

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received \_\_\_\_\_  
date entered \_\_\_\_\_

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Indianapolis Chair Manufacturing Co.

and/or common Indianapolis Warehouse

## 2. Location

street & number 330 West New York Street N/A not for publication

city, town Indianapolis N/A vicinity of

state Indiana code 018 county Marion code 097

## 3. Classification

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

## 4. Owner of Property

name Canal Commons Associates, Inc.

street & number 8604 N. Allisonville Road

city, town Indianapolis N/A vicinity of state Indiana 46250

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. City-County Building, Recorder's Office

street & number City-County Building

city, town Indianapolis state Indiana

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

Built in three sections, this massive building dominated the Indianapolis skyline after 1893. (Photo 1.) Its design is typical of 19th century industrial buildings; its relationship to the adjacent Big Four railroad and the Central Canal is clear. (Photos 2 and 3.) Between 1891 and 1893 the Indianapolis Chair Manufacturing Company launched its most ambitious building program with the construction of the two six-story additions that now dominate the site. (Photo 4.)

The earliest brick building was reconstructed alongside the canal and railroad after a disastrous fire in 1860 destroyed the 1857 facility. Based upon an 1889 photo, however, that building no longer exists, except perhaps the square smokestack, now dwarfed by the six-story sections to the east. (Photo 2.) Based upon photographic evidence, sometime between 1889 and 1893 this southwest portion was probably demolished and rebuilt to its present appearance. (Photo 4, left.) The building's south facade is three stories, with the five first floor bays serving as loading docks, while the upper two stories have simple, segmental arched windows with stone sills. A corbeled brick cornice is capped by stone coping, which projects slightly above the flat industrial roof. On the west side, the facade contains only two bays on the first and third stories while the second story wall is blank. (Photo 9.) A two-bay by two-bay ell connects the northeast corner of this section with the smokestack rising from the corner of the ell. (Photos 2, 9.)

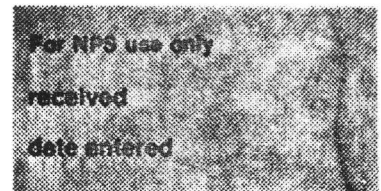
The ambitious construction in 1891-1893 of the eastern and northern portions of the facility was aided by the site's proximity to the canal. The lumber of the massive interior beams (Photo 10) is said to have come from Boone County and was transported to the site by way of the Michigan Road to a point about three miles from the city, where it was dumped into the canal and floated the remaining distance. The average depth of each beam is 20", while the average width is eight inches. Used in pairs, the beam width is increased to 16". Large cast iron brackets or stirrups complete the connection.

Construction of the first six-story brick section (southeast) commenced in 1891. The main facade faced east on Ellsworth Street, which is now only an alley. (Photo 4.) This section comprises 14 bays, set in pairs separated by pilasters that decrease in depth as they rise above the foundation. These pilasters serve to buttress the load-bearing masonry walls. The segmental arched windows have stone sills, as does the loading dock bay that was added at a later, undetermined date. A blind arcade at the top is surmounted by a simple brick cornice that is capped by stone coping, which rises above the flat, industrial roof. The south facade of this portion of the building is two bays wide (Photo 4), plus a corner tower. Upper story windows are identical in width to the first floor loading bays. All of the bays are segmentally arched with stone sills.

The east and south facades just described are joined by an entry tower rising to eight stories on the southeast corner. The building's rough-faced ashlar limestone foundation is here continued above grade to the springline of the round-arched, barrel-vaulted main entrance. The original double doors with fan lights still remain. (Photos 5, 6.) Corbeled, recessed panels separate pilasters which rise from the third floor to the eighth, lightening the visual impact of the massive tower. Originally, the 90' tower was topped by a 10,000 gallon gravity water tank. The south facade of the tower is nearly identical to the east, differing only with the windows set on the landing level midway between each floor.

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The second phase of new construction began as soon as the first section was in operation. This portion of the building is the north half of the existing structure. (Photo 7.) Thirteen bays on the east beyond the 1891 addition, this section of the building is constructed without the abundance of reinforcing pilasters, having only one pilaster midway in the facade. The decorative blind arcade and cornice are duplicated in this half of the building. Another tower rises at the north end of this final section of the factory. More simple in its execution, it does not visually deter from the dominance of the main tower, although it was originally identical in height. (Photo 8.) Lacking the heavy stone base and the recessed panels, the tower has only corner pilasters and limestone banding for visual interest. A loading bay is located on the first floor with wide, segmental arched windows on each of the six stories above. The wall of the north side of the tower is blank. The north facade of this section originally contained 14 bays. All but one were destroyed when this wall collapsed during World War II, while the building was being used by the government for the storage of surplus materials. The remaining portion of the building was sealed in 1948 with a combination of reinforced concrete and glazed brick. (Photo 8.)

The west facade of the structure is a collision of varying section depths. All original bay openings are segmentally arched with stone sills. A single-story wing stretches from the final phase of the building to the front portion.

At the time of the 1891-1893 construction, many innovative features were included in the building, the first high-rise mill in the city. A hot air system was integrated into the interior walks to heat the building, and an electric plant provided lighting. A six-car siding track and 16 loading docks aided the business in efficient pick-up and delivery of goods and materials. Three elevators were incorporated into the building, and one of the first sprinkler systems protected the company's investment. Three large, interior security vaults were constructed with cast iron lions heads guarding the vault doors. (Photo 12.) An enormous scale, still in operating condition, was installed in the southwest corner of the building.



## 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1891-1893

Builder/Architect Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Indianapolis Warehouse is one of the last remaining tall mills in Indianapolis and is typical of industrial buildings of the mid- to late-19th century. The architectural strength and mass of this building help to emphasize and define the linear character of the historic Lower Central Canal and delineate its boundaries. The building is also a landmark that relates to the Indiana Avenue corridor. It is important to the history of the city because of the role it played in commerce, industry, and economic development.

In 1857, Charles Helwig and John Roberts opened their chair manufacturing company—Helwig, Roberts and Company—at the New York Street crossing of the Central Canal. Sometime in 1860, this building burned and a replacement, three-story brick building was immediately constructed. In 1874 the business was reorganized under the name of the Indianapolis Chair Manufacturing Company, with Helwig as president and his son, Frank, serving as general manager. By the turn of the century, the factory complex and lumber yard covered a city block.

In 1891, the Indianapolis Sentinel reported the company had grown to employ 350 workers producing up to 200 dozen chairs a day. The main factory and lumber yards were still located at New York Street and the Canal, but warehousing and some manufacturing were also done at four other locations. For this reason, the construction of a huge, six-story factory at the New York Street site commenced in 1890. In order to continue maximum production throughout the building project, the new mill was constructed in two phases around the existing factory. At the completion of the first phase—the southeast section of the factory—construction began on the northern phase. According to an 1891 publication, the chair manufactory was one of the largest of its class in the United States, its trading having doubled from 1889 to 1890.<sup>1</sup>

The business experienced its period of greatest prosperity between 1888 and 1901 under the guidance of its second president, Edward Groves Cornelius, father-in-law of general manager, Frank Helwig. Cornelius, a businessman of high standing in the city, was also a founder and officer of the Indiana Trust Company. After Cornelius' death in 1901, Vice-President Norman A. Byram served as president for two years. At the end of that time, John H. Emrick became president. John's family had been in the furniture manufacturing business since 1868, when his father, Henry, founded Western Furniture Company after serving for three years as general manager of the Indianapolis Chair forerunner, Helwig, Roberts and Company. In 1915, Indianapolis Chair Manufacturing Company ceased operation and Emrick joined the family company.

It was at this time that the Indianapolis Warehouse Company's association with the site began. Since its founding in 1892, the company had been located on South Pennsylvania Street. Offering insured storage, the business had outgrown its facilities and the vacant

<sup>1</sup> Indianapolis and Its Resources, A Souvenir of the Indianapolis Sentinel, 1891, p. 46.

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Indianapolis Chair building was ideal for its needs. Occupying the structure in 1913, the Warehouse leased the building from the Indianapolis Chair Company until 1932, when the structure was purchased by the warehouse company. Used to store government surplus goods during World War II, the building was damaged when the north wall collapsed under the weight of surplus sugar stored there. Repairs were made in 1948. The building was used for storage until the late 1970's. Since that time, the structure has been vacant.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.14 acres

Quadrangle name Indianapolis West

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	6	5	7	1	5	4	0	4	4	0	2	5	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Elsworth sub L33 B29 to L47 B29  
Inclusive 4 x 12 ft. SE COR ADJ L33 B29

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gordon Clark

organization Gordon Clark Associates, AIA date 7-12-84

street & number 611 N. Capitol Ave. telephone 317/264-2995

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  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.

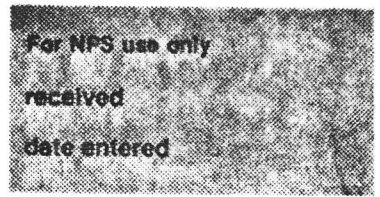
State Historic Preservation Officer signature James M. Anderson

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer date 10-5-84

<b>For NPS use only</b>	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
	date
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

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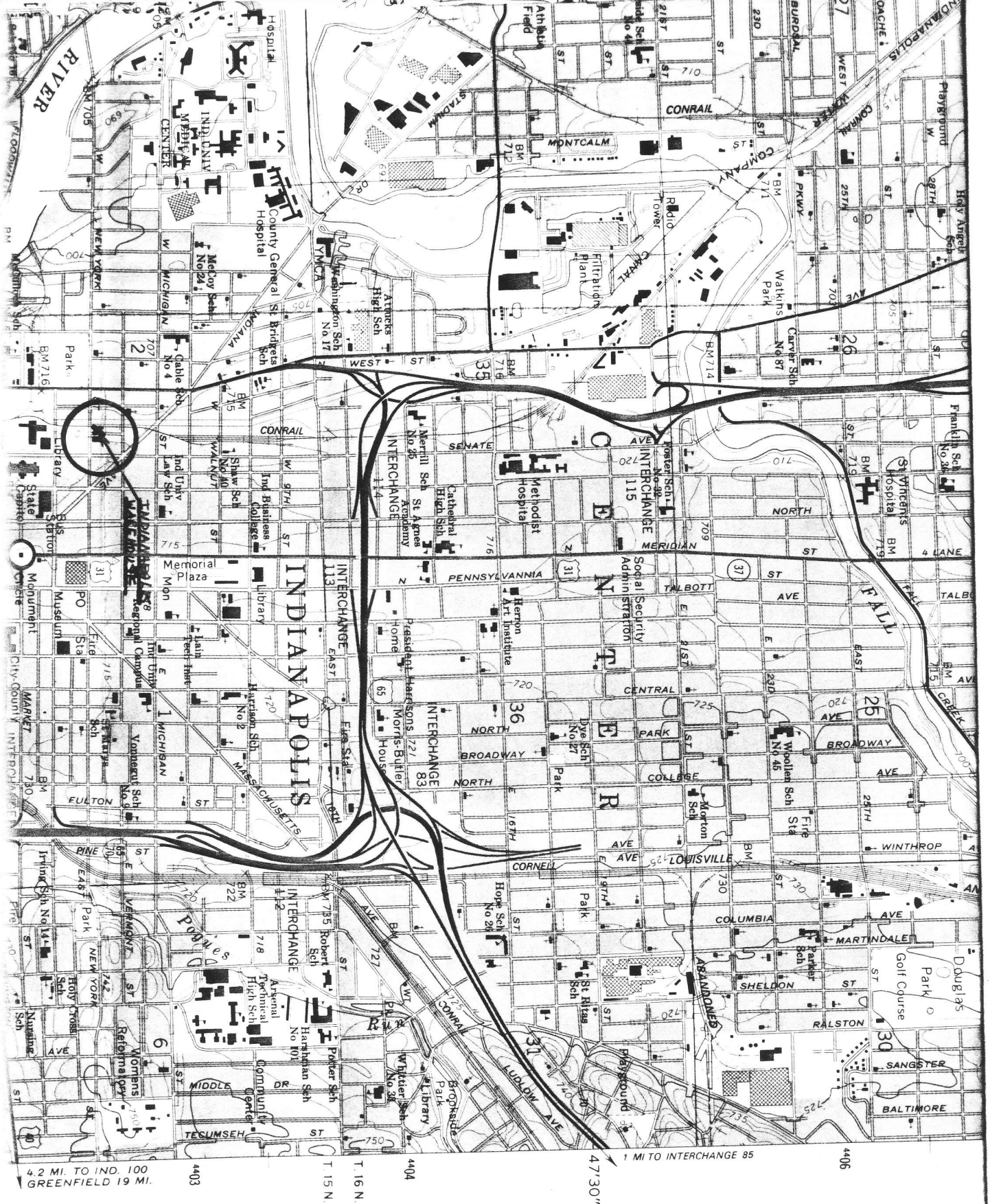


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Indianapolis Chair Company  
 Indianapolis, Indiana  
 UTM Reference: 16/571540/4402540