

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Indiana Oxygen Company

and or common Same

2. Location

street & number 435 South Delaware Street N/A not for publication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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input 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 checked="" 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 Walter L. Brant

street & number 5519 N. Delaware Street

city, town Indianapolis N/A vicinity of state Indiana 46220

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number 150 N. Alabama Street

city, town Indianapolis state Indiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Indiana Historic Preservation Commission  
Regional Center Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes  no

date 1985 federal  state county local

depository for survey records Indiana Department of Natural Resources

city, town Indianapolis state Indiana

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved    date

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

The Indiana Oxygen Company Building, constructed in 1930, is located on the northeast corner of Delaware and Henry Streets in a primarily industrial area, just south of downtown Indianapolis, and immediately southeast of the Union Station railroad yard. The two story main building has a rectangular plan with the main facade oriented west toward Delaware Street. Both the main building and its attached U-shaped, one-story warehouse/production area to the rear or east side of the main building have raised basements and flat roofs, and are constructed of brick in a modified English bond with metal casement windows separated by brick pilasters. The main building also has a fair amount of limestone and metal decoration, which gives it a recognizably Art Deco style.

The main facade has nine bays separated by brick pilasters which spring from a beveled limestone water-table resting on a brick raised basement. The eighth bay from the left is the entrance bay. The two pilasters flanking the entrance bay are joined at the top to form a backdrop for the company name, INDIANA OXYGEN COMPANY, in raised individual metal letters (see photos #1 and 2). This sign panel is capped with a rectangular, slightly pointed slab of limestone with three decreasingly smaller slabs on either side. The recessed panel between the two pilasters and below the sign panel on the second story contains one, 20-light metal window with two operable panels of three panes below and six panes above. The spandrel between the window and the entrance door below has a raised grid pattern in brick with the bricks varying slightly in color to accentuate the grid effect. At ground level is an arched entryway with a limestone surround consisting of a Gothic, pointed, compound arch with the outermost archivolt having a lozenge pattern. The arch rests on a lozenge-patterned architrave, supported by two pilasters with chevron carved molding that gives the archway an Art Deco appearance (see photo #4). The bases of the limestone pilasters serve as date stones; the one on the left has the founding date of the company (1915) incised in the stone block, and the one on the right has the building's erection date (1930). The transom inside the Gothic arch is a stained glass representation of a torch flame (see photos #4 and 5). Below the transom is a single leaf, paneled wooden door with large metal bolts and a decorative metal door handle and escutcheon, the central panel consisting of one glass pane with the company's name and products in gold letters on the glass (see photo #4). Originally, this central light consisted of 55 leaded panes (see photo #1). Adding to the Gothic feeling of the entrance are light fixtures cut from authentic steel gas cylinders which are affixed to the brick pilasters flanking the entrance (see photos #1 and 4).

The other eight bays on the main facade each have single 25-light metal windows on the ground floor, and similar 20-light sash on the second story, each with operable panels as in the entrance bay window (see photos #2 and 3). Each of the six northernmost bays also has a three-light metal window at the basement level. The spandrels in each of the bays have a raised grid pattern in brick as in the entrance bay spandrel. At the top of the pilasters separating the bays (except the two flanking the entrance) and below the stone cap is a limestone gas cylinder form resting on a small corbelled brick platform. The parapet is capped with a limestone coping. The pilaster caps are higher and have a slight point. Visible from the street facing the main facade is a brick chimney with a simple limestone coping.

The north and south facades of the main building have two window bays separated by brick pilasters and arranged and decorated similarly to the main facade (see photos #3 and 6).

## 8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1930 Builder/Architect Ray Fatout of Fatout Building/Construction Co.

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Indiana Oxygen Company building is important as a unique example of industrial architecture located in the near-southside of Indianapolis in a primarily industrial area. The architecture is a combination of Art Deco and industrial styles with decorative motifs relating specifically to the company's products. The Indiana Oxygen Company has continued to operate the building since its construction in 1930, without major changes to the building inside or out, allowing a high degree of architectural integrity to be maintained. The company, founded in 1915 by Walter and John Brant, was the first manufacturer of industrial gas in Indiana, having started production just eight years after the process was introduced in the United States. The founders of the company and the company itself also have significance in their association with the Indianapolis 500 race.

The Indiana Oxygen Company was founded in April, 1915, by Walter and John Brant, and was first located across the alley from the current facility in a building on Harmon Street, now occupied by F. H. Langsenkamp. The company produced hydrogen and oxygen by an electrolytic process, which separated the components of air into distinct gases by electric current. The process was developed by a Swedish chemist in Germany in 1895, and was introduced commercially in the United States in 1907. The Indiana Oxygen Company was the only manufacturer of hydrogen and oxygen in Indianapolis for the first four or five years of its operation, and remains the only producer of pure hydrogen in the state today. In 1925, the Indiana Oxygen Company was the first in Indianapolis to produce gases by a liquid process, also developed in Germany, which separated the components of water into distinct liquid gases. In 1930, the current Indiana Oxygen Company building was opened and continues to manufacture oxygen, nitrogen, argon, helium, carbon dioxide, hydrogen, nitrous oxide and other gases. The company also now has an acetylene manufacturing plant in Beech Grove, and outlets throughout central Indiana. The gases are produced primarily for welding, cutting and medical use, but also have unique industrial uses, such as argon and helium for fluorescent lamps, acetylene for synthetics and plastics, and carbon dioxide for making aspirin.

The Indiana Oxygen Company has had a long association with the Indianapolis 500 race, beginning with the involvement of the founders, Walter and John Brant, in the first 500 race in 1911. The Brants owned a car agency which sold Lozier cars. Two Lozier cars, driven by second place winner Ralph Mulford, were in the race and were housed and serviced during the race preparations at the Brant brothers' facilities at the northeast corner of Vermont and Capitol.<sup>1</sup> (The Lozier team contested Mulford's second place scoring as they showed him in first place; however, fourteen tire changes during the race are said to have been the cause of his losing.<sup>2</sup>) Shortly after forming the Indiana Oxygen Company in 1915, the Brant brothers continued their involvement with the 500 race as sponsors and providers of industrial gases, equipment and welding services. The Indiana Oxygen Company has continued its sponsorship throughout the years, becoming the official welding service for the 500 race in 1966.<sup>3</sup> The company claims the oldest and longest sponsorship in the race.<sup>4</sup>

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Indianapolis west

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

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

B [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]  
Zone Easting Northing

C [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

D [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

E [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

F [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

G [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

H [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

## Verbal boundary description and justification

Bound by Delaware Street on the west, Harmon Street on the east, Henry Street on the south and the building property extends 100 feet north from Henry Street

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 Walter L. Brant, President

organization Indiana Oxygen Company

date 7-31-86

street & number 5519 N. Delaware Street

telephone 317/632-4525 - Work  
317/253-1331 - Home

city or town Indianapolis

state Indiana 46220

# 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 *Michael Hartz for J. M. Pedersen*

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

date 1-30-87

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



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The south wing of the one story, U-shaped attached portion has nine bays separated by unadorned brick pilasters, with a corbeled brick cornice running between the pilasters the length of the wing, and a concrete raised foundation (see photos #6, 7, 8 and 9). The westernmost bay is just wide enough to contain a single metal service door on the ground level and a 12-light metal window above. The second bay contains two abutting metal windows, each with 24 lights and a central operable panel of eight lights, and two basement level windows with metal grates. Above the larger windows is a painted company sign. The third and fourth bays comprise a loading dock with a shed roof, two large garage doors and two smaller metal windows. The five easternmost bays each contain three abutting 20-light metal windows with a central operable panel of six lights.

The north wing of the one-story, U-shaped attached portion has three and one-half bays of brick with pilasters, corbeled cornice, concrete raised foundation and metal casement windows identical to the easternmost bays of the south wing (see photo #3). The easternmost portion of the north wing is a somewhat later concrete block addition with metal casement windows, which juts out about five feet towards the north.

The east facade is the open end of the U-shaped plan where there are large storage tanks and a loading area. The east end of the south wing has three pairs of windows similar to those on the south side. The east end of the north wing is flush with that of the south wing.

The main, two-story building is used for offices. The interior entry stairwell is separated from the lobby by a leaded glass and oak paneled partition (see photos #10-12). The lobby and stairs to the second floor have a tile floor and wainscoting, stair rail, square newel posts and square balusters, all in oak. The lobby also has an original metal chandelier and original oak carved furniture. An arched passageway separates the lobby from the administrative area. The pointed arch rests on small, bent-over figures as consoles. An oak railing with square newel posts and square balusters and a gate are also in the archway separating the two areas.

The administrative area has olive and maroon checkered floor tiles, plaster walls, oak doors and Art Deco overhead light fixtures. The administrative area is separated from the executive office by an oak frame and leaded glass Tudor arched door with matching sidelights. The executive office has a 12-foot sculpted plaster ceiling, oak paneled walls, some with built-in filing cabinets and hidden storage compartments, a dark green and chocolate checkered tile floor, and metal chandeliers and wall sconces (see photos #13-17). The uppermost oak wall panels have decorative carving. The east wall has a seven foot concrete fireplace with a Tudor arch opening and a carved panel above containing the Brant family and other crests.

The building retains its overall architectural integrity and is in good repair. The building is unaltered both on the exterior and in the interior first floor office space.

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The architecture of the Indiana Oxygen Company building combines the Art Deco style with industrial motifs in an inventive manner, which gives this otherwise unassuming industrial structure a truly significant character. The interior offices are correspondingly delightful chambers of combined Art Deco, Gothic and Tudor decor. The architecture and interior design are all the more significant in their near perfect state of integrity.

Notable features of the exterior entrance facade are the limestone gas cylinder forms mounted on corbeled brick pedestals near the top of the building, the decorative grid pattern of the bricks in the recessed panels, and the limestone coping. The entrance is particularly compelling with its limestone, Gothic arched opening, which has lozenge and chevron patterns incised in the stone, the torchlight stained glass window, and the cut metal gas cylinder lamps flanking the entrance. Notable features of the interior include Art Deco light fixtures, arched doorways, and oak trim, paneling and carved furniture.

<sup>1</sup> Indiana Oxygen Company brochure.

<sup>2</sup> Yate, Brock. The Indianapolis 500: The Story of the Motor Speedway, New York: Harper & Row, 1956, p. 2 and others.

<sup>3</sup> Indiana Oxygen Company brochure and Kurt Hunt, Indianapolis Motor Speedway Publicity Department.

<sup>4</sup> Indiana Oxygen Company brochure.

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Brant, J. R. "Bulletin #5." Indianapolis: Liquid Oxygen Division, Indiana Oxygen Company, March, 1938.

Brant, Robert. Indiana Oxygen Company, Indianapolis, Indiana. Interview, November 20, 1986.

Brant, Walter. Indiana Oxygen Company, Indianapolis, Indiana. Interview, November, 1986.

Devaney, John and Barbara. The Indianapolis 500: A Complete Pictorial History. New York: Rand McNally & Co., 1976.

Hunt, Kurt. Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Publicity Department. Interview, December 18, 1986.

"Indiana Oxygen," brochure. Indianapolis: Indiana Oxygen Company, c. 1985.

"Indiana Oxygen Company," brochure. Indianapolis: Indiana Oxygen Company, c. 1940.

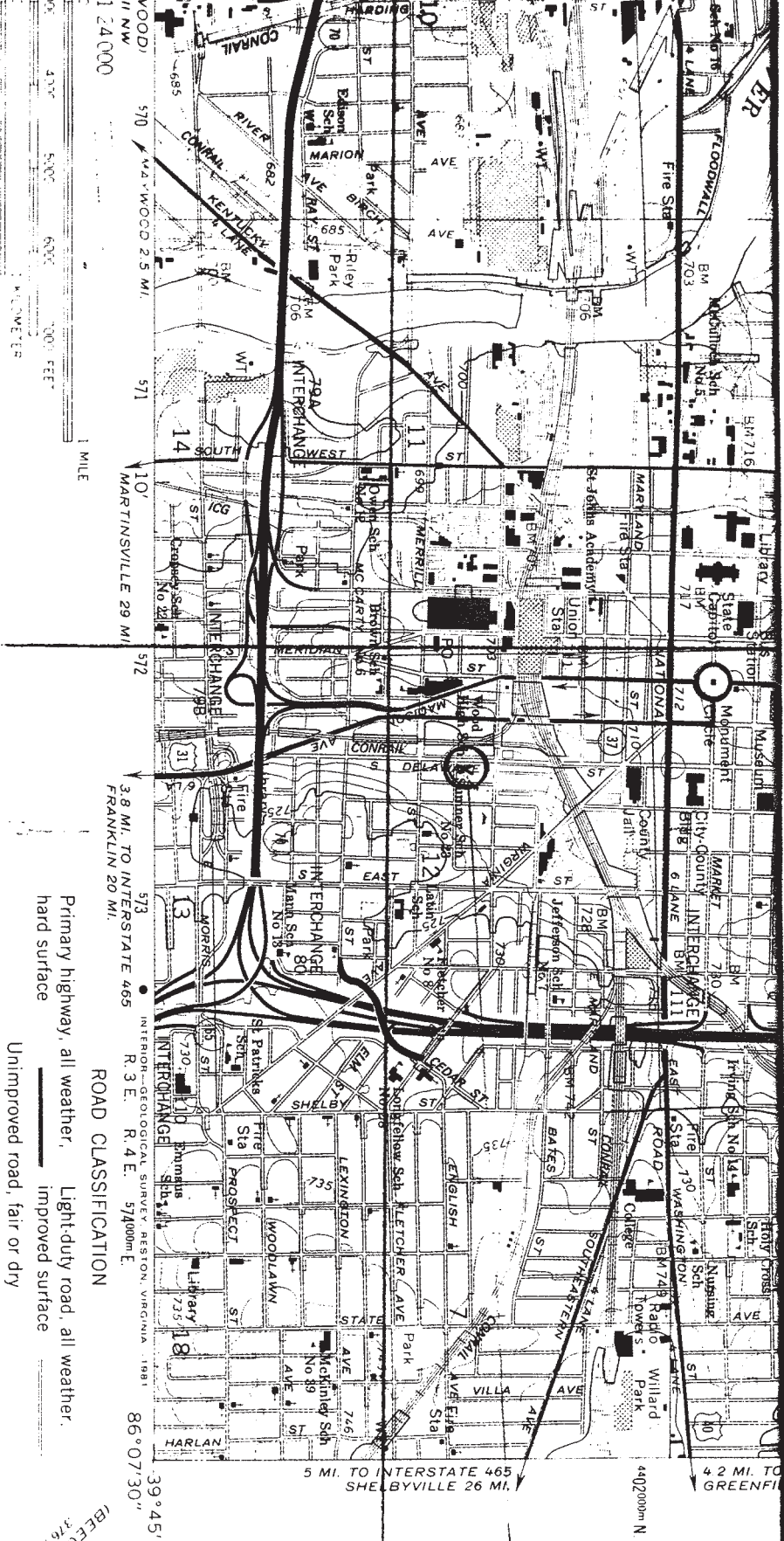
Indianapolis News. Obituary for Walter Brant. 27 October 1976, p. 36, c. 6.

Indianapolis Star. Obituary for Walter Brant. 27 October 1976, p. 67, c. 1.

Yates, Brock. The Indianapolis 500: The Story of the Motor Speedway. New York: Harper & Row, 1956.







VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
 SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
 RESOURCES, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204  
 AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

QUADRANGLE LOCATION



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

**INDIANAPOLIS WEST, IND.**

N3945—W8607.5, 7.5

1967  
 PHOTOREVISED 1980  
 DMA 3763 I SW—SERIES V851

○ Interstate Route    □ U. S. Route    ○ State Route

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

**ROAD CLASSIFICATION**

3.8 MI. TO INTERSTATE 465  
 FRANKLIN 20 MI.

INTERIOR-GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA, 1981  
 R.3.E. R.4.E. 5740000E

86°07'30"

5 MI. TO INTERSTATE 465  
 SHELBYVILLE 26 MI.

4420000m N

Indiana Oxygen Company  
 Indianapolis, Indiana  
 UTM Reference: 16/572420/4401260

*BUILDING*

IBEECH GROVE  
 3763 I SW

