

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Bush Stadium

other names/site number Perry Stadium, Victory Field, 098-296-1453

2. Location

street & number 1501 West 16th Street N/A not for publication

city or town Indianapolis N/A vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Marion code 097 zip code 46202

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Patrick R. Roberts 4-26-95
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Bush Stadium
Name of Property

Marion Co., IN
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE: Sports Facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE: Sports Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls CONCRETE BRICK

STONE: Limestone

roof ASPHALT

other STEEL

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Bush Stadium

Name of Property

Marion Co., IN
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- ARCHITECTURE
- ENGINEERING
- ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
- _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

1931-1945

Significant Dates

1931

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Pierre, Edward Dienhart & Wright, George Calet
Osborn Engineering Co./Jungclaus, W.P. Co.

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Bush Stadium
Name of Property

Marion Co., IN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 16 AC.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	569270	4404470
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2	16	569590	4404470

3	16	569580	4404040
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4	16	569280	4404120

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title William Madden, Suzanne Fischer/Intern, Paul Diebold/Architectural Historian

organization Madden Publishing Co., Inc /DHPA date 1-11-95

street & number 21036 Rustic Wood Court telephone 317/776-2722

city or town Noblesville state IN zip code 46060

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Indianapolis, Department of Parks & Recreation

street & number 1426 West 29th Street telephone 317/327-0000

city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46208

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Bush Stadium Marion Co., IN

First known as Perry Stadium, then Victory Field, and now most commonly referred to as Bush Stadium, this 1931 baseball facility stands at the southwest corner of West 16th Street and North Harding Street in northwest Indianapolis. The site is near the confluence of Fall Creek and White River. Osborne Engineering Company, Cleveland, Ohio, planned the ball park with Indianapolis architects Pierre and Wright providing the architectural details.

Typical of ballpark planning, the home plate-pitchers mound-second base axis runs southwest to northeast to avoid interference from the summer sun. Stands occupy most of the southwest corner, extending almost to the north and east walls. Twelve feet high brick walls enclose the outfield on the north and east sides. In plan, the stadium is roughly square, with the 460' long outfield walls meeting at a right angle, but the west and south walls, which run for about 500', are at an acute angle. The structure of stadium consists of steel framing and poured reinforced concrete veneered with red face brick and Indiana limestone.

The exterior of the stadium has significant architectural detailing on all faces, but the west and south walls are most richly detailed. The 50 feet wide, 3 story high bowed entrance gate pavilion of Indiana limestone faces southwest (photo 2). Full height piers articulate the gate pavilion; two closely spaced piers mark end sections. Five bays are marked by other piers. The end sections have Art Deco style metal doors surmounted by raised spandrel having a three-dimensional roundel carved with P S (Perry Stadium). Over this is a narrow two story high metal window above which is a recessed bas-relief panel of Deco style baseball players (photo 4). This design is repeated on the return sides of each end section. The center piers which form five gates are masked by a bowed flat roofed metal canopy supported on stylized brackets (photo 7). Within the projecting piers are ticket booths with decorative metal grills. On the second and third levels over the gates are multi-paned metal windows. Spandrels over the windows have small bas-relief panels of crossed bats with baseballs, catcher's mitt, and indian mask (photo 6).

Extending east and north of the gate pavilion are the roofed seats and box seating areas, marked on the exterior by simple two story high brick pilasters with stone block capitals (photos 8, 9). The

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first level is masked off by the uniform 12 feet high brick wall with brick dentils and stone coping. A separate bleacher section in far right field repeats the two story height, but a typical wall section visually joins these stands to the main section of grandstands. Over the main bleachers rises a canopy supported on steel I-beams and riveted truss work. Bedstead-like trusses uphold the roof. Press boxes are placed at the corner of the main bleacher roof aligning with the entry gates.

Passing through the entry gates, one enters a foyer with tiled floor. Tepee designs are on the floor. Deco style metal gates lead to an interior lobby (photo 10). It is utilitarian, with concrete walls, terrazzo floors, and the ceiling is formed by the stepped bleachers above. The inverse side of the entry piers have sunburst Deco detailing for capitals. Within the gate pavilion structure are offices and rooms. Club offices were adjoined by a dining room and kitchen for convenience of visiting officials. Administrative offices on the second floor of the pavilion structure have tiled floors and wood paneled walls. The "Perry Room" has a fireplace and restroom. It can be reached by a private stair which leads from a garage area below. A stairway leads to the roof and five offices.

Moving to the grandstands, which are poured reinforced concrete, roofed areas form an L shape in plan (photo 11). An apron of lower bleachers is not sheltered by the roof. Open bleachers are in right field. Perry Stadium was equipped for night games when built in 1931. Rising over the roofed bleachers are 85 feet high steel trussed light towers, one over the right field side of the stands and two over left field. 100 feet high light towers also light the field, one behind the open bleachers to far right field, one over the right outfield wall, and one over the left field wall. These towers are original, the electrical equipment and fixtures have been replaced. Original seating had metal legs and arms with wooden slated backs and individual folding seats (photo 15). This has been replaced by metal benches in some areas and individual plastic folding seats in other sections. The open bleachers have benches with no backs. When completed, Perry Stadium could hold 13,000 in the covered grandstand, 2,000 in open bleachers, 2,200 in box seats. Capacity today is roughly the same.

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Conveniences for fans, players, and umpires are tucked under the bleachers. Separate lockers for each team, connected by tunnels to respective dugouts were part of the original design and are now a common feature in ballparks. Even umpires were provided with their own locker room. Restrooms and concession stands are also under the grandstands.

The ball field itself measures 335 to left field wall, 395 to center field wall, and 335 to right field wall. Originally, the diamond was placed so that left and right field were 350 feet and center field was 500 feet long. A home run wall installed inside the original wall has reduced center field as noted. Miles of drainage tile were installed under the field as part of the stadium's construction and has resulted in few games being called on account of wet grounds. Infield surface is crushed brick, the turf is rye and bluegrass. The original scoreboard is located along the left field wall and is a concrete booth with openings for manually arranged score tiles (photo 13). This scoreboard is no longer in use; an electronic board is on the right field wall.

Alterations to Bush Stadium have been undertaken through the years. Within about ten years of construction, a new set of concrete bleachers connected the east grandstand to the far east set of bleachers. The far east bleachers were extended about 25 feet so that they touch the right field wall. Restrooms were built under the far right bleachers, and under the new bleachers. Under the east grandstand, a restroom was converted to a storage room. Lockers under the north grandstand were extended into a former storage area. A one story brick addition was made to the west edge of the entry pavilion. The bowed entry canopy was added, according to Sanborn maps, by the early 1940s. Certainly, its strong Art Deco lines suggest that Pierre and Wright planned this addition.

In 1977, Bush Stadium went through an extensive rehabilitation costing 2.48 million dollars. 1.6 million came from a Federal grant. Aside from parking lot work, 6,000 molded plastic seats were installed; a new press box was added; booths for broadcasters, public address, and an organ were added; and the roof was resurfaced and lined by fencing. The original flood light fixtures were replaced at this time. Since this rehabilitation, Bush Stadium has suffered from infrequent maintenance resulting in

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surface deterioration. Several poorly maintained sections of concrete below the stands and in locker room areas have exfoliated, exposing rebar. Despite surface deterioration and rehabilitation work, Bush Stadium still retains its appearance as a classic American ball park of the early 20th century.

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Bush Stadium Marion Co., IN

Statement of Significance

Bush Stadium, 1931, is significant under Criterion A in the area of entertainment and recreation, and Criterion C in the areas of architecture and engineering. In the area of recreation, it was the last in a series of 12 Indianapolis ball parks, the earliest of which held games beginning in 1870. Bush Stadium served as the home of the Indianapolis Indians, a minor-league team, from 1931 to the present. The Indianapolis ABCs, a Negro League team, rented the stadium to use for many of their home games during the 1930s and 1940s. In the areas of architecture and engineering, Bush Stadium was (and still is) considered one of the finest minor league parks in the country. It was built by the Osborn Engineering Company, the most active and experienced firm in ball park construction of that time. Its playing field is one of the largest of all major or minor league parks of that time, and its facilities for both fans and players were thought to be quite advanced for the period of their construction. Bush is one of the few classic ball parks remaining from the era of concrete-and-steel stadium construction. Although it is a minor-league park, it compares favorably in size and design with famous major-league parks.

In the early days of baseball, most ball parks were temporary structures built of wood. If a park burned down, another quickly took its place. Larger and more permanent structures arose after baseball started to become a big business in the late 1800s, but they were still built of wood and were susceptible to fire. Washington's Griffith Stadium and New York's Polo Grounds both fell victim to fires during this time. Most major-league franchises began to build (or rebuild) their parks in concrete and steel. The first of these parks were Shibe Park in Philadelphia, Forbes Field in Pittsburgh, and Comiskey Park in Chicago. All are now gone.

Osborn Engineering Company was one of the first builders of concrete-and-steel ball parks. The firm built Cleveland's League Park (1910), rebuilt Griffith Stadium (1911), and built Comiskey

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Park (1910), Detroit's Tiger Stadium (1912), Yankee Stadium (1923), and rebuilt Fenway Park (1934). Osborn was responsible for over fourteen ball parks between 1910 and 1970. The firm also built three other classic major-league parks that have since been torn down. Of these, only Tiger Stadium is listed on the National Register. Although it is a minor-league park, Bush Stadium is an excellent example of the work of Osborn Engineering, and stands as one of the very few classic ball parks still in existence today.

The sturdy engineering of the Osborn firm was complemented by the architectural services of Pierre and Wright for the Bush Stadium design. Edward Dienhart Joseph Pierre and George Caleb Wright formed a partnership on August 1, 1925 in Indianapolis. The young firm came to the forefront of the local architectural scene in the early 1930s with a series of important commissions. The commission for Bush Stadium came in 1930-31, followed by the Indiana State Library and Historical Building in 1932. The partnership was dissolved in 1944.

Most likely, design of the gate pavilion and exterior walls were left up to the architects. Pierre and Wright used their trademark Art Deco flourishes and modern classicism for the Bush Stadium project. Throughout the late 1920s, the firm had received commissions for small commercial blocks or larger corner stores (such as the Walgreen's at 38th and College, no longer standing) and for these a modest combination of classical piers with bas-relief carved spandrels having Art Deco overtones was developed. The Bush Stadium commission uses this formula on a grand scale with heroic style bas reliefs to embellish the gate pavilion. Bush Stadium is a fine example of this important firm's work.

Bush Stadium was commissioned by Indians owner Norman Perry, whose family ran the Indianapolis Power and Light Company. Norman decided to name the park "Perry Stadium" as a tribute to his brother Jim, the former owner of the team, who had died in a plane crash in 1929. The park was constructed in the spring of 1931 at a cost of \$350,000. The construction permit was granted

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immediately, giving employment to 200 men for two to three months. The proposed site of the park had an old farmhouse and well standing on it. The house was demolished, but the well was enclosed within the park and continued to be used.

The first game at the new stadium was held on September 5, 1931. Two of the honored guests were Kenesaw Mountain Landis, first commissioner of major-league baseball, and Thomas Hickey, president of the American Baseball Association. Hickey claimed that Bush was the finest ball park ever. Another contemporary sportswriter extolled it as "the most perfect in equipment and having a playing field surpassed in area by only a few." During its first full season in 1932, Bush Stadium played host to the New York Yankees during an exhibition game that featured star players Lou Gehrig and Babe Ruth.

Bush had features that pleased both fans and players. The new park had tunnels that connected the players' dugouts to the clubhouses so that fans could not swarm over them after a game. Umpires had their own quarters separate from those of the players. The players' benches had the first built-in ice-water fountains. Few games were ever called on account of rain, due to an extensive infield drainage system of tile. Fans appreciated the height of the seats, which had a rise of 10" as opposed to the normal 6", making it easier for fans to see over spectators in front of them. Night games were made possible by moving Washington Park's lighting towers to Bush. To add to the professional look of the park, ushers and concessionaires wore uniforms. No advertising signs were permitted inside the grounds.

The stadium was renamed Victory Field in 1942 in honor of the war effort. In 1943, Norman Perry sold the team to Owen Bush and Frank McKinney, however, the stadium remained Perry's property. In 1967, the stadium was sold by Perry's heirs to the city of Indianapolis for \$300,000. A year later, it was renamed Owen J.

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Bush Stadium MARion Co., IN

Bush Stadium in honor of the owner of the Indians. At this time, the city is building a new baseball stadium near the RCA Dome and the future of Bush Stadium is uncertain.

Thousands of baseball games have been played in the stadium. While most games were played by the Indians, there have been many games played there by major league teams and Negro League teams. During the years when blacks were barred from playing professional major-league ball, the Indianapolis ABCs rented Bush Stadium for their home games. Game 5 of the Negro League World Series was held at Bush in 1943.

Since 1967, the stadium has been used by the Indiana High School Athletic Association for its championship playoffs. In 1987, the baseball games for the Pan Am Games were held there. It was also the site for the Scarborough Peace Games during the 1980s and 1990s. In 1987, Bush Stadium was the location for "Eight Men Out," a film about the Black Sox scandal.

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Bibliography

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- Gruber, Michael, Marianne Maher, Gordon Bugbee, Donald Voelker, and Michael Samojeden. "Navin Field/Briggs Stadium/Tiger Stadium." National Register Nomination, 1988.
- Mittman, Dick. "City's 100-Year Baseball Party Bit Premature." Indianapolis News (15 April 1986): 19-20.
- Peterson, Robert. Only the Ball Was White. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984.
- Reddick, David B. and Kim M. Rogers. The Magic of Indians' Baseball: 1887-1987. Indianapolis: Indians, Inc., 1988.

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Bush Stadium Marion Co., IN

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

See attached map

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

Boundary was drawn to include the resource but exclude parking lot and restaurant.

BUSH STADIUM
MARION CO. IN

ZONE 16

① E 569 270
N 4404 470

② E 569 590
N 4404 470

③ E 569 580
N 4404 470

④ E 569 280
N 4404 130

