

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received FEB 2 1984  
date entered

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

1. Name

historic KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS BUILDING

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 333 West <sup>5th</sup> Fifth Avenue NA not for publication

city, town Gary NA vicinity of

state Indiana code 018 county Lake code 089

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Gary NSA V, An Indiana Limited Partnership, c/o  
Mr. Gerald P. Gulling, General Partner

street & number P. O. Box 8580

city, town Canton NA vicinity of state Ohio 44718

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lake County Recorder's Office

street & number 2293 North Main Street

city, town Crown Point state Indiana 46307

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title NA None has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records NA

city, town state

# 7. Description

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

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

The Knights of Columbus Building, constructed in 1925, is located in the heart of the oldest section of downtown Gary, Indiana. The building stands on the southeast corner of West Fifth Avenue (the principal east/west boulevard) and Madison Street.

The free standing, ten-story structure is approximately 124 ft. high and exhibits a complex series of massing setbacks known as "wedding cake" design. Detailing may be described as Spanish Renaissance Revival style, popular during the 1920's. The three-story Base is approximately 125 feet square. The seven-story Tower (plus penthouse), ranging in size from 58 feet x 70 feet on the 4th level, to 38 feet x 50 feet on the 10th level, is centered over the Base in the east/west direction in order to maintain symmetry in the building's north elevation, which faces West Fifth Avenue. However, the Tower is shifted to the north, compromising the symmetry of the west elevation, which faces Madison (a side street). In themselves, all four elevations of the Tower and the two street elevations of the Base are symmetrical. (The east elevation faces a small parking lot and the south elevation faces an alley. The building also has a full basement.)

The reinforced concrete structural frame and floor slabs are in fair to good condition. The exterior running bond brick veneer, a warm reddish-brown, is in good condition, with soil and stain marks in limited areas. Extensive terra cotta details (apparently unglazed), also in a natural, earth-tone color, appear to be stable, intact and not excessively soiled, despite the close proximity to the massive Gary steel works. Some sections of the terra cotta frieze/cornice capping the Base have broken away in the setback area at the center of the north elevation. Limestone details on the north and west elevations of the Base are generally undamaged and unstained, except at the main entrance on the north elevation. The original steel paneled entrance doors and storefront glazing and frame were lost some time ago. All of the original steel casement windows are beyond repair due to vandalism. The original clay tile on the shallow-hipped roof sections of the Tower has also deteriorated beyond repair. Portions of the flat roof and parapet flashings also evidence deterioration in water damage to finishes throughout the building.

The various exterior decorative features may be described in detail as follows:

Limestone cladding at the first floor extends across the north and west elevations (facing the streets). Above a simple base course, consisting of plinth and torus, the surface is divided into seven courses of carefully dressed stone, with wide reveal joints (Photo 8). The top course forms a continuous band above the window openings. A simple crown mold with dentils caps this limestone treatment. Above the west entrance, a limestone balconet is supported by two modillions (Photos 10 & 11). At the north elevation

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS BUILDING  
333 W. Fifth Avenue, Gary, Indiana

Item 7. Description (continued)

- Photos 3 & 7 a limestone balustrade extends above the two storefront openings flanking the elaborate main entrance piece. The doors here were set in a molded limestone archway with an acanthus scroll keystone. This archway is framed by two pilasters surmounted by large ancons, above which sit two limestone griffins on the projecting limestone crown mold (described above). Between the griffins is a large engraved limestone panel, which is crowned with an heraldic shield, (probably part of the Knights of Columbus insignia). Additional limestone features are found at the third floor level in the set back area above the north entrance, where limestone molded surround and projecting lintel frame the doorway opening onto the small balcony, which also has a limestone balustrade.
- Photo 9
- Photo 4 Brick and terra-cotta decorations are generally concentrated in horizontal bands which crown the stepped-back blocks of the building. The most elaborate frieze/cornice finishes the north and west elevations of the three-story base block. This band begins with a 10-course frieze of arcuated and corbelled brickwork, with terra cotta floral insert panels. (At the west elevation, the brick archwork is carried only at the corner bays.) The large projecting terra cotta cornice above the brickwork is supported on scrolled brackets. At the east and south elevations, a modified brickwork cornice with a simple terra cotta coping finishes the three story block. In the setback area of the north elevation (above the main entrance), the brick archwork and terra cotta brackets were substituted by a terra cotta frieze of three alternating square panels (flower, shield, face) topped with terra cotta crown mold coping. The brick archwork returns to finish the projecting masses which terminate at the sixth floor. The cornice here is completed by a terra cotta crown mold similar to the one used at the third floor north set back area. The next major horizontal decorative band trims the projecting masses which terminate at the eighth floor, where a terra cotta frieze is capped by a terra cotta crown mold. In order to articulate the building's corner masses, (which here are topped with hipped roofs to generate the feeling of castle-like towers), the frieze employs two different series of panels. At the corner "towers", the frieze has square panels of alternating geometric and natural motifs. Stretching between the towers (at the east and west building elevations) the pattern changes to long rectangular panels, deeply modeled with heraldic motifs. These relief panels are separated by flat, post-like panels and capped with a simple trim, creating the sense of a balustrade or balcony railing. The illusion of corner towers at the eighth level is further accented by a slight recess of the brick wall (along the east and west elevations) and an additional terra cotta molding with brackets which stretches below the eighth floor windows.
- Photos 1 & 9
- Photos 5 & 13

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS BUILDING  
333 W. Fifth Avenue, Gary, Indiana

Item 7. Description (continued)

Photo 6 The crowning mass of the building is a very elaborate piece. The beginning of the crown is marked by a large terra cotta frieze/molding above the tenth floor windows. The frieze employs alternating rectangular and paired square panels with natural and heraldic motifs. A simple brick parapet extends above this molding. The block of the penthouse, set back from this parapet, is finished with a wide band of decorative brick work. The corners of the penthouse block push out to form octagonally-shaped turrets, embellished with large terra cotta medallions. However, all of these elements serve but to frame the richly ornamented projecting loggia/balcony centered at each face of the tower. The frieze (described above) which stretches above the tenth floor windows projects out to form a plinth for the balcony, supported by large ancons. (The exception to this is at the north elevation, where the plinth is transformed into a series of arches with terra cotta insert panels between the supporting ancons.) Above the plinth is a heavy terra cotta railing composed of posts framing pierced panels (cross set in a circle). To make the small balcony space, the face of the loggia is set back from the railing, but still is projected slightly from the penthouse block proper. Windows are set within a shallow arcature. Above the arches, the terra-cotta frieze appears one last time, capped with the decorative brickwork cornice which continuously wraps the penthouse.

Photo 1 Various other decorative elements accent and organize the major features. On the north and west elevations, spiral colonettes rise from the limestone base to the frieze/cornice at the third floor. At the north elevation, the spiral colonettes reappear in the setback area, rising from the fourth floor level to tie in with the brackets supporting the loggia/balcony.

Photo 12 The rhythmically ordered window openings complete the exterior articulation. The windows, which are vertically proportioned, casement-type steel units with subdividing muntins, are arranged in consistent vertical bands at all four sides of the Tower and at the two street elevations of the Base. The larger openings at the second and third floor levels include an awning-type operable lite above the casement. Openings are of double width at the corners of the Tower. The west elevation features five grand ballroom windows, measuring approximately six feet wide by ten feet high. These windows are framed by major terra cotta pilasters, featuring floral relief carvings on the shaft and composite capitals, which support a projecting terra cotta entablature. Other featured window openings include a round window with molded terra cotta trim (west elevation, south end), narrow "arrow slot" windows with flat terra cotta trim and heraldic boss (west elevation, north end) and terra cotta balconets in front of centrally paired windows at

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS BUILDING  
333 W. Fifth Avenue, Gary, Indiana

Item 7. Description (continued)

the two "wings" of the north elevation. All other windows are set in simple masonry openings with slate sills and soldier course brick lintels. At the second and third floor windows there is also a slate exterior stool.

- Photo 16 The building has never been altered in a major way, but it has been vacant, unmaintained and open to vandals for many years. Practically all interior doors, railings, decorative fixtures, etc. have been lost. Plaster wall finishes throughout the building and plaster crown mold and pilaster capitals of the ground floor lobby/club rooms are seriously deteriorated. Much of the marble wainscot of the ground floor lobby has been stripped or smashed. The ground floor shops have been gutted, with only a few decorative steel shop front frames facing the interior lobby area remaining. However, some of the major decorative plaster elements in the second floor ballroom space have escaped significant vandalism, though water damage from the flat roof immediately above this space has seriously damaged the finishes of the beamed ceiling. Ballroom features include entrance arch (east side), overlook casing (north side), grand window casings (west side) and proscenium arch (south side). Most of these features are partially deteriorated.
- Photo 15

The original floor plans were organized in simple, symmetrical fashion, with public spaces in the Base and guest rooms in the Tower. The main entrance, centered on the north elevation (facing West Fifth Avenue), led through a corridor between two shops and up a few steps to a square central lobby space (which was one story in height). This allowed the shops, which stretched across the north side of the building, to have a higher floor to ceiling height than the rest of the ground floor spaces. To the east of the lobby was the balcony overlooking the swimming pool. (Bowling alleys were also located in the basement.) Another corridor led from the lobby to the west entrance. Some small club rooms were located in the southwest corner of the ground floor. The second floor was dominated by the two-story volumes of the Ballroom on the west, with grand windows overlooking the city's fashionable residential district, and the Gymnasium on the east, with a small lobby between. Club rooms and service areas completed the floor. The third floor was actually only a central mezzanine balcony overlooking the Ballroom and the Gymnasium. This mezzanine was connected to an exterior balcony, centered above the building's main entrance. More club rooms were located in the northeast and northwest corners of the third floor. The guest rooms of the Tower floors were tiny spaces reached by narrow corridors from a small central hall. There was a single, dormitory type toilet room on each floor. Vertical circulation was provided by an elevator and a simple open stair. The nature of the penthouse floor plan is unknown.

# 8. Significance

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

**Specific dates** 1925 **Builder/Architect** Porter & McNally of Cleveland, OH.

**Statement of Significance** (~~in paragraph~~)

From the time it was built, during the "Boom Years", through to this day, the Knights of Columbus Building may be the most exceptional, as well as one of the tallest buildings, in Gary. The free-standing, ten-story structure, with its striking stepped-back "wedding-cake" massing, can be seen silhouetted against the sky from almost any point in the heart of the oldest section of downtown Gary, where it is a prominent visual landmark. The excellent craftsmanship with which the rich, Spanish Renaissance Revival style terra cotta ornamentation was executed makes this building a significant example of one of the popular architectural styles of the 1920's. Constructed in 1925 to the design of architects Harry L. Porter and Ralph McNally of Cleveland, Ohio, the Knights of Columbus Building became an important social and cultural focal point for the young city, which had been started from scratch in 1906. Besides providing a sumptuous meeting facility for the fraternal organization, the building also served as a hotel. Its shops, restaurant, gymnasium, pool and ballroom were used by local residents as well as visitors to the city, which was something of a convention center prior to the 1930's.

The building's architectural significance is justified in that it retains nearly all of the original significant exterior features. Only the original steel paneled entry doors and original storefront framing and glazing have been lost. There have been no major alterations or additions, though the building has been unmaintained for many years. (Original blueprints are on file at the Gary Public Library.)

The building's significance to the local cultural/social/historical context may be understood in terms of its role as an emblem of promised growth. The dynamic massing and surfaces the color of iron ore are directly symbolic of the forces of man and nature that shaped the "steel city" within the context of our national industrial expansion. In 1906, the mills and town were started from "scratch" on the sand dunes and swamp land at the southern shore of Lake Michigan. In 1909, with 16,000 inhabitants, Gary was incorporated as a city. Due to a Federal Trade Commission decision in the early 1920's (regarding pricing policies for manufactured goods), the mills and the city expanded enormously from 1922 to 1930. Population of the city doubled from 55,400 in 1920 to 100,700 in 1930. By the 1950's Gary had the largest steel works in the world.

Because the early entrepreneurs' ultimate dreams of grandeur for the City of Gary have yet to be fulfilled, the proud and brooding Knights of Columbus Building is a landmark precious to both the cultural and physical heritage of the so-called "miracle city".

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Lane, James B. City of the Century. (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press). 1978.  
Gary Post Tribune, "Golden Jubilee Special Editions", 1956.  
Cannon, Thomas H. History of the Lake and Calumet Region of Indiana. 1927

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1/3 acre (approx.).

Quadrangle name Gary

Quadrangle scale 7.5 Min. Series

UTM References

A 

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

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

**Verbal boundary description and justification:** Property bounded by 5th Ave. R.O.W. (north edge), Madison Street R.O.W. (west edge), Public Alley (south edge) and vacated Public Alley (east edge). Comprising Lots 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, Block 80, Gary Land Company's First Sub-division in the City of Gary, Indiana.

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

state	NA	code	county	code
-------	----	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Leslie A. Capek, Architect

organization James E. Childs & Assoc., Inc. date October 1, 1983

street & number 521 West Colfax Avenue telephone 219-288-2052

city or town South Bend state Indiana 46601

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature J. M. Redman

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer date 1-24-84

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the  
National Register

date 3/1/84

J. M. Byers  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration