in the District
Although difficult to believe today, the district was once crowded with residential structures. Monument Circle was initially designed as a primarily residential area with the Governor’s house as its central landmark. Over the decades leading up to the Civil War, other distinguished houses sprang up around the Circle to mingle with churches and green spaces. After the war’s end businesses rapidly replaced those Circle residences and other houses in the district, although many buildings with first-floor shops still contained rooms on upper floors for business owners or residential tenants. The early 20th century commercial building boom further displaced residences from the city center.

As mid-century suburbia enticed downtown inhabitants to flee the city, residential uses all but disappeared. Recently, the district has experienced a resurgence of people desiring to live in the city center again. Older commercial buildings such as the William H. Block Co. Building (54-4) at 50 North Illinois Street, Elliott’s Block (66-6) at 14 West Maryland Street, and the National City Bank Building (57-15) at 110 East Washington Street have been renovated as residences. New buildings, such as the Conrad Hotel (55-10) at 50 West Washington Street, have been built with residences incorporated into the design.

Commercial Uses in the District
Many structures in the district contribute to the area of commerce. Most of the commercial activity is in the two areas of retailing and banking, while others include hotels and commercial office use. As mentioned earlier, Washington Street has been the center of business since the city's founding. Shops, taverns and hotels historically fronted this street, which was and still is a segment of the National Road. As the city grew so did the commercial area, but Washington Street has always remained the east-west axis.

Retail Uses
The Hannaman and Duzan Building (56-7) at 42 East PHOTO SOURCE: Washington Street Looking West from Pennsylvania Street, 1920, Indiana Historical Society Collection
HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Washington Street is the oldest building in the district and possibly the oldest commercial building in the city. It was built circa 1852 to house the drugstore of one of the city’s early druggists, William Hannaman. In the 1860s the wholesale and retail druggist firm of Stewart and Morgan took over Hannaman’s business.

Two other Civil War-era buildings are the Stevens Coffman Building (57-10) at 152 East Washington Street and the Hereth Block (57-7) at 20-22 North Delaware Street. Joshua Stevens, a bootmaker and part-time lawyer, erected the south portion of his three-story brick commercial building circa 1853. Druggists were tenants between the 1860s and 1880s, but the building also held law offices and saloons. Stevens’ daughter remodeled the building circa 1889 to its present appearance. The Hereth Block, a three-story Italianate commercial building, was built in 1866-1867 by John C. Hereth. Hereth and his brother operated their saddle and harness shop here and leased the upper floors for law offices, due to its prime location across Delaware Street from the Marion County Court House.

Elliott’s Block (66-6), built in 1875 at 14 West Maryland Street, is notable for its intact brick and cast-iron three-story façade. The Italianate building is one of the few in Indianapolis with such an extensive use of cast-iron details in its brick façade. Calvin A. Elliott, a wholesale liquor merchant, built the building as an investment property.

Early twentieth century commercial retail architecture in the district include the F.W. Woolworth Company Building (65-2) at 11 South Meridian Street, built in 1890 and remodeled in 1938; the Taylor Carpet Company Building (55-8) at 26 West Washington Street, built in 1897 and 1906; the Marott’s Shoes Building (56-12) at 18 East Washington Street, built in 1900; the S.S. Kresge Building (65-4) at 41 East Washington Street, built in 1923; and Selig Dry Goods Company Building (55-6) at 20 West Washington Street, built in 1924.

Three major department store buildings constructed at the turn of the twentieth century are downtown landmarks today. The first, L.S. Ayres & Company (66-3 and 66-4), began in 1872 when dry goods merchant Lyman S. Ayres arrived in Indianapolis from New York. He established himself as a partner in N.R. Smith & Ayres Company, eventually becoming the sole proprietor of L.S. Ayres & Company. Ayres’ son Frederic moved the department store into a new era in 1905 with a new building at West Washington and South Meridian Streets. Although the company eventually vacated the flagship building in 1992, it remains a fixture of the district’s streetscape.

The second store, H.P. Wasson & Company (55-5), was established in 1883 at North Meridian and West Washington Streets by Hiram P. Wasson. During its tenure, it enjoyed success as one of the city’s great department stores. The company remained at this location for almost a century, until it went out of business in 1979.

The third big department store was the William H. Block Co. (54-4), founded in 1896. Block was an Austro-Hungarian immigrant who began his career as a peddler. The first Block building was in the first block of East Washington Street, later moving to a

Photo Source: Griffith Block/Indianapolis News Building, 1907, Indiana Historical Society Collection
flagship downtown building at North Illinois and West Market Streets with suburban mall outlets. In 1988 Block’s store became part of the national Lazarus chain, which closed in 1993.

The district’s retail function was greatly impacted in the 1990s by the transformation of the first block of West Washington into Circle Center Mall. Shaped in part by a Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation for the Circle Center Development Project, the mall was designed to reflect the evolution of an urban streetscape by reusing the historic Griffith and Darmody facades and incorporating the 1905 L.S. Ayres department store as an anchor. Contemporary materials of various textures and colors were used for the build-out of the mall and new facades connected to the historic ones.

Banking Uses
Over the decades many financial institutions located their businesses in the first and second blocks of East Market Street. The Indianapolis News in 1926 dubbed these blocks the “Wall Street of Indianapolis,” since by then they were home to nearly a dozen banks and trust companies. The State Bank of Indiana, established in 1834, was the first banking institution in the city. Indianapolis resident Stoughton A. Fletcher, Sr. also started a bank in 1839 that would evolve into the American Fletcher National Bank. Upon passage of the National Banking Act of 1863, new local banks could be founded with national charters. By the end of 1864 six national banks were chartered in the city, including Merchants National Bank and Indiana National Bank, the successor to the Indianapolis branch of the State Bank of Indiana. Now the names of these banks have all been lost through mergers with multi-state banks.

Three of the banks listed above – Fletcher, Merchants and Indiana – built architect-designed buildings that remain in the district, although they no longer serve as bank headquarters. The Merchants landmark building (65-1) at 11 South Meridian Street, designed by Daniel Burnham, was the city’s tallest building from 1912 to 1962. The architectural firm of Vonnegut & Bohn designed the Fletcher Trust Building (45-4) at 108 North Pennsylvania Street, which was completed in 1914. Local architecture firm D. A. Bohlen & Son designed the 1956 Indiana Building (44-16) at 120 East Market Street for Indiana National Bank.

Other buildings in the district were designed as banks or had strong associations with now-defunct banks. The J.F. Wild Bank Building (57-2) at 129 East Market Street was built for the J.F. Wild State Bank in 1923, though the bank closed in 1927. The Fidelity Trust Company constructed the Fidelity Trust Building (44-14) at 146 East Market Street in 1915, then moved to the Wild Bank Building in 1937. Its final home (45-3) was constructed in 1958-59 at 111 Monument Circle. This new building was designed by the Chicago firm of Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill and is the first example of curtain wall construction in the city. The National City Bank Building (57-15) at 110 East Washington Street is a sixteen-story office building built in 1921 to house that bank. City Trust Company occupied the building by 1930, and within another ten years Indianapolis Morris Plan, a savings and loan company, occupied the
building for the next several decades.

Savings banks sprang up soon after state law permitted them in 1869. Turner Building and Savings Association (TBSA) was incorporated in 1883 and opened its own building (44-10) at 116 North Delaware Street in 1941. The building became the home of the Peoples Mutual Savings & Loan Association in the 1950s and later of Shelby Street Federal Savings and Loan Association. Peoples Bank was established in 1891 by Felix T. McWhirter and chartered in 1900, making its office in the 1898 Law Building (44-15) at 136 East Market Street. The bank bought the building in 1920 and remodeled the façade in the 1970s. Saving bank construction continued into the mid-twentieth century, when Union Federal Savings & Loan Association built an eight-story building (57-1) at 45 North Pennsylvania Street in 1964. The building received a new façade in 1985.

Hotel Uses
Hotels have been a part of the district’s history since the city’s founding, when visitors spent the night in taverns. Two great hotels of Indianapolis’ history, the Bates House (1852-1901) and the Claypool Hotel (1902-1969), were consecutively located at the northwest corner of Illinois and Washington Streets, an ideal spot on the National Road between Union Station and the interurban terminal. Although those earlier buildings are now gone, the site is still used for a hotel.

Hotel Washington and the Harrison Hotel are the only surviving historic hotel buildings in the district and both now serve as office buildings. Hotel Washington (56-10) at 32 East Washington Street was designed by the R.P. Daggett architectural firm and constructed by J. Edward Krause in 1912. It closed in 1963 and reopened after remodeling in 1965 as an apartment building, then was rehabilitated again in 1982 as an office building. The Harrison Hotel (54-1) at 143 West Market Street was constructed in 1927-28 and appropriately situated near the National Road, Traction Terminal, bus station and statehouse. The eight-story hotel closed in 1971 and was remodeled as office space, reopening the following year as the Harrison Building.

In the late twentieth century, new hotels were built to serve the revitalized downtown. Embassy Suites Hotel (54-5) at 110 West Washington Street, built in 1983-85, is built on the site of the former Bates House and Claypool Hotel. The Conrad Hotel (55-10) at 50 West Washington Street, built in 2005-06, has its main entrance located where the historic Griffith Block once stood. As part of the Circle Center Mall development, the dismantled, restored, and reconstructed Griffith façade (66-2) is now on the south side of Washington Street and faces the Conrad.

The district also contains a building originally constructed for another use, but was later rehabilitated into a hotel. The Fletcher Trust Building (45-4) at 108 North Pennsylvania Street was built in 1913-14 to house banking, insurance, and law offices. After those uses left, the building found new life as a hotel in the late 1990s.

Office Uses
A number of buildings in the district were constructed as speculative office ventures and the earliest real estate speculators gamble on East Washington Street. The

Photo Source: Sentinel Printing Co. Building, Indiana Historical Society Collection
Lombard (56-11), a Renaissance Revival-style commercial building at 22 East Washington Street, was designed by R.P. Daggett & Co. and constructed in 1892. Wealthy resident Elizabeth Tinker Talbott initiated the venture and American National Bank eventually became one of the building’s most prominent tenants.

In 1900 George J. Marott followed Mrs. Talbott’s lead by constructing the Tudor Revival office building (56-12) adjacent to the Lombard. Marott’s shoe store occupied the street-level space of the structure and multiple office users rented the upper levels.

Speculative office ventures then surged in the 1920s as a result of a downtown building boom following the end of World War I. The Illinois Building (55-1) at 35 North Illinois Street, designed by local architecture firm Rubush & Hunter, was constructed in 1925-26 as a speculative office venture of the Illinois and Market Realty Co. Another Rubush & Hunter design, the nine-story Renaissance Revival Guaranty office building (55-4) at 20 North Meridian Street, was erected in 1922-1923 by Indianapolis financier Albert E. Metzger. It was uniquely designed to front Monument Circle, with retail shops on the first floor opening into the building’s lobby as well as onto the street. This configuration allowed for an interior shopping arcade, which was unusual in city office buildings of the period.

The Test building (55-2) at 54 Monument Circle was meant to be a “sister building” to the Guaranty office building. Designed by the architecture firm Bass, Knowlton & Co., it was built in 1924-25 as an investment property by the heirs of Charles Edward Test, former president of the National Motor Vehicle Co. The building was an excellent example in that era of a progressive mixed-use property, because it had a self-contained parking garage with a capacity of over 200 vehicles.

Of great architectural interest is the Circle Tower (56-2), designed by Rubush & Hunter and constructed by Albert E. Metzger in 1929-30. Located at 55 Monument Circle, this building illustrated the high point of Art Deco design in the city. Although the City ordinance limited building heights on the Circle to 108 feet, the architects were able to achieve a higher height by receding the stories above the 108-foot limit. This set-back principle, while used extensively in Eastern states during this time period, found expression in Indianapolis only in Circle Tower. Its “ziggurat” crown capping the roofline, combined with bronze cresting above the individual storefronts, appealed to all kinds of office tenants.

Post-World War II office buildings are also represented in the district. The Lawyers Title Building (57-12) at 140 East Washington Street was completed in 1962 and exemplifies Modern curtain wall design. The commercial structure (57-11) next door at 146 East Washington Street is a circa 1890 building remodeled in the 1960s with a curtain wall that imitates mid-twentieth century stylizing.

In the 1980s the district experienced an office
tower building boom reminiscent of the 1920s era when the central business area was rebuilt. One example of this Post-Modernism movement is Market Tower (46-1) at 10 West Market Street, designed by Lohan Associates and Ratio Architects and built in 1986-88. Another is One North Capitol (54-7) at 1 North Capitol Avenue, designed by LOM Corporation and built in 1981. Both buildings were skyscraper development ventures that reshaped the skyline of the city.

**Entertainment and Recreation Uses in the District**

The district also contains buildings which represent the historic development and practice of leisure activities for amusement and diversion.

**Theater Uses**

Three historic theater buildings survive in the Mile Square. The first, the Empire Theater (44-21) at 136 North Delaware Street (also known as 121, 126 East Wabash Street), was constructed in 1892 as a venue for burlesque shows and sporting events. It was radically rebuilt and remodeled in 1922-1926 to hold 300 cars, and today still functions as a parking garage.

The second, Circle Theater, was designed by Rubush & Hunter and completed in 1916. Circle Theater was the first theater in the city constructed expressly for feature-length films, but it also accommodated stage and musical performances. After a $6.9 million renovation in 1984, Circle Theater reopened as the home of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. Although completely surrounded by the boundaries of the Monument Circle Historic District, Circle Theater stands alone as an individually designated property by the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission. This designation occurred in 1981 and the Circle Theater Historic Preservation Plan protects the building exterior and interior.

The Circle Theatre Company, which historically owned Circle Theater, constructed the third surviving theater building, Indiana Theatre (54-6) at 140 West Washington Street in 1927. Rubush & Hunter produced the theater design which created the city’s largest cinema, seating 3,200. The Indiana Theatre was also unique because it contained other recreational attractions such as a bowling alley, billiard tables, soda fountain and roof top ballroom. Indiana Theatre closed as a cinema but reopened after extensive remodeling in 1980 as the home of the Indiana Repertory Theatre.

**Clubhouse Uses**

Three clubhouses, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) Building (57-16) at 1 North Pennsylvania Street, the Knights of Pythias (K of P) Lodge Hall No. 56 (44-1) at 115 East Ohio Street, and the Columbia Club (45-2) at 121 Monument Circle are also important to the historic recreation theme of the district. Both the K of P and Odd Fellows Buildings are no longer owned or used by the fraternal lodges that built them, but they remain monuments to the movement which flourished in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. The Columbia Club, however, survived the decline of club life.
and continues to enjoy the same prestige and status it commanded in the past.

The I.O.O.F. was the city’s second fraternal order, established in 1846. They built their first Hall in the 1850s on Pennsylvania Street at the National Road, but demolished it in 1907 to make way for the present building. Completed in 1908, the fourteen-story design by Rubush & Hunter incorporated street-accessible showrooms and storefronts on the first two floors. Nine stories of office space occupied the middle portion, with lodge meeting rooms and an auditorium on the top three floors. Rents from the commercial office and retail space provided income for the fraternal organization.

The K of P Hall was constructed in 1906 as the home of Indianapolis Lodge No. 56. In 1910 the Lodge was noted as “one of the three largest K of P lodge buildings in the country.” The building had rental commercial space on the first floor with lodge activities occupying the balance of the building area. Like the Odd Fellows, the K of P chose Rubush & Hunter to design its lodge hall.

The Columbia Club at 121 Monument Circle was originally founded in 1888 as a marching club, supporting the successful presidential campaign of local attorney Benjamin Harrison. It then quickly established itself as an influential organization linked to the Republican Party. The organization first occupied a house on the site, but demolished it around 1900 to make way for a multi-story club house. It was then replaced by the present Columbia Club building, constructed in 1924-1925. Also designed by the local firm of Rubush & Hunter, the prominent building offered club members guest rooms, dining rooms, lounges, meeting rooms, and athletic facilities.

**Other Entertainment Uses**

The glass-and-steel Artsgarden dome (66-1 Part A) straddling the intersection of Illinois and Washington Streets is a modern entertainment addition to the district. Designed by Ehrenkrantz, Eckstut & Whitelaw and built in 1994-95, it connects Claypool Court, Conrad Hotel, Hyatt Regency Hotel and the Circle Centre Mall to each other. The 72,500 square feet of space serves as a public area and is used year-round for performances, exhibitions, meetings, community and special events.

The Emmis Broadcasting Building (55-3) at 40 Monument Circle is the newest building on the Circle and houses the headquarters of Emmis Communications, owner of multiple radio stations. Some of those stations are housed within and program from the building. Designed by local architecture firm Ratio Architects and built in 1999-2000, the building incorporates the historic façade of the former Journal Building, built in 1897, into the elevation facing Monument Circle and the historic façade of the former Rink’s Women’s Apparel Store (55-11 and 55-12), built in 1910, into the accompanying parking garage facing North Illinois Street.

**Religious Uses in the District**

Founded in 1837, Christ Church Cathedral (45-1) at 125 Monument Circle is the oldest church in Indianapolis and the only church that remains in the district. Four Protestant churches faced Monument Circle from circa 1830 to 1868, but over time three of them sold their lots and moved northward as the Circle changed from a

Photo Source: Businesses on Washington Street, 1910, Indiana Historical Society Collection
residential area to a commercial core. The cathedral is the church’s second structure on the site. The first was built in 1838 of wood construction, then removed to make way for the present church, built in 1857-1859. Irish-born architect William J. Tinsley (1804-1885) was the creative mind behind the design. Christ Church is the “mother church” for much of the present Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis and was elevated to cathedral status in 1954.

Indiana Soldiers and Sailors Monument
Although located at the center of the district, the Monument and surrounding state-owned land are excluded from IHPC jurisdiction because they are protected and operated by the Indiana War Memorial Commission. However, as the district’s namesake the Monument is worth mentioning for its significant impact on the district’s composition.

For Hoosiers of the late 19th century, the Civil War was the epochal event of the state’s history, a cataclysm that preserved the United States through immense effort and sacrifices on the part of Indiana soldiers and citizens. The first official endorsement for a monument or memorial dedicated to the Indiana Soldiers of the Civil War came from Oliver P. Morton. As early as November of 1865 he urged the state to “… honor the dead (soldier), cherish the living, and preserve in immortal memory the deeds and virtues of all, as an inspiration for countless generations to come.” Gov. Morton later told the state legislature that a monument should be built to commemorate the sacrifices of Indiana soldiers.

No other Civil War memorial in the state approaches the Monument in size, scope of design, cost or prominence of location. When finished in 1901, the Monument visually dominated the Mile Square plat laid by Alexander Ralston in 1821, and provided an impressive terminus to all the streets leading to the Circle. By virtue of its commanding location, unique design, and local tradition as Indianapolis’ most familiar landmark, the Monument also became the symbol of the city.
Architectural Significance

Photo Source: Block’s Department Store at Night, 1916, Indiana Historical Society Collection
ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Most of the resources described in the Historic Significance section were designed by architects, many of them local, and were constructed by accomplished builders and ornamented by talented artists. Today their work stands as evidence of the pride of Indianapolis residents in creating a diverse built environment. Yet this showcase of architectural history would be incomplete without the streets that define their geographic locations. Washington and Market Streets, platted by Alexander Ralston, remain intact as originally designed and provide the magnificent streetscape views for which the city is known.

LOCAL ARCHITECTS

D.A. Bohlen & Son
Diedrich August Bohlen (1827-1890) emigrated from Germany and opened his architectural office in Indianapolis in 1853. The practice passed down through the family: Diedrich was succeeded by his son Oscar, grandson August and great-grandson Robert. This firm was responsible for landmark buildings in Indianapolis and around the state, many of them religious or institutional.

Buildings designed by the D.A. Bohlen & Son firm:
- S.S. Kresge Building, 41 East Washington Street (65-4)
- Indiana Building, 120 East Market Street (44-16)
- Indiana Dental College Building, 150 North Delaware Street (44-3)

Adolf Scherrer
Swiss native Scherrer (1848-1925) was educated at the Kunstakadmie in Vienna. After emigrating, he arrived in Indianapolis in 1873 to work for Indianapolis architect Edwin May. May and Scherrer’s design of the Indiana State House was selected as the winner after a competition, and Scherrer was the supervising architect and completed the drawings after May’s death in 1880. Either on his own or in partnership with others, Scherrer was responsible for many local schools, houses, commercial and institutional buildings.

Buildings designed by Adolf Scherrer:
- Rink’s Cloak House Building, 25 North Illinois Street (55-11 and 55-12)

R.P. Daggett & Co.
Robert Platt Daggett (1837-1915) founded his firm in 1880. A prolific and versatile architect, he designed numerous residences such as the 1872 James Whitcomb Riley House, as well as schools and commercial buildings. Daggett’s son, Robert Frost (1875-1955) joined the firm after earning his diploma in 1901 from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, and Robert Frost Daggett, Jr. (1912-1985) joined in 1948. The firm dissolved after the younger Daggett’s retirement.

Buildings designed by the R.P. Daggett & Co. firm:
- Hotel Washington, 32 East Washington Street (56-10)
- Consolidated Building, 115 North Pennsylvania Street (44-18)
- Inland Building, 156 East Market Street (44-12)

Photo Source: Indiana National Bank Building, 1956, Indiana Historical Society Collection
ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- Lombard Building, 22 East Washington Street (56-11)
- H. Lieber Company Building, 24 West Washington Street (44-11)
- Continental Bank Building (later rebuilt as the Electric Building), 1 Monument Circle (56-1)
- Lemcke Building (later remodeled as the LaRosa Building), 107 North Pennsylvania Street (44-17)

Vonnegut & Bohn
The architectural firm of Vonnegut & Bohn contributed much to the district’s architectural spectrum. Formed in 1888 by Bernard Vonnegut (1855-1908) and Arthur Bohn (1861-1948), this team was responsible for many buildings throughout the city. The firm’s designs were wide-ranging and included industrial, school, institutional, religious, residential, commercial and office buildings.

Buildings designed by the Vonnegut & Bohn firm:
- L.S. Ayres & Company Building (and additions), 1 West Washington Street (66-3 and 66-4)
- William H. Block Company Building (and addition), 50 North Illinois Street (54-4)
- Kahn Tailoring Building, 1 North Meridian Street (56-16)
- Fletcher Trust Building, 108 North Pennsylvania Street (45-4)
- Meyer-Kiser Bank Building, 130 East Washington Street (57-13)
- Selig’s Dry Goods Company Building, 20 West Washington Street (55-6)
- Turner Building & Saving Association Building, 116 North Delaware Street (44-10)

Rubush & Hunter
This architectural duo left a deep impression on downtown Indianapolis. Preston C. Rubush (1867-1947) and Edgar O. Hunter (1873-1949) founded their firm in 1905 and designed almost 200 buildings throughout the country until the partnership ended in 1938. A number of the district's early 20th century buildings are identified as their creations and showcase their experience in a variety of architectural styles.

Buildings designed by the Rubush & Hunter firm:
- Circle Tower, 55 Monument Circle (56-2)
- H.P. Wasson & Company Building, 2 West Washington Street (55-5)
- Indiana Garage, 145 East Market Street (57-4)
- Odd Fellows Building, 1 North Pennsylvania Street (57-16)
- Columbia Club, 121 Monument Circle (45-2)
- Knights of Pythias (K of P) Lodge No. 56, 115 East Ohio Street (44-1)
- Indiana Theatre, 140 West Washington Street (54-6)
- Circle Theater, 45 Monument Circle
- Daniel Stewart Company Building, 50 South Meridian Street (66-5)
- Fidelity Trust Building, 146 East Market Street (44-14)

Fermor Spencer Cannon
Cannon studied architecture at the University of Illinois and maintained his own practice from 1913 to 1929. Cannon’s father was the founder of Railroadmen’s Federal Savings and Loan Association, to

Photo Source: Odd Fellows Building, 1946, Indiana Historical Society Collection
which Cannon succeeded him as president and later, chairman of the board after closing his design office. An especially notable work by Cannon is the 1928 Butler University field house, which is a National Historic Landmark.

Buildings designed by Fermor Spencer Cannon:
- J.F. Wild Bank Building, 129 East Market Street (57-2)

**William Earl Russ**
Russ was a graduate of Columbia University and moved his architectural office to Indianapolis in 1913. By 1934 he had formed a partnership with local architect Merritt Harrison.

Buildings designed by William Earl Russ:
- The Harrison Hotel, 143 West Market Street (54-1)

**Bass, Knowlton & Co.**
This firm was founded by architect Herbert L. Bass (1877-1926) and engineer Lynn O. Knowlton in 1921. The firm specialized in garage structures and designed many across the country for the U.S. Post Office, while also producing designs for the National Register-listed Cole Motor Company and numerous mansions.

Buildings designed by the Bass, Knowlton & Co. firm:
- Test Building, 54 Monument Circle (55-2)

**Ratio Architects**
This local firm was founded as HDG Architects in 1982 by architect William Browne and developers Cornelius Alig and Harold Garrison, and was affiliated with Mansur Development Company. In 1987 Browne bought out his partners and changed the firm’s name to Ratio. As the company grew, Ratio played a major role in the late twentieth century redevelopment of existing buildings downtown in addition to construction of new buildings in the district.

Buildings designed or redeveloped by the Ratio Architects firm:
- Addition to Elliott’s Block, 14 West Maryland Street (66-6)
- Emmis Broadcasting Building and Journal Building Façade, 40 Monument Circle (55-3)
- Monument Circle Building, 120 Monument Circle (46-2)
ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

NATIONAL ARCHITECTS

Daniel H. Burnham
Burnham (1846-1912) was commissioned to design Merchants National Bank at the prime location of Washington and Meridian Streets. He was an experienced designer of high-rise office buildings in Chicago and Chief of Construction for the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition. The seventeen-story tower was the city’s tallest building for fifty years until the City-County Building was erected.

Buildings designed by Daniel H. Burnham:
- Merchants National Bank Building, 11 South Meridian Street (65-1)

Jarvis Hunt
Hunt (1859-1941) was another Chicago architect hired to design a commercial structure in downtown Indianapolis.

Buildings designed by Jarvis Hunt:
- Indianapolis News-Goodman Building, 30 West Washington Street (55-9)

Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill (SOM)
This world-renowned architectural firm was founded in Chicago in 1936 by Louis Skidmore, Nathaniel Alexander Owings, and John Ogden Merrill. Skidmore and Owings were both Indiana natives. Still a leader today in building design, the firm is responsible for such famous buildings as the Willis (formerly Sears) Tower and the John Hancock Center in Chicago, and the Lever House in New York City. The firm introduced curtain wall construction to Indianapolis in the 1950s.

Buildings designed by the Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill firm:
- Fidelity-AFNB-Chase Building, 111 Monument Circle (45-3)
- J.C. Penney Co. Department Store (now converted to the Monument Circle Building with no semblance of the original SOM design), 120 Monument Circle (46-2)

Photo Source: J.C. Penney Store, c. 1952, Indiana Historical Society Collection
BUILDERS AND ARTISTS

Sculptors
Alexander Sangernebo (1856-1930) was born in Estonia and educated in St. Petersburg, Hamburg and Paris. He arrived in Indianapolis in the early 1890s as chief sculptor of the Indianapolis Terra Cotta Company and opened his own studio in 1898.

Buildings displaying work by Alexander Sangernebo:
- L.S. Ayres & Co. Building, 1 West Washington Street (66-3 and 66-4)
- Columbia Club, 121 Monument Circle (45-2)
- Guaranty Building, 20 North Meridian Street (55-4)
- Test Building, 54 Monument Circle (55-2)
- Illinois Building, 35 North Illinois Street (55-1)
- Selig Dry Goods Store, 20 West Washington Street (55-6)
- Fletcher Trust Building, 108 North Pennsylvania Street (45-4)
- Odd Fellows Building, 1 North Pennsylvania Street (57-16)
- Kahn Tailoring Building, 1 North Meridian Street (56-16)

Construction
The William P. Jungclaus Company was a local firm that constructed many buildings in the district. William P. Jungclaus (1849-1923) left Germany in 1870 to visit his uncle, Indianapolis architect D.A. Bohlen, and decided to remain. He founded his contracting business in 1875 and was succeeded by family members. The firm still exists as a major builder in the city under the name Jungclaus-Campbell Company.

Buildings constructed by the William P. Jungclaus Company:
- Indiana Theatre, 140 West Washington Street (54-6)
- Harrison Hotel, 143 West Market Street (54-1)
- Columbia Club, 121 Monument Circle (45-2)
- Indiana Building, 120 East Market Street (44-16)
- Illinois Building, 35 North Illinois Street (55-1)
- Guaranty Building, 20 North Meridian Street (55-4)
- Circle Tower, 55 Monument Circle (56-2)
- Taylor Carpet Co., 26 West Washington Street (55-8)
- H.P. Wasson Co., 2 West Washington Street (55-5)
- L.S. Ayres & Co., 1 West Washington Street (66-3 and 66-4)
- S.S. Kresge Company, 41 East Washington Street (65-4)

Photo Source: Detail of the Columbia Club, 2009, Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission Collection
ERAS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Indianapolis’ history is most easily discerned by looking at the built environment of its downtown and how it has evolved over time. Eras of significance, as explained here, define the different chapters of the city’s history. Each era has character-defining features that categorize it as part of that era. As the district continues to evolve these features will take on new meaning.

1821-1847: Pioneer
Indianapolis, platted in 1821, was designed by prominent planner Alexander Ralston. In Ralston’s plan Washington Street was to be the principal street in the new city; its extra width and land layout point to its significance. Washington Street also made up a portion of the National Road, the first federally-funded interstate highway. This road stretched through 6 states, beginning in Cumberland, Maryland and ending in Vandalia, Illinois.

Despite being the first area settled, the Monument Circle District does not contain structures dating from this pioneer period. Originally they would have been residences constructed of log or heavy-timber frames. As the city grew, these structures were razed or moved to make way for newer, bigger buildings. Indianapolis’ growth and development snowballed when the first train arrived in the city in October of 1847. Other railroads followed quickly followed, connecting the Indiana town to the rest of the world. Because of the railroads, the city’s population exploded from 2,692 in 1840 to 8,091 in 1850.

1847-1866: Antebellum
The city of Indianapolis continued to grow during the Antebellum and Civil War eras. By the beginning of the war the city contained over 18,000 people, with immigrants arriving from the East Coast and Europe to seek job opportunities in the steadily growing town.

Due to this population increase, the city’s central business district grew larger and spread away from the original confined “main street” along the National Road. These businesses were located in brick buildings two to four stories in height, replacing the smaller older homes and shops along Washington Street.

The rapid growth of Indianapolis also affected Circle Street, transforming it from a small neighborhood to a booming commercial district which included law and insurance offices and retail stores. This commercial district then spread along Washington Street and Market Street.

Some of the oldest buildings currently in the Monument Circle District date to the 1850s, including Christ Church Cathedral (45-1) and several commercial buildings, though some of the original details have been hidden behind newer facades.

1867-1889: Post Civil War
Indianapolis continued to grow during this period following the Civil War. By 1870 the city was home to 75,056; twenty years later that number had grown to over 105,000 citizens. The central business district continued to swell as commercial interests engulfed the surrounding residential areas, becoming a denser area perfect for commercial activity. The city also built larger civic buildings to serve their needs. In 1876 the Marion County Courthouse was erected. The year 1888...
ERAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

saw the completion of the Indiana Statehouse as well as the beginning of construction on the Soldiers and Sailors Monument located in the heart of downtown.

Along with new buildings, the city experienced an increase of notable architectural firms. Robert Platt Daggett began his practice in 1868, D.A. Bohlen & Son formed in 1884, and Vonnegut and Bohn opened their doors in 1888. The Post Civil War period saw the continued popularity of the Italianate, Renaissance Revival, and Second Empire Styles. Many of the new architects practicing in Indianapolis designed grand buildings in these styles, which can still be seen in the Monument Circle District today.

1890-1899: Post Civil War
During this period the city’s population expanded to 170,000, and buildings and commerce continued to grow. Older buildings from the antebellum era were demolished to make way for larger buildings and newer architectural styles and materials. Terra-cotta and steel were used frequently in these newer buildings. The single-story Wagner Building (44-4) showcased a stamped sheet-metal entablature while the façade of the Lombard Building (56-11) highlighted the use of terra-cotta.

The year 1892 marked the completion of the Empire Theater (44-21), providing a variety of entertainment for Indianapolis’ population. Its uses ranged from a venue for stage shows to a ring for boxing matches. The theater originally towered over its low-rise neighbors, but now after decades of growth and development this structure is located behind even taller buildings and is completely screened from view.

1900-1919: Early Twentieth Century
Buildings of the district built in the first two decades of the twentieth century are numerous. They were built with modern materials such as steel and concrete and were larger in size. This period produced numerous high-rise skyscrapers, starting with Rubush & Hunter’s 14-story Odd Fellows Building (57-16) in 1908, followed by the Daggetts’ 15-story Consolidated Building (44-18) of 1911, and their 17-story Hotel Washington (56-10) of 1912. Daniel Burnham’s 17-story Merchants National Bank (65-1) of 1912 reigned as the tallest building in Indianapolis until 1962. All of these skyscrapers used the standard classical formula of base, shaft, and capital and had Renaissance Classical details in carved limestone and terra-cotta.

The early 1900s also saw the completion and dedication of the unofficial symbol of the city: the Soldiers and Sailors Monument. Skyscrapers posed a threat to the prominence of the Monument and led to the 1905 adoption of a height restriction ordinance on buildings near Monument Circle.
ERAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

1920-1930: Post World War I
Following the end of World War I, the population of the city grew from 314,194 to 364,161. This period saw the lifting of war-time material and labor restrictions, leading to one of the biggest building booms the city had ever seen. Monument Circle was the focus of redevelopment as one nineteenth century building after another was pulled down and replaced. Revival styles became popular, as did the “zoomy” Art Deco style. Architects also designed spaces for the automobile by producing parking garages such as Indiana Garage (57-4), Union Title/Del Mar Garage (57-5) and the Test Building (55-2) with its unique internal garage.

1931-1949: Great Depression
During the years of the Great Depression, the city’s population growth slowed with a gain of only 22,811 by 1940. This period saw very little new construction because of the low demand caused by the Depression, and then restrictions on construction materials and labor shortages during World War II. Instead, the city experienced a rise in retrofitting, or applying new facades to existing older buildings. Examples of these buildings include the H.P. Wasson Department Store (55-5), F.W. Woolworth Five and Dime store (65-2), Aetna (57-19), and the Turner (44-10) buildings. This period also saw a new trend where building owners razed their empty commercial buildings to reduce the tax burden and turned the properties into surface parking lots. Many buildings were permanently damaged or lost to these trends.

Ironically, the three major local department stores made substantial investments in their buildings. The Ayres Building (66-3 and 66-4), Block Store (54-4), and the collection of Wasson buildings (55-5) were all heavily altered and expanded during the Depression and World War II.

1950-1979: Mid Twentieth Century
The Post-War period brought the dramatic arrival of the Modern Style to the stage of Monument Circle. With its distinct characteristics of blankness, severity, and simple window grids, this style began to sprout on new buildings or as new facades to existing buildings. Skidmore, Owings and Merrill’s 1959 Fidelity Building (45-3) on Monument Circle is an excellent example. The modern designs of the local architectural firm of Lennox, Matthews, Simmons & Ford was in high demand during the 1960s and 1970s.

This was a period of great growth in Indianapolis as the population grew from 427,173 in 1950 to 744,624 in 1970. However, it also saw the decline of the central business district as a result of suburban growth, and demand for more parking lots and garages fueled demolition fever. Removal of “eyesores” was applauded in the local press. The Interstate system, completed in
ERAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

1976, spurred development of large shopping malls with local and national department store outlets on the I-465 beltway, giving shoppers fewer reasons to frequent the stores on Washington Street. New buildings, such as the Union Federal Building (57-1) of 1964 with stark Modern glass facades, were enthusiastically received.

1980-1995: Late Twentieth Century
In the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s the central business district became a continuous construction site, culminating with the completion of the Circle Center Mall in 1995 and continued rehabilitation of historic buildings. Between 1989 and 1990 historic and non-historic buildings were demolished to clear the streetscape of the first block of West Washington for Circle Center Mall. Despite the loss of buildings, the resulting mall design reflected the organic evolution of the urban streetscape by reusing the Griffith (66-2) and Darmody facades along with new materials of various textures and colors. New high-rise office buildings were introduced downtown, drastically transforming the city’s skyline. Additionally this decade marked an era of investments in public buildings with the development of Market Square Arena, the Indiana Convention Center, and eventually the Hoosier RCA Dome.

1995-2011: Present
The current period has seen construction and design oriented to highlight the mall, such as the Conrad Hotel (55-10) and the Emmis Building (55-3) as well as the rehabilitation of the William H. Block Building (54-4). Awareness of the value of historic buildings also increased the number of rehabilitation projects. However, the mall and the revived central business district has resulted in increased demand for more parking structures, posing unique dilemmas to the ongoing retention of the built environment in downtown Indianapolis.