

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Bryant Building

Other names/site number: 1301 Superior Avenue, Mall Motor Company,  
Cleveland Ignition Company

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

### 2. Location

Street & number: 1261 Superior Avenue

City or town: Cleveland State: Ohio County: Cuyahoga

Not For Publication:  N/A

Vicinity:  N/A

### 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A  B  C  D

 DSHPO Inventory & Registration		Oct. 24, 2014
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	<b>Date</b>	
State Historic Preservation Office, Ohio History Connection _____		
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>		
In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.		
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>	
_____		
<b>Title :</b>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Patience Andrews  
Signature of the Keeper

12/11/2014  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**  
**Historic Functions**

COMMERCE/automotive  
INDUSTRY/automotive  
                                    
                                    
                                    
                                    
                                  

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)  
GOVERNMENT/government office

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

Commercial Style

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

CONCRETE, TERRACOTA, BRICK

### Narrative Description

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#### Summary Paragraph

The Bryant Building is an early 20<sup>th</sup> century, two-story commercial building on the east side of downtown Cleveland, Ohio. Constructed in 1921, the building fronts Superior Avenue near the intersection of East 13<sup>th</sup> Street. Bryant Building sits within the 1200 block flanked by one 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial building of similar style to the west and one contemporary masonry building on the east. The white glazed terracotta façade consists of 7 bays, defined by a limestone base, recessed fenestration pattern, a decorative cornice and parapet wall of matching terracotta. The ground-level store front features a central recessed entrance and limestone bulkhead true to the original design. The exterior maintains many of the original features, but the interior has been altered to accommodate varying usage since the building's construction. The interior retains its largely undivided showroom space as was historically intended, with partitioned rooms at the perimeter. Concrete columns and floor slabs, brick exterior walls, and historic ceramic flooring in the southwest circulation core remain in the building. Although all windows have been replaced, the overall appearance and character of the building is largely unchanged from the historic period, and it retains a high degree of architectural and historic integrity.

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#### Narrative Description

The Bryant Building is a 2-story commercial building constructed in 1921 on Superior Avenue, approximately one-half mile east of Public Square. The building exhibits early 20<sup>th</sup> century Commercial style architecture through the use of concrete, brick, and steel construction, decorative glazed terracotta, and a dominating storefront fenestration pattern. The main façade

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faces true southeast (referenced as the south elevation), sitting flush with the adjacent buildings of the block at the sidewalk line (Photo 1). A parking lot dedicated to the Bryant Building acts as a buffer between the rear of the building and Rockwell Avenue (Photo 3).

The primary south façade of the Bryant Building is clad in white glazed terracotta, with seven bays of store front window systems at the ground level and matching windows on the second level above. The storefront windows maintain the original openings and appearance, but were replaced with non-historic double-pane windows c.1990. These units consist of three-light fixed windows with matching black-out, opaque transoms above. The storefront windows sit on a limestone bulkhead. All windows are slightly recessed from the façade surface, providing definition between bays. Limestone cladding at the base of the elevation wraps into the recessed central entry, defined by contemporary double doors with flanking full-length sidelights and opaque transom in matching style of the storefront systems. A recessed blank terracotta panel divides the first level from the second above the entry. A decorative terracotta cornice runs the full length of the façade, with pressed dentil details and rosettes between each bay. A low parapet wall capped with terracotta is divided by a taller parapet feature that rises above the central bay (Photo 2). The feature has a rounded arch top, flanking scroll details, and matches the white-glazed terracotta used on the entire façade. A secondary recessed non-historic entry in bay 1 is covered by a contemporary awning and yields no significance to the structure. Every window was replaced c.1990 while maintaining the historic fenestration pattern. All other façade details are original to the Bryant Building. Minor crazing is consistent across the façade while moderate spalling has occurred in the limestone base and bulkheads, but the historic materials remain in good condition overall.

The building's secondary elevation at the rear faces north to Rockwell Avenue, defined by a central projection consisting of three forms (Photo 3). The eastern form rises 2.5 stories to house the service elevator with adjacent loading dock. The main form of the projection matches the two-story building height and includes a non-historic entry and awning at ground level and a non-historic, two-light fixed window with opaque transoms on the second level (typical rear window unit). The western form rises a full 3 stories to house a circulation stair providing access to the flat roof. Two typical rear windows occur on the second level on both sides of the rear projection. No windows exist on the first level. The elevation is painted red-brick masonry walls with two locations of cement block infill on the first and second levels, providing evidence to where the building used to connect to the 1924 parking garage addition, demolished ca.1960.

The interior of Bryant Building is primarily undivided open space, characterized by historic concrete columns reaching six bays deep by seven bays wide (Figure 7). Moderate changes were made to the building's interior ca.1990 when the current tenant moved in to the building. A non-historic storefront vestibule leads into the public space of the first floor. A large semi-circular counter stretches from bay two to bay five, creating a division between the open-plan office space and the public service area (Photo 4). Non-historic partitioned offices enclose bay 1 on the west wall and bay 7 on the east wall, with service space stretching across the northern bay at the rear (Photos 8, 9). A non-historic open stair in the center of the building connects the two floors beneath a 2.5 story sky-lit atrium (Photos 5, 6, 7). A 1951 Sanborn Map (Figure 4) notes the seven foot half-story above the second floor in the center of the building, but the skylight appears

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to be non-historic. The first level has been modified with non-historic floor tile, carpeting, drywall partitions, dropped ceilings, and fluorescent light fixtures. Historic ceramic tile flooring with decorative inlay remains in the southwest bay where the secondary entry on the primary façade currently exists (Photo 10). Unfortunately no documents of the original floor plan have been located, but a local newspaper article announcing the opening of the new building gives a brief description of the interior configuration. The 1921 article states, “The commodious and handsomely finished salesroom contains 3,780 square feet of space.” The mezzanine floor held the firm’s offices, and the service department occupied 46,000 square feet.

The second level of the Bryant Building is similar to the ground level, with enclosed offices lining bay 1 on the west wall and the southern bay at the front of the building (Figure 8). Enclosed service space lines the northern wall at the rear of the building to provide access to the elevator, restrooms, and egress stairs. The central stair terminates at the second level, with a non-historic half wall surrounding the square opening beneath the skylight. The remaining space not enclosed on the perimeter walls is divided by free-standing bookshelves to serve the needs of the current tenant (Figure 11). Non-historic dropped ceilings and tile flooring define the second floor in similar form of the first. The original brick walls and concrete floor slabs are visible above the dropped ceiling, characteristic of the modern fireproof construction technologies used in the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century.

The building has a full height basement, accessible by a historic stair at the northeast corner of the building. The unfinished space consists of concrete floors, brick walls, exposed concrete columns and the floor slab above (Photo 12). Mechanical equipment is housed at the west end of the basement. Evidence of water infiltration is significant throughout the spaces.

The Bryant Building retains a high degree of historic integrity in its notable location on Superior Avenue near Cleveland’s “Automobile Row”. The design of the two-story Commercial Style building reflects the original construction while retaining significant character-defining features of the façade. A 1921 photograph shortly after construction (Figure 1), and photographs from the 1960s (Figures 5, 6) all show the primary façade experiencing few physical changes while maintaining the historic identity of the building. Replacement windows on both levels are compatible with its historic character, and the appearance of the storefront has not significantly changed despite shifting functionality since construction. The parking garage addition at the rear of the building was removed ca.1960 after Cleveland Ignition Company ceased operation in the building, consequently ending the period of significance.

Demolition of the 1924 parking garage arguably constitutes a loss of integrity by association, but the primary function of the showroom and service center remained in the 1921 building. The primary façade stands as the focal point of design and material integrity, characterized by the original white terracotta cladding, fenestration pattern, limestone base, and decorative cornice. The Brooks Company building to the adjacent west and a contemporary structure (of similar height and proportion to the original Cleveland Desk Company building) to the adjacent east contribute to the retention of the Bryant Building’s historic setting while maintaining the urban character of the block. Architectural integrity of the interior has proven difficult to thoroughly assess as no drawings or documentation of the original configuration have been found. The ca.

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1990 interior modifications appear to be compatible with the building's open plan. Typical of the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century automobile retail and service commercial design, the public space in the front of the building remains separated from the private spaces of the rear and mezzanine level. Original concrete columns, ceilings, and brick walls remain intact. Despite the modernization of the interior, the primary façade of the structure is undeniably distinguishable as the 1921 Bryant Building, reflecting its historic character and physical evidence of importance in Cleveland's automobile industry.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

- 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.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/automotive

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**Period of Significance**

1921-1955

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**Significant Dates**

1921, 1924, c.1931

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**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

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**Cultural Affiliation**

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**Architect/Builder**

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### **Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

Bryant Building is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of commerce, associated with the retail, service, and support of Cleveland's early automobile industry. Built as the Mall Motor Company's state-of-the-art dealership of Ford Motors in 1921, the building reflected innovative sales and service methods in addition to modern fireproof construction techniques. After changing hands to businessman E.H. Bryant shortly after opening, the Ford dealership continued to prosper until Bryant pursued other business endeavors in 1925. After Bryant's shift in interests, the building became an Oldsmobile dealership in 1926, a Gardner dealership in 1928, and eventually took on additional tenants to fill the building as the dealership declined. After experiencing a transition period of light manufacturing use during the Great Depression, the Bryant Building became home to an automobile service establishment, Cleveland Ignition Company, for nearly 25 years. The period of significance begins with construction of the building in 1921 and ends in 1955 when Cleveland Ignition Company closed, consequently ending the building's direct association with the automobile industry.

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### **Narrative Statement of Significance**

The automobile has arguably been one of the greatest influences in shaping the built environment since its invention in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By the turn of the century, few were able to afford the innovation of automobiles and the early industry was largely supported by the upper class. In 1900 American cars were being produced in greater quantities due to large-scale manufacturing techniques that relied on the use of interchangeable parts.<sup>1</sup> Automotive technologies and the assembly line soon brought the car to a level of affordability for the masses. Despite Detroit's emergence as the center of global automobile production, Cleveland's growth as a competitive market was significant.<sup>2</sup> Cleveland was an ideal location for the automotive industry as it had access to steel, glass, and rubber. The city also possessed companies rich in experience of machining necessary tools, a strong workforce of skilled laborers, and acted as a major transportation center for the region.<sup>3</sup> A 1909 U.S. manufacturing census noted automobile manufacturing as the third largest industry in Cleveland. The first several decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed Cleveland become the second largest automotive center in the country. By 1930 Cleveland was home to over 80 different makes of automobiles.<sup>4</sup> Between architectural styles, construction techniques, and infrastructure necessities, the cultural pattern of the automobile had a clear influence on the city as global forces combined with the local context.

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<sup>1</sup> Rudi Volti, "A Century of Automobility", *Technology and Culture* 37, no. 4 (October 1996):670, accessed April 23, 2014, <http://jstor.org/stable/3107094>.

<sup>2</sup> Barney Wolf and Brian Holly, "The Rise and Fall and Rise of Cleveland", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 551 (May 1997): 210, accessed April 18, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1047948>.

<sup>3</sup> Darwin Stapleton, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History* (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University, 1997), s.v. "Automotive Industry," accessed April 29, 2014, <http://ech.case.edu/cgi/article.pl?id=AI3>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

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### **Cleveland's Auto Industry and Architecture**

The history of Cleveland's automobile industry is defined by three periods of development. The first period lasted from 1898 to the recession of 1907. The industry began as a diverse collection of small-scale companies that emerged as new mechanical advancements and designs evolved during this period. Manufacturing methods between 1898 and 1905 utilized existing techniques used in the bicycle and carriage industries.<sup>5</sup> Parts were purchased through local suppliers and the hand-labored manufacturing process took time and skill. Often housed in wood-frame structures, this process was fairly crude as laborers assembled each motor and automobile by hand, often referring to the job as one of an artisan.<sup>6</sup> Just as many production techniques were shared with other industries, so were the manufacturing facilities. Early auto companies occupied whatever space they could find and afford without a substantial market or sufficient capital. Many of the first auto makers were mechanical engineers by trade and therefore more concerned about the automobile itself rather than the methods of production of the facilities that housed each operation. A historical report on the Cleveland automobile industry by Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) described this first period as being product oriented rather than process.<sup>7</sup> The brick and wood-frame buildings that were sufficient for bicycle and carriage production did not lend themselves efficiently to the manufacturing of automobiles. The majority of the early auto companies would fail by the recession of 1907.

Beginning in 1907 and continuing to 1917, the second period of Cleveland's automotive history was characterized by the maturation of the companies that survived the recession in addition to technological advancements in production techniques. By 1907, Detroit pulled ahead of Cleveland as the leading manufacturer in the nation. Regardless of the thousands of cars being made in Cleveland, no manufacturer could keep up with Henry Ford's efforts in Detroit. Ford revolutionized the auto industry by emphasizing the speed and efficiency of production instead of the expense and skilled craftsmanship.

The second period of development introduced new building types that reflected the modernization of production. Large factories with attached offices, fireproof construction materials, and a focus on marketing and sales were key factors of increasing success. Make-shift barns and warehouses on city side streets were no longer acceptable for the rising auto industry. Reinforced concrete had recently become available and allowed for greater structural capabilities with fireproof qualities, making it an ideal material to use in new construction. Auto dealers specializing in product sales needed facilities to display and service cars. Major manufacturers began to hire architects and engineers to design new facilities in an effort to frame a positive image for the company.

Decorative brick and terracotta cladding were used to conceal the industrial structure behind, giving the automobile industry a face of elegance and strength. A National Register nomination of a dealership of the similar era in Kansas City, Missouri (Kelly-Reppert Motor Company

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<sup>5</sup> Tom Fisher, *The Cleveland Automobile Industry: Methods and Facilities 1898-1932* (Washington, DC: Historic American Engineering Record), 13, accessed July 9, 2014, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/pnp/habshaer/oh/oh0100/oh0117/data/oh0117data.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>7</sup> Fisher, 15.

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Building, #20041112) describes these first-generation buildings as embodying traditional one- and two-part commercial design that include a storefront, upper story, and decorative cornice. Large storefront windows and large doors for vehicular access were used to capitalize on the marketing strategy of generating both interest in product and confidence in buying from the occupant of a refined building. Modeled after Albert Kahn's auto-specific buildings in New York City, these second generation buildings combined elegant showrooms, car repair, and storage areas all within one design.<sup>8</sup> The traditional commercial building type would continue to evolve over the next two decades before shifting urban population would alter the automobile's pattern of growth.

The third period of Cleveland's early automotive history dates from 1917 to the Great Depression in 1932. During this time major changes were seen in production methods and facilities continued to evolve. Further refinement for efficiency and cost effectiveness increased competition from out-of-town companies that were expanding in the Cleveland area. Large auto companies were gaining dominance in the market, with ten controlling three-quarters of the national automobile market. By 1923 that figure rose to 90%. Small auto makers reportedly would survive between 2-7 years before ultimately failing.<sup>9</sup> This developmental period also included a shift in automobile facility locations. Factories began to move to industrial parks near suppliers and showroom/service buildings increasingly defined the eastern end of the city's major thoroughfares. Cleveland's "Automobile Row" refers to the general area of downtown where many manufacturers and dealerships were established between 1900 and 1932, particularly on Euclid Avenue between E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street and E. 25<sup>th</sup> Street. Parallel east-west thoroughfares extending from Public Square such as Superior Avenue and Prospect Avenue also were the location of numerous automobile dealerships and service centers, often displaying designs of practical sophistication consistent with automotive trends as described above. By 1932 Cleveland's early automotive industry had come to a close. Major manufacturers began to shut down in the years leading up to the Great Depression; Stearns failed in 1924, Cleveland Automobile in 1926, Chandler in 1929, and Peerless in 1931. The Cleveland auto industry essentially lost its ability to compete and, when combined with the national economic difficulties of the time, consequently lost the remaining entities that defined Cleveland's local automobile industry.

### **Ford in Cleveland: Bryant Building**

Ford Motor Company entered the Cleveland market in 1906 with offices and an assembly plant on the east side of the city. As automobile production expanded and demand for vehicles increased, Ford looked to authorized agents assigned to specific territories to represent the company. Unlike other high end automobile dealerships that took root in Cleveland, Ford and similar manufacturers out of Detroit aimed to meet the needs of the everyday person. Ford Motor Company advertised expert service in addition to expert workmanship in its manufacture. Ford's business plan was to provide both sales and service in one location within these assigned

<sup>8</sup> National Register Nomination, Kelly-Reppert Motor Company Building, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, #2004112, p 22.

<sup>9</sup> Fisher, 24.

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territories. A 1917 Ford advertisement in the Cleveland Plain Dealer described their service stations including, “skilled, competent Ford mechanics, genuine Ford-made materials, charges regular Ford prices...each is a part of the Ford organization, and as such is responsible to maintain the standard of Ford service.”<sup>10</sup> In the same May 1917 advertisement, 21 authorized Ford agencies were listed for the Cleveland area.

One of the specified agencies in Cleveland was The Mall Motor Company, located at the time in the 600 block of Superior Avenue NE. Earlier that year in February 1917, the Mall Motor Company announced that it had assumed the Ford Agency formerly handled by The Malin Motor Company. at the same address. This four story building was devoted to sales, repairs, and storage exclusively for Ford cars. Mall Motor Company pledged to produce the highest efficiency using every mechanical appliance necessary while occupying the c.1905 building.

With business thriving, Mall Motor Company constructed the nominated property in 1921, located approximately one-quarter mile east. On July 25, 1921 Mall Motor Company opened at 1301 Superior Avenue (Figure 1). Ford officials were quoted in the local newspaper as describing the new building as “one of the finest, largest, and best equipped Ford dealer plants in the state.”<sup>11</sup> The building has a frontage of 128 feet and a depth of 300 feet, with a saleroom of nearly 3,800 square feet. The second level consisted of the firm’s offices. General Manager Arthur Haas went on to describe the service department of occupying 46,000 square feet with a staff of expert workmen utilizing the most modern equipment. The new Mall Motor Company building included club rooms, showers for employees, and rest rooms for women. With little documentation of the building’s interior, the exact configuration is unknown. No architect has been identified or associated with the design of the property. Despite the lack of information, the described amenities exemplified the auto dealer property type by stressing the blend of functional service space with the luxury and modernity of the customer experience. Amenities for employees emphasized the company’s value in its skilled labor while displaying the latest technology.

With the new facility’s opening, L.E. Green was appointed general sales manager of the company, a former employee of the Cleveland branch. For reasons unknown, only three months later, in October 1921, the business, building, and equipment of Mall Motor Company at 1301 Superior Avenue was acquired by Ernest H. Bryant. E.H. (or Ernie) Bryant was a young business man who seemed to have a talent for the sales industry. A 1915 newspaper article features Bryant, then 27 years old, for the significant progress and growth of an automobile trading business he was increasingly involved with. By 1917, the Bryant Automobile Company was founded just west of downtown Cleveland. While maintaining his own car business, Bryant also began exploring the tractor business – particularly the Fordson tractors produced by Ford Motors in Dearborn, Michigan. The outcome of the endeavor remains unclear, but in 1920 the Bryant Automotive Co. was closed, and in 1921 Bryant acquired the former Mall Motor Company as an authorized agent for Ford Motor Company, operating one of only two Ford dealerships in downtown Cleveland.

<sup>10</sup> The Plain Dealer, May 9, 1917, p4.

<sup>11</sup> The Plain Dealer, July 24, 1921, p51.

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As the number of automobiles on the streets of the city increased, traffic issues and parking violations became a problem. Local newspaper articles provide an account of the significance of the traffic difficulty in the city. A 1923 front-page article describes the situation at a breaking point; twenty-three streets in Cleveland prohibited parking, with many more having a time limit of one hour. Without any enforcement from local authorities, the typical street in downtown Cleveland witnessed a double line of parked cars left for hours, creating severe delays in moving through the city. As hundreds of cars tried to navigate Euclid Avenue and Superior Avenue, two of Cleveland's main transportation arteries, the prevalence of disregard for motor laws was becoming unbearable. Local citizens called for the construction of more downtown garages, in addition to the existing structures that had an estimated capacity of 6,500 cars. In 1924, a two-story garage was built on the back of the 1301 Superior Ford dealership, extending to the rear of the property at Rockwell Avenue (formerly Oregon Ave.). The 1951 Sanborn map describes the garage structure as being fire proof, constructed of reinforced concrete and brick with a capacity of holding 125 cars (Figure 4). AT the time of construction auto garages were growing increasingly common as the automobile became an integral part of urban life. The garage addition to Bryant Building maximized vehicular storage within the 1200-1300 block of Superior Avenue, but did not draw any of the primary retail or service function out of the main 1921 building.

City directories cross-list E.H. Bryant, Bryant Ford, and Superior Ford Dealers at 1301 Superior until 1925 when Charles H. Cooksey moved his dealership into the dealership. In October 1925 a small announcement was made that Cooksey Oldsmobile Company was relocating to what was locally referred to as the Bryant Building, with space to exhibit and service Oldsmobile vehicles at a convenient and central location. In February 1926 Cooksey was one of only five Oldsmobile dealerships in Cleveland, but by April the dealership had transitioned to selling Moon Motor vehicles. St. Louis-based automobile manufacturer, Moon Motor Car Company, aimed to produce automobiles based on style, comfort, and color rather than feats of advanced engineering. Unable to keep up with demand from local dealers due to aging production techniques, the company failure shortly after gaining popularity in the Great Lakes region.

In August, Charles Cooksey accepted the position as sales manager at Glenn Motor Sales Company on Lorain Avenue and withdrew his business from the Bryant Building. Failure of small automotive businesses were common during this time in Cleveland. After a brief vacancy in the building, Gardner Motor Company dealership assumed occupancy selling and servicing the St. Louis-based cars. Gardner lasted less than one year before also failing. From construction in 1921 to the closing of the last dealership in late 1928, this is the first phase during the period of significance relating to Cleveland's automobile industry. Although starting as a Ford dealership, the use by multiple small manufacturers parallels the city's auto history. The glazed terracotta façade was the face of an impressive low-rise complex that exemplified the automobile's coming of age in Cleveland through integrated sales, service, storage, and technology.

During the short-lived Cooksey and Gardner eras of the Bryant Building, E.H. Bryant is still listed as having an address of 1251 Superior Avenue, a street number that falls between the neighboring building to the west and the advertised address of 1301. With business interests

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spread in various industries, Bryant attempted new efforts as economic hardship became eminent. In 1927 and 1928 the building is listed as the location of Bryant Tool Company, an endeavor that marked the beginning of the Bryant Building's transitory phase of occupancy. Bryant Tool Company shifted the building's function to be predominantly industrial with a small retail component. As the Depression drew near, business efforts were fleeting. By 1929 E.H. Bryant relinquished this effort to become the Vice President of Harm White Company, an advertising agency in Cleveland. With Bryant's departure, city directories and newspapers begin to refer to 1301 Superior Avenue as the Bryant Building. In 1929 the building housed the manufacturing of knit goods by Carter Williams Company in addition to the establishment of Cleveland Parts Company. Motor Body Company, an auto body repair business, was established in 1931. This phase of Bryant Building's significance reflects a shifting number of automobile service and light manufacturing businesses during a difficult economic time for the entire country. Despite minimal success of such attempts, the building remained a location of various auto-related labors while also sharing space with other tenants.

Incorporated in 1919, Cleveland Ignition Company relocated to the increasingly vacant Bryant Building in 1931. Specializing in automobile parts and service, the building was an ideal location with ample room and facilities. Advertisements featuring various electrical equipment, engine repairs, tune-ups, and performance improvements frequently ran in the local newspapers (Figure 2). This third and final phase of significance relating to the automobile industry reflects the definitive shift to automobile service over downtown sales facilities. Art Deco and Mid-century dealerships with service centers in the suburbs limited the need for such facilities in downtown Cleveland. Only a decade prior the auto industry was booming with small business dealers. By the 1930s few major auto retailers dominated the industry. As a result the parts and service industry rose to support the number of automobiles on the road. The final phase of the Bryant Building parallels the evolution of Cleveland's early auto industry. Beginning with the exclusive production of luxury cars, the market responded to the need for more affordable and practical machines of small business, and then shifted to an industry dominated by assembly lines and prefabricated parts. Although no longer an impressive showroom of new Fords, Cleveland Ignition Company allowed for the Bryant Building to continue its related function within the industry by providing automotive service and support to the downtown community. Cleveland Ignition Company operated for nearly 25 years at the Bryant Building until closing in 1955.

After Cleveland Ignition Company closed, a restaurant supply store, in addition to a music company, assumed occupancy of the Bryant Building. A bowling alley had opened on the far east end of the building in the mid-50s with a separate entrance from the street. In 1970 the building returned to a dealership when Nielsen Sports Car moved into the space. Various tenants occupied the building until ca.1990 when the Cuyahoga County Title Bureau acquired the building. Major renovations were made at this time to accommodate the needs of the Bureau, including replacement windows, interior build-out of office spaces, and minimal work on the façade. The Title Bureau currently occupies the building in its entirety.

Sitting between E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street and E. 13<sup>th</sup> Street on Superior Avenue, the dealership was one of many local automotive businesses in the "Automobile Row" vicinity. The 1921 city directory

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lists over twenty dealerships in the downtown Cleveland area. Built as Mall Motor Company's new showroom and service facility, the building reflected the terracotta-clad concrete structure that was common in Cleveland's dealership building stock. Cleveland Cadillac Co., Marmon Motor Cars, Standard Motor Sales, Cleveland Motor Cars, and Hudson-Stuyvesant Motor Cars all exhibited white terracotta facades, with four still standing today. The 5-story Cleveland Coliseum on E. 13<sup>th</sup> Street housed several smaller dealerships on the ground level, with exhibition space on the floors above. The block-long building is clad in white terracotta and still stands today. Other dealerships of the same era constructed with decorative brick facades include the Peck and Horton Co. building on E. 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Craig Motor Co. on Euclid Ave. All dealerships noted were existing when the Bryant Building was constructed, and are located within one-half mile of the Bryant Building site. The Bryant Building is believed to be the only white terracotta façade Ford dealership in the "Automobile Row" area, and reflected the typical style and characteristics of early 1920s automobile dealerships and service facilities.

Bryant Building remains a physical manifestation of the early development and rise of the automobile industry in Cleveland. Through three distinct phases of use the occupants of the nominated building have historically supported the local automobile industry through sales, service, and support. Constructed as one of the most modern dealership facilities in the city at the time, the Bryant Building mirrored the shifting needs of the automobile; from getting cars into the local community, to then supporting the high demand for maintenance and parts retail. The building retains significant integrity in the remaining terracotta façade, overall massing, and interior spatial configuration. The Bryant Building is nominated to the National Register under Criterion A in the area of commerce at the local level, for its associations and important contributions of the building's occupants to Cleveland's automotive industry.

Bryant Building  
Name of Property

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County and State

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Fisher, Tom. *The Cleveland Automobile Industry: Methods and Facilities 1898-1932*. Washington, DC: Historic American Engineering Record. Accessed July 9, 2014. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/pnp/habshaer/oh/oh0100/oh0117/data/oh0117data.pdf>.

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Volti, Rudi. "A Century of Automobility." *Technology and Culture* 37, no. 4 (October 1996): 664-85. Accessed April 23, 2014. <http://jstor.org/stable/3107094>.

Wolf, Barney, and Brian Holly. "The Rise and Fall and Rise of Cleveland." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 551 (May 1997): 208-21. Accessed April 18, 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1047948>.

Bryant Building  
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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

---

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 0.63 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Bryant Building  
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**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |             |                 |                   |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 17 | Easting: 442777 | Northing: 4594725 |
| 2. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 3. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 4. Zone:    | Easting :       | Northing:         |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated property consists of a single parcel (Cuyahoga County Parcel #102-22-039), bounded by Superior Avenue on the south, an adjacent two-story building on the east, a surface parking lot to the north, and the historic Brooks Company two-story building on the west.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The proposed boundary includes all property historically associated with the Bryant Building.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: David Trayte and Peter Ketter  
organization: Sandvick Architects Inc  
street & number: 1265 W. Sixth Street  
city or town: Cleveland state: Ohio zip code: 44113  
e-mail: pketter@sandvickarchitects.com  
telephone: 216-621-8055  
date: April 17, 2014

Bryant Building  
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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

#### Photo Log

Name of Property: Bryant Building

City or Vicinity: Cleveland

County: Cuyahoga

State: Ohio

Photographer: David Trayte

Date Photographed: April 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo #1 (OH\_Cuyahoga County\_Bryant\_0001)  
South façade, camera facing north

Photo #2 (OH\_Cuyahoga County\_Bryant\_0002)  
South façade, parapet detail, camera facing north

Photo #3 (OH\_Cuyahoga County\_Bryant\_0003)  
North elevation, camera facing south

Photo #4 (OH\_Cuyahoga County\_Bryant\_0004)  
First floor, lobby, camera facing northeast

Photo #5 (OH\_Cuyahoga County\_Bryant\_0005)  
First floor, office interior, camera facing northeast

Photo #6 (OH\_Cuyahoga County\_Bryant\_0006)

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First floor, central stair and atrium, camera facing southwest

Photo #7 (OH\_ Cuyahoga County\_Bryant\_0007)  
First floor, skylight detail, camera facing up

Photo #8 (OH\_ Cuyahoga County\_Bryant\_0008)  
First floor, partitioned office/storage space, camera facing north

Photo #9 (OH\_ Cuyahoga County\_Bryant\_0009)  
First floor, service section, camera facing north

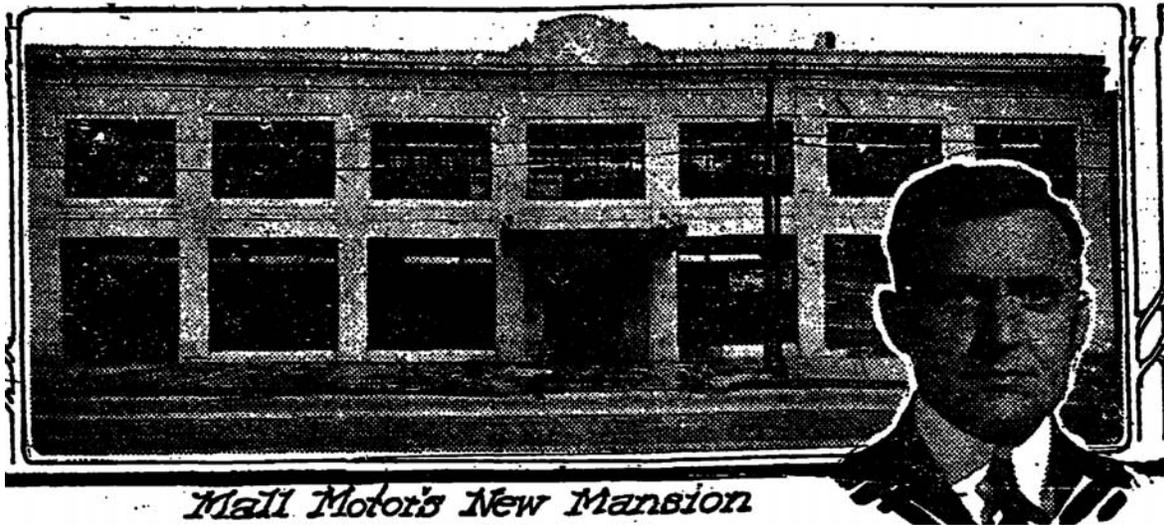
Photo #10 (OH\_ Cuyahoga County\_Bryant\_00010)  
First floor, secondary entrance and elevator lobby floor detail, camera facing southeast

Photo #11 (OH\_ Cuyahoga County\_Bryant\_0011)  
Second floor, typical shelving units, camera facing east

Photo #12 (OH\_ Cuyahoga County\_Bryant\_0012)  
Basement, mechanical space, camera facing west

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**Figure 1:** Mall Motor Company, opening of new dealership, July 25, 1921. *Cleveland Plain Dealer*

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**GIVE YOUR CAR A  
REAL SPRING TUNE-UP  
ENJOY LOWER COST MOTORING**

**All Electrical Units on Your Car  
CHECKED, INSPECTED and ADJUSTED**

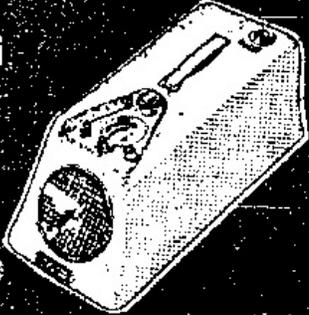
BATTERY	LIGHTS	<b>4 cyl. \$2.75 car</b>
GENERATOR	HORN	
STARTER	CABLES	
IGNITION	WINDSHIELD CLEANER	

**COMPLETE SERVICE ON**

Carburetors	Magnetos	<b>6 cyl. Car -- \$3.75</b>
Fuel Pumps	Oil Filters	<b>8 cyl. Car -- \$4.75</b>
Radiators	Speedometers	
Car Radios	Shock Absorbers	

**INCREASES POWER, PEP AND SPEED**

**ANNOUNCING  
Sensational New  
RCA VICTOR  
UTILITY RADIO  
For Your Car and Home**



**EASY TO REMOVE FROM CAR—  
AND USE IN HOME**

**THE IDEAL RADIO FOR TRAVEL**

SEE and HEAR the NEW M-116

YOU'LL BE AMAZED AT ITS  
PERFORMANCE, TONE and PRICE

**Order Your New RCA VICTOR Today**

Low Down Payment. Easy Terms.

**17 YEARS SERVING CLEVELAND MOTORISTS**

**THE CLEVELAND IGNITION COMPANY**

1301 SUPERIOR AVE. N.E. PRespect 0340

Figure 2: Cleveland Ignition Company advertisement, April 15, 1934. *Cleveland Plain Dealer*

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Figure 3: 1932 Tompkins Plat Map, Cleveland, Ohio, Volume 1 Sheet 5.

Bryant Building  
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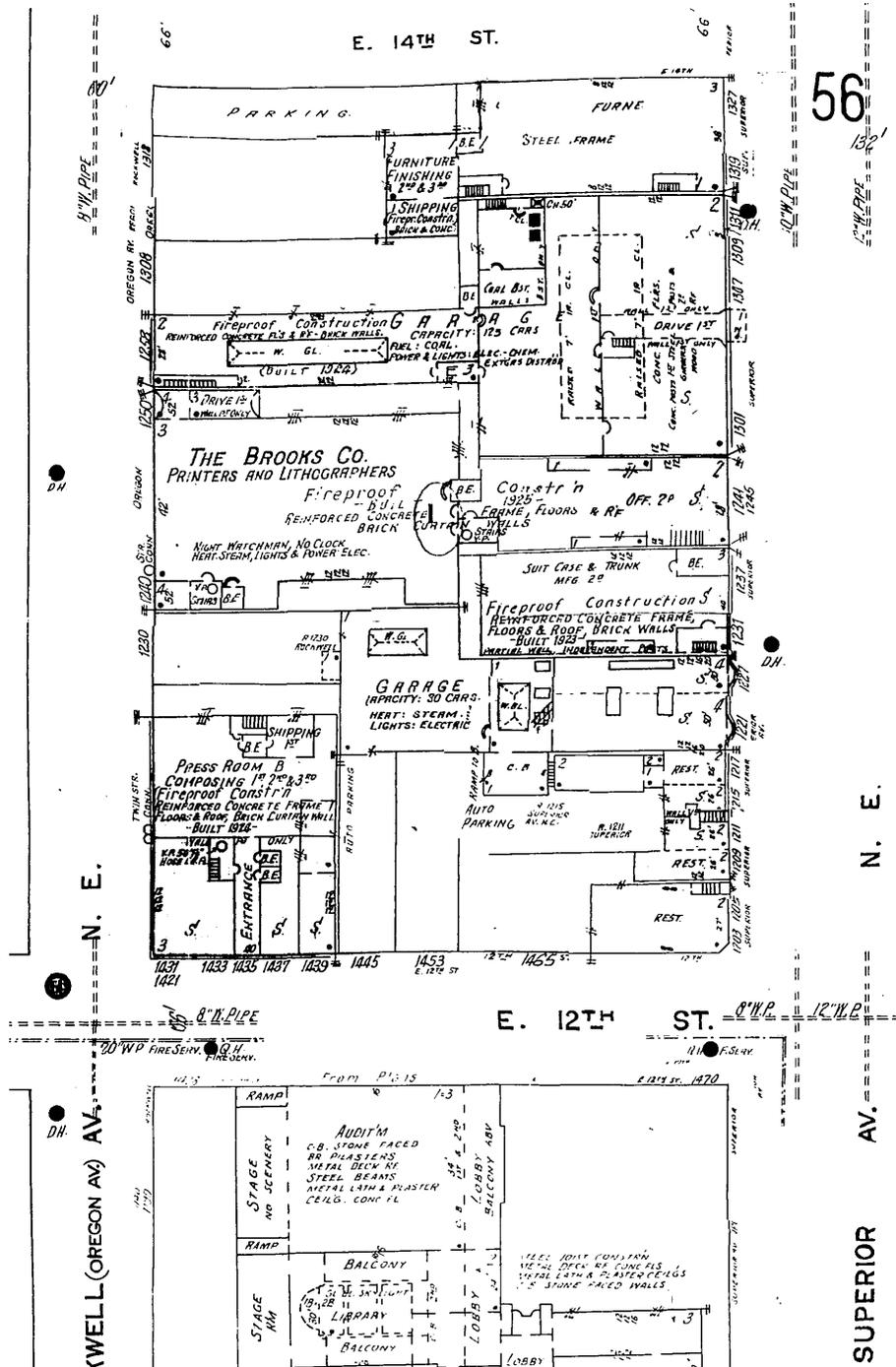


Figure 4: 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Cleveland, Ohio, Volume 1 Sheet 32.

Bryant Building  
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**Figure 5:** Superior Avenue, looking west towards Bryant Building, 1968. *Cleveland Public Library*

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**Figure 6:** Bryant Building, c.1960, looking northwest. *Cleveland Public Library*

Bryant Building  
Name of Property

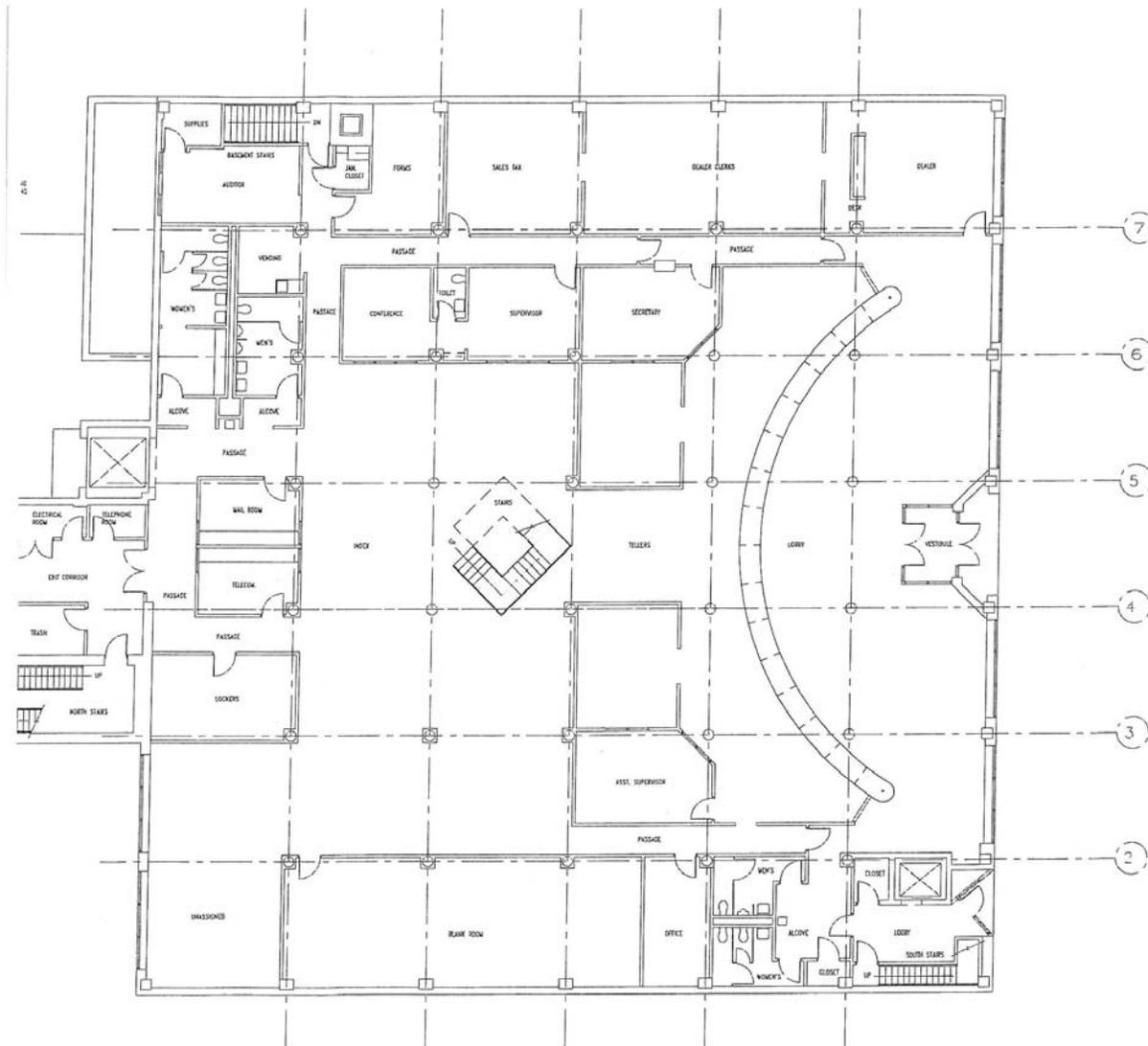
Cuyahoga County, Ohio  
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**Figure 7:** Bryant Building, Nielsen Sport Car c.1970. *Cleveland Public Library*

Bryant Building  
Name of Property

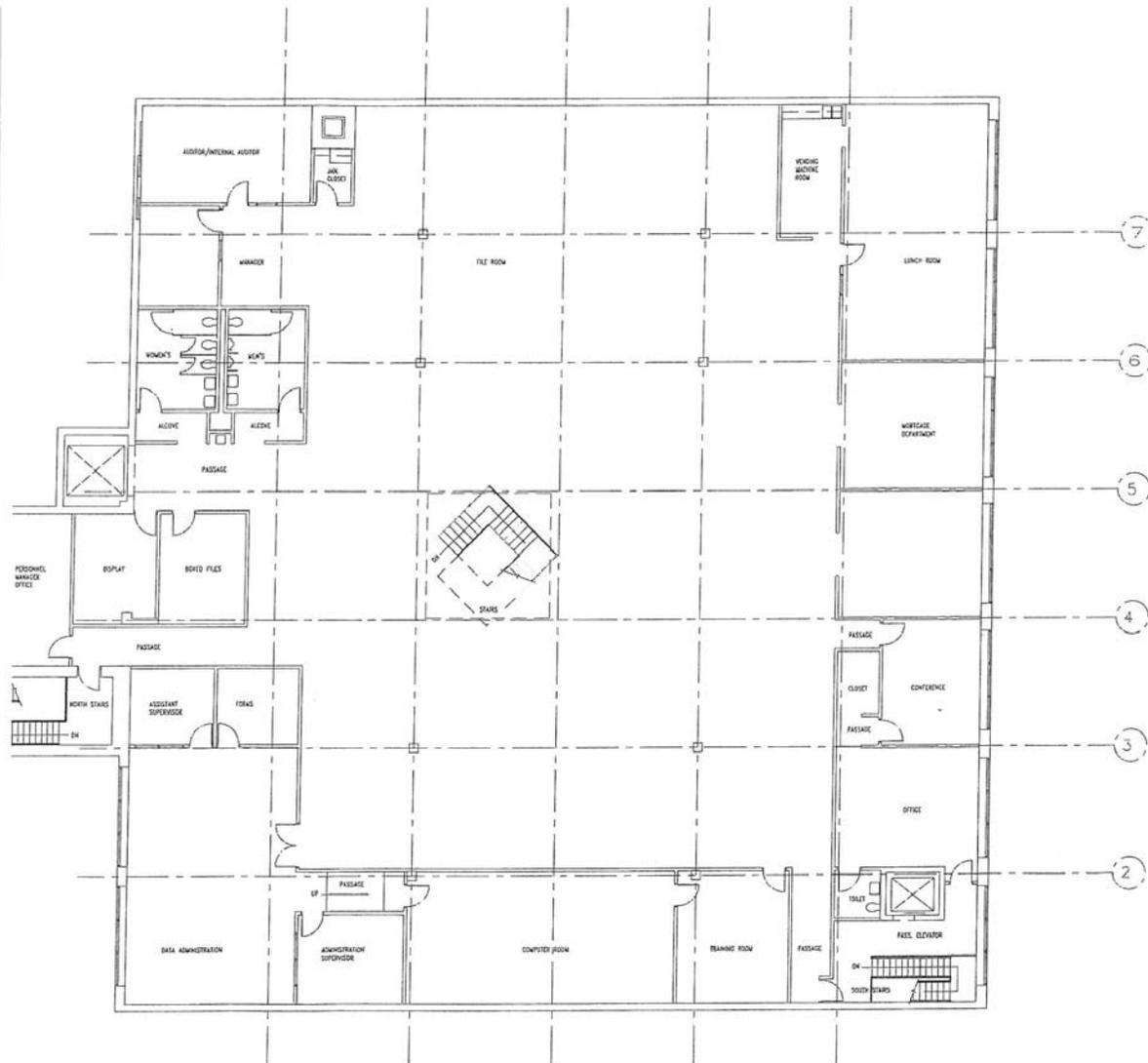
Cuyahoga County, Ohio  
County and State



**Figure 8:** Bryant Building, c.1990, first floor renovation plans. *Cuyahoga County Title Bureau*

Bryant Building  
Name of Property

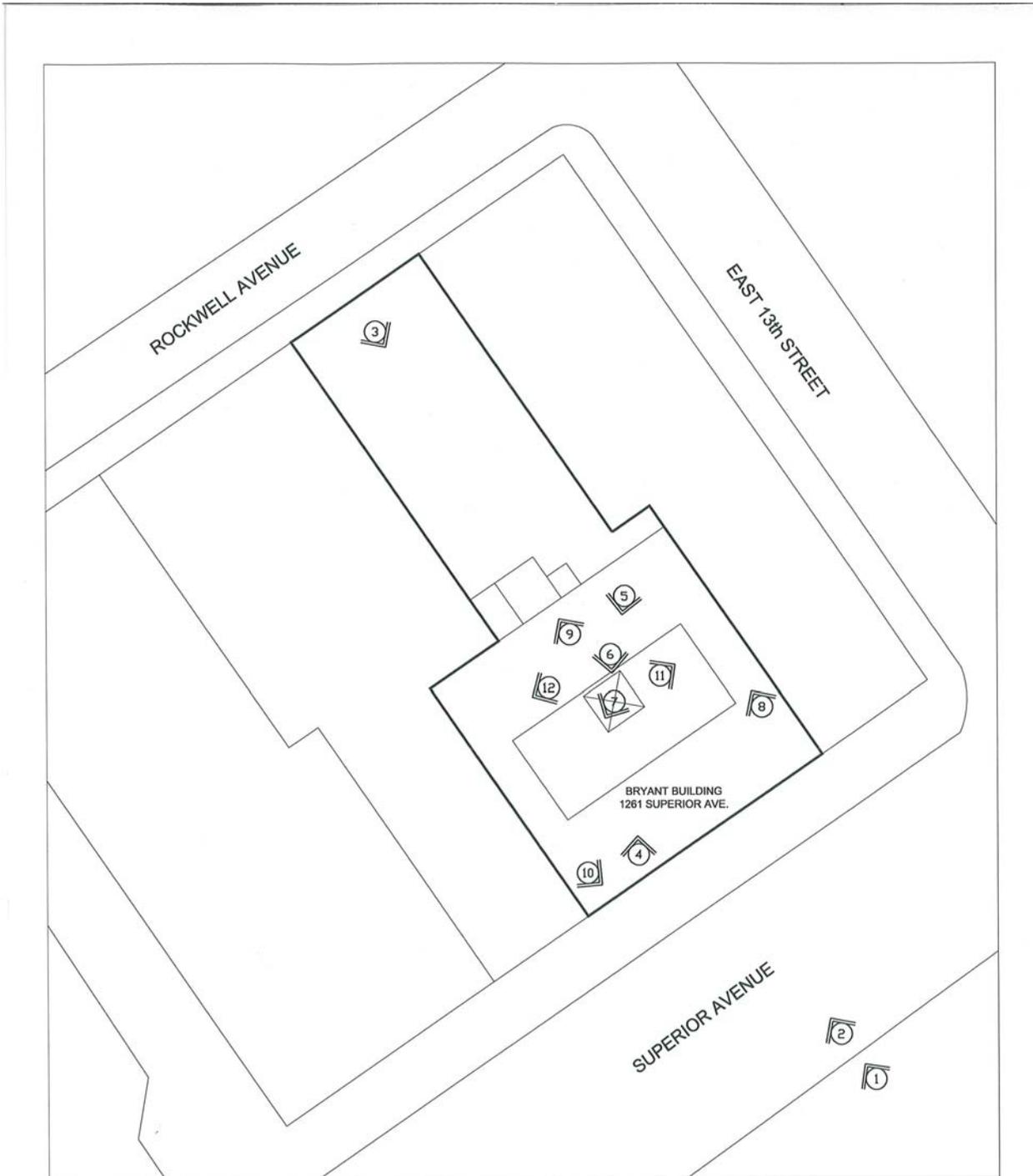
Cuyahoga County, Ohio  
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**Figure 9:** Bryant Building, c.1990, second floor renovation plans. *Cuyahoga County Title Bureau*

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NATIONAL REGISTER PHOTOGRAPH KEY  
BRYANT BUILDING  
CLEVELAND, CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO



Bryant Building National Register Nomination Location Map  
Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, Ohio UTM Zone: 17 Easting 442777 Northing 4594725



Google earth



Bryant Building National Register Nomination Location Map  
Cuyahoga County, Ohio



1201

COTTAHARA COUNTY OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT AUTO TITLE DIVISION

COTTAHARA COUNTY OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT AUTO TITLE DIVISION

















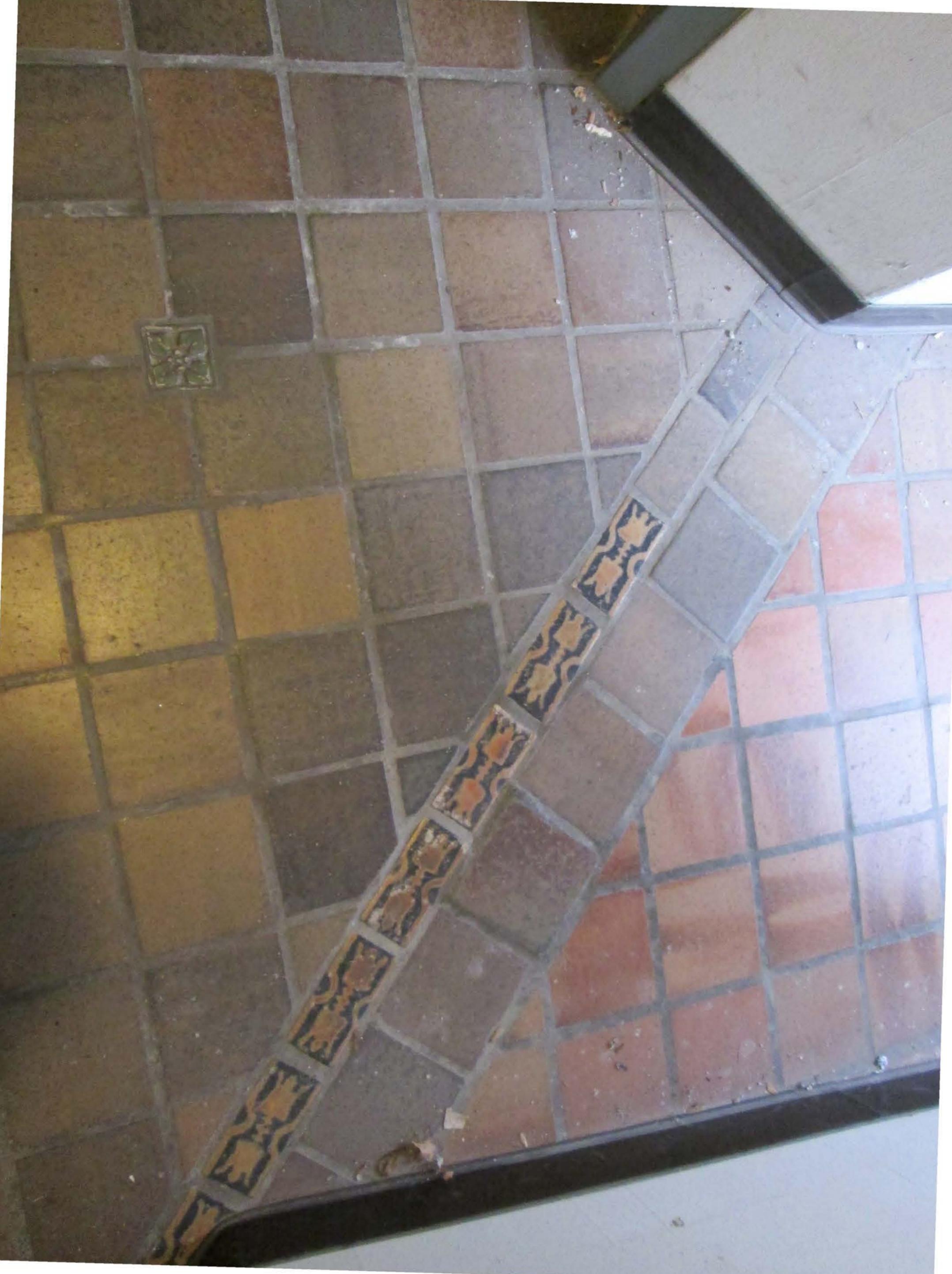
EXIT



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EXIT





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Bryant Building

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: OHIO, Cuyahoga

DATE RECEIVED: 10/31/14      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/25/14  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/10/14      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/17/14  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14001051

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N    PDIL: Y    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: N    NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    12/11/2014 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A

REVIEWER Patricia Andrews

DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE 12/11/2014

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
NPS TRANSMITTAL CHECK LIST

OHIO HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE  
800 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43211  
(614)-298-2000



The following materials are submitted on Oct. 24, 2014  
For nomination of the Bryant Building to the National Register of  
Historic Places:

- Original National Register of Historic Places nomination form  
 Paper  PDF
- Multiple Property Nomination Cover Document  
 Paper  PDF
- Multiple Property Nomination form  
 Paper  PDF
- Photographs  
 Prints  TIFFs
- CD with electronic images
- Original USGS map(s)  
 Paper  Digital
- Sketch map(s)/Photograph view map(s)/Floor plan(s)  
 Paper  PDF
- Piece(s) of correspondence  
 Paper  PDF
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS:

- Please provide a substantive review of this nomination
- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- The enclosed owner objection(s) do \_\_\_\_\_ do not \_\_\_\_\_  
Constitute a majority of property owners
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_