

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE 1849 C Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20240

The attached property, the Wasson, H.P. & Company Building, in Marion County, Indiana, reference number 970001539, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places by the Keeper of the National Register on 12/24/1997, as evidenced by the FEDERAL REGISTER/WEEKLY LIST notice of January 2, 1998. The attached nomination form is a copy of the original documentation provided to the Keeper at the time of listing.

Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places

<u>10/7/2008</u> Date

S:/nr_nhl/jjoecke/archives/inventoriesandfrc/certificanletter/certifyletter

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

FINAL

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.

Name of Property		
istoric name <u>Wasson, H.P. & Company</u>] ther names/site number	Building	8-296-16027
•		5-290-1002/
. Location	•	
treet & number 2. West Washington/ 2 North N		•
city or town Indianapolis		N/A_□ vicinity
state <u>Indiana</u> code <u>IN</u>	county Marion code 09	7 zip code <u>46204</u>
. State/Federal Agency Certification	·	
As the designated authority under the National Historic P request for determination of eligibility meets the docuu Historic Places and meets the procedural and professiona meets does not meet the National Register criteria nationally statewide locally. (See continu Signature of certifying official/Title Indiana Department of Natural Resource State or Federal agency and bureau In my opinion, the property meets does not meet comments.)	mentation standards for registering properties in the N al requirements set forth in 36CFR Part 60. In my opi 1. I recommend that this property be considered signi uation sheet for additional comments.) //-5-77 Date Ces	National Register of inion, the property ificant
Signature of certifying official/Title	Date	
State or Federal agency and bureau	······································	
. National Park Service Certification		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
hereby certify that the property Is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
determined eligible for the National Register		
 See continuation sheet. determined not eligible for the National Register 		
removed from the National Register to other, (explain:)		
·		

Wasson, H.P. & Company Build Name of Property	ing		Marion IN County and State	-
5. Classification				
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply) private public-local	Category of Property (Check only one box)			in the count
public-State	🗌 site	1	0	buildings
public-Federal	structure object	0	0	sites
		0	00	structures
		0	0	objects
		1	0	Total
Name of related multiple p (Enter "N/A" if property is not part o		Number of contril in the National Re	outing resources prev gister	iously listed
N/A	L	0		
6. Function or Use				
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions	5)	Current Functions (Enter categories from in		
COMMERCE/TRADE:	Department Store	COMMERCE/	TRADE:	Business
	enselin – engenerenselski kligerenserski MMP (Nyrgraf) (Pengerenselser engenerense)	COMMERCE/TRADE:Specialty		
			TRADE:	Restaurant
7. Description				
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions		Materials (Enter categories from	instructions)	
19th & 20th c. AMER	: Art Deco	foundation	STO	NE
		wallsSTONE: Granite		
			STONE: L	imestone
		roof	ASPH	ALT
			METAL:	
		other	WIETAL:	DIVIZE

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

Wasson,	H.P.	& Con	onany	Buildin	Ø
Name of			- 1		

Name or	Property	County and State
8. Sta	tement of Significance	
Applic (Mark "> for Natio	able National Register Criteria " in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property onal Register listing.)	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)
	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	ARCHITECTURE
[] 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.	Period of Significance
	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.	
Cuitani	a Considerations	Significant Dates
	in all the boxes that apply.)	1937
	Property is:	1948
	owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.	Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
🗌 В	removed from its original location.	N/A
□c	a birthplace or grave.	Cultural Affiliation
D	a cemetery.	N/A
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.	Architect/Builder
		Rubush & Hunter
		Graham, Anderson, Probst, & White
Narrati (Explain t	ve Statement of Significance he significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)	W.P. Jungclaus & Co.
9. Majo	r Bibliographic References	
Biblio	raphy	
	books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on us documentation on file (NPS):	one or more continuation sheets.) Primary location of additional data:
	minary determination of individual listing (36	State Historic Preservation Office
	67) has been requested	
	iously listed in the National Register	Other State agency
	iously determined eligible by the National	Ederal agency
	ister gnated a National Historic Landmark	Local government
□ reco #	rded by Historic American Buildings Survey	
		Other

			-
recorded b	y Historic	American	Engineering
Record #	-		

Name	of	repository:
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Marion_

IN

_____PDIL # 10785IN (447)

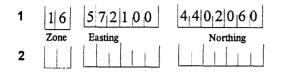
Marion	L		IN
County	and	State	

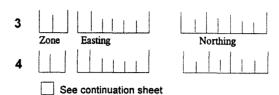
10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ______

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)





______ state IN______ zip code 47404___

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	Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission (3-17-80), revise	d by Nancy H	liestand &
organization	Cynthia Brubaker, Preservation Development, Inc.	date	8-2-96
street & num	ber 400 West 7th St., Suite 110	telephone	812/336-2065

city or town Bloomington

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 Goodman Jewelers, Inc., Goodman Quad Ltd., Goodman Court St., Inc., DBA Two North Meridian Co.

street & numbe	r <u>30 W. Washington St.</u>			telephone	317/236-	1000
city or town	Indianapolis	state	IN		zip code	46204

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.

Section Number <u>7</u> Page <u>1</u> H.P. Wasson & Co. Building, Marion County, Indiana

Description

The H. P. Wasson & Co. building is an eight story symmetrical commercial structure which stands at the northwest corner of Washington and Meridian Streets in downtown Indianapolis. Originally, the Wasson store was housed in three Victorian buildings along Washington Street. In 1937, Rubush & Hunter, a prominent local architectural firm, was commissioned to reface these buildings and design an addition to the east in order to expand and unify the structure. In 1948, a portion of the western section of the building was demolished and a new addition was built on the site. The present day appearance of the Wasson building dates from that year.

The Wasson Building is a rectangular late Art Deco structure, approximately 160' by 120', with the longer frontage facing Washington Street. The building has a flat roof. A water tower is located on the roof near the northeast corner. The facade is made up of regular coursed ashlar limestone beginning at the second floor. The first level of the building is composed of dark red polished granite.

When it was refaced in 1937, the Wasson building represented a change in merchandising philosophy. With the advent of fluorescent lighting, large banks of windows were no longer required in retail stores. The narrow windows of the Wasson building are an important element in the overall Art Deco design. Three evenly spaced sets of paired strip windows face Meridian Street and extend from the second to the eighth floor. Each window is crowned by a carved stone panel of the same width in a stylized flower motif. Five pairs of identical windows (and a single strip window on the western end) look onto Washington Street. These strip windows were originally glass block, covered by aluminum panels for a time and new glass block installed during a 1981 renovation.

The ground floor on the Meridian Street side has seven bays - one center entry with three windows on either side. The entry consists of two doors with a decorative metal grill over each, which is separated by a carved stone panel, similar to those above the strip windows. Flanking the entry doors are two display cases. A single plain, granite medallion is located above these cases. A suspended painted metal canopy hangs over this entrance.

On Washington Street, eight display windows and two entrances comprise the first floor exposure. The entrance to the east appears identical to the one on Meridian Street, with the exception of the suspended metal canopy. The entrance on the west is similar to the others, but smaller and lacks display cases and medallions. Both Washington Street entries have decorative grill work above the doors. All display windows in this building were originally equipped with a mechanized awning system, most of which are still in place.

The Wasson Building underwent at least two interior remodelings during the 1960's. In 1981 a major renovation converted the building to primarily office use with individual retail stores on the ground floor. The renovation included the installation of new glass block mentioned above and the construction of an atrium that extends from the basement to the roof. A metal and glass skylight structure covers the atrium. Decorative metal grill work removed from the Bankers Trust Building, was installed around the openings to the atrium on each floor. The east wall of the atrium is covered with mirrors. The upper floors were renovated to accommodate offices.

The Wasson Building is once again being renovated by the current owners (1996), who are undertaking a certified historic rehabilitation for ground floor retail and offices above. Although little historic fabric remains on the inside of the building, the current rehabilitation will restore the stone facade and some of the Washington Street doors and windows that were altered by other retail tenants.

Section <u>8</u> Page <u>2</u> H.P. Wasson & Co. Building, Marion County, Indiana

Statement of Significance

The H. P. Wasson & Co. Building stands today as the only reminder of a fine downtown department store. Founded and managed locally for 75 years, the firm left the downtown area 15 years ago. The building which remains symbolizes an elegant era when the finest shops were located in the central city. Considered the first modern shopping facility in Indianapolis after its renovation in the 1930's, the Art Deco building exemplified the vitality then present in the city's retail district. The Wasson building is significant as an interesting local example of the late Art Deco style, and because of its former status as the home of a major Indianapolis shopping establishment with a tradition of excellence.

By the early years of this century, H. P. Wasson & Co., along with L.S. Ayres & Co., the New York Store and L. Strauss & Co., ranked as one of the most important dry goods outlets in Indianapolis. These stores boasted a high quality of merchandise and service. In time, sumptuous buildings were erected for these stores which anchored the downtown retail district. Today, Wasson's is no longer downtown. Only the sleek structure built to house its goods remains.

In 1862, Louis H. Tyler opened a dry goods store at the corner of Washington and Meridian Streets. Known as the "Bee Hive," Tyler operated the business until 1870, when George M. Traver purchased the store. A year later, Traver took William Close into partnership. This business arrangement continued until 1873, when Traver left the firm and a former stock boy, Hiram P. Wasson, became a partner in the business with Close. Close and Wasson operated the Bee Hive at 2 West Washington until 1880; when the firm moved to Louisville, Kentucky. Business there was poor, so Wasson sold his interest to Close and returned to Indianapolis in 1883 to open his own store, H.P. Wasson & Co., at 12-14 West Washington Street.

The store prospered, and by 1891, Wasson occupied the entire 4 ½ story structure 12-18 West Washington Street. The store expanded in 1902, when Wasson purchased the two buildings to the east. (See Photo#1) At this point, Wasson's occupied space from 6-18 West Washington Street, according to the 1903 city directories. Hiram Wasson died in 1910 and control of the company passed to his son, H. Kennard Wasson, who died suddenly in 1912. After his death, the Wasson family sold the firm to Gustave A. Efroymson and Louis Wolf, already successful merchants.

Under the direction of the new ownership, much expansion and construction was undertaken. Wasson's opened a budget store at 34-40 Monument Circle in 1927. Located in what was the White Cafeteria Building and the former Remy Hotel, this budget store was connected to the main building at the rear. Shortly thereafter, Wasson's purchased the two buildings east of the store on Washington Street. Known as the "Daylight Corner", the Merchants Heat & Light Company Building (site of Kahn Tailoring) and Haerle Dry Goods Store were demolished in 1937 for the expansion of Wasson's to the corner of Meridian & Washington Streets.

A major renovation of the Wasson's store occurred in 1937. Rubush & Hunter, a prominent local architectural firm, designed a new eight story addition to fill the vacated space mentioned above. At the same time, a major refacing of the existing structure was undertaken in an effort both to modernize and unify the facade. Wasson's at this time occupied three distinct buildings. The facade of the original Victorian building was removed and replaced with a sleek, smooth limestone and granite finish. The store was billed at the completion of renovation as the first modern shopping facility in town. The modernization and expansion gave Wasson's 160 feet of frontage on Washington Street, the leading retail street in Indianapolis. Photo #2 shows the building at the completion of remodeling in 1937. The City Directory of 1937 featured a Wasson's advertisement listing its various departments and services; Women's and Misses Coats, Suits and Dresses, Children's Ready-to-Wear, Millinery, Silks, and Dress Goods, Corsets, Gloves, Toilet Articles, Hosiery, Draperies, Silverware, Gifts, Furs, Jewelry, Leather Goods, Neckwear, Men's Furnishings, Boy's Clothes, Rugs, Domestics, Beauty Shop, and Pure Food Café. Wasson's offered a complete range of services at the height of its popularity.

NPS Form 10-900-a (8-86) United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 3 H.P. Wasson & Co. Building, Marion County, Indiana

By 1948, Wasson's was ready to expand again. The smaller five story western section of the main building was demolished, and a new addition, designed by Graham, Anderson, Probst, and White of Chicago was erected to match both the facade and height of the remaining structure. This construction resulted in the present day appearance of the building (photo#3) William Jungclaus Co. acted as general contractor on the demolition and rebuilding. They completed the work in three phases so as to keep disruptions of business activity to a minimum. The addition resulted in 24,000 square feet of retail space added to the store at a cost of \$250,000. The building underwent interior remodelings in 1961 and 1968. A separate sheet is attached summarizing significant dates in the physical development of the store.

Wasson's remained under the control of the Wolf family until 1967. Two months after the death of Louis Wolf, the business was sold to Goldblatt Brothers of Chicago. After this sale the store experienced a steady decline in its traditional quality. Spurred by the rise of mammoth shopping centers and the general decline of the downtown retail district, Wasson's lost both customers and prestige. A fire in the Monument Circle annex in 1968 resulted in the demolition of those two buildings and further accelerated the decline. By 1979, the new owners felt the store had become too great a liability. At the end of that year, Wasson's closed the doors of the downtown store. Throughout its long history, the firm recorded a few retailing milestones. Wasson's installed the first fire protection sprinkling system in the city in 1902, and boasted the first completely air-conditioned store. The Wasson Co. was also responsible for the first major suburban department store development in Indiana at the Eastgate Shopping Center in 1957.

Hiram P. Wasson (1845-1910), the founder of H.P. Wasson & Co. arrived in Indianapolis from his native Maryland in 1863. Just 18 years old, he found employment at Tyler's Bee Hive as a stock boy. Sleeping at the store to save money, Wasson began studying bookkeeping in his free time. He was eventually promoted to the position of bookkeeper, and subsequently filled every managerial position in the firm. In addition to this activity with the dry goods store, Wasson established a State Bank in 1908, and was active with several other businesses, including the Indiana National Bank, State Life Insurance Company, the Bobbs-Merrill Publishing Co., and the Indianapolis Traction Terminal Company. Wasson was also a chief organizer of the Merchants Association and a member of the Board of Trade. At his death, his son, H. Kennard Wasson took control of the company.

H. Kennard Wasson (1882-1912) was born during his parent's three year stay in Louisville. Educated at Yale University, he returned to Indianapolis and became President of Wasson's after his father. H.K. Wasson's death at a young age left a vacuum in the management of Wasson's. Efroymson and Wolf subsequently stepped in and purchased the firm.

The H. P. Wasson & Co. Building is one of a number of Indianapolis Art Deco buildings designed by the architectural firm of Rubush and Hunter, who were considered the preeminent designers in this style locally. Although the Wasson Building is a refacing of existing buildings, rather than new construction, it may be compared with the Woolworth Building (7 East Washington 098-296-16039) across the street and Rost Jewelers (25 North Illinois, also a remodeled 1895 storefront, the deco facade of which is preserved at Illinois between Washington and Maryland Streets). These two structures feature a simple verticality enforced by unbroken piers. Each of the three storefronts are faced with massive granite or marble lintels and curvilinear metal marquees. The Woolworth Building is strikingly similar to the Wasson Building with polished granite at the base of the facade and limestone above. The scale of the Wasson Building is much larger however, with facades on two street fronts and several door and window openings detailed in bronze.

Other significant examples of Art Deco design in the greater downtown area include the Circle Tower (5 East Market 098-296-16017) and the Coca Cola Bottling Company (801 North Carrollton 098-296-16039). Both buildings are earlier deco examples designed by Rubush and Hunter reflecting an era of more elaborate design than the Wasson Building. The anomalous and distinctive profile of the Circle Tower Building is a response to a zoning ordinance regulating height on the circle. Passed in 1905, the

Section <u>8</u> Page <u>4</u> H.P. Wasson & Co. Building, Marion County, Indiana

legislation was among the first design-oriented regulations in the country. Others have noted the influence of contemporary Aztec and Mayan archaeological discoveries and their consequent popularization on the building (Glory June, <u>Art Deco in Indianapolis</u>, P.6). Also contrasting with the Wasson Building is the Circle Tower's arched main entrance which faces Market Street, framed with delicate limestone carving by sculptor Joseph Willenborg. Similarly, the Coca Cola Bottling Company Building is faced with white glazed tile and heavily carved scenes of stylized flowers and fountains. The Wasson Building is, by contrast, less influenced by elaborate Louis Sullivan-like detail, and more apparently associated with the streamlined school reflected by unifying but much simplified use of floral motifs. This analysis suggests an early and late use of the deco style in Indianapolis. The early, as exemplified in the Coca Cola Bottling plant (1931) and Circle Tower (1930,) is characterized by exuberant exterior detail, while the latter style, of which Wasson's (1937), Wm. H. Block (1934-36), Rost's (1936) and Kirk Furniture (1938) are examples, include sweeping lines and simplified motifs.

Situated at the pre-eminent intersection of Indianapolis, the Wasson Building has served for many years as a landmark for the citizens of Indianapolis. Throughout much of its history, Wasson's was a retail leader in the city. The building underwent a major renovation in 1981 with retail uses on the street level and offices on upper floors. The current rehabilitation (1996) seeks to restore some of the building's former sophistication and refinement. Through adaptation as an office building with ground level retail, the building has found a practical use, which allows it to remain a point of interest in downtown Indianapolis.

H. P. Wasson & Co. Building Significant Dates

1883 -	Hiram Wasson establishes H.P. Wasson & Co., - 12-14 West Washington Street
1891 -	Wasson's expands throughout entire building - 12-18 West Washington Street
1903 -	Expansion into two adjacent buildings to the east - 6-18 West Washington Street
1910 -	Hiram P. Wasson dies
1912 -	H. Kennard Wasson dies
1912-13 -	H.P. Wasson & Co., purchased by Gustav Efroymson and Lotus World
1927 -	Monument Circle annex opens 34-40 Monument Circle
1937 -	Demolition of Merchants Heat & Light Co, Building and Haerle Dry Goods Store and subsequent expansion of
	Wasson store to intersection of Meridian and Washington Streets. Also, existing Victorian buildings constituting
	H. P. Wasson & Co. refaced (Design by Rubush & Hunter) 2-18 West Washington Street.
1948 -	Demoltion of 5 story western section and rebuilding addition on site to match existing structure (Graham, Anderson,
	Probst & White, architects; William Jungclaus Co., general contractors).
1967 -	Wasson's sold to Goldblatt Brothers of Chicago
1979 - :	H.P. Wasson downtown store closes

Section _9,10_ Page _5_ H.P. Wasson & Co. Building, Marion County, Indiana

Bibliography

Glory June. Art Deco in Indianapolis. Indianapolis Architectural Foundation. 1980.

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Verbal Boundary Description

All of Lots 9 and 10 and the East ¼ of Lot 8 (being 17 feet, 9 ¾ inches off the East side of said Lot 8), all in Square 55 of the Donation Lands in the City of Indianapolis.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the H.P. Wasson & Co. Building.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Section <u>Photographs</u> Page <u>6</u> H.P. Wasson & Co. Building, Marion County, Indiana

Photographs

The following informati	on is the same for all photographs:	Property Name: H.P. Wasson & Company Building County and State: Marion County, Indiana
Photographs 1 - 3 submi Photographs 4 - 13:	Name of photographer: Cynthia I Date of photographs: 4 - 9: April	ter Nomination by the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission Brubaker I 9, 1996; 10 - 12: October 26, 1995 reservation Development Inc., 400 W. 7 th St., Suite. 110, Bloomington,
Description of views:	 Exterior, ca. 1937 photograph northwest. Exterior, northeast corner of 1 Exterior, northeast corner of 1 Exterior, storefront detail Wa Exterior, store entrance Exterior, pier and vertical win Exterior, Meridian Street entr Interior atrium detail, camera Interior atrium mezzanine detail Interior eighth floor office spinal Exterior, April 16, 1997 photofacing northwest 	I, camera facing northwest and down. tail, camera facing northeast. ace detail, camera facing south. ograph of northeast corner of Meridian and Washington Streets, camera photocopies for reference only. photos 4-13 " appearance of the building, photo 13 shows







