

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination FormSee instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

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received  
date entered

## 1. Name

historic Cole Motor Car Company

and/or common Service Supply Company, Inc.

## 2. Location

street &amp; number 730 East Washington Street (U.S. 40) N/A not for publication

city, town Indianapolis N/A vicinity of congressional district

state Indiana code 018 county Marion code 097

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Service Supply Company, Inc.

street &amp; number 603 East Washington Street

city, town Indianapolis N/A vicinity of state Indiana

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. City-County Building

street &amp; number 200 Block East Washington Street

city, town Indianapolis state Indiana

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic American Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ nodate 1971 ☒ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records National Park Service

city, town Washington state D.C.

## 7. Description

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved

date N/A

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Cole Motor Car Company building, constructed between 1911 and 1913, is located just east of downtown Indianapolis. Its massive proportions, generous fenestration, and lack of extensive ornamentation are typical of industrial buildings of the early 20th century. The Cole Building, however, also features Art Deco detailing on its main facade, distinguishing it from other buildings of its type.

Four stories high, the building is L-shaped. The smaller east wing on Market Street was built in 1911. Then, in 1913, the larger 100' x 390' addition, which spans the entire block between Market and Washington Streets, was added to the west side of the smaller building. Together, the original wing and addition form the L-shaped structure which stands today at the corner of Washington and Davidson Streets. A round brick smokestack stands at the intersection of the two buildings.

An interesting feature of the structure is its bridge-like foundation, necessitated by the placement of the building over Pogue's Run, a creek. The entire building is constructed of reinforced concrete.

The main, or south, facade, which faces Washington Street, is constructed of white ceramic brick. This facade displays unusual decorative details. The first story of this facade is of different design than the upper three stories. There are three bays across the first story, which have been altered from their original appearance. In the left half of the west bay is a recessed entrance. The left wall of the recessed area is black marble, and the angled right wall contains a large glass window with a blind panel above. The entrance, itself, consists of a pair of glass doors with a glass transom above. The right half of the west bay fronts the street, and consists of a large, six-paned window. The other two bays contain full-length windows divided into 12 panes. Four brick pilasters, topped with stone capitals, form the divisions between the bays on the ground floor. Just beneath the capitals are shield-like stone ornaments. The initials "CMC" which originally appeared on them have been removed. Above the pilasters is a row of vertical bricks, which contrasts with the horizontal brickwork of the rest of the facade. A projecting brick stringcourse runs across the facade, just above the vertical bricks. Together, the vertical brickwork, stringcourse, and strip of horizontal brickwork above the stringcourse form a frieze-like detail over the first story pilasters. An additional detail is the diamond-shaped inset of diagonally-laid brick above each pilaster.

At the second story level the design of the facade changes slightly. A projecting belt course of dressed stone adorns the base of the second story level. From this projection, four pilasters, placed directly over the pilasters on the first story, rise to the roof level, dividing the facade into three major bays. An interesting feature of this upper portion of the facade is the vertical bricks, laid within the horizontal brickwork, forming a vertical rectangular panel on the face of each pilaster. The tops of these pilasters rise above the roof level and are capped with stepped stone, and stylized pendants, lending an Art Deco flavor to the roofline.

On the three major bays, brick mullions divide each bay into three pairs of windows. Each window has two lower panes and a blind panel above. These windows are not original to the building. Vertical brickwork lines the top edge of each window.

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On the fourth story, a stone tablet is centered over each bay. Originally, the name, "Cole," appeared on these tablets, but it has been removed. A small, decorative shield is placed at either end of each tablet. A simple cornice crosses the facade at the roof level.

Along the west, south, and east elevations, the building formerly had rows of industrial windows, consisting of 90 small panes each. These windows have been bricked in, leaving only very small openings for single-paned windows. A rectangular, full-height service tower, which has been painted grey to match the rest of the building, has been added at the south end of the west elevation. "Service Supply Co., Inc.," has been painted along the top of the west wall, replacing the Cole logo.

In the interior, the building contains three basements, with a total of 22,000 square feet of floor space. In addition, each of the four floors has 56,196 feet of space. These large areas made the building suitable for its original use as an automobile assembly plant.

The nominated structure is somewhat crowded by Interstate 65. To the east of the building, just beyond Davidson Street, is an embankment for the interstate (see photo #3). On the north side of the building an access ramp has been constructed in the space over Market Street, passing within a few feet of the upper stories on the north elevation. Despite such close proximity to the building, neither the construction of the ramp nor its location poses any danger to the nominated structure. Service Supply Company continues to use the facility for its operations. The west and south elevations remain free of such obstruction and are clearly visible.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1911–1914

**Builder/Architect** W.C. Halstead/Bedford Stone & Construction

### Statement of Significance

The Cole Motor Car Company building is significant for its association with the Cole Company, one of Indianapolis' leading automobile makers in the early decades of the 20th century, and one of the earliest producers of luxury automobiles in the United States. The nominated structure is the original site from which the Cole Company expanded and experienced its most successful years of operation.

Joseph Jarrett Cole, owner of the Cole Motor Car Company, began his career in the transportation industry at the age of 19 in 1888, when he went to work as a salesman for the Parry Carriage Company in Indianapolis. Eight years later, in 1896, he became the Texas representative for Moon Brothers Carriage Company. By all accounts, Texas was a difficult market for a carriage salesman. However, Cole was quite successful, and he opened his own business, the Cole Carriage Company, in Indianapolis in 1904. A building on West New York Street housed this business.

In 1907, in anticipation of the future trends of the transportation market, Cole converted his facilities for the production of luxury automobiles. The first Cole car arrived on the market in 1909. Cole was a pioneer in the manufacture of eight cylinder automobiles and in the use of aluminum gears and wheels. He also built his reputation through his distinctive production method: he assembled his cars from parts which were ordered from other manufacturers, rather than manufacturing the entire car within his own plant.

Cole's venture was so successful that in 1911, he contracted with W. C. Halstead and Dewitt Moon to erect the smaller wing of the nominated building. This building was constructed at the corner of Market and Davidson Streets. By 1913, further expansion was necessary, and Cole contracted with Bedford Stone and Construction Company to build a 100' x 390' addition to the first building. The new facilities had a 6000 car capacity.

Cole's enterprise continued its success. Among the models produced in his plant were the Cole 30 Flyer, the Cole Aero-Eight, Roadster, and Berlin Car. Cole's cars performed well in road races and reliability tests. Among the road races which Cole cars won were the Elgin Road Race and the Vanderbilt Cup. During World War I, 80 Cole Aero-Eights were ordered for the American Expeditionary Force in France. Only 40 cars were shipped before the Armistice, but one of those cars was used by General John J. Pershing.

Between 1918 and 1921, Cole Motor Car Company was the second largest manufacturer of automobiles in the United States. During this period, Cole had 1000 selling connections in this country, and his cars were marketed in 58 foreign countries. By 1919, further expansion was necessary. Cole again contracted with Bedford Stone and Construction to build two new buildings, one east of Davidson Street in the next block of Washington Street, and the other building north of Market Street, across the street from the original building. The addition constructed east of Davidson Street has since been demolished. The other structure still stands, but is not part of this nomination.

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By the mid-1920's, the advent of assembly-line production made Cole's assembly method obsolete. He was unable to compete with manufacturers who used mass production methods. Rather than switch to the new method, Cole closed his plant. The last car left the plant in 1924. Cole died the next year, in 1925, at the age of 56.

Cole's family leased the nominated building to various business and industrial firms, including Lane Bryant Company, the George F. Cram Map Company, and Advance Independent Electrottype Company. Service Supply Company purchased the property in 1967.



## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see continuation sheet

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1 1/2

Quadrangle name Indianapolis West

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

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4	4	0	2	0	7	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** The property of the nominated building has a 457 ft. south boundary on Washington St.; 255 ft. north boundary on Market St.; and a 385 ft. east boundary on Davidson St. The diagonal 450 ft. west boundary is the railroad track.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Frank N. Owings, Jr., Corporate Information Manager

organization Service Supply Co., Inc. date August 30, 1979

street & number 603 E. Washington Street telephone 317/638-2411, Ext. 204

city or town Indianapolis state Indiana 46204

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

     national      state   X   local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *J. M. Redman*

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer date 1-21-83

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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