

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 The Vera, The Olga

and or common

2. Location

street & number 1440, 1446 N. Illinois St. N/A not for publication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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
			<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Edith Dorfman, Ruth Gold, Martin Dorfman

street & number 1029 N. Illinois St.

city, town Indianapolis N/A vicinity of state Indiana 46204

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Center Township, Marion County Assessor's Office

street & number Room 1301, City-County Building, 200 E. Washington Street

city, town Indianapolis state Indiana 46204

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Indianapolis-Marion County Register of Historic Properties title has this property been determined eligible? yes X no

date (nomination submitted 3-28-84) federal state X county local

depository for survey records Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission

city, town Indianapolis state Indiana

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
excellent	deteriorated	unaltered	X original site
X good	ruins	X altered	moved date
fair	unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Vera and The Olga, two red brick rowhouse buildings, are two story, hipped roof structures located in a courtyard setting. The east ends front on Illinois Street while the buildings' main elevations face each other across a narrow courtyard in a north/south direction, and feature full-length covered porches.

Each building originally contained ten units which have identical front facades. The ground level of each unit is three bays across and originally consisted of a center entry flanked by two windows. In 1943, one window was converted to a door in order to provide exterior access to the upper level, which was made into a separate apartment, making 20 units in each building.

Located in the center bay, the original wood entry doors have two lights topped by a glazed transom and headed with two header courses set in a segmental arch. Original screen doors, several of which are intact, feature decorative bracing of corner fans and spooled bars. The added wood doors with plain wood surrounds have a light with a wood panel below. The window is a rectangular double-hung sash with single lights; it is topped by two header courses set in a segmental arch with a wood filled tympanum, and has a limestone sill.

The first level of the main facade on each building is sheltered by a continuous gable roofed porch supported by chamfered posts with scroll cut brackets. The posts are spaced with a narrow opening at the location of the original entrance. The porch has a series of modillions across the frieze. A wood railing separates the individual units (Photo 4); originally, the entire porch was railed at the exterior line of the slightly elevated concrete floor.

The second story main facades are composed of projecting bay windows and small windows creating an A-B-B-A, A-B-B-A pattern across the front. The fully glazed projecting bay, roofed by a slight extension of the main roof, is centered above the original entrance. Each bay consists of three attached, double-hung windows with one-over-one lights; the center window is flanked by 45° angled windows. The windows are topped by a two-tiered lintel. The smaller, single windows are double-hung sash with one-over-one lights and have the same window heads and sills as the first floor windows. Above these windows, a bracketed cornice, interrupted by the bay windows, extends around the building.

The rear elevations repeat the original three bay, center entrance arrangement. Each unit has a bulkhead for access to the basement. The north or rear elevation of The Olga retains its original rear porch, which is similar in configuration to the front porches. The rear porch of The Vera was removed after 1943.

Facing the street, the east end elevations are asymmetrical and plain in design (Photos 2 and 3). On the ground level, each building has a broken scroll, pedimented limestone plaque inscribed with "1440" on The Vera and (1446) on The Olga, located near the front facade. There are two bays on this level; a window with a single light is positioned near the center; a double-hung window with the same surrounds as the front facade windows is located near the rear facade. Directly above it, there is an identical window, the only second level bay.

The black asphalt hipped roof has open bracketed eaves. Red brick chimneys have been leveled to the ridge height. Stack ventilators and other contemporary attic vents pierce the horizontal roof line at regular intervals.

The original front center entrance of each unit provides access to the living room which extends the full width of the unit. An east-west load-bearing wall separating the rear two rooms from the living room contains two single leaf openings to a kitchen and the original dining room, now a bedroom (Photo 6). Access between the kitchen and the original dining room has been enclosed by a new north-south wall inserted in the kitchen which provides closet space opening with the original doorway and door in place in the bedroom. A long, narrow bathroom located beneath the stairway is fitted with a small claw-and-ball footed tub and a bracketed marble-topped sink. All living rooms have a corner fireplace unit with glazed earth-toned tiled surrounds and hearth. Stock pedimented overmantels supported by simple piers finished the composition (Photo 7). All openings were fitted with coal boxes. Some retain the original stamped cover. All interior trim, originally walnut stained, is wide and unmolded. Quarter circles are inserted atop the framing stiles, giving a flat arched appearance to all openings.

Originally, a short run of stairs which entered the living room along the entrance wall provided access to a landing. This portion of the stairway has been removed and the original wall continued to the facade. Additional steps have been inserted down to the new entrance, creating a steep, straight run stairway to the second floor. This enclosed stairway provides access to a small hallway. Transomed doors open to the large front room containing the centered bay (Photo 8), a small rear bedroom and a hall closet, the original entrance to the third bedroom which has been converted to a kitchen. A small bathroom located over the stairway is entered from the front room. Originally, this bath contained a small ceramic corner sink and stool. Today, a small metal shower stall is located immediately inside the door.

The Vera and The Olga are sited to the exterior limits of Lots 1 and 2 in Drake's Addition to the City of Indianapolis. The open courtyard space between the two ranges is landscaped with small shrubs interspersed between a grid pattern established by the major east-west sidewalk and accompanying crosswalks (Photo 9). An original cast iron lamp post with scrolled base and capital located midway just south of the center walk is in disrepair and no longer in use. Two contemporary low brick posts fitted with single globes are located at each end of the courtyard. The entire street and alley perimeter is delineated by an original low cast iron fence. Paneled posts topped by decorative finials mark the corners and flank the concrete recessed, stepped entrance into the courtyard.

The present holder of an option to purchase the property intends to initiate a certified historic rehabilitation of The Vera and The Olga.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1901

Builder Architect

Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The construction of The Vera and The Olga in 1901 in Indianapolis marked an alternative to the modern flat construction which began in the city as early as 1896, according to a 1905 newspaper article. These rowhouses, each originally composed of ten, two-story units, stand as the only example of multi-unit construction in the city from this era, which features non-street orientation and common entrance porches. Furthermore, the complex is one of only a handful of rowhouse structures built in the city at a time when apartment and flat buildings were being erected in large numbers. Stylistically, the functional, industrial Victorian profile of this building is in contrast to the applied historicism which is characteristic of other terraces and flats constructed in the first decade of the century in this city.

The buildings were constructed as a speculative real estate investment by Wilford M. Williams, president of W. M. Williams Company, manufacturers of Nine O'Clock Washing Tea, a general household cleaning compound produced in small commercial structures located at 446-456 S. Meridian Street. This family business involved Williams' brothers, Lemuel and Dr. James, as well as his son-in-law, Miles V. Moore, who married Williams' adopted daughter Mabel, in 1897. The Olga and The Vera were named for the granddaughters, Olga Moore (born 1899) and Vera Moore (born 1901). Williams, who resided at 1334 N. Illinois Street from 1898 until his death in 1909, had already constructed a five-unit, frame rowhouse to the rear of his property in 1899, the Cherry Grove Apartments at the above address (no longer standing). According to the 1900 U.S. Census, an alley, Cherry Avenue, was constructed with individual addresses assigned to this unit.

Thus Williams, aware of the success of one development in multi-unit housing, embarked upon another speculative real estate venture by purchasing lots upon which were sited four frame rental residences. Twenty units sited on less than two acres, or two average-sized city lots, more than tripled the potential of return on investment compared to a typical flat, which contained four to six units of five to ten rooms each within a two or three-story building. The desirable population density was achieved, yet the arrangement which provided separate front and rear entrances and two-story living accommodations was more similar to that of the single family or semi-detached house. As much was written about the psychological hazards of apartment or flat living during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the retention of a few house-like amenities created an ambience which would be more readily marketable. However, it is important to note that the common entrance porch, although not continuing the idea of maximum separateness, became more acceptable in this situation due to the park-like setting and isolation as a whole from the traffic and its accompanying noise and dirt. A sheltered entrance was considered a necessity here, due to the immediate entry into a living space, rather than into a vestibule or hallway such as would usually be found.

The early residents of The Vera and The Olga, 1902-1910, can be categorized in the following manner: 30% older couples; 25% young couples with small children; 15% widows or widowers with working young adult children; 15% newly married couples with no children. A roomer or older family member as part of the household was not unusual. Most of the working people held positions which required a skill or previous experience: a newspaper printer, reporter, veterinary surgeon as an inspector at the Kingan Meat Packing Company, owner of a cap manufacturing factory, and several from various families employed by a publishing company or automobile company as foremen or clerks. Prior to moving to The Vera and The Olga, several resided in nearby apartments or rooming houses below 16th Street, but north of the original mile square plan of the city. Forty per cent of the residents in 1914 remained until the mid-1930's. Thirty per cent of the residents from the same time did not remain in Indianapolis. As over 60% of the renters did not live in the city prior to their moving to 1440-1446 N. Illinois Street, they were not part of the same social background or upwardly mobile society found in similar rental units two blocks to the east in the Old Northside National Register Historic District.

Stylistically, the functional, no-frills presentation of The Vera and The Olga and their location in the northwest quadrant of the city, historically the least desirable section, were compatible with the needs of an identifiable segment of the lower middle class work force who came to Indianapolis during the period of great development of a regional wholesale and manufacturing center. The red brick masonry walls with segmentally arched openings, not unlike those found in any of the small industrial buildings south of the major rail lines, are devoid of any architectural ornamentation except the address plaque. Little allusion to previous architectural styles can thus be assessed. The balustrade and wrought iron balconies found in other apartments or flats of the period are replaced here by standard millwork porches fronting onto a private, contained, landscaped strip of green to make an architectural statement which, in 1902, was less imposing but still unique. Today, no other so arranged and finished complex of equal sized, two-story units, each with a private entrance, stands in the city.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approx. 1.8 acres

Quadrangle name Indianapolis West

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	6	5	7	1	9	8	0	4	4	0	4	2	2	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

Lots 1 and 2, Drake's Addition, Indianapolis, Indiana

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

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan R. Slade, Architectural Historian
Jacqueline L. Munson, Archival Assistant, for:

organization Property option holder Stephen W. Sutherlin
1 Indiana Square, Indianapolis, IN 46204 date March, 1984

street & number 4560 Broadway telephone 283-6114

city or town Indianapolis state Indiana 46205

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 *J. T. Castelli*
title Deputy Dir., Dept. of Natural Resources
Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer date 8-17-84

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY—NOMINATION FORM

Continuation sheet--The Vera, The Olga

Item No. 9

Page 3

Baist, G. William (compiler). Real Estate Atlas of Surveys of Indianapolis and Vicinity, Indiana; compiled and published from Official Records, Private Plans and Actual Surveys. Philadelphia: G. William Baist, 1899, 1908.

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Indiana Division, Indiana State Library (compilers). "Indiana Biography Series," Vols. 3, 15, 32, 47.

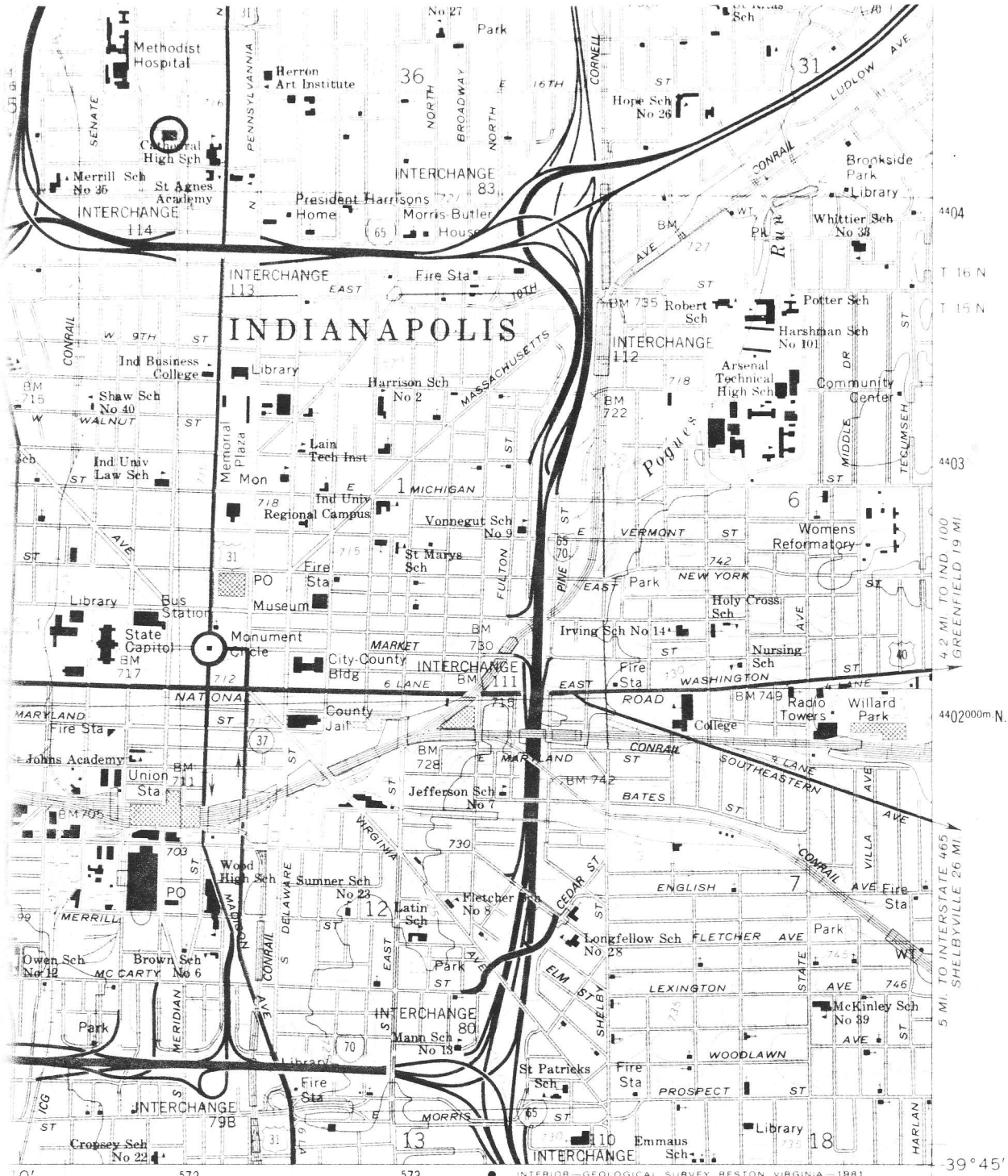
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Indianapolis News. April 5, 1934, pt. 1, p. 12, c. 1.

Rabb, Kate M. and Herschell, William (editors). Indianapolis and Marion County, Vols. 3 and 4. Dayton, Ohio: Dayton Historical Publishing Co., 1924.

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The Vera and The Olga
 Indianapolis, Indiana
 UTM Reference: 16/571980/4404220

10' 572 573 574 86°07'30" 39°45'

MARTINSVILLE 29 MI. 3.8 MI. TO INTERSTATE 465 FRANKLIN 20 MI. INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY RESTON VIRGINIA—1981 R 3 E. R. 4 E. 574000m E

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Primary highway, all weather, hard surface
- Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface
- Unimproved road, fair or dry weather

- Interstate Route
- U S Route
- State Route

(BEECH GROVE)
 3763 II NE

INDIANA

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

INDIANAPOLIS WEST, IND.

N3945—W8607 5/7.5

Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with State of Indiana agencies from aerial photographs taken 1977 and other source data. This information not field checked. Map edited 1980

1967
 PHOTOREVISED 1980
 DMA 3763 I SW - SERIES V851