

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

INDIANA WORLD WAR MEMORIAL PLAZA HISTORIC DISTRICT

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: INDIANA WORLD WAR MEMORIAL PLAZA HISTORIC DISTRICT

Other Name/Site Number: The American Legion Mall

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: Bounded by St. Clair, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Meridian Streets

Not for publication: ___

City/Town: Indianapolis

Vicinity: ___

State: IN

County: Marion

Code: 097

Zip Code: 46204

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: ___

Public-Local: X

Public-State: X

Public-Federal: X

Category of Property

Building(s): ___

District: X

Site: ___

Structure: ___

Object: ___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

5

4

13

22

Noncontributing

___ buildings

___ sites

___ structures

3 objects

3 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 22

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

INDIANA WORLD WAR MEMORIAL PLAZA HISTORIC DISTRICT

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. 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): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

INDIANA WORLD WAR MEMORIAL PLAZA HISTORIC DISTRICT

6. FUNCTION OR USE

| | | | |
|-----------|----------------------|------|--|
| Historic: | Landscape | Sub: | Plaza/Park |
| | Social | | Civic |
| | Recreation & Culture | | Work of Art Monument/Marker |
| | Education | | Library |
| Current: | Landscape | Sub: | Plaza/Park |
| | Social | | Civic |
| | Recreation & Culture | | Work of Art Monument/Marker |
| | Government | | Post Office Courthouse Government Office |
| | Education | | Library |

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Classical Revival: Art Deco

MATERIALS:

Foundation: Stone (Limestone)
Walls: Stone (Limestone, Granite)
Roof: Stone
Other: Statuary: Metal (Bronze);
Concrete

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.**SUMMARY**

The Indiana World War Memorial Plaza Historic District, in the heart of downtown Indianapolis, is composed of predominantly Neoclassical buildings and structures, landscaped open space, and sculptural ensembles. The district is flanked on the west by Meridian Street, the primary north-south route running through the center of the city and on the east by Pennsylvania Street. Because of its location between two primary north-south traffic arteries, the Plaza provides a monumental entrance to the Indianapolis business district from the north. The Plaza proper extends from New York Street on the south to St. Clair Street on the north, but the district also includes the terminating buildings and their blocks at the north and south ends of the Plaza.

This historic district has within it five contributing buildings—the Main Indiana War Memorial Building; Buildings "B" and "C," both used by the American Legion; the Marion County Main Public Library; and the Federal Building. The district also includes a Cenotaph in its Sunken Garden; the Obelisk Square; University Park; and free-standing sculptures which is itemized below.

The Plaza as a whole was designed by architects Frank B. Walker and Harry E. Weeks in 1923 and realized in phases between 1925 to essential completion in 1950; it is missing one planned, but never built, building.

The Marion County Public Library on the north side of St. Clair Street provides the northern terminus to the grand vista from the War Memorial Building. University Park and the Federal Building to the south of the War Memorial Building visually extend the formal landscaping and the Neoclassical architectural character of the Plaza design in that direction.

ORIGINAL AMERICAN LEGION (AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY) BUILDING (Building "B")

The two American Legion buildings define the east and west sides of the Plaza at its north end. The smaller building ("B" on the original plan) is at the intersection of Meridian and St. Clair Streets, the northwest corner of the Plaza, with an entrance on Meridian Street and one oriented eastward toward that section of the Plaza designed as the Sunken Garden. Construction began in 1925. This building served as the Legion's national headquarters until Building "C" was constructed in 1950. Today Building "B" houses the American Legion National Auxiliary, the Indiana Department (state organization) of the American Legion and its State Auxiliary, and the National Forty and Eight (affiliate of the Legion).

This Indiana limestone building is a fine example of Neoclassical architecture. Its design echoes that of the Marion County Public Library immediately north on St. Clair Street. The pilastered facades of the building resemble the columns of a Roman temple. The monitor roof is likewise typical of Neoclassical design, the dominant style during the early twentieth century for public buildings such as courthouses and libraries.

The building is four stories tall, thirteen bays in length, and three bays in width. The ends of the long facades are defined by heavy corner piers while the thirteen bays of openings are separated by simple Roman Doric pilasters. The corner piers and pilasters support a full Doric entablature. This same treatment is continuous across the end elevations. A parapet rising above the cornice partially conceals the recessed monitor containing the fourth floor of the building. The ground floor windows are set in limestone enframements topped by a wide, molded spandrel that corresponds to the frieze above the Meridian Street and Plaza entrances. The entrances are further accentuated by projecting horizontal cornices topped by foliate carving in a roughly pedimental shape. The second and third floor windows, which take up the full bay between the pilasters, are composed of paired lights. All windows are double hung anodized aluminum sash as is the spandrel panel between the second and third floors. Decorative enrichment of the structure is limited to the bronze entrance doors, molding and stylized relief carving in the spandrels above the first floor openings, and the triglyph, metope, mutule block detail of the classically correct entablature. This results in an overall classically restrained building whose dignity is achieved through refined proportions.

Notable well preserved interior spaces in this building include the third floor office suite of the National President of the Auxiliary and the fourth-floor meeting room. Both were used for corresponding functions by the Legion itself when the National Headquarters was in the building.

AMERICAN LEGION HEADQUARTERS (Building "C")

This larger structure was constructed as the national headquarters for the American Legion in 1950 and remains in use for that purpose today. Although not quite fifty years old, it contributes to the district due to its Neoclassical architectural style, its function, and its associative history. Building "C" was also designed by Walker and Weeks and was a part of their original plan for the Plaza. It was not built with Building "B" because members of the War Memorial Commission felt that additional space was not needed at that time.

Building "C" (so designated by the plan) is located at the intersection of Pennsylvania and St. Clair Streets. Its main facade, oriented to the west, also faces toward the Sunken Garden and northern part of the mall. It is comprised of two four-story pilastered wings joined by a recessed center section containing the entrance. The northern wing is, with the exception of slight modification of the limestone treatment around the first floor windows, a mirror image of Building "B." The southern wing essentially duplicates this same format in fifteen bays. Both wings have centrally located, paired anodized aluminum frame entrance doors with fixed sash transoms. The monitor roof on the southern wing contains blind panels rather than window openings. The recessed connector is dominated by a monumental entrance composed of paired free standing Doric columns supporting a full entablature. The upper levels of this connector, punctured by two rows of small double hung windows, is enriched by the American Legion emblem in sculptural relief. Like Building "B," this structure is in an excellent state of repair.

The National Commander's suite of offices and the meeting room used by the National Executive Committee of the American Legion are the most notable rooms in the building. A museum and library are other important interior elements.

(The original plans for Building "C" envisioned that a new similar structure be built adjacent to Building "B" to add symmetry. This project has never been constructed.)

SUNKEN GARDEN/CENOTAPH

That part of the Plaza lying directly between Building "B" and the north wing of Building "C" is lower than the rest of the design and is thus referred to as the Sunken Garden. This portion of the plan was constructed in 1931.

The Garden is lower than the St. Clair Street entrance to the plaza and the two American Legion buildings but higher than the mall area to the south. It is entered from all four sides (corresponding to the cardinal points of the compass) by wide granite and limestone stairways. The difference in level and simple landscaping contribute to the garden's commemorative function.

The central focus of the garden is a rectangular, black granite cenotaph (raised empty tomb) resting on low green granite and red granite bases which in turn rest on a pavement of polished red and green granite squares. A bronze wreath with a central star is located on each of the east, west, and south sides of this pavement. A bronze wreath with an inscription to honor James Bethal Gresham, the first member of the American Expeditionary Forces to die in action in World War I, is on the north side. At the four corners of the granite paving rise black granite Art Deco columns with simple gold necking bands and stylized gold eagles in place of capitals. The cenotaph itself is adorned by bronze laurel wreaths and a border of stars.

MALL

A grass mall extends southward between the sunken garden and North Street. It is flanked on the east and west sides by formally landscaped parterre.

OBELISK SQUARE

That part of the Plaza located between North Street and Michigan Street is known as Obelisk Square and was completed in 1930. With the exception of a narrow strip of lawn and trees bordering the square, it was originally paved with asphalt. The square was relandscaped in 1975 with a formal pavement pattern radiating from the central Obelisk fountain, as part of beautification efforts for the Bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence. Grassy areas were added and trees at the four corners. On the northern mid-block edge of the square, a regiment of flags representing each state of the Union is centrally located to carry out the formal axis of the whole Plaza design.

The Obelisk itself, a symbol of regeneration, has been said to represent "...the hopes and aspirations of the nation, a symbol of the power of nature to reproduce and continue the life of the country."¹ It is a 100' four-sided shaft of black granite ornamented at its base by four bronze bas-relief tablets. These 4' x 8' bronze bas-relief panels are sculpted to represent the four fundamentals on which the nation's hopes are founded: law, science, religion, and education. The panels were set into place in the fall of 1929 under the supervision of Henry Hering, the primary sculptor of the Plaza. The cap of the shaft has recently been covered with gold leaf.

A two-level fountain, part of the original design, encircles the Obelisk. Its lower basin is 100' in diameter and is composed of pink Georgia marble and terrazzo. The upper basin is composed of four small bays with a large nozzle and spray ring in each. Colored lights illuminate the fountain at night.

INDIANA WORLD WAR MEMORIAL BUILDING

In early 1926 work began on the main memorial building. Several buildings, including the Haugh Hotel (presently on East Michigan Street), were moved. On July 4, 1927, Gen. John J. Pershing laid the cornerstone "consecrating the edifice as a patriotic shrine."²

¹ "The Indiana World War Memorial," *The Indianapolis Star*, May 25, 1921, p. 1.

² *The Indianapolis News*, July 5, 1927, p. 1, c. 1.

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Work continued steadily on the main Memorial until 1928. A delay in the acquisition of state funds slowed the completion of the interior of the Central Shrine. (Removal of two churches remaining on the block posed an issue until 1960, when they were finally demolished.)³ Although progress was intermittent, on November 11, 1933, Lt. Gen. Hugh Drum, Deputy Chief of Staff of the United States Army, and Governor Paul McNutt dedicated the main Memorial. Other dignitaries in attendance included representatives from the British, French, Italian, and Royal Yugoslav Consuls.

The main Indiana World War Memorial Building occupies almost the entire block between Michigan and Vermont streets. The whole block is raised above street level. This, combined with the banked landscaping, contributes to the shrine's monumentality. The Neoclassical shrine rises 210' above street level with the main vertical mass resting on a wide base. Access to the terrace roof of the base on the north side is gained by a low, wide, granite and limestone stairway leading from Michigan Street to a pair of end stairways that rise in two runs. A short, wide, central stair then leads directly to the terrace itself. From Meridian and Pennsylvania streets, stairs lead to the interior of the base via three centrally grouped pairs of double bronze doors.

From Vermont Street, the terrace above the base is approached by a single, grand, monumental stairway rising directly from the sidewalk. The terrace is guarded at both the north and south entrances by stylized limestone lions holding shields. Large limestone urns mark the four corners of this terrace. The vertical mass of the shrine rising above the base is itself divided into a rusticated lower section; a smooth, rectangular shaft articulated on each face by six Ionic columns; and a stepped pyramidal roof topped by a lantern. On each face the rusticated lower section projects forward to support six monumental Ionic columns that support a full entablature. The frieze of this entablature continues across each facade

³ *The Indianapolis News*, February 25, 1930, p. 6, c. 3.

and is filled with bas-relief carvings of stylized eagles. Figurative sculpture rests on top of the entablature above each column. In turn, heraldic shields are placed above each figure in the cornice.

The rusticated lower section of the shrine is pierced on the north and south elevations by tall, double leaf bronze doors. Two foliated stanchions carrying bronze globes flank these doors. Inscribed above are the words "To vindicate the principles of peace and justice in the world."

The main entrance to the memorial is located on the north facade. Once inside the vestibule one sees the Tennessee marble floors, Neshobe Gray marble walls, and ornamental plaster beams. Art Deco influences are evidenced in the Egyptian motif in the beams and the light fixtures. This room is reserved for smaller displays.

The Grand Foyer likewise has a Tennessee marble floor. The walls and columns are a combination of Verde Antique marble and decorated plaster. The Foyer is relatively empty except for a reception desk and a few small display cases and flags. At either end of the Foyer are two identical meeting rooms. Each room seats up to 75 people and is used by civic groups.

On the east and west sides of the Foyer are two staircases which lead to the Shrine Room. Access to the stairs is through a marble arch flanked by two monolith Levanto marble columns. Lining the walls are the names of all Indiana World War I Veterans and the casualties from Indiana during World War II and the Korea and Vietnam conflicts. The walls are American Pavonazzo marble while the stairs themselves are Georgia white marble.

The Shrine Room is the central attraction of the Memorial. Suspended in the center of the room below the crystal Star of Destiny is an American flag. Below the flag is the Altar of Consecration supported by four marble eagles which serve as guardians of the Shrine. Inscribed on each side of the altar are inscriptions by Royal Cortissoz, author of the Lincoln Memorial inscriptions.

The top of the Altar is executed in brilliantly colored enamels, being a wonderful piece of craftsmanship, and embracing the American Golden Eagle, the Shield of the United States, the Wreath of Memory, the Palms of Victory, and the broad gold ribbon upon which is inscribed in blood red letters the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

At each corner of the Altar and situated on the raised plinth are four marble and gold tripods representing the Centinels of Light throwing their lustre on the apotheosis of the whole design, the American flag, whose dimensions is about seventeen by thirty feet. Above the flag is the Star of Destiny, a large crystal star symbolizing the guidance of the future welfare of the Nation.

Each wall of the shrine room is articulated by four monolithic columns of dark green marble, making a total of 16 in all. They stand on raised bases inscribed with wreaths and are capped by Corinthian composite capitals that are gilded. Above the capitals is an elaborate frieze. Above the frieze is a catwalk and above that the ceiling.

Surmounting the whole warm rich color in the room and forming a mysterious background for the Star of Destiny is the the ceiling, serene in its simplicity and suggesting in color the atmosphere of the heavens.

In three niches on each the east and west sides are portraits of the leading soldiers of France, America, Great Britain, Belgium, Italy, and Serbia painted by Walter Brough. Above the 17' high marble wainscot is an allegorical marble frieze sculpted by Frank Jirouch. The north wall depicts America joining the Allies, the east and west walls portray the war itself, and the south wall represents peaceful activities. Above the frieze are 20 blue stained glass windows.

The Auditorium, which has a capacity of 500 people, is located directly under the Shrine Room. American red marble highlights the base, dado, and trim of the room, while Gustavino acoustic tile covers the walls and ceiling. Classical columns, pilasters and other motifs further decorate the auditorium. The blank spaces on the east and west walls were originally reserved for murals. A large portrait of Gen. John J. Pershing hangs behind the stage.

In the basement of the main Memorial are galleries which provide space for a World War I Museum. They are minimally ornamented and contain showcases and displays.

Difficulties with the Memorial Building were encountered in later years. In April 1949, *The Indianapolis Times* reported that the Memorial was deteriorating, with leaks, cracked plaster, peeling paint, and eroding limestone.⁴ Newspaper accounts in 1961 depicted similar decay.

Both the main Memorial and Obelisk Square were also periodically threatened by development. In 1952, city developers proposed that a civic auditorium be constructed on Obelisk Square with an underground garage below University Park. While studies were conducted, the concept was eventually dropped. In 1961, a State Senator proposed that the Memorial be sold to a developer with the proceeds of the sale going to a new mental health hospital. The proposal, however, was never adopted.

Finally, in 1965 the finishing touches were completed on the structure which had been begun in 1926. Landscaping of the southwest corner (former site of one of the churches) and the east and west steps were likewise completed.

***Pro Patria* Sculpture**

The central sculptural element of the Main Memorial Building is the 24' tall bronze casting *Pro Patria*, set on a pink granite base projecting from the southern monumental stairway to the main Memorial. The sculpture, by Henry Hering, depicts a young man draped in an American flag reaching heavenward. It was described as the largest sculptured bronze casting ever made in America when set in place in 1929.

Hering constructed four models, each one greater in size, in order to perfect and develop details on such a large scale. Hering stated it was his idea to "... execute a figure that will embody the spirit rather than material concept of a soldier..."⁵ *Pro Patria* took three years to complete. The sculpture was cast by the Roman Bronze Works in Corona, New York, in seven parts and finally arrived in Indianapolis in October 1929. A special rigging was devised to convey *Pro Patria* up the south steps of the Memorial and place it on the granite

⁴ *The Indianapolis Times*, April 10, 1949, Sec. 1, p. 4.

⁵ *The Indianapolis Star*, July 1, 1928, Sec. 7, p. 8.

plinth.

UNIVERSITY PARK (UNIVERSITY SQUARE)

University Park is the one block square bordered by Vermont, Pennsylvania, New York, and Meridian Streets, the block just south of the War Memorial Building. The World War Memorial Plaza proper, to the north, was planned to link the area visually along a north-south axis. University Park extended this axis to the south. Before being incorporated into the grand City Beautiful scheme, the park had a separate design history.

Set aside as a site for a state university in 1821, when Indianapolis was platted as a "Mile Square" city, the park never housed a university. During the balance of the 19th century, the block served various uses. In 1833-60, a two-story building at the southwest corner housed successively the Marion County Seminary, churches, and the city's first high school.⁶ In 1860, the building was torn down and the square became a drilling ground for Union troops. The southeast corner contained a lumber yard at one time, while a cow pasture and a children's playground were once on the north side of the square. J.B. Perrine leased and enclosed the east side of the square in 1850 for an exhibition ground, which displayed band concerts, balloon ascensions, and fireworks. Many plans were made for use of the property, but none completed.⁷

After the Civil War, the citizens of Indianapolis began to think about University Square in a different manner. This coincided with a national feeling toward the use of public spaces.⁸ In 1866, a fence enclosed the entire square and nearby residents took up a fund to develop the land into a park. Ten years later, they removed the fence and laid out a naturalistic series of curvilinear, radiating paths.

By 1920, however, University Park had essentially assumed its present appearance, which facilitated its incorporation into the Plaza. George Edward Kessler's redesign called for a central circle with radiating diagonal concrete walkways and heavy plantings at the corners and intersections of the park. With the exception of a walk which connects Meridian and Pennsylvania Streets, this plan and landscaping remain intact today.

⁶ *The Indianapolis Star*, June 19, 1966, Sec. 1, p. 18.

⁷ *The Indianapolis Star*, June 19, 1966, Sec. 1, pp. 18-19.

⁸ Spiro Kostof, *America by Design* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 215.

A collection of bronze sculpture of exceptional distinction occupies the shaded lawns of University Park. The Depew Fountain is located in the central circle. It is one of the six sculptures found in the park, the others being Schuyler Colfax, Benjamin Harrison, the wood nymph Syrinx, Pan, and Lincoln Seated.

Lincoln Seated Statue (Henry Hering, 1934)

At the southeast corner of the park, this bronze statue depicts Lincoln slumping in a chair, his right hand raised in a gesture of peace, his head bent slightly forward.⁹ He is dressed in a morning coat and is sitting on his shawl, which is draped over a chair. The chair is a Victorian adaptation of a Neoclassical form with fringe encircling the lower portion of the chair in a Turkish motif, typical of the mid-Victorian era. Attractive details such as Lincoln's watch chain on his vest and his stovepipe hat and gloves lying on the floor behind the chair add touches of realism to the sculpture.

Benjamin Harrison Statue (Statue, Charles Niehaus; Plaza and Exedra, Henry Bacon, 1908)

The Benjamin Harrison statue, honoring Indiana's (and Indianapolis's) only President, is at the south center edge of the Park facing New York Street and the Old Federal Building. The Harrison sculpture is composed of four parts: the plaza, which includes the exedra or semicircular bench, the plinth, the pedestal, and the statue itself. The exedra, plinth, and pedestal are limestone; the statue is bronze.

The stepped up plaza is simple and basically free of ornamentation except for the exedra. Each end of the bench displays a scrolled lion's leg and foot with an Ionic-type capital. Artistic acanthus leaves are carved at the top of the lion's leg section.

The plinth, the limestone block that separates the pedestal from the plaza, bears carved inscriptions, on the south side, within a carved elongated maltese cross.

Acanthus leaves decorate the base of the pedestal and oak leaves and acorns adorn the top. A fringed sash is wrapped around the oak leaves with the ends hanging down at each corner of the pedestal, creating an interesting ornamental effect. An American eagle is centered on the pedestal's front facade, poised over an inscription.

On the pedestal stands Harrison in a slightly open overcoat holding his gloves in his left hand. Harrison is standing in a pose that is supposed to be indicative of his attitude during his front porch campaign speeches.

Directly behind the figure is a chair with curved back and splayed legs, reminiscent of the Greek Klismos chair with lion paw feet, which continues the lion paw pattern in the exedra. A United States flag is draped over the chair.¹⁰

Schuyler Colfax Statue (Lorado Taft, 1887)

The statue of Colfax, Vice President with President Grant, was the first to be placed in the park, at the southwest corner. It is now in the middle of the east half of the park, near the center of

⁹ *The Indianapolis Times*, April 16, 1934. Fuller descriptions of the statuary in University Park are available in the National Register nomination prepared by Katherine Martin of the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana in 1988.

¹⁰ Charles Warren Fairbanks, *The Addresses* (Indianapolis: Hollenbeck Press), pp. 3-6.

the park, moved there from its earlier location in 1919.¹¹ The Colfax statue has a triangular granite pedestal. The inscription I.O.O.F. (International Order of Odd Fellows) and the word Colfax in raised letters, are arranged above and below a bronze medallion.

The northwest and southwest sides of the pedestal contain raised emblems of branches of the I.O.O.F. order—a shield and a medieval tent with crossed staffs.

Three connecting granite columns with leafy capitals rise from the pedestal base. Atop the columns stands the Colfax statue, done in bronze. Colfax is dressed in both an overcoat and a Prince Albert coat. The whole structure is 20' high; the bronze section is 8'4".¹²

Depew Fountain, 1913-19 (Karl Bitter; A. Stirling Calder)

The focal point of University Park is the Depew Fountain at the center. The granite fountain is surrounded by a circular plaza with stone benches. Alexander Stirling Calder executed the design after Karl Bitter's unexpected death in 1917.¹³

There are five levels to the fountain. From the lower water basin rise three tiers. The lowest tier is unadorned. The second tier contains carved granite half-clam shells from which water flows. Eight dancing children holding hands in a fairy ring, frolic around the fountain. The figures (3 girls, 5 boys) are bronze with a green patina finish. All but two have their backs to the fountain. The children wear leaves, seaweed, water lily pads, and netting, draped over and around their bodies and arms; their heads are wreathed and their feet are bare. The frieze of the third tier contains 16 jumping fish (8 carp, 8 catfish). The fish seem to be playing and dancing along with the children.

A fluted pedestal base rises from the third tier spreading into a water basin. The upper basin is the fourth level of the fountain, water cascades over the edge of the upper basin.

A cylindrical column in the center of the upper basin is carved with frog faces, and atop this column on the fifth level is a woman in a classical toga drape, a cymbal in each hand. Her head is tilted to one side and her left foot is on point, raised for a dance.

Wood Nymph and Pan, 1923-1970s (Myra Reynolds Richards, 1923; replaced by replicas)

Two small sculptures, a wood nymph, or Syrinx, and a Pan sculpture are accessory to the fountain on its east and west sides, respectively. Due to theft, this is the third Pan and the second wood nymph, the latest replacement coming in 1981. (For this reason, these objects are considered non-contributing.) Formerly drinking fountains, the sculptures now rest on stone tree stumps. The wood nymph sits with her left arm cupped to her ear listening to the pan pipes. Her head is wreathed in flowers. Pan is seated with his goat legs side saddle fashion. He wears a slight smile as he plays the flute.

LANDSCAPING

Interspersed between spoke-like sidewalks, University Park is alive with landscaped flower beds and plentiful trees. Picnic tables are placed on the grassy area at the west side of the park. Cast

¹¹ George W. Geib, *Indianapolis: Hoosiers' Circle City* (Tulsa: Continental Heritage Press, Inc., 1981), p. 62.

¹² *The Indianapolis Sentinel*, May 19, 1887; *The Indianapolis News*, May 18, 1887, p. 1.

¹³ *The Indianapolis Times*, April 14, 1936.

metal street lamps line each of the walkways. These lamps, which feature fluted shafts and acorn globes, were installed in 1919-20. Two very unusual lamps are located east and west of the Benjamin Harrison plaza. The posts are decorated with a leaf design and lions' heads. Each of the four feet of the lamp rests on the back of a turtle. (Today, a stone marks the site of the seminary in the southwest corner.)

CURRENT CONDITION

University Park survived proposals in the 1950s and 1960s, such as one to use the park for underground parking. In a rather complex arrangement, University Park continues owned by the State, to be maintained with city funds and administered by the Memorial Commission.

The sixties and seventies saw cleaning, repairs, and updating of University Park. The Depew Fountain was fitted with a new jet spray and lights.

University Park retains a high degree of integrity to its 1914 redesign by Kessler. Crosswalks connecting Meridian and Pennsylvania Streets now bisect the park, but the most important elements of the design—its symmetry, the use of diagonal walks, intersections and borders heavily planted with deciduous trees, and a central fountain as a focal point on the north-south axis of the district—remain intact.

FEDERAL BUILDING

This building, occupying the block bounded by Ohio, Meridian, Pennsylvania, and New York Streets, was designed to house federal courts, offices, and the main city post office. These functions were accommodated in a four-story extended U-shaped building 91' high, 172.5' wide, and 355.5' long, with its symmetrical long facade facing south on Ohio Street. The structure is of steel, the floors and flat roof of reinforced concrete, and the exterior walls are sheathed in Indiana limestone detailed in Italian Renaissance style.

The classic dignity of the rhythmic Ionic-pilastered facade is enhanced by a raised stone-balustraded terrace regularly punctuated with bronze light fixtures. A heavy classical cornice terminates the vertical thrust of the pilasters and provides an appropriate cap to the monumental facade.

The construction of a five-story addition in 1936-38, closed the original U-shaped plan, creating a light court for the upper floors and extended the classic facade around the building. The two main entrances, at either end of the south facade, are accented by pairs of heroic statues by John Massey Rhind, leading into the Bedford stone-vaulted entrance lobbies.

The first floor and basement originally housed the post office. Ornate glass mosaic ceiling designs, imported and domestic, marble-clad and pilastered walls with carved wood trim, and intricate marble floor patterns decorated the first floor public corridors. The original marble floors were replaced with terrazzo flooring of similar design in 1963. An important interior feature is a set of two, two-story self supporting curving marble staircases that flank the entrance lobbies.

The second floor houses the Department of Justice quarters, including two federal courtrooms. The third, fourth, and partial fifth floors house other federal offices. The Law Library, originally described as the most handsome space in the building, but now greatly altered, is located in the center front of the second floor.

The west courtroom contains an impressive array of decorations, including a large mural behind the bench, "Appeal to Justice" by W.B. Van Ingen, a pupil of Thomas Eakins, whose murals decorate several federal buildings, including the Library of Congress. The walls of this courtroom feature gray and white marble pilasters with bases and Corinthian capitals of bronze,

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separated by mahogany-framed gold-brocaded panels. Above the pilasters are painted the seals of the 13 original colonies and the state of Indiana. The 30-foot ceiling is divided into circular and octagonal panels, decorated with classic motifs and illuminated in gold and silver. Two large stained-glass windows, massive mahogany furnishings, marble floor and intricate bronze rail give additional testimony to the tasteful opulence of this noteworthy climax of monumental government architecture in the early 20th century.

The building was repaired and air-conditioned in 1962-63.

MARION COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

This building, inspired by the classic Greek Doric architectural design, has three stories and a basement. The two wings, containing the East and West Reading Rooms, the Main Reading Room, and the stack rooms form four sides of a large court and air well, traversed by a bridge for direct access. The exterior of the building is of Bedford limestone, having a base of Vermont granite and concrete roofs.

The interior finish of wood is Indiana quarter sawed white oak and much of the carving, in wood, stone, and ornamental plaster was done on the site. None of the service rooms lie below ground level. The varying floor levels are an interesting feature of the construction, relieved by unusual inclines, passageways, and short flights of steps. The stone entrance foyer leads on the east to the Auditorium and Children's Room, and on the west to the administrative offices.

In front, the entrance foyer opens into the Main Reading Room, which is a great open shelf room one hundred feet long and fifty-five feet wide, occupying the entire front wing, with walls of limestone and Caen stone. An important feature of this room is an unusual ceiling forty-three feet above the marble and tile floor, in detail. The material is plaster pre-cast into intricate classical decorative details. Inset into the beam framed ceiling spaces are painted canvases, decorative rosettes, and painted frescoes.

The East and West wings are two-story structures at the top of marble stairs at each end of the Main Reading Room. They each have a length of one hundred and forty feet and are panelled in oak above the book cases up to the ceiling coves. The original lighting for the entire building was indirect. The lighting system was first supplemented in 1951 through the introduction of 500 watt recessed incandescent ceiling fixtures. These were further supplemented in 1961 with the installation of flood lights in the chandeliers in all spaces, except the mezzanine which received ceiling-hung fluorescent fixtures. Heat was supplied by a combination of both direct and indirect systems of hot water and hot air.

No changes have been made in the basic architectural configuration of the building from the original 1913-16 design. The reading rooms, offices, and work areas are basically as they were at that time. Minor modifications have included the relocation of a rest room to a former office area, the installation of a storage and display area in the east hallway, the cutting of a door through the decorative plaster of the west balcony directly into the stack area, the remodeling of the auditorium, and the insertion of a floor above the full length of the high east hallway to provide additional space.

In 1963, an addition, consisting of a basement and first floor, was added to the northeast side of the building. The connection to the main building was made through what had been a rest room area. In 1974, four additional floors were added to this addition with connections into the main building through the north end of the east balcony and the fourth floor stack area. The 1974 addition necessitated the blocking-up of the north window of the East Reading Room. The addition, which does not match the original in materials, scale, or fenestration, is intrusive, but is not visible from the mall, or south, side of the Library.

STATE OF PRESERVATION

All of the buildings, monuments, and parks within the district are in good or excellent condition, except that the Library's addition is intrusive, but not visible from the Plaza, and the landscaping of Obelisk Square has been modified—without, however, disturbing the Obelisk itself, the key feature. Plans are currently under way to restore the interior sidewalks of the plaza between North and St. Clair Streets and to expand the landscaping on the east and west sides of the mall.

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES**Buildings:**

Public Library
Original American Legion Building (Building B)
American Legion Headquarters (Building C)
Indiana World War Memorial Building
Federal Building

Sites:

Sunken Garden
University Park (University Square)
Mall
Obelisk Square

Objects:

Cenotaph
Art Deco Columns (4)
Obelisk
Pro Patria
Lincoln Seated Statue
Benjamin Harrison Statue
Schuyler Colfax Statue
Depew Fountain
Turtle Base Lamps (2)

NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES**Objects:**

Pan Statue
Syrinx (Wood Nymph) Statue
Stone Marker for Seminary

INDIANA WORLD WAR MEMORIAL PLAZA HISTORIC DISTRICT

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: ___ Statewide: ___ Locally: ___

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A X B ___ C X D ___

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):

A ___ B ___ C ___ D ___ E ___ F X G X

NHL Criteria: 1, 3, 4

NHL Exceptions: 7, 8

NHL Theme(s): VII. Political and Military Affairs, 1865-1939
E. World War II, 1914-1919

VIII. World War II

IX. Political and Military Affairs after 1939

XVI. Architecture

W. Regional and Urban Planning
1. Urban Areas

Areas of Significance:

- Architecture
- Art
- Community Planning & Development
- Landscape Architecture
- Social History

Period(s) of Significance: 1921-1950

Significant Dates: 1925, 1929-1930, 1931, 1933, 1950

Significant Person(s):

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

INDIANA WORLD WAR MEMORIAL PLAZA HISTORIC DISTRICT**Page 18**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Architect/Builder:**Architects/Landscape Architects**Frank B. Walker and Harry E. Weeks (War Memorial Building,
Legion Buildings, and Plaza)

Paul Cret (Public Library)

John Hall Rankin and Thomas W. Kellogg (Federal Building)

George Edward Kessler (University Park)

Sculptors

Henry Hering (all except noted below)

Lorado Taft (*Colfax* Statue)Charles Niehaus and Henry Bacon (*Benjamin Harrison* Statue)Karl Bitter and Alexander Stirling Calder (*Depew* Fountain)Myra Reynolds Richards (*Pan* and *Wood Nymph Syrinx*)

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**SUMMARY**

To commemorate the valor and sacrifice of the land, sea and air forces of the United States and all who rendered faithful and loyal service at home and overseas in the World War; to inculcate a true understanding and appreciation of the privileges of American citizenship; to inspire patriotism and respect for the laws to the end that peace may prevail, justice be administered, public order maintained and liberty perpetuated.

—Main Inscription on the Indiana World War Memorial Building

The Indiana World War Memorial Plaza Historic District is, as its name suggests, a nationally distinguished commemorative tribute to the State's heroes who have fought and suffered or died in war, but it is also the national headquarters of the largest organization of veterans and their relatives, the American Legion and its auxiliary and affiliated organizations. Indeed, the construction of this entire complex, which is also of exceptional architectural and planning interest, derived from the efforts that brought the Legion to Indianapolis before the end of 1919, the year it was formed.

The American Legion was formed because the veterans of World War I desired to honor their fallen brethren and to associate themselves in common endeavors for their own and the nation's good. The Legion quickly became a large and influential organization. Its activities in the past 75 years have touched every aspect of the welfare of veterans and their relatives. These activities have included, sometimes with considerable controversy, efforts to influence America's foreign policy and defense posture and have also notably extended to broad humanitarian efforts in education and recreation that have reached most Americans, including millions outside the veterans community.

The Indiana World War Memorial Plaza Historic District, moreover, presents dramatically, as do relatively few sites in the United States, the realization of the city planning concepts of classical formality and grand monumental scale envisioned by city planners, architects, and artists in the City Beautiful movement of the early twentieth century. The Plaza's fine Neoclassical buildings, of which the Indiana War Memorial Building is the most majestic; its formally designed open spaces and north-south vistas focusing on the War Memorial; and its heroic monuments and statuary all contribute to its grandeur. Few tributes to a State's or the Nation's veterans are its equal in scale, architecture, or art.

BACKGROUND

The efforts of prominent persons in Indianapolis to attract the American Legion to Indianapolis developed into the plan for the Indiana World War Memorial and Memorial Plaza. The American Legion was formed by veterans in Paris in February-March 1919, after the November

1918 Armistice that ended World War I. A second organizational meeting was held during May 1919, in St. Louis. A national convention was planned for Minneapolis in November. Temporary national headquarters meanwhile were located in New York City.¹

During the summer of 1919, three Indianapolis veterans, Walter Myers, Dr. T. Victor Keene, and Robert Moorhead, met to discuss the possibility of Indianapolis hosting a national Legion convention. They were also taken with the idea of attracting the national headquarters to Indianapolis, an idea blessed by tradition, for the Soldiers and Sailors Monument, one of the Nation's outstanding memorial sculptures to Civil War veterans, already stood in the circle at the heart of the city.

The veterans met with Solon J. Carter, Marion County Superior Court Judge, and later with Stoughton Fletcher, who recommended they work with Charles Coffin, the Chamber of Commerce President, to encourage businessmen to fund a lobbying effort. Mayor Charles W. Jewett recommended Charles Bookwattler and Governor James P. Goodrich recommended Secretary of State John Roach to represent Indianapolis and Indiana at the Minneapolis convention.

On November 11, 1919, the first anniversary of the Armistice ending World War I, the first National Convention of the American Legion selected Indianapolis as the site for permanent headquarters. The Indiana delegation had lobbied hard. They pressed Indianapolis's location near the center of U.S. population, its ease of access by railroads and motor transportation, and its strong patriotic tradition. They cited the drawbacks of other proposed cities—Minneapolis, Washington, D.C., and New York.

The majority report of the site committee favored Minneapolis but was tabled when confusion erupted after Walter Myers attempted to submit a minority report favoring Indianapolis and demanded a roll call vote. The Indiana delegation was reported to have broken into choruses of "Back Home Again in Indiana." Other cities joined the competition. Washington got the most votes on the first ballot, with Indianapolis second. However, Washington did not receive the majority required. A second ballot was taken and Indianapolis won by a margin of 38 votes out of 684 cast.

While the 1919 National Convention of the American Legion had recommended Indianapolis as its headquarters, it was up to the city and state to provide an appropriate location. In January 1920, a citizen's planning committee recommended that two city blocks be purchased for a memorial to the veterans of World War I. In July the Indiana House of Representatives passed the Indiana War Memorial Bill which allocated \$2,000,000 for construction and set aside the two city blocks between St. Clair Park (south of St. Clair Street) and University Park for "memorial

¹ In adapting the National Register of Historic Places nomination form for this National Historic Landmark study, additional material has been added on the history of the American Legion and other topics. Thomas A. Rumer's *The American Legion, An Official History, 1919-1989* (New York: M. Evans & Co., 1990) should be consulted for those desiring background from which this very brief historical summary has been developed.

purposes."² In 1921, the City and County Commissioners began the acquisition of the two block area between Meridian and Pennsylvania streets on the east and west, and North and Vermont streets on the north and south.

Preliminary work on the Plaza began in early 1921. A nationwide competition was undertaken to select an architect. The State's War Memorial Board instructed that the design commemorate valor and the sacrifices of soldiers, sailors, and marines while also providing meeting, office, and archival space. In November, the American Legion dedicated the Plaza site with a gift from France—a cornerstone from the bridge over the River Marne at Chateau-Thierry.

In 1923, the War Memorial Board approved the firm of Frank B. Walker and Harry E. Weeks, from more than two dozen entrants, to serve as the architects of the Plaza. A jury of three out-of-state architects (Henry Bacon of New York, Milton B. Medary, Jr., of Philadelphia, and Charles Adams Platt of New York) chose the winning design. Walker and Weeks' plan included the Main Memorial, two auxiliary buildings, the Cenotaph, Mall, and Obelisk Square.

Frank R. Walker and Harry Weeks, Cleveland's premier public architects, had both trained at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Walker had further schooling at Paris's Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Among their designs were the following major Cleveland buildings: Public Library, Federal Reserve Bank, Main Post Office, Municipal Stadium, Severance Music Hall, and Cleveland Municipal Auditorium.³

Walker and Weeks' design was executed in phases beginning in 1925 and essentially completed in 1950. It is missing one planned, but never built, element, a building that would match the southern portion of the current American Legion headquarters. The complex is otherwise complete as designed with very little change or intrusion.

An element of Walker and Weeks' plan that must be emphasized is the manner in which it incorporated two existing impressive Neoclassical buildings by other architects—the Public Library at the north end of the Plaza and the Federal Building south of the War Memorial Building site—to conclude their plan's vistas. The recently redesigned University Park, between the War Memorial site and the Federal Building, was also worked into their plan. (The overall design is most clearly seen in their plans. See illustrations accompanying this nomination.)⁴ As an historical magazine noted:

² *The Indianapolis News*, July 29, 1920, p. 1.

³ Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, Inc., 1970), pp. 624-625, 640.

⁴ The most impressive view is that appearing in *The Indiana World War Memorial, Indianapolis, Indiana*, a pamphlet prepared for the War Memorial Commission. These views explicitly include the Public Library and Federal Building as the terminals of the vistas.

The architecture of the buildings in the plaza group has been made to conform in general to the style of the federal building and public library, so that in the entire group Indianapolis will have a civic center with unity of design, and a certain harmony of purpose.⁵

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY, WE ASSOCIATE OURSELVES TOGETHER FOR THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES: To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and good will on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy; to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion

This statement of the Legion's principles, which remains today virtually as drafted in 1919 by World War I veterans, could be used to develop a lengthy discussion of the organization's history. But it is not so much an organization as a movement, operating through 15,000 community-based "posts."

Throughout its existence, the Legion has not only been an outstanding advocate for its members and veterans generally in matters that concerned their health, welfare, and government recognition and benefits, but has also concerned itself with the welfare of all those in the military service. The key point that came to distinguish the Legion from earlier veterans organizations, such as the Grand Army of the Republic and the United Confederate Veterans, the associations of the Union and Confederate Civil War veterans, respectively, was the Legion's decision, taken early during World War II, to embrace veterans of that war in their membership.

Subsequently, the admittance to membership in the Legion of veterans of later wars has insured that the Legion will be a continuing organization.⁶ That decision was also expressed and solidified by one of the Legion's most signal accomplishments, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act ("G.I. Bill")(1944), which the Legion drafted and shepherded through Congress.⁷

Even the Legion's critics must acknowledge the significance of the G.I. Bill and other measures the Legion has taken as advocates for, and providers of, assistance and recreation to veterans, their families, and the public. Examples include the Legion's donations, in the late 1940s, to research on rheumatic heart disease and its extensive sports programs for children, such as the American Legion Junior Baseball, in which noted player Bob Feller and 65% of all major league players were involved.⁸

⁵ Stephen C. Noland, "Indiana's War Memorial," *National Republic* 15, 5 (September 1927), 7.

⁶ Rumer, *op. cit.*, pp. 276-283.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 243-248. Also see Ken Scharnberg, "The Writing of the GI Bill," *The American Legion* 136, 6 (June 1994):34-36, 56-59.

⁸ Rumer, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-210, 298-301.

The strength of the Legion (currently 3.1 million members) as the nation's largest veterans organization, as well as its lobbying skills, has made it a force to be reckoned with on Capitol Hill and in the White House from its earliest days. Indeed, the Legion's record of early legislative accomplishments included successful efforts to override economy-motivated vetoes by Presidents Coolidge, Hoover, and, even, Franklin D. Roosevelt.⁹ Later Presidents, recognizing the Legion's clout, have treated it with the respect, if not affection, that comes from close association. All Presidents from Truman through Bush have been members, and President Clinton has cited his participation in Boys Nation, the Legion's civics training institute for young men.

The Legion has often been moved to undertake projects related to, or take positions on, public issues. The Legion drafted, in 1923, a "Flag Code" that was adopted by Congress in 1942, and is currently campaigning for a constitutional amendment to ban desecration of the U.S. flag.¹⁰ Although its politics have been explicitly nonpartisan, they have hardly been radical and have often been controversial, even in the early days. The founding St. Louis caucus of 1919 dealt with the exclusion of a radical veterans group.¹¹ The eve of World War II brought major debates in the Legion's national conventions over the virtues of neutrality, Lend-Lease, and the like.¹² Throughout such episodes, frequently incurring criticism, the Legion's leaders have stoutly proclaimed their adherence to its founding principles.

SIGNIFICANCE IN ARCHITECTURE AND CITY PLANNING

The World War Memorial Plaza and the existing public library and Federal Building created a formal setting with classical designs that reflected the design concepts of the City Beautiful Movement of the early 20th century. The City Beautiful Movement had its roots in the 1893 Columbian Exposition held in Chicago. That event focused attention on the grand Neoclassical architectural designs of McKim, Mead & White, Richard Morris Hunt, et al., and the planning concepts of Daniel H. Burnham. The "White City," as the exposition site was called, exhibited elements of formality through monumental, classical designs. As the century drew to a close, these new planning ideas took firm hold.¹³ This grandeur was translated, primarily by Burnham, into large scale urban designs in such cities as Chicago, San Francisco, Cleveland,

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 149-155, 191, and 215.

¹⁰ Ray Mahon, "The Legion and the Flag," *The American Legion* 136, 6 (June 1994): 18, 50.

¹¹ Rumer, *op. cit.*, p. 44-45.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 224-241.

¹³ Fairbanks, p. 3.

and Washington, D.C. The premise of the City Beautiful Movement was to bring "order to the disquieting jungle of American towns, an order based on uniformity, on the classical style public architecture, on reverence for natural beauty."¹⁴

The World War Memorial Plaza clearly exhibits the concepts of the City Beautiful Movement. The formality of the Plaza, the classically inspired architecture, and the monumentality of the main Memorial exemplify the essential concepts of City Beautiful design. The Plaza's location between the Neoclassical Central Library on St. Clair Street and the Federal Building of classical design immediately south of University Park, gives the area a stylistic unity and monumentality of scale that establishes this ensemble as the most recognizable expression of Neoclassical architecture in Indianapolis.

The Legion buildings are significant representations of the Neoclassical style, while the main Memorial is an excellent example of that same style. As a reflection of the significance of ancient classical forms, the Memorial is patterned after the tomb of King Mausolos at Halicarnassus. That great marble tomb, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, consisted of a rectangular base upon which sat a colonnade similar to that of the World War Memorial. Because of its size and scale, the main Memorial is the most imposing Neoclassical structure in the city and is the visual focal point of the World War Memorial Plaza.

The symmetrical landscape plan of University Park, as redesigned in 1914-20, and the classical themes of the outstanding collection of sculptures in that park also reflect the City Beautiful movement and prefigure their integration into the master scheme of the War Memorial Plaza. The sculpture was executed by some of the nation's most prominent artists of the early 1900s.

The park's redesign was the work of George Edward Kessler, the city's landscape architect after 1908. Born and trained in Germany, Kessler is recognized as a master landscape architect and city planner.¹⁵ He is best remembered for his efforts in Kansas City, although his Indianapolis works, of which the redesign of University Park is but one, are significant examples of his work.¹⁶

Visually, University Park forms an extension of the World War Memorial Plaza immediately to its north. The formal design of University Park is very compatible with the City Beautiful qualities exhibited in the later War Memorial Plaza, which was designed to incorporate the park.

The Federal Building is an excellent example of the Classic Revival style popular for public buildings at the turn of the century. The design won the silver medal at the 1908 Louisiana

¹⁴ Fairbanks, p .3.

¹⁵ See Mel Scott, *American City Planning Since 1890* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969), p. 13; Richard Guy Wilson, *The American Renaissance 1876-1917* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), p. 87; and James O'Day, "George Edward Kessler and the Indianapolis Park System: A Study of its Historical development during the City Beautiful Era, 1895-1915" (Graduate Thesis, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, 1988), Chapters II and III.

¹⁶ James O'Day, "George Edward Kessler and the Indianapolis Park System: A Study of its Historical Development During the City Beautiful Era, 1895-1915" (Graduate Thesis, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, 1988). A plan for University Park, bearing Kessler's name, appears in the *21st Annual Report of the Board of the Indianapolis Park Commissioners, 1915*. See also *24th Annual Report of the Board of the Indianapolis Park Commissioners, 1920*.

Purchase Exposition (St. Louis World's Fair).¹⁷ The original section of the building was designed by the Philadelphia architects John Hall Rankin and Thomas W. Kellogg and completed in 1905. Construction of the north third of the building in 1936-38. This addition extended the classical facade around the north side of the building and completed an appropriately classic elevation as the southern terminus for the Indiana War Memorial Plaza. Its interior decoration and trim are representative of opulent public architecture of the early 20th century.

The Indianapolis Central Library is a classic work of superior distinction. Constructed in 1913-16 by the firm of Zantzinger, Borie, and Medary, and designed by the eminent architect, Paul Cret, who designed the Pan American Union Building in Washington, D.C., and a number of war memorials in France, the building exemplifies a sensitive use of the classical and classically inspired elements.

The south facade, the main entrance to the building, is one of the most imaginative modern interpretations of the Greek Doric style which has been created in the early twentieth century. The exterior use of stone is finely proportioned and detailed.

Contemporary praise for the building was fulsome. Ralph Adams Cram, America's foremost Gothic Revival architect, commented in 1918 that the Indianapolis Central Library

is the best example of classic architecture in America.... The whole thing is not only Greek in form but penetratingly Greek in spirit... the most notable qualities in the exterior are scale and surface. It is not a large building, yet the scale is so delicately preserved that one does not think of dimensions.... Nothing is overdone or wasted, and the enormous success of the result follows from proportions that are fine and sensitive to the point of perfection... one of the most distinctive and admirable contributions to architecture that have been made in America.¹⁸

A recent scholar has been just as kind, noting that the interior is a "Beaux Arts synthesis of up to date functional planning and appropriate civic impressiveness."¹⁹

ART IN THE WORLD WAR MEMORIAL PLAZA

When University Park was incorporated into Walker and Weeks' overall design for the War Memorial Plaza, it already included major pieces by several of America's best known sculptors—Charles Niehaus, Lorado Taft, Karl Bitter, and A. Stirling Calder. To this Henry

¹⁷ Sandra L. Tatman and Roger W. Moss, *Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects* (Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1985), p. 643.

¹⁸ Ralph Adams Cram, *Architectural Forum*, September 1918.

¹⁹ "Paul Cret," *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects* 1 (New York: The Free Press, 1982): 476.

Hering added all the new projects within the War Memorial Plaza, including the stone figures on the main Memorial, the panels on the obelisk, *Pro Patria* on the south steps of the World War Memorial Building, and the Seated Lincoln statue in the park itself.²⁰

Hering had studied at Cooper Union and the Ecole de Beaux-Arts and the Colarossi Academy in Paris. He worked for Philip Martiny and then studied under Augustus St. Gaudens from 1900 to 1907. Hering's works include the Robert Collyer Memorial for the Church of the Messiah, New York; and a Civil War Memorial at Woolsey Hall, Yale University. Collaborations with architects led to his best recognized commissions: symbolic statues for Federal Reserve Banks in Dallas; Kansas City; Chicago; Pittsburgh; Cleveland, where he also worked with Walker and Weeks; and Indianapolis.

It is also critical to note Hering's predecessors in University Park, for, like the architects, he was adding to an already impressive collection of public sculpture. French trained Lorado Taft, then an up-and-coming sculptor 27 years of age, had been selected in 1887 for the Colfax statue because of his *General Lafayette* for the Randolph County, Indiana, Soldiers Monument. His distinguished later career was noted mainly for his work in his native Illinois, such as the *Fountain of Time* in Chicago and *Alma Mater* at the University of Illinois, but he also designed the Columbus Fountain in Washington, D.C.²¹

Charles Niehaus, a former student of the Munich Academy, was best known for his sculptures of public figures in Washington, D.C., including John Paul Jones and Dr. Hahnemann, and his James Garfield in Cincinnati. His 1908 Harrison statue is of Neoclassical style.²² Henry Bacon designed the pedestal and plaza of the Harrison statue. Bacon is best known as the architect of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., but he did numerous other buildings and a total of some 50 memorials and monuments with various sculptors, including the plaza design for the Depew Fountain.²³

The original design of the Depew Fountain was by the prolific Karl Bitter, a Viennese native, who had become a well known sculptor under the patronage of Richard Morris Hunt. Bitter worked on reliefs for the Pennsylvania Station in Philadelphia, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the doors of Trinity Church in New York, and indeed "a swarm of decorative sculptures in the Viennese manner."²⁴ When he died in 1915, he had completed only a small model of the Depew Fountain.

²⁰ *The Indianapolis Times*, October 8, 1917.

²¹ *Ibid.*; Lewis W. Williams, II, "Lorado Zadoc Taft," *Dictionary of American Biography* Supplement 2: 647-648.

²² Leila Mechlin, "Charles Henry Niehaus," *Dictionary of American Biography* Supplement 1: 574-576.

²³ *Who Was Who 1897-1942* (Chicago: The A.N. Marquis Co., 1943), 1. C.H.W., "Henry Bacon," *Dictionary of American Biography* 1: 477-478.

²⁴ A.A. "Karl T.F. Bitter," *Dictionary of American Biography* 2: 303-305.

A. Stirling Calder, who trained in Philadelphia and Paris, finished Bitter's design.²⁵ Among his many works, his Ericsson Memorial, a gift to Iceland from the American people, is said to be his best work, but Calder considered the Depew Fountain his best.²⁶ (Calder was the father of Alexander Calder, inventor of the mobile.)

CONCLUSION

Though designed to honor the veterans of World War I, the War Memorial Plaza is today dedicated to all men and women of Indiana who have served in all conflicts since World War I. The Plaza unites the buildings serving the Indiana and National Headquarters of the American Legion, devoted to serving the survivors of war, to the Cenotaph Memorial in the Sunken Garden, a tribute to the war dead. It then ties these elements to the main Memorial by means of a grand axial design balanced around the Obelisk symbolizing the nation's hopes for peace. University Park opens another grand vista, to the south. The Public Library and the Federal Building close the vistas to the north and south, harking back symbolically to the main inscription on the War Memorial Building, with its emphasis on patriotic education and the service of justice.

The World War Memorial Plaza clearly expresses the urban planning ideals of the early twentieth century and contains the city's most significant grouping of Neoclassical architecture. Its concept explicitly recognized and incorporated two fine preexisting Neoclassical buildings and the redesigned University Park and its sculptures of high artistic quality by significant American artists. The final grand design, by two major early 20th century architects and an important sculptor, carries out its idealistic theme in one of America's most impressive public settings and one of the Nation's outstanding war memorials. That this complex also houses the largest veterans organization and its continuing work and that the whole complex had its genesis in the founding days of that organization are also especially appropriate.

²⁵ Geib, *Indianapolis: Hoosiers' Circle City*, p. 62.

²⁶ Kostof, *America by Design*, p. 183; H. Harvard Arnason, "Alexander Stirling Calder," *Dictionary of American Biography* Supplement 3: 123-125.

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INDIANA WORLD WAR MEMORIAL PLAZA HISTORIC DISTRICT

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: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office: Indiana Historic Sites & Structures Inventory
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other (Specify Repository):

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 30.25

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing

| | | | |
|---|----|--------|---------|
| A | 16 | 572155 | 4403360 |
| B | 16 | 572305 | 4403360 |
| C | 16 | 572305 | 4402340 |
| D | 16 | 572155 | 4402340 |

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at the northwest corner of the intersection of Meridian and Ohio Streets, proceed north along the east curb of North Meridian Street. Turn east at the south curb of N. 9th Street and continue east turning south on Pennsylvania Street. Follow the west curb of Pennsylvania southward and turn west at Ohio Street. Continue west along the north curb of Ohio Street stopping at the point of commencement.

Boundary Justification:

The Indiana World War Memorial Plaza boundaries are delineated by the major thoroughfares which form the borders of the green spaces, monument areas, and the bounding buildings to the north and south. These are the historical boundaries of the Plaza as planned by Walker and Weeks in 1923.

INDIANA WORLD WAR MEMORIAL PLAZA HISTORIC DISTRICT**Page 32**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Suzanne T. Rollins, Preservation Historian, Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana (Indiana War Memorial Plaza, 1987);
Katherine Martin, Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana (University Park, 1988);
Lawrence Downey, Associate Director, Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library (Central Library, 1975); and
Bruce E. Goetzman, Architect, Cincinnati, Ohio (U.S. Courthouse, 1973).

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Date: June 24, 1994