

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: United States Corrugated-Fibre Box Company Plant

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

## 2. Location

Street & number: 1411 Roosevelt Avenue

City or town: Indianapolis State: IN County: Marion

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A \_\_\_ B X C \_\_\_ D

<p><b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b> <u>Indiana DNR-Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology</u> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p><b>Date</b></p>
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<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p><b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p>	<p><b>Date</b></p>
<p><b>Title :</b></p>	<p><b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

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

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements

Other: Industrial

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

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: CONCRETE

BRICK

roof: CONCRETE/WOOD

other:

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The United States Corrugated-Fibre Box Company Plant, henceforth referred to as the Corrugated-Fibre Plant, is comprised of a multi-section industrial reinforced concrete building and an adjacent brick office building. Located at 1411 Roosevelt Avenue in the Massachusetts Avenue industrial corridor on the near East side of Indianapolis, the property consists of four, interconnected early-twentieth century industrial warehouse, manufacturing and support buildings and one office building, totaling approximately 133,351 square feet. For convenience, the sections of the facility are labeled A-E, corresponding to expansions of the plant. The brick office, small concrete block building, and the interconnected factory buildings (A, B, and C, all three counted as one building with additions) are the only resources. The plant was constructed in 1930 by H.J. Lacy Sr. and his U.S. Corrugated-Fibre Box Co. for the manufacture of corrugated-fibre containers, following the destruction of the original U.S. Corrugated Fibre Box Company factory in 1929. The property consists of two parcels bounded on the north by Roosevelt Avenue, on the east by an irregularly shaped vacant lot and North Newman Street, on the south by the railroad and on the west by a lot containing a one-story brick industrial warehouse and by Dr. Andrew J. Brown Avenue. The vacant,



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former residential parcels adjoining the northeast corner of the property, on which stood a deteriorated brick cottage that was removed sometime in 2018, historically has no functional relation to the USCFB plant. The area immediately surrounding the property is primarily industrial, with the Windsor Park residential neighborhood to the south.

The exterior of the Corrugated-Fibre Building showcases materials, forms, and details that are typical of early twentieth century industrial architecture. Buildings A-D are of reinforced concrete construction, while Building E is constructed of red brick. Most of the building's historic steel industrial windows were removed from the building by a previous owner, though some remained in various locations throughout the building. As of 2023, window openings typically hold replicated windows that restore the relationship of void-solid as well as appearance. Previously, all openings that no longer had original windows had either concrete block, siding, or replacement windows.

Despite alteration, additions over the years, and structural deterioration in certain areas (now repaired), the U.S. Corrugated-Fiber Box Company Plant maintains reasonable integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The Corrugated-Fibre Building retains its historic massing and the majority of its exterior architectural features and continues to convey an effective sense of the historic industrial environment of one of the nation's foremost pioneers in the development of the corrugated-container industry. In the past roughly four years (about 2018-2023), the current owners have rehabilitated the complex using the Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit program. New replica windows have replaced blocked-off openings and multiple uses ranging from restaurant, to office, to rock climbing/exercise have revitalized the interior.

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## **Narrative Description**

### Exterior

*Building A (ca.1930), photos 0001, 0005, 0006, 7, and 0008.*

Building A is a two-story-tall concrete building located at the eastern end of the site. Building A was intended for paper storage, and so it had/has windows only on the west half of the northwest elevation. Two upper-level window openings and two door openings are the only penetrations on the north elevation; bands of second floor windows provide the only detailing on the east and west elevations. Windows are divided by metal mullions; each upper bay has a continuous band of five windows. At the north elevation, there are two loading door openings at the ground floor level. These now have large overhead doors that hold large horizontally-paned glazing. The building was repainted as part of the rehabilitation. The main section of Building A features a large, double-height space that is rectangular in plan. A small ell connects Building A to Building B to the west.

South of the ell, there is a narrow courtyard which held the ruins of the former boiler house and smokestack (photo 0005). Both the boiler house and the smokestack were structurally unsound; a significant percentage of the exterior and interior walls of the boiler house had collapsed, and most of the windows were broken or missing. The roof has collapsed in many areas, leading to further degradation due to exposure to the elements and a further loss of structural support. The smokestack suffered similar deterioration and was visibly out of plumb in many areas. As part of the recent rehabilitation, the boiler house and the smokestack were demolished.

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*Building B (ca.1930), photos 0001, 0004, 0005, 0013, and 0015*

Located at the center section of the complex, Building B is four stories tall, making it the tallest section of the plant. It exemplifies pier-and-spandrel industrial construction, with regularly shaped and spaced window openings marking each bay at each floor level. Recessed spandrel panels create pilasters that vertically divide the bays. The replacement windows are metal multi-pane unites with the appearance of central pivoting sash. Flat concrete sills and lintels project slightly from the building. At the south elevation, loading doors provide direct access from the railroad.

*Building C (ca.1930), photos 0001, 0003, 0004, 0011, 0013, and 0014*

Building C is two stories tall and is located at the western end of the site. Like Building B, it exemplifies pier-and-spandrel industrial construction. Flat concrete sills and lintels project slightly from the buildings. The south elevation is characterized by a first-floor level loading area, receded within the elevation.

*Building D (ca.1930), photos 0003, 0016, and 0017*

Building D, located between Building C and Building E, is one story tall. A small concrete block addition occupies most of the east elevation. The west elevation is three bays wide, with square piers on either side of each bay. The piers project above the roofline parapet and are topped with square, flat caps. The three spandrels between each of the piers are detailed with recessed panels. A concrete block and metal addition connects the west elevation of Building D to the north elevation of Building C.

*Building E (ca.1930), photos 0002, 0003, 0018, and 0019*

Located at the northern perimeter of the site, the one-story Building E is notable as the only section of the Corrugated-Fibre Building that is not constructed predominantly of concrete. Set on a concrete foundation, the building is primarily of red brick set in running bond with concrete ornamentation. As the former office space, and likely relating to its position as the section of the building closest to Roosevelt Avenue, Building E showcases the highest level of ornamentation and detailing. The main (north-facing) elevation is seven bays wide, with the main entrance located on the center bay. The entrance is accessible by a wide set of concrete steps. The entrance holds a metal door with large single light, sidelights, and transom. The metal-framed unites replicate the original appearance. A large metal canopy is set above the transom. The canopy is supported by brackets and by cables. The underside of the canopy is covered with stamped metal panels.

Each bay is divided by slightly-projecting piers, which are topped with stepped concrete caps. Long, vertical concrete panels run from just below the caps to in line with the window openings along the façade. The spandrels between the piers are also accented with horizontal, rectangular concrete panels inset at the center. The central bay is topped with a high parapet, which is accented with raised beveled concrete banding and flush panels. Window openings, square on the two outer bays on each side and vertical rectangles flanking the entry bay, are filled recent windows that replicate the original steel, multi-paned windows. The side and rear elevations of Building E share similar materials and forms as the main (north) elevation but are generally simpler and display fewer ornamental details. The east and west elevations are four bays wide. As on the main elevation, each bay is flanked by piers, which are topped with concrete caps. Concrete panels accent the piers and spandrels. The south elevation, which abuts Building D, also shares these details.

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Following the recent rehabilitation, the industrial character of the plant's interiors remains very evident. Bare concrete floors, exposed structural elements (piers, posts, beams, undersides of concrete upper floors), and open concept planning contribute to the industrial feeling of the interiors.

Building A now houses a rock-climbing business. The business installed various climbing walls and raised areas for their clients. The two story, open height remains intact, spiral metal ducting and suspended lighting allow the original ceiling (trusses and underside of roof) to remain visible (photo 0008).

Building B features its original, exposed concrete frame and beam-reinforced floor/ceiling slabs. Bare concrete flooring, spiral metal ducts, and suspended lighting strips and fixtures characterize the spaces. New partition walls in selected areas define offices or other spaces where privacy is essential. Due to its multi-story height, the architects called for an elevator core for this building (photo 0023). The first floor continues the exercise spaces of Building A (photo 0009). The second floor of Building B has a café (photo 0020) while upper floors have business offices with "open concept" staffing areas (photos 0023-0026).

Building C also has exposed structural concrete framing. A social hub is on the first floor (open gathering or informal meeting space, photo 0014). Upper floors have open concept offices for several businesses (photos 0021 and 0022).

The plain concrete block Building D has a bicycle shop (photos 0016 and 0017). Exposed concrete framing and high ceilings are typical inside this building.

Building E has business offices. By its smaller nature and brick construction, this building was less open. Partition walls and open ceilings with rectangular and spiral metal ducting characterize the plain finishes (photos 0018 and 0019)..

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY

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**Period of Significance**

1930-1960

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**Significant Dates**

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**Significant Person (last name, first name)**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

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**Cultural Affiliation**

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**Architect/Builder (last name, first name)**

BACON, CHARLES E.

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**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance begins in 1930 with the rebuilding and expanding of the company's Roosevelt and Martindale avenue facilities and ends when USCFB vacated the building in 1960.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

None.

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The United States Corrugated-Fibre Box Company Plant, at 1411 Roosevelt Avenue in Indianapolis, is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Industry for its association with the United States Corrugated-Fibre Box Company (USCFB), one of Indianapolis's leading box-makers in the early-20th century and one of the earliest producers of corrugated shipping containers in the United States. Capitalizing on new transportation regulations that allowed corrugated containers to replace wooden crates in railway shipments, Howard Lacy Sr. co-founded U.S. Corrugated in 1912. The property is the original site from which USCFB expanded and experienced its most successful three decades of operation. From its incorporation in 1912, U.S. Corrugated grew from being one of the Midwest's foremost pioneers in the corrugated container industry into one of the nation's largest independent producers of corrugated shipping containers. The Lacys were important entrepreneurs in Indianapolis, most notably Howard J. Lacy Sr., Howard J. Lacy II, his wife Edna Balz Lacy and their son Andre B. Lacy. The Lacy family was integral in helping to shape the city of Indianapolis through their roles as civic leaders, brilliant business stalwarts, as well as through their significant philanthropic contributions to the Indianapolis community over a period of three generations. The property is a distinctive and well-preserved example of early-twentieth century brick and concrete industrial architecture by the locally prominent architect Charles E. Bacon. The period of significance begins in 1930 with the rebuilding and expanding of the company's Roosevelt and Martindale Avenue facilities and ends when USCFB vacated the building in 1960.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The United States Corrugated-Fibre Box Company

The U.S. Corrugated Fiber-Box Company is a significant local example of an Indianapolis-based packaging manufacturer that emerged in the early-twentieth century, at a time when modified railroad regulations and new technologies had made it possible to ship every imaginable type of product in corrugated packaging. The company traces its roots to 1911, when entrepreneur Howard John Lacy Sr. moved his family from Covington, Kentucky to Indianapolis to start a corrugated box company. One account of the event highlighted that "Howard John Lacy...recognized the need and usefulness of corrugated shipping containers long before most others."<sup>1</sup> On December 30, 1911, Mr. Lacy ordered equipment from the New York Tube and Corrugated Paper Company, and on New Year's Day, according to company archival documents, H.J. Lacy, J.B. Finch and R.J. Hauser signed the articles of incorporation for the U.S. Corrugated Fibre-Box Co. (Figure 1) and established their headquarters in Indianapolis at 222-226 West Maryland Street.

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<sup>1</sup> Reynolds, 7.

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The advent of parcel post in 1913 had created an immediate demand for special packaging, catapulting Howard Lacy and his newly formed U.S. Corrugated to the forefront of the nation's rapidly evolving shipping industry. USCFB met in March of 1913 to discuss plans for the erection of what would become the first factory the company built, located at 1315 Martindale Avenue at the corner with the Big Four railroad (Figure 2). New transportation and shipping regulations, most notably the Interstate Commerce Commission's landmark *Pridham* decision of 1914, removed enormous barriers to the use of fiberboard boxes in domestic shipping. In just two short years, Howard Lacy Sr. and the USCFB were at the forefront of the nation's industrial development, pioneering what eventually would become a multi-billion-dollar corrugated-container industry. On July 1, 1914 USCFB's assets totaled \$77,402.13 (approximately \$1.7 million in today's dollars), with capital stock of 40,605.<sup>2</sup> By this time, one of the original investors, J.B. Fitch, had parted ways with the company seemingly having been bought out by Howard Lacy.<sup>3</sup>

On September 13, 1918, five months after the U.S. entered World War I, Mr. Lacy received word from a U.S. government agency established to coordinate the purchase of war supplies stating: "Both of your plants have been certified for Class#4, #10196 is for your Indianapolis Plant..."<sup>4</sup> Though the war ended two months later, industrial production had increased tenfold during the war years and USCFB had become one of largest producers of corrugated fibre boxes in the nation. By 1920, the Lacy family controlled almost all the USCFB stock. At the helm of the enterprise was forty-five-year-old Howard J. Lacy Sr., President and Chairman of the Board.

Local newspapers sang the praises of Mr. Lacy and his family. His name appeared in a 1927 list of "Payroll Builders of Indianapolis" in the *Indianapolis News* (Figure 3), and an article from the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce reported that USCFB had "grown to be one of the ten largest carload shippers of Indianapolis."<sup>5</sup> The next year USCFB was reorganized under the Indiana General Corporation Act, which took a more liberal approach than the state's previous corporate legislation. This new law encouraged the theory that corporations are a desirable form of business organization and should be encouraged, and granted to corporations, and correspondingly to their stockholders and directors, a wide and almost unlimited range of powers.<sup>6</sup> A corporation, under the new law, was given all of the capacity to act possessed by natural persons. Its charter may be perpetual. It may conduct its business in the state of Indiana or elsewhere. It may acquire, own and dispose of both real and personal property, without limit, anywhere. It also granted multitude of new stock options from which corporations could profit.<sup>7</sup> Shortly after reorganizing USCFB, H.J. Sr. held a special meeting for the board of directors to seek their approval of "a contract with Sears, Roebuck & Co. of Chicago covering a 5-year period in which we are to receive all the corrugated supplies required by any of their plants within a radius of 500 miles of any of our factories and in consideration of this contract we give them 500 shares of our no-par value stock." Attracting the business of one of America's best-known retailers made it possible for USCFB to move into the coming decade with a sense of security.

From the get-go, Howard Lacy Sr. had aligned USCFB with the nation's growing glass-bottle industry, which, like the shipping industry, experienced incredible growth in the early twentieth-century as consumers increasingly purchased bottled-goods and had them shipping to their homes. Mr. Lacy

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<sup>2</sup> Reynolds, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Reynolds, 10.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Dix, George O. "The Indiana General Corporation Act." *Indiana Law Journal*, vol. 5, no. 2, Nov. 1929, pp. 107-117.

<sup>7</sup> Dix, 110.

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established a critically important relationship with Roy R. Underwood and his Knox Glass Company in 1930; Knox would eventually be USCFB's primary and most influential customer for decades to come. By 1950, glass manufacturers were using twenty-five percent of all corrugated cartons produced in the United States and glass packaging had grown to be USCFB's largest and most important business facet.<sup>8</sup> On March 20, 1926, just shy of his twentieth birthday, Howard J. Lacy II became a member of USCFB's board of directors. In addition to his increased management responsibilities, H.J. II also invented and put into production two new box-types: one was for a specially designed box to ship chairs, the first of which was shipped to the Orleans Chair Company; the second was a carrying box with a detachable handle that acted as a partition to separate bottled goods.

Shortly after announcing plans to construct a new plant in Buffalo, New York, a local newspaper recorded: "Mr. Lacy (Sr.) declared that conditions in the container industry were never better and that prospects of a heavy vegetable pack by canners made the outlook especially promising."<sup>9</sup> Another development occurred in 1937 when at their August meeting, USCFB directors changed the articles of incorporation, adding to the company's stated purpose "To buy, sell, dispose of or trade, deal in or operate farm land or lands for agricultural, stock or dairy purposes." As the nation navigated its way out of the worst economic depression to date, the Lacy family and USCFB were benefitting from unprecedented growth in the corrugated-container industry. Mr. Lacy operated under the firm belief that "during depression is the time to keep money in circulation."<sup>10</sup> Putting this belief into practice, H.J. Sr. kept USCFB employees on the payroll during times of economic hardship, assigning them to tasks on one of the large farms he owned in the area if production was slow at the Indianapolis box plants.

Increased demand for shipping containers during World War II brought new opportunities. Under the savvy business leadership of Howard Lacy Sr., combined with the loyal hard work of the company's 750 employees, U.S. Corrugated had established five plants and a Chicago warehouse, secured important and loyal customers, and solidified a place in the growing corrugated industry.<sup>11</sup> The company was producing more than double the square feet of corrugated board than it was at the beginning; output increased from 3 million to 5.5 million square feet in the early part of World War II.<sup>12</sup> From 1940-1945, the value of the company's stock was ten times the annual net profit of \$175,567.75 (\$71.51/share).<sup>13</sup> Three days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the USCFB board approved bonuses for all employees, paid in Defense Bonds and Stamps.<sup>14</sup> In response to a suggestion made by the Louisville post office, USCFB designed three new styles of boxes, all which meet new postal regulations. The first, designed for overseas shipments, had an easily removable top which allowed for efficient military inspection; the second was designed specifically for shipping books; the third could accommodate six ten-or-twelve-inch phonograph records.<sup>15</sup> Under Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce sponsorship, USCFB maintained a permanent display (Figure 4) at the city's Union Station under the headline "Fibre Box Company Makes Containers Many Sizes."<sup>16</sup>

World War II, however, had altered virtually every aspect of American society and business. Kraft linerboard manufacturers, corrugators and the box-making industry were becoming increasingly integrated. Independent box manufacturers such as USCFB, who had grown accustomed to a good supply

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<sup>8</sup> Reynolds, 26.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 22.



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of paper during the war years, were unable to obtain adequate paper stock to meet production requirements and keep its plants running. After the death of his father in 1959, Howard Lacy II largely stayed course at USCFB, devoting little effort toward plant modernization. The company had not opened a new plant since 1946 and relatively little had been invested in plants to improve them. And while 1959 marked a high point for the company's growth, and in October of that year, "dollar-wise, was the largest month in the history of USCFB,"<sup>17</sup> the company was awash with obsolete equipment and antiquated plants in need of extensive repairs. Additionally, the shipping and box-making industries were continuing to evolve rapidly: plain shipping cartons with a customer's advertising were becoming more popular, technology was improving at an unprecedented rate, the cost of raw materials was skyrocketing, and many new box manufacturers were entering the market.<sup>18</sup> Edna Lacy later described how difficult the competition became with the larger integrated companies and so many new paper mills entering the market.

When Howard Jr. passed away suddenly in 1959, his wife Edna Balz Lacy immediately stepped into his shoes as head of USCFB. Determined to keep the company both independent and non-integrated, Edna immediately scheduled standing meetings each Monday afternoon with her four department heads and got to work strengthening the company's position as a national leader in corrugated box production.<sup>19</sup> By this time, USCFB had six plants in Indiana, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Connecticut and West Virginia. After weighing the concern over pressing capital improvements at the company's plants, Edna Lacy and the board of U.S. Corrugated made the difficult decision to purchase the former H and B American Manufacturing Co. plant and adjacent land at 2900 Franklin Road in Indianapolis. The more modern one-story facility would replace the old-five-story structure at Roosevelt and Martindale Avenues, which the company subsequently sold to Carrico Furniture Company.<sup>20</sup>

The company restructured in 1972 to better reflect its diversification strategy and began looking to acquire value-added distribution businesses under a new name: Lacy Diversified Industries, known today as LDI, Ltd. Edna Lacy retired from day-to-day operations in 1983, handing over the reins to her son, Andre. Andre sold the United States Corrugated-Fibre Box Company to Boise Cascade in 1984 and continued to grow LDI into an influential growth institution, acquiring and reinventing small niche distributors. U.S. Corrugated Fiber-Box Co. was one of the only local paper box manufacturers to survive over multiple decades, continually growing and adapting during a period of rapid change in the United States shipping and corrugated container industries to become a leader in its industry.

#### Roosevelt & Martindale Avenue Plant

In March of 1913, USCFB directors met to review bids for the erection the company's original factory, which was to be located at 1315 Martindale Avenue at the corner with the Big Four railroad. Indianapolis architect Charles E. Bacon was commissioned to design a one-story plus basement, brick mill-construction factory building with a footprint occupying 60x150 ft. U.S. Corrugated grew steadily and substantially in its early years, requiring several additions to the Martindale plant to keep up with mushrooming demand for their product. Two years after construction of the original building, USCFB called again on Mr. Bacon to design a similar addition on the property, this time two-stories plus a

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<sup>17</sup> Reynolds, 42.

<sup>18</sup> Reynolds, 44.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Reynolds, 45.

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basement, measuring 62x155 ft.<sup>21</sup> As business continued to flourish, a September 1919 article from *The Paper Trade Journal* titled “Box Firm to Erect Building,” advertised how:

“Owing to greatly increased business this year, plans are being made by officials of the United States Corrugated Fibre Box Company, Martindale and Roosevelt avenues, for a new building which will increase the capacity of the plant at least 33 per cent. The improvements, which include additions and one new building, are expected to cost approximately \$200,000 according to H.J. Lacy, president and treasurer of the company...The new building will be fireproof throughout and will be of concrete construction. Every modern convenience and facility known in factory construction will be embodied in the new building.”<sup>22</sup>

Another article from November 26, 1919 stated that the substantial addition and new building would increase the plant’s capacity by almost 50 percent.<sup>23</sup> The contractor, C.J. Wacker, also outfitted the building with a steam heating and power system.<sup>24</sup> Described by one local newspaper as “modern in every way,” it had 75,000 square-feet and a daily production capacity of 150,000 to 200,000 boxes.<sup>25</sup>

Despite H.J. Lacy having successfully navigated USCFB through uncharted territory during the war years, the company suffered a challenging setback in May 1929 when a fire destroyed the Roosevelt and Martindale avenue plant in Indianapolis, causing between \$250,000 and \$300,000 worth of damage (Figure 5). One local newspaper described how the wax and paper used in the manufacturing process burned and exploded “throwing up great billows of flame and smoke eighty feet.”<sup>26</sup> Luckily Mr. Lacy had the foresight to ensure the loss was covered by insurance and in 1930, USCFB rebuilt the Indianapolis plant destroyed by fire the previous year, erected a new warehouse (Building A), manufacturing and shipping building (Building B), a new smokestack and powerhouse, a new garage (Building D), and a new office building (Building E) at the 1411 Roosevelt Avenue (1315 Martindale Ave.) location.

A 1929 article from *The Indianapolis News* titled “Box Plant to Bring All Offices to City” detailed how the fire allowed the company to build a much larger structure on the property (Figure 6). USCFB had announced plans to erect a new two-story building (Building C), 80x100 ft., which would house the general offices for all of the USCFB plants. Centralizing operations at the southeast corner of Martindale and Roosevelt avenues allowed for an increase of four times the capacity of the previous offices.<sup>27</sup> Charles Bacon was again awarded the contract for the general construction of the buildings. In order to prevent another disaster like they had experienced the year prior, Mr. Lacy had the new facilities, which cost \$400,000, outfitted with reinforced concrete floors and fire-proof vaults (Photo 15).<sup>28</sup> Once rebuilt, the Roosevelt plant served as the USCFB headquarters from which the company expanded and experienced its most successful three decades of operation.

Despite having been successfully navigated through the post-depression era and a second World War, the company suffered another setback in April 1952 when a fire destroyed certain records, machinery, dyes and working inventory at the Roosevelt Ave. plant, causing more than \$125,000 in damage.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *The American Contractor*, vol. 36, 13 Feb. 1915, p. 59.

<sup>22</sup> “Box Firm to Erect Building.” *Paper Trade Journal*, 11 Sept. 8, 1919, p. 41.

<sup>23</sup> *Paper*, vol. 25, 26 Nov. 1919, p. 54.

<sup>24</sup> *Power*, vol. 51, 20 Mar. 1920, p. 362.

<sup>25</sup> Reynolds, 9.

<sup>26</sup> Reynolds, 11.

<sup>27</sup> “Box Plant to Bring All Offices to City.” *The Indianapolis News*, 18 May 1929, p. 35.

<sup>28</sup> Reynolds, 12.

<sup>29</sup> Reynolds, 29.

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Additionally, the gradual deterioration caused by thirty years of corrugated box manufacturing left the plant in need of significant roof repairs, sewer hookups and a variety of other improvements. The company was facing astronomical costs to make these necessary capital improvements, including more than \$25,000 to resurface the concrete building. After weighing the decision, Edna Lacy decided to sell the property to Carrico Furniture Company in 1960.

### Architecture

The U.S. Corrugated-Fibre Box Company Plant is a cohesive representation of early twentieth-century brick and concrete industrial architecture that demonstrates the evolution of architectural engineering techniques and the solution of basic industrial needs including fire-prevention, improved lighting and the efficient use of space. Prominent local architect, Charles E. Bacon, designed both the original factory and the post-fire rebuild/expansion in 1930. The plant's massive proportions, generous fenestration and lack of extensive ornamentation are typical of industrial buildings of the early-twentieth century. Building E, at the northern perimeter of the site, is notable as the only section of the Corrugated Fibre Building that is not predominantly of concrete. As the former office space, and likely relating to its position as the section of the building closest to Roosevelt Avenue, Building E showcases the highest level of ornamentation and detailing (Figure 10). The building's strong vertical emphasis and geometric motifs are typical of the Art-Deco style popular during the 1920's and 1930's. Long, vertical concrete panels run from just below the caps to in line with the window openings along the façade. The spandrels between the piers are also accented with horizontal, rectangular concrete panels inset at the center. Other features include the building's high parapet, which is accented with concrete banding and panels, slightly-projecting piers topped with stepped concrete caps, and the large metal entrance canopy, the underside of which is covered with stamped metal panels, which is supported by brackets and by cables.

Exposed concrete frame construction was often utilized in the design of manufacturing facilities. Though concrete had existed as a building material since the ancient Romans, it was not until the late 1800s that reinforced concrete began to be utilized once again. By the early twentieth century, utilitarian industrial buildings, characterized by their exposed, reinforced-concrete frames infilled with expanses of glass, had become popular.<sup>30</sup> This so-called "factory style" of construction was particularly well-suited to manufacturing buildings. Less expensive and easier to work with than stone, concrete was considered to be a particularly durable and fireproof material, and it allowed for large open interiors. The manufacturing floors of the building would have required a great deal of stability and security, which this method of construction was able to provide.

The plant retains its overall form, historic massing, and industrial-defining characteristics, including its reinforced concrete framework, large window openings, and the majority of its exterior architectural features. The interiors of the buildings typically feature regularly spaced reinforced concrete columns and beams. Brick perimeter and party walls are typically exposed, some were later painted. The floors and ceilings are typically the original exposed wood, which was later painted. The architecture of U.S. Corrugated-Fibre Box Co. plant continues to convey an effective sense of the historic industrial environment constructed by one of Indianapolis' pioneer corrugated-container manufacturers.

*Charles E. Bacon*

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<sup>30</sup> National Trust for Historic Preservation Technical Preservation Services, "Preservation Brief 15: Preservation of Historic Concrete," <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/15-concrete.htm> (accessed May 11, 2017).

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Charles E. Bacon (Figure 11) was an architect and engineer in the greater Indianapolis area who also served as a former Indianapolis Building Commissioner. Born in Rochester, Indiana, Mr. Bacon began his career in the city of Peru, where he worked as a foreman for a large building contracting firm before moving to Indianapolis in 1903. After graduating from the International Correspondence School, Mr. Bacon worked for Indianapolis architects Folz and Parker, and later joined the firm of Martindale and Riggs.<sup>31</sup> Charles Bacon opened his own office in 1909, which he maintained until 1935. A registered Indiana architect and engineer, he entered the building commissioner's office in February 1943 as a structural engineer. He was appointed commissioner of buildings for the city of Indianapolis in November 1944, where he served ten years under both Republican and Democratic administrations.<sup>32</sup> Mr. Bacon retired on October 31, 1953.

C.E. Bacon's industrial commissions included the Capital Paper Co. building (now demolished); Century Biscuit Co. baking plant; J.W. Warner Auto Parts Co. factory in Muncie, Indiana. In addition, C.E. Bacon is responsible for the design of numerous civic buildings in and around the city of Indianapolis, including the Meridian Hotel on the corner of Meridian and Louisiana streets; Third Christian Church; Emerson Avenue Baptist Church; and Scottsburg High School. Mr. Bacon, whose office was in the 1603 Merchants' Bank Building, was also one of the founders of the Midwest Conference of Building Officials, and he served as a member of the Indiana State Association of Architects, Society of Professional Engineers, American Institute of Architects, American Society of Sanitary Engineers and the Construction League of Indianapolis.<sup>33</sup> He served as past president of the Indiana Inspectors Association and was a member of the Linwood Christian Church, Irvington Masonic Lodge 666 (for which he was architect), Scottish Rite and Murat Temple.<sup>34</sup> Charles E. Bacon died on January 16, 1957 in his Indianapolis home.

### The Lacy Family

Throughout the last century, the Lacy family has been an integral part of Indianapolis' business, civic and philanthropic leadership. The authors of *Out of the Box: 100 Years and Counting: The History of LDI* highlight that: "In the pantheon of significant Indianapolis families, the Lacy family deserves a place of distinction."<sup>35</sup> Extraordinarily civic minded, the family lived by the motto: "Be good at doing good,"<sup>36</sup> devoting their talents and philanthropy to a variety of educational, professional and cultural institutions. Few Indianapolis families have had an impact the Indianapolis community like the Lacy family, and the foundation that bears their name. The Lacy Foundation, a charitable foundation established in memoriam of Stanley K. Lacy, represents the family's commitment to making central Indiana a caring and thriving community. Through the Stanley K. Lacy Executive Leadership Series (SKL), which has developed over 40 classes of leaders with more than 1,000 program graduates, the foundation supports Indianapolis and all of Central Indiana by developing and engaging its current and future leaders.<sup>37</sup> The Lacy family's significant economic and cultural contributions over a period of three generations and their dedication to enhancing the growth and quality of life in their hometown helped shape Indianapolis into the bustling metropolis it is today.

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<sup>31</sup> "Charles Bacon Dies: Architect, Engineer." *The Indianapolis Star*, 17 Jan. 1957, p. 28, [www.newspapers.com/image/105564518/](http://www.newspapers.com/image/105564518/).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Reynolds, v.

<sup>36</sup> Patrick, Rebecca. "2008 Volunteer of the Year Andre Lacy." *BizVoice*, 2008, pp. 46-48.

<sup>37</sup> Johnson, Scott. "Lacy Foundation Rebrand." *Axiomport*, 11 May 2018, [www.axiomport.com/branding/lacy-foundation-rebrand/](http://www.axiomport.com/branding/lacy-foundation-rebrand/).

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The significance and contributions of the notable members of the Lacy family are outlined below:

*Howard J. Lacy Sr.*

A pioneer in the corrugated container industry, Howard J. Lacy Sr. (Figure 7) was born in New Castle, Pennsylvania on May 23, 1875. Just before his twenty-fifth birthday, Howard Sr. married Martha E. Williams. A risk taker with a strong entrepreneurial spirit, he moved his wife and their three sons to Indianapolis in 1911 to organize the U.S. Corrugated Fibre-Box Company. At the time, Indianapolis was the twenty-second largest city in the United States, with nearly a quarter of a million residents. However, immediately outside of the city proper was still largely agrarian. Within a decade of the company's founding, Mr. Lacy had established a prominent position in the packaging industry and in Indianapolis society. According to *Indianapolis Men of Affairs 1923*, Howard Sr. had become a member of the Chamber of Commerce, the Indianapolis Athletic Club, Highland Golf Club and the Rotary Club.<sup>38</sup> He was a 32<sup>nd</sup> Degree Mason, a member of the Murat Shrine and served as the first Vice President of Raglands Inc. Millinery Manufacturers.

During the interwar years, Howard Sr., who “cared a great deal about land,”<sup>39</sup> began investing in Indiana farmland, acquiring several hundred acres of parcels across Speedway, Westfield and Brownsburg. During the Great Depression, when there were not enough box orders to keep the Indianapolis plant running more than a few days a week, he allowed employees to work at the farms to keep paychecks coming in. His grandson later recalled how nobody was laid off during the depression. Howard Sr. continued buying up large tracts of agricultural land, eventually amassing over 1,500 acres in three Indiana counties. In the 1960's, as development in Indianapolis expanded outward towards the city limits, the Speedway Farms were liquidated, and part of the land provided grounds for the Speedway High School, which still carries Howard Sr.'s name, while other acreage was used for parking lots and for use by the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.<sup>40</sup>

In addition to the significant investment he made in Indianapolis infrastructure, Howard Sr. also continued circulating his own personal money in the community. A letter dated May 7, 1936 from the Indianapolis Motor Speedway addressed to “Mr. H.J. Lacy, The U.S. Corrugated-Fibre Box Co., Indianapolis, Indiana” acknowledged an order for 500 race tickets in the front-row box of Grand Stand A, at \$10 a ticket. Described by his grandson as a relationship entrepreneur rather than an organizational one, Howard Lacy Sr. bet on the future of an industry in its infancy when forming USCFB and ended up building the company into a recognized leader in the industry. Howard Sr. died on June 26, 1952 at the age of seventy-seven in his Kessler Boulevard home.

*Howard J. Lacy II*

Heir to the U.S. Corrugated presidency, Howard Lacy Jr. (Figure 8) was born on March 23, 1906 in Covington, Kentucky. He joined USCFB in the summer of 1924, working ten-hour days at twenty-five cents per hour.<sup>41</sup> He worked his way up the corporate ladder, learning the business inside out as he moved through various positions within the company. He began as a helper on corrugators before operating his own machines. Before long, Howard Jr. was developing new and more efficient methods of unloading

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<sup>38</sup> Reynolds, 147.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 142.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 144.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 151.

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and storing paper and boxes. He eventually graduated to the sales side and in January 1930 he became USCFB's first Vice President. In June 1946, Howard Jr. took over the reins from his father and became president and treasurer of USCFB.

On November 29, 1934, Howard Jr. married Edna Balz, an Indianapolis native who held a degree from the University of Michigan and had been teaching in the Indianapolis Public School system since her graduation in 1928.<sup>42</sup> Together, the two became deeply involved in the Indianapolis community; Howard Jr. "used the community as an outlet for his leadership skills,"<sup>43</sup> becoming director of Franklin College and board member at Culver Military Academy. He was also a member of the Masonic Lodge, Scottish Rite and the Murat Shrine of Indianapolis. Over time he joined the Columbia, Woodstock and Trader's Point Hunt clubs, the Capitol Hill Club in Washington, and the Indiana Society of Chicago.<sup>44</sup>

In an open letter in the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce's "Getting Things Done for Indianapolis" report, Howard Jr. highlighted the completion of an "unprecedented \$12,000,000 voluntary fund for hospital construction," which allowed for an entirely new general hospital on the east side of town, a new and larger private hospital for treatment of mental illness, and of additions to two major general hospitals.<sup>45</sup> After years of active participation as a spokesman for the local business community, Howard Jr. was elected president and chairman of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce in 1953, where he served two terms.

His extensive community service efforts culminated in his forming the Chamber of Commerce's Memorial Foundation to provide scholarships for deserving students. When the *Indianapolis News* ran a series of articles on Indianapolis business and industry leaders to show some of the personal characteristics that have contributed to the subject's rise to a prominent position in the community, their first subject was Howard Jr.<sup>46</sup> After his sudden death in March 1959, the Chamber of Commerce praised that "with all of the demands upon him from his business, he clearly felt all the more obligation to pay the price of citizenship...by cheerfully, energetically and most efficiently accepting responsibilities in civic endeavors. In these his counsel was eagerly sought, and his wise judgment most influential."<sup>47</sup>

### *Edna Balz Lacy*

Edna Balz (Figure 9) was born September 21, 1906 in Indianapolis and later attended the University of Michigan where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the School of Education in 1928. The year after graduation Edna accepted a position teaching sixth and seventh graders in the Indianapolis Public School system. She married Howard Lacy II on November 29, 1934 and later recalled how: "In the Lacy family you live boxes and you think boxes around the clock." Edna joined USCFB's board of directors as assistant secretary and assistant treasurer just months after the death of her father-in-law in 1952. Taking on more responsibility, the "assistant" portion was dropped from her titles in 1956. Edna stepped into the role as head of U.S. corrugated almost immediately after her husband's sudden death in 1959, becoming president, chairman of the board and treasurer of USCFB.

With the help of most trusted advisor, her son Andre, Mrs. Lacy set to work securing a future for USCFB, determined to leave a lasting legacy and inheritance for her children. A February 1979 article for

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 152.

<sup>44</sup> Reynolds, 152.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 153.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 155.

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*Indianapolis Monthly* titled “Edna Lacy – Lady in a Hurry,” noted that “her goal was to know it (the box business) inside out so that she could preserve for her children what her husband and father-in-law had built – The U.S. Corrugated-Fibre Box Company.”<sup>48</sup> What Edna lacked in management experience she more than compensated for with her unfaltering work ethic and the close counsel of trusted advisors. Rather than becoming a mere figurehead for her family’s box-manufacturing empire, Edna enrolled at Butler University for graduate studies in history, law and accounting so that she was well versed in the fundamentals of business.

At a time when it was rare for a woman to run a company of any size, and even more rare for a widow with four children to do so, Edna B. Lacy was pioneering businesswoman and dedicated community leader. She was a strong advocate for the rightful place of women in board rooms and in positions of civic leadership and is quoted as saying “I hope the time will come – and soon – when more board vacancies in American business and civic enterprises will be filled by women.”<sup>49</sup> Described as one of the most active and distinguished women in Indianapolis, Mrs. Lacy became one of the first women executives to make the front cover of *Indiana Business and Industry Magazine*. After retiring from day-to-day operations in 1983, Edna remained a chairman of the LDI board.

Her community service, civic leadership and philanthropic efforts were unparalleled in Indianapolis. She served on the board of the Indianapolis Community Hospital; Goodwill Industries; Indiana State Symphony Society; Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce (life director 1987-91); United Way of Central Indiana; YMCA Foundation of Greater Indianapolis (chairman 1977-79). Her many honors and awards included: Sagamore of Wabash, honored by Governor Handley (1960); Woman of Year Award, Indianapolis chapter Women in Communications (1976); Woman of Year Award, Indiana Republican Mayor Association (1976); University of Michigan Outstanding Achievement Award (1982); Hoosier Heritage Award, Heritage Place of Indianapolis (1988).

In addition to her countless charitable gifts to a wide array of organizations, Mrs. Lacy established the Edna Balz Lacy Fund for undergraduate education in the humanities at the University of Michigan. Edna Lacy was inducted into the Central Indiana Business Hall of Fame in 1993, one year after she passed away. Franklin College also established the Edna B. Lacy Endowed Chair in Business and Entrepreneurship in her honor in 1993.

#### *Andre B. Lacy*

Andre Lacy was a celebrated icon in the Indianapolis community. Born and raised in the city, he spent most of his career working, leading and eventually transforming USCFB into the successful distribution company it is today. At age nine Andrew began working at U.S. Corrugated distributing mail during summer breaks from school.<sup>50</sup> After graduating from Denison University in 1961 with a B.A. in economics, Andre immediately began working as an analyst in the USCFB offices. From there, he moved up from a sales representative to resident manager of the Indianapolis plant, then regional manager and assistant secretary/treasurer of the company. In a statement honoring the life and legacy of Andre Lacy, the Hon. Susan W. Brooks of Indiana in the House of Representatives championed that “Andre’s remarkable career as a transformative figure both within his family business and in his community is truly unmatched...Andre was a great son of Indianapolis, a leader in Indiana, who deeply loved our country.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 162.

<sup>49</sup> Reynolds, 163.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 173.

<sup>51</sup> Brooks, Susan W. “Honoring the Life and Legacy of Andre Lacy.” *Congress.gov*, 14 Dec. 2014,

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Under his direction, U.S. Corrugated was reorganized as Lacy Diversified Industries (LDI) in 1972 to reflect the company's expanding interests. He resolved to "build and maintain, in customers, employees and the public, a reputation for honesty, fairness and good corporate citizenship."<sup>52</sup> He had a deep concern about the quality of public education and was elected president of the Indianapolis School Board where he helped found CLASS – Community Leaders Allied for Superior Schools. An integral part of the city's leadership for decades, Andre Lacy served as a board member for numerous companies and held numerous civic leadership positions including trustee at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, board member of the Community Leaders Allied for Superior Schools and the Nature Conservancy of Indiana, as well as being the former chairman of the Indianapolis 500 Festival, Indiana Chamber of Commerce and the United Way of Central Indiana. One of his highest priorities was examining the Chamber's efforts to make public policy resonate better with the masses, stressing that he "wanted to explore how the chamber could be more effective in its communication as an advocate for Indiana."<sup>53</sup>

Andre also formalized the Lacy family's philanthropic efforts by establishing the Stanley K. Lacy Foundation in 1973, which continues the Lacy family legacy of community engagement with a focus on education, leadership and quality of life. Andre and his wife Julia made headlines in 2016 when they dedicated more than \$25 million to Butler University's Business School, the largest gift from an individual or family in the university's history.<sup>54</sup> The couple also provided \$2 million to jump-start the restoration of Indiana Farmers Coliseum at the state fairgrounds. Formerly known as Pepsi Coliseum, the building underwent a 17-month, \$53 million renovation, reopening in 2014.<sup>55</sup>

Andre was inducted into the Indiana Academy for lifetime achievement and contributions throughout the state by The Independent College of Indiana in October 2017 and was the recipient of the 2017 Indiana Philanthropy Award by the Indiana Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. Additionally, he was recognized with the highest honor an Indiana governor can bestow, the Sagamore of the Wabash, given for wisdom, public commitment and a concern for the well-being of others. In November 2017 Andre was awarded the Whistler Award, which recognizes individuals who, outside of the regular duties of their chosen professions, have brought together the public and private sectors for civic improvement in Indianapolis. When he passed away in 2017, Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett issued this statement:

"Countless Indianapolis businesses, organizations, and philanthropic endeavors have benefited from Andre's leadership, yet his legacy is truly defined by the values and principles that he lived by. Because of his integrity, innovation, and generosity, Andre leaves behind an Indianapolis that will be even better for the next generation"<sup>56</sup>

### USCFB Property Post-1960

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[www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2017/12/14/extensions-of-remarks-section/article/e1705-5?r=30](http://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2017/12/14/extensions-of-remarks-section/article/e1705-5?r=30).

<sup>52</sup> Reynolds, 55.

<sup>53</sup> Patrick, Rebecca. "2008 Volunteer of the Year Andre Lacy." *BizVoice*, 2008, pp. 46–48.

<sup>54</sup> Brooks, E1706.

<sup>55</sup> Ryckaert, Vic, and Maureen C. Gilmer. "Butler University's Business School Benefactor Killed in Motorcycle Crash in Africa." *Indianapolis Star*, INI, 30 Nov. 2017, [www.indystar.com/story/news/2017/11/30/butler-universitys-business-school-patron-killed-motorcycle-crash-africa/909677001/](http://www.indystar.com/story/news/2017/11/30/butler-universitys-business-school-patron-killed-motorcycle-crash-africa/909677001/).

<sup>56</sup> Dow, Julie. "Indianapolis Philanthropist Lacy Dies after Motorcycle Crash in Botswana." *WISH*, 30 Nov. 2017, [www.wishtv.com/news/local-news/indianapolis-philanthropist-lacy-dies-after-motorcycle-crash-in-botswana/1096416231](http://www.wishtv.com/news/local-news/indianapolis-philanthropist-lacy-dies-after-motorcycle-crash-in-botswana/1096416231).



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After USCFB sold the property to Carico Furniture in 1960, the facility continued to operate as a furniture warehouse until 1983. While portions of the building remained in industrial use through the early 2000's, the former smokestack and powerhouse have deteriorated significantly from their lack of use. From 1990 to 2001 the property was used as a warehouse by the Lindner Machinery Co. From 2008 to 2016, Building E housed the March Auction Galleries.

There have been a few structural intrusions and building additions, resulting in some loss of integrity of materials and fenestration. Despite this, the U.S. Corrugated-Fibre Box Company Plant retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The owners will utilize federal historic tax credits for the rehabilitation of the building for commercial use. All work will meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

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## **Developmental History/Additional historic context information**

### Indianapolis' Industrial Evolution

Shortly after Indiana achieved statehood in 1816, the Indiana General Assembly began talks on establishing a new capital city in the center of the state. In 1821, Indianapolis became the county seat of the newly configured Marion County, and four years later, when the state legislature met for the first time, Indianapolis had one street and a population of 600 people.<sup>57</sup> By the time the town was officially incorporated in 1832 the population had only reached 1,000 people. There was hope that the steam boat trade on the White River would bolster commerce and industry in the new capital, but the river proved too shallow for commercial shipments.<sup>58</sup> Several determined businessmen with experience in building and operating water-power mills erected wool, grain, or saw mills on the waterways at the time.

Until the mid-to-late nineteenth century, Indianapolis' industrial importance was primarily agricultural in nature, with slaughtering and meatpacking being the number one industry in 1890.<sup>59</sup> The invention of steam power and the railroad altered the city's industrial landscape drastically by providing workshops and mills with an easier outlet for surplus goods. The first railroad to Indianapolis was completed in 1847, and the city soon became the hub of a radiating rail network that extended throughout Indiana and the Midwest. Indianapolis also enjoyed the distinction of hosting the first union passenger depot in the United States.<sup>60</sup> The railroad and Union Station formed a link with the outside world, attracting commerce and industry to the city and boosting its population tenfold.

The last two decades of the nineteenth century marked a period of unprecedented growth for the city, commonly referred to as Indianapolis' "golden age." The prosperity brought about by the Civil War and the subsequent business boom expanded industrial manufacturing into a major sector of Indianapolis' economy. The city began attracting traditionally east coast businesses looking to expand their market reach. In 1881, Indianapolis became one of the first American cities to install electric street lighting.<sup>61</sup> The turn of the twenty-first century ushered in an era of rapid industrialization and spectacular technological progress. In 1911, Indianapolis was the twenty-second largest city in the nation, with nearly

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<sup>57</sup> "Indianapolis: History." *City-Data*, [www.city-data.com/us-cities/The-Midwest/Indianapolis-History.html](http://www.city-data.com/us-cities/The-Midwest/Indianapolis-History.html).

<sup>58</sup> National Park Service, *H. Lauter Company Complex*, Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana.

<sup>59</sup> Merriam, William Rush. *Twelfth Census of the United States, taken in the Year 1900: Census Reports, Manufactures*. United States Census Office, 1902.

<sup>60</sup> National Park Service, *Indianapolis Wholesale District*, Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana.

<sup>61</sup> Indianapolis: History.

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240,000 residents. Indiana was also among the top 10 manufacturing states in the nation and, by 1920, Indianapolis had become a major industrial center of the Midwest, with a population of over 300,000.

### The Growth of the Corrugated Box Industry

For the last century, corrugated-fiberboard shipping containers have been indispensable for modern physical distribution of goods. In her publication, *The History of Corrugated Fiberboard Shipping Containers*, author Diana Twede argues that modern marketing would not have been possible without the creation of these inexpensive yet durable shipping containers.<sup>62</sup> She outlines three key technological inventions in the 1800s that set the foundation for mass produced paper packaging: the paper making machine, the process for pulping wood, and lithographic printing.<sup>63</sup> At the turn of the twentieth century, rapid improvements in transportation and communication brought unprecedented access to customers nationwide. Consumers were increasingly purchasing packaged goods at retailers, and there developed a growing need for disposable packaging. Many items (food, clothing, hardware, etc.) that were traditionally produced locally and sold in bulk bins or open shelves were instead increasingly being manufactured in centralized locations and packaged for individual sale before being delivered to retailers. Technological advancements and evolving market trends were also creating significant changes in the sale and distribution of goods worldwide and companies began eagerly seeking ways to market their products to a much broader population.

The first patent for making corrugated paper was issued in England in 1856, for use as cushioning in men's hats. It was not until 1871 that the first patent for using corrugated paper as a packaging material was granted to an American, Albert L. Jones, for a textured cushioning product to protect glass bottles during transport.<sup>64</sup> These early corrugated wrapping materials were made from thin straw sheets, dipped in water and then pressed through heated fluted rollers.<sup>65</sup> The second major breakthrough in the corrugated box industry came in 1874, when Oliver Long was granted a patent on an improvement that would vastly increase the applications and effectiveness of corrugated material. Up until this point, wooden crates, barrels and boxes were the standard means of shipment. Paper packaging had traditionally been made by hand and was therefore reserved for high-end luxury goods. However, when Scottish-born, paper merchant Robert Gair invented the precut paperboard box in 1890, he created an entirely new means of moving goods throughout the world. This development was closely followed in 1894 by the production of the first double-faced corrugated boxes for light express deliveries in New York City.<sup>66</sup>

Corrugated cases offered a number of distinct advantages over traditional timber boxes. Firstly, they could be delivered folded flat, then erected at the filling site, making transportation easier and allowing boxes to be stored in larger quantities. They were also much lighter and offered better protection in terms of cushioning.<sup>67</sup> Ms. Twede also highlights that Indiana was the birthplace of many of the developments in the corrugated-container industry. In fact, the first machine to corrugate the medium and affix both faces was invented by Jefferson T. Ferres in 1895 for the Sefton Manufacturing Company in Anderson,

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<sup>62</sup> Twede, Diana. "The History of Corrugated Fiberboard Shipping Containers." *ResearchGate*, 11 Apr. 2016, [www.researchgate.net/publication/237446686\\_The\\_History\\_of\\_Corrugated\\_Fiberboard\\_Shipping\\_Containers](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/237446686_The_History_of_Corrugated_Fiberboard_Shipping_Containers).

<sup>63</sup> *The History of Corrugated Fiberboard Shipping Containers*, 241.

<sup>64</sup> Reynolds, Donna L. *Out of the Box: 100 Years and Counting: The History of LDI*. LDI, Ltd., 2011.

<sup>65</sup> *The History of Corrugated Fiberboard Shipping Containers*, 241.

<sup>66</sup> *The History of Corrugated Fiberboard Shipping Containers*, 242.

<sup>67</sup> Reynolds, 4.

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Indiana. His machine, despite only operating at only 10 feet per minute, served as the prototype for the corrugating machines still used today.<sup>68</sup>

At the turn of the century, distribution and production methods were expanding markets in every sector nationwide. Probably the most significant impetus for the corrugated-container industry came on January 1, 1913, when the Parcel Post Act of 1912 went into full effect, providing domestic parcel post service in the United States. The Smithsonian Institution describes how the establishment of a postal service had an unprecedented effect on the United States economy, opening a world of opportunities for both farmers and merchants alike. Rural Americans could purchase a variety of goods not readily available to them previously and have them shipped directly to their homes, saving both time and money.<sup>69</sup> It also created new marketing opportunities in the form of mail-order businesses. Most importantly for the box-making industry, it created an immediate demand for special packaging.<sup>70</sup>

Historically, a strong relationship had existed between the transportation industry and makers of shipping containers. At the time, the railroads were especially resistant to the use of corrugated fiber boxes for shipping and would charge up to a 400% premium for shipments eastbound from California. Due to federal land grants, railroad companies had enormous timber holdings and investments in box-making sawmills, and therefore had a financial interest in promoting the uses of wooden boxes.<sup>71</sup> In 1905, nine manufacturers united to secure railroad approval for the use of corrugated fiberboard boxes as shipping containers. Five years later, the U.S. Bureau of Explosives approved fibre boxes for packaging Strike Anywhere matches. Another major milestone came the next year with the Interstate Commerce Commission's landmark *Pridham* decision of 1914, which found that there were no transportation differences between wood and fiber boxes, subsequently prohibiting all tariff discrimination.<sup>72</sup> Almost overnight, corrugated-fibre boxes went from being a substitute container to the standard one.

On March 14, 1916, a group of twenty-seven manufacturers organized the National Association of Corrugated and Fibre Box Manufacturers "to discuss conditions existing in the industry...and formulate such remedies as seem proper."<sup>73</sup> The association was responsible for standardizing corrugated board properties and box weight limits for the entire corrugated-container industry.<sup>74</sup> Within five years of its inception, the Association's membership increased more than 100%, attracting some of the largest manufacturers of solid fibre products in the country. As part of their experimental work, the National Association cooperated with the Nestle Food Company in making a trial shipment of Nestle food packaged in tin cans from Cass City, Michigan to London, England, in various styles of corrugated fibre containers.<sup>75</sup>

When the U.S. entered World War 1 in April 1917, the necessity of shipping goods, both domestically and internationally, skyrocketed. The ballooning demand for corrugated fiberboard during and after the war prompted the building of more manufacturing facilities. By the end of the war, advances in machinery and processes had made the use of corrugated containers more efficient and less expensive. Lightweight, inexpensive paper boxes helped meet the growing demand for product packaging, while also

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<sup>68</sup> *The History of Corrugated Fiberboard Shipping Containers*, 243.

<sup>69</sup> Reynolds, 7.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Twede, Diana, et al. *Cartons, Crates and Corrugated Board: Handbook of Paper and Wood Packaging Technology*. Vol. 2, DEStech Publications, 2014.

<sup>72</sup> Twede, 54.

<sup>73</sup> "Corrugated and Fibre." *The Shears*, vol. 30, Apr. 1922, pp. 65-67.

<sup>74</sup> *The History of Corrugated Fiberboard Shipping Containers*, 242.

<sup>75</sup> "Corrugated and Fibre," 67.

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providing a printable medium that allowed for easy incorporation of the types of advertising and branding desired for marketing to regional and national audiences.<sup>76</sup>

Mass production and distribution methods were exploding markets in every major industry nationwide and both the shipping and corrugated-container industries grew exponentially in the interwar years. Four major regional corrugated fibre box companies in Indiana dominated the industry and provided genuine competition to the large inland firms: Bell Fibre in Marion, Corrugated Fibre Box in Fort Wayne, Wabash Box in Terre Haute, and the U.S. Corrugated Fibre Box Company in Indianapolis, which was owned by the socially prominent Lacy family. One 1938 newspaper article reported:

“Improved machinery enables manufacturers to make corrugated containers large enough for mattresses, strong enough to withstand a pressure of 500 pounds a square inch, durable enough for building work and for material for acoustical and thermal insulation... The growth of the corrugated container industry has been phenomenal.”<sup>77</sup>

This period would also see many changes in material, technology and papermaking processes, the most significant being the invention and popularization of kraft linerboard, a stronger and less expensive type of linerboard which contains at least 80% virgin kraft pulp fibers and whose supply would eventually squeeze out many of the smaller manufacturers, causing the industry to grow increasingly integrated.<sup>78</sup> From 1925-1952, linerboard production overall quadrupled and by the end of this period, kraft linerboard accounted for 80% of overall production.<sup>79</sup>

The market dominance of the larger box-producers increased substantially throughout 1950's as many companies continued merging in order to stay afloat. By the 1970's almost every product available in the United States was shipped in a corrugated fiberboard shipping container.<sup>80</sup> Diana Twede sums up the often-understated impact the corrugated box industry had on the United States and wider global economy:

“The low cost and light weight of corrugated boxes enabled more producers to economically employ wider distribution than ever before in history. Indeed, the exponential expansion of distribution throughout the 1900s would not have been possible without the help of the self-effacing brown corrugated RSC.”<sup>81</sup>

The corrugated regular slotted container (RSC) is still the most common box style used today. It continues to play a key role in global distribution, representing 80% of the mass and over half (54%) of the value of packaging materials in the United States.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> *The History of Corrugated Fiberboard Shipping Containers*, 241.

<sup>77</sup> Reynolds, 16.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> *The History of Corrugated Fiberboard Shipping Containers*, 244.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 245.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 245.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 241.

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"Two Views of Industrial Centers of Indianapolis." *The Indianapolis News*, 29 March 1930, p. 7, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/37491055/>.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested  
#39133, Approved 9/11/2018  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

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

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 2.8 acres

Use the UTM system

### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |             |                 |                   |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 16 | Easting: 574116 | Northing: 4404293 |
| 2. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 3. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 4. Zone:    | Easting :       | Northing:         |

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

Beginning at the corner of the southwest edge of Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave. and the southeast edge of Roosevelt Ave., proceed northeast along the south edge of Roosevelt to the northeast lot line of Lot 119 in Ingram Fletcher's 3<sup>rd</sup> Addition. Said line of said lot 119 corresponds today to the sidewalk along the northeast side of Building E. Proceed southeast along said line to a point 15 feet from the front wall of Buildings C, B, and A. This point is a point on a line formed by an access drive, the north edge of which corresponds to the rear lot lines of Ingram Fletcher's 3<sup>rd</sup> Addition, lots 117-123. Proceed northeast on said line to the southwest edge of Newman St. Turn southeast and follow said edge of Newman St. to the nearest right of way of the railroad running behind the buildings of the U.S. Corrugated-Fibre Box Company complex. Follow said rail right of way to the southwest edge of Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave. (partly vacated for Building C). Turn north along said edge of Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave. and follow to the point of origin.

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

The boundaries encompass the parcels of land historically associated with the U.S. Corrugated-Fibre Box Company Plant in Indianapolis, Indiana. The bounds are here described based on Indianapolis assessor's cards for the this and adjoining properties and parcel maps provided on Indianapolis and Marion County's MapIndy site @ maps.indy.gov.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Ryan Cameron / Mark Foster  
organization: Macrostie Historic Advisors, now Ryan, LLC  
street & number: 263 Summer Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
city or town: Boston state: Massachusetts zip code: 02210  
e-mail: rcameron@mac-ha.com  
telephone: 617-531-7158  
date: August 2023

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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



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### **Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### **Photo Log**

Name of Property: U.S. Corrugated-Fibre Box Co. Plant

City or Vicinity: Indianapolis

County: Marion

State: Indiana

Photographer: Sofia Mattesini

Date Photographed: August 2023

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

- 1 of 26: North elevation, buildings A+B+C, parking lot, facing southwest.
- 2 of 26: North elevation, building E, entrance from Roosevelt Ave, facing southeast.
- 3 of 26: North and west elevation, back alley, facing southeast.
- 4 of 26: South elevation, buildings B+C, facing northeast.
- 5 of 26: South and east elevation, buildings A+B and courtyard, facing northwest.
- 6 of 26: South and east elevation, buildings A+B+C, facing northwest.
- 7 of 26: North and east elevation, building A, facing southwest.
- 8 of 26: First floor, building A, North Mass Boulder climbing gym, facing southeast.
- 9 of 26: First floor, building B, North Mass Boulder, circulation, facing south.

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10 of 26: First floor, building B, North Mass Boulder, weights, facing northwest.

11 of 26: First floor, building C, North Mass Boulder, women's locker room.

12 of 26: First floor, building B, elevator lobby, facing north.

13 of 26: First floor, building C, corridor, facing west.

14 of 26: First floor, building C, Gray Capitol, social hub, facing southwest.

15 of 26: First floor, building C, Stenz, open offices, facing northeast.

16 of 26: First floor, building D, Bicycle Garage Indy, facing south.

17 of 26: First floor, building D, Bicycle Garage Indy, facing north.

18 of 26: First floor, building E, Live Nation, open offices, facing west.

19 of 26: First floor, building E, Live Nation, open offices, facing north.

20 of 26: Second floor, building B, North Mass Boulder Cafe, dining area, facing south.

21 of 26: Second floor, building C, Superior Oil, open office, facing southwest.

22 of 26: Second floor, building C, Early Learning, open office, facing north.

23 of 26: Third floor, building B, elevator lobby, facing northwest.

24 of 26: Third floor, building B, DELV Design Studio, office, facing northwest.

25 of 26: Fourth floor, building B, Lewis Wagner Suites, break room, facing south.

26 of 26: Fourth floor, building B, Lewis Wagner Suites, facing southeast.

## **FIGURES:**

Figure 1 of 14: Reynolds, 5.

Figure 2 of 15: U.S. Corrugated Archives.

Figure 3 of 15: Reynolds, 10.

Figure 4 of 15: Reynolds, 29.

Figure 5 of 15: Reynolds, 11.

Figure 6 of 15: "Two Views of Industrial Centers of Indianapolis."

Figure 7 of 15: Reynolds, 146.

Figure 8 of 15: Reynolds, 22.

Figure 9 of 15: Reynolds, 40.

Figure 10 of 15: U.S. Corrugated Archives.

Figure 11 of 15: "Charles Bacon Dies: Architect, Engineer."

Figure 12 of 15: U.S. Corrugated Archives.

Figure 13 of 15: U.S. Corrugated Archives.

Figure 14 of 15: U.S. Corrugated Archives.

Figure 15 of 15: 1948 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

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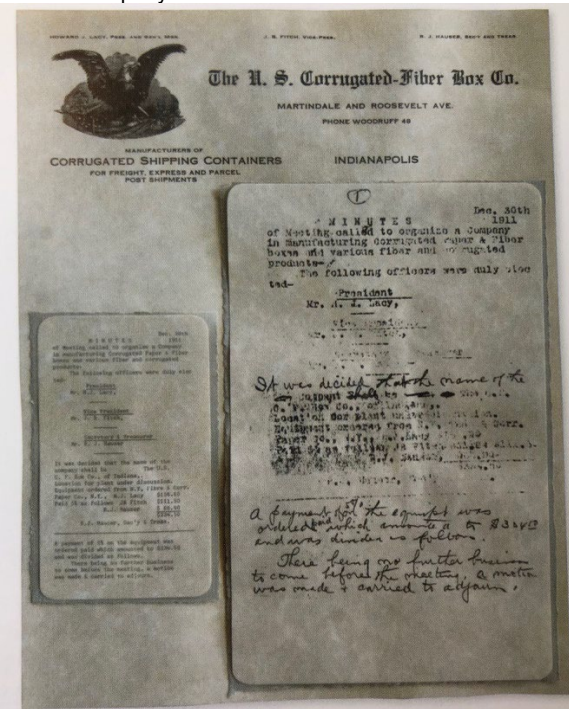


Figure 1: USCFB Articles of Incorporation, signed on December 31, 1911

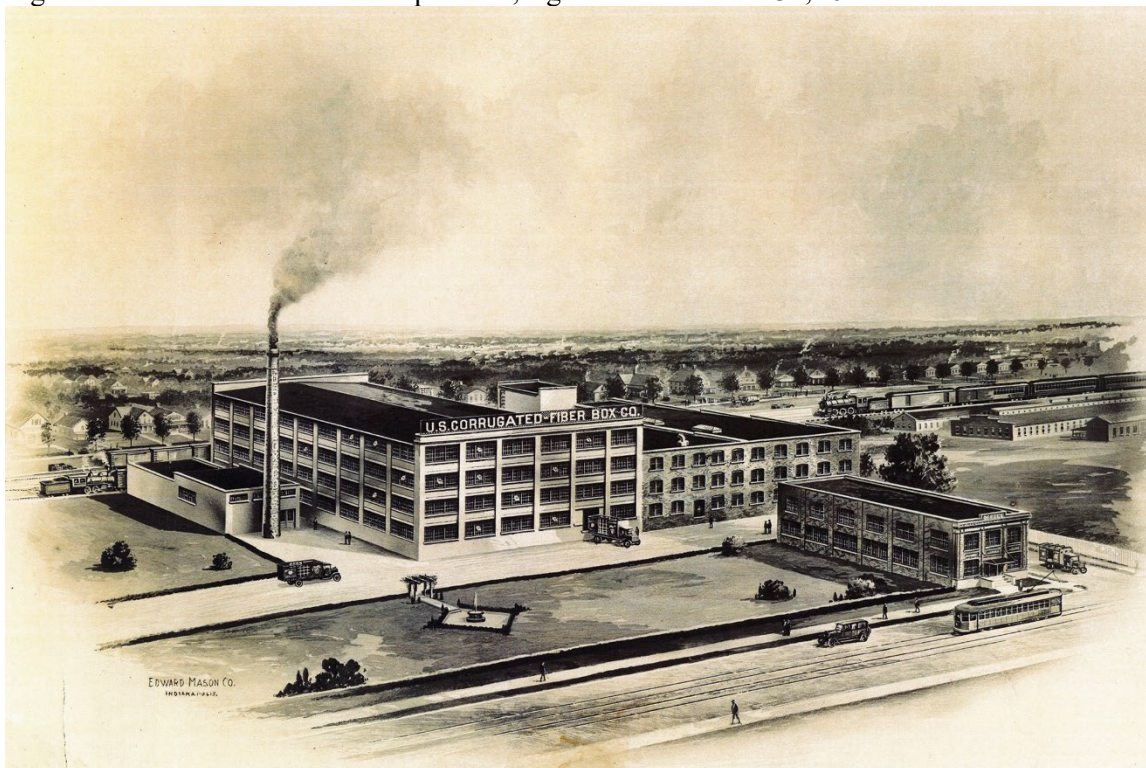


Figure 2: c.1920s rendering of the USCFB plant before it was destroyed by a fire in 1929



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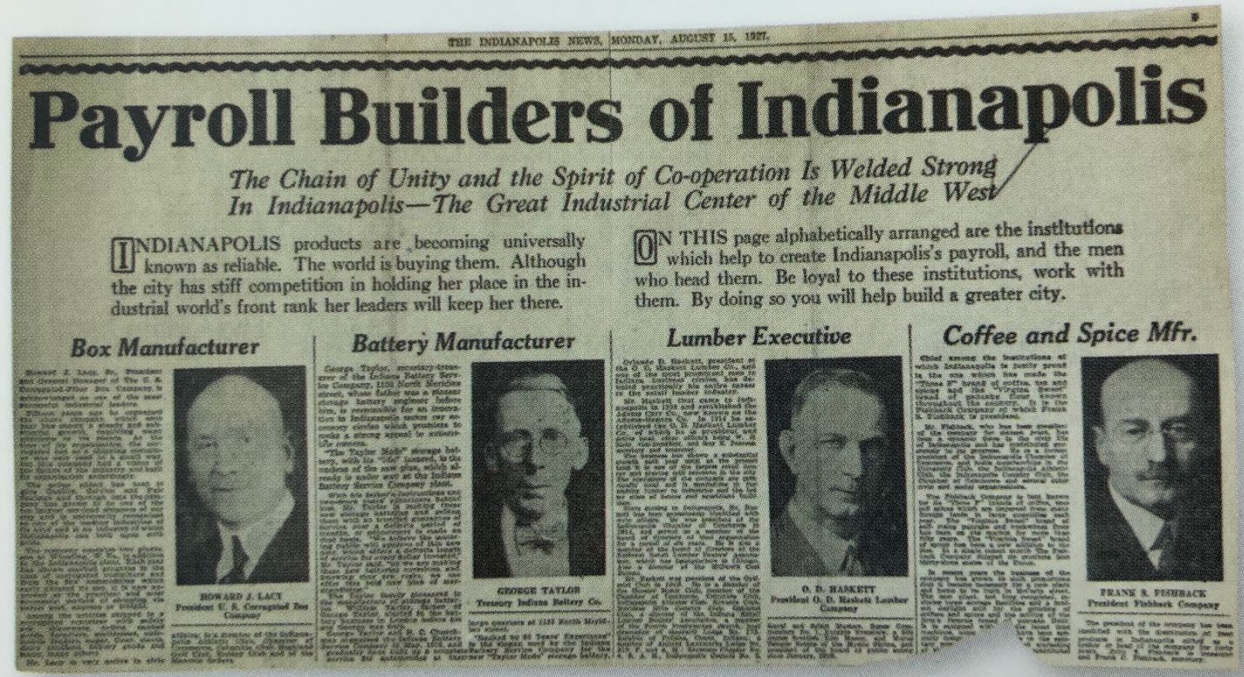


Figure 3: 1927 Indianapolis News article highlighting H.J. Lacy Sr.'s prominent position in Indianapolis



Figure 4: H.J. II in front of USCFB's Chamber of Commerce display in Indianapolis' Union Station



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Figure 5: Aftermath of the May 1929 fire that destroyed the original USCFB plant



Figure 6: 1930 newspaper article describing the Corrugated-Fibre Plant as an Industrial Center

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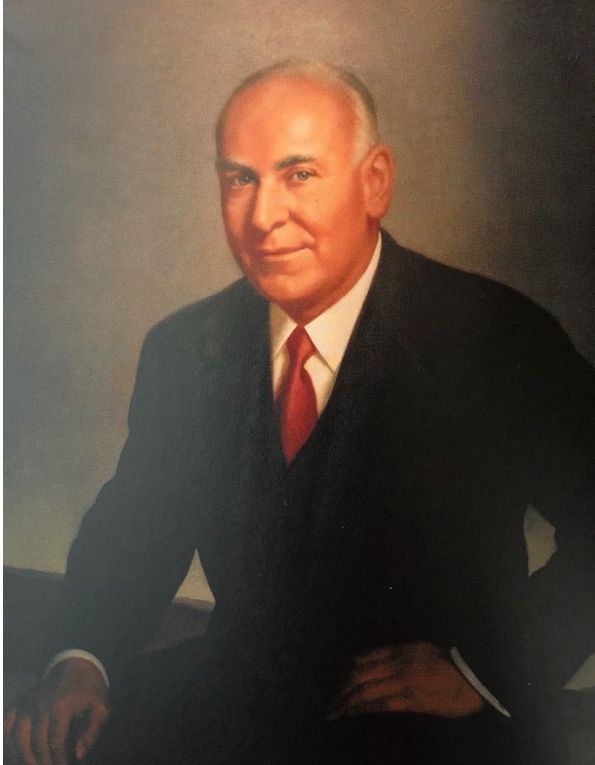


Figure 7: Portrait of Howard J. Lacy Sr.



Figure 8: Photo of Howard J. Lacy Jr., date unknown



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Figure 9: Photo of Edna Balz Lacy, date unknown



Figure 10: The primary north-facing elevation of Building E, displaying Art-Deco ornamentation

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Figure 11: Architect Charles Bacon, date unknown



Figure 12: The Corrugated-Fibre Plant, facing southeast, date unknown



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Figure 13: Corrugated-Fibre Plant D, facing northeast



Figure 14: Interior of the offices located in Corrugated-Fibre Plant Building E

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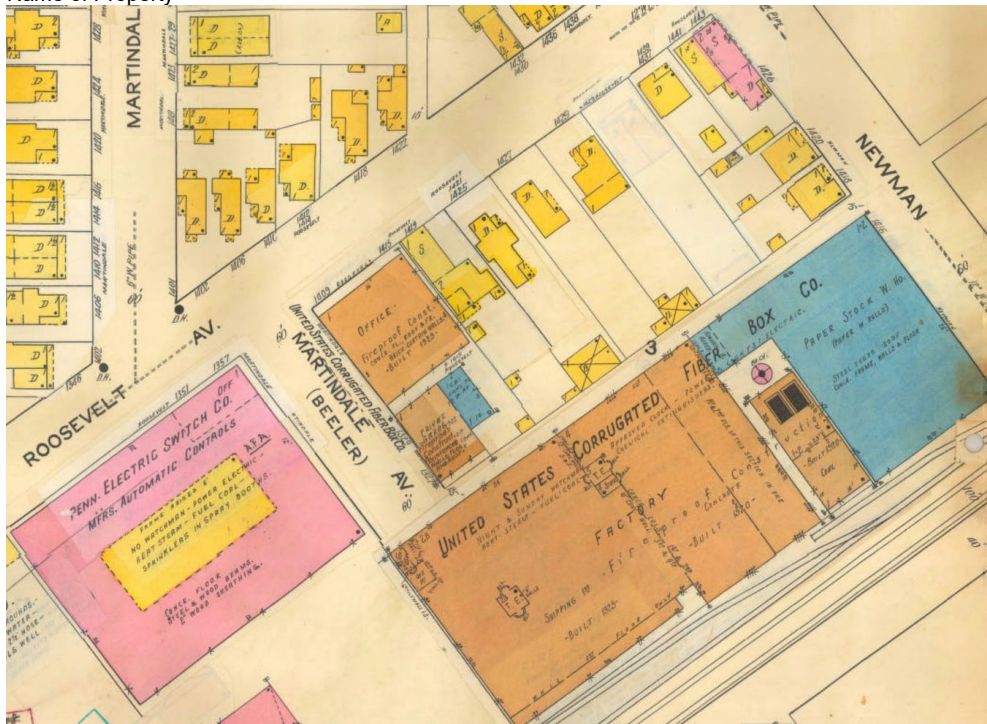


Figure 15: 1948 Sanborn Map showing the Corrugated-Fibre Plant after the 1930 rebuilding

U.S. Corrugated Fibre Box Co.



Figure 16: Parcel Map 2022, Corrugated-Fibre Plant property highlighted in red. From Indianapolis and Marion County's MapIndy site, at maps.indy.gov.

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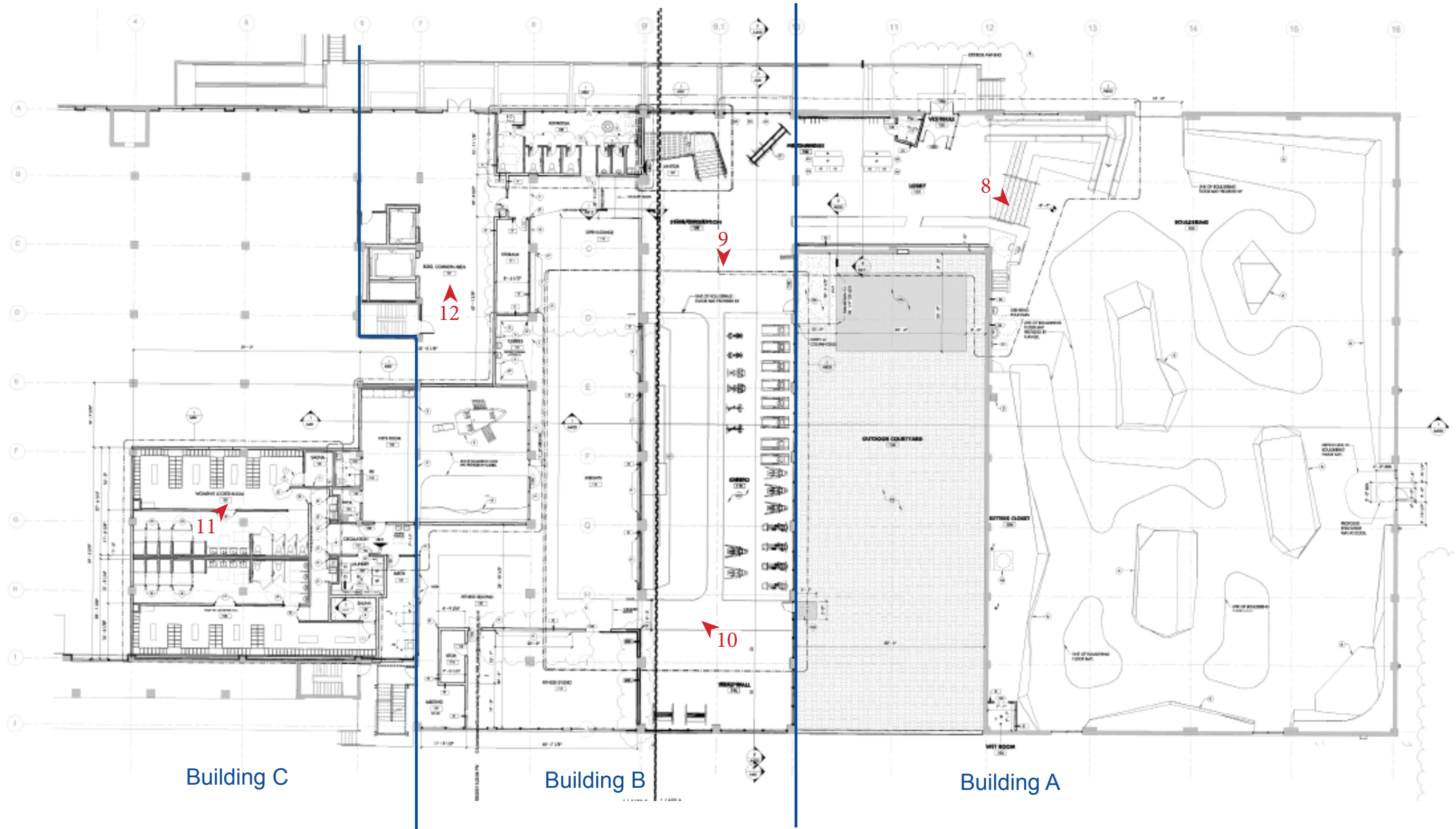
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.









Building C

Building B

Building A



United States Corrugated-Fibre Box Company  
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National Park Service  
 National Register Nomination Photo Key  
 First Floor Plan



Building C

Building B

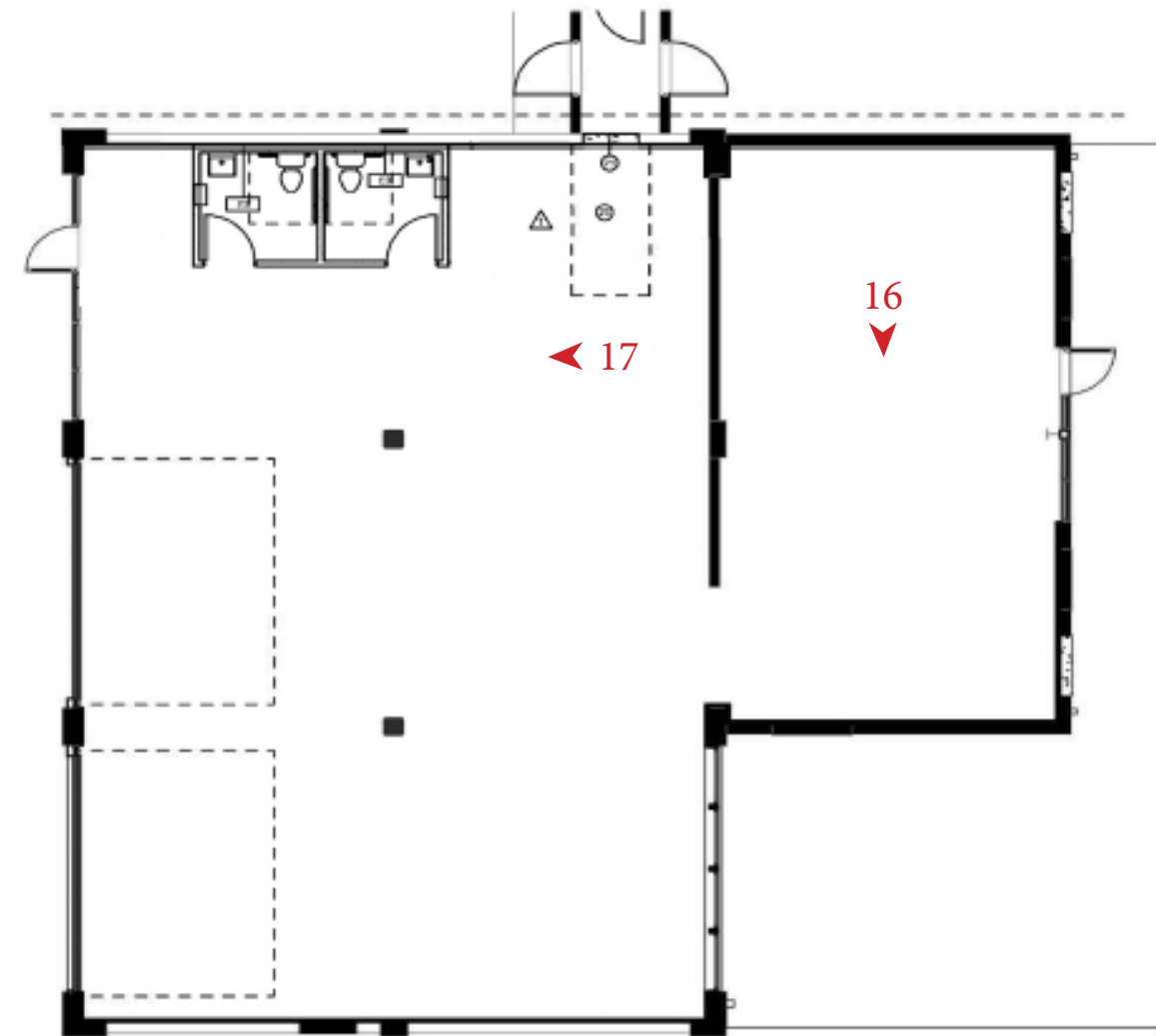


United States Corrugated-Fibre Box Company  
 1411 Roosevelt Avenue  
 Indianapolis, IN 46201

National Park Service  
 National Register Nomination Photo Key  
 First Floor (Buildings B+C) Plan



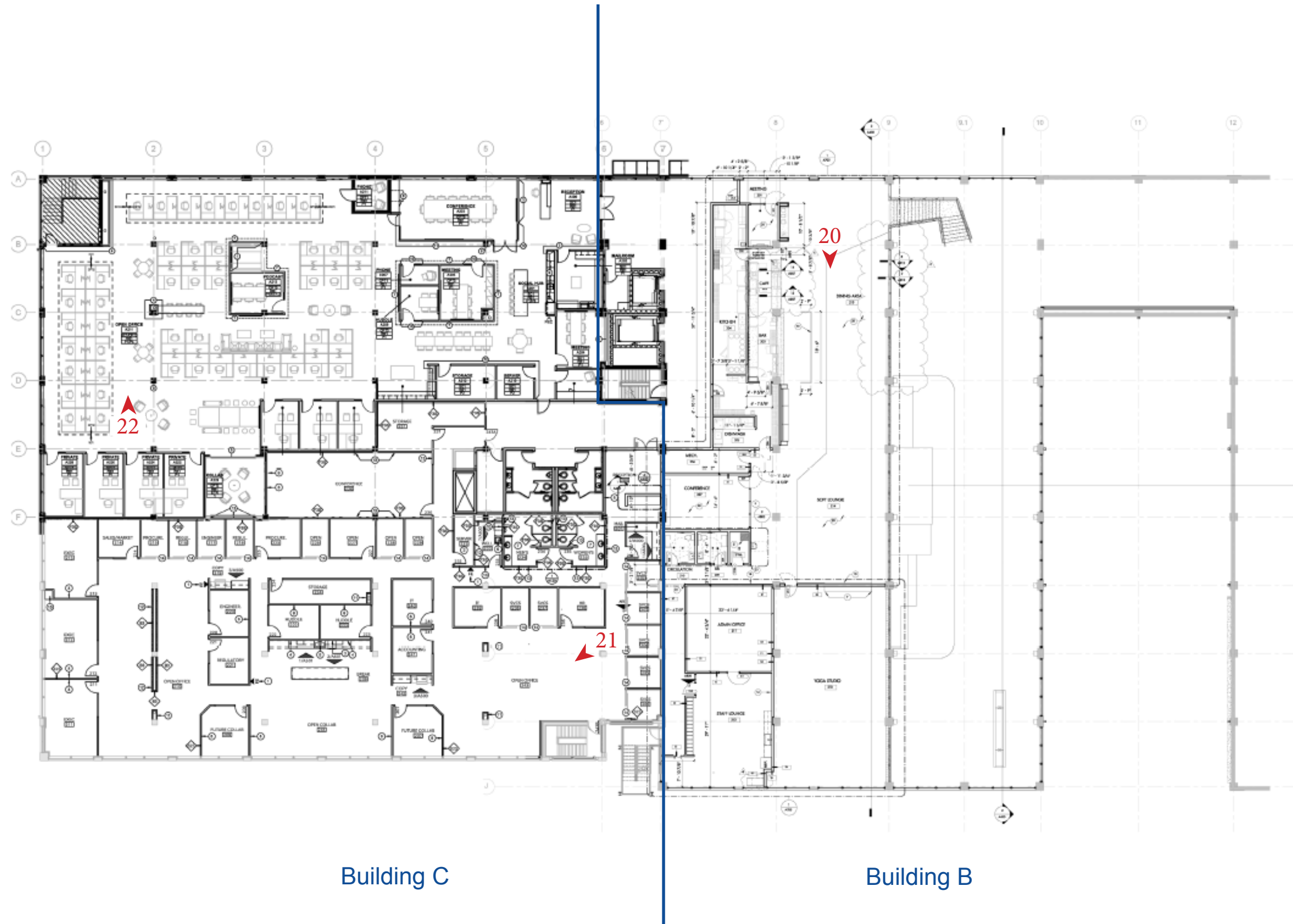
Building E



Building D





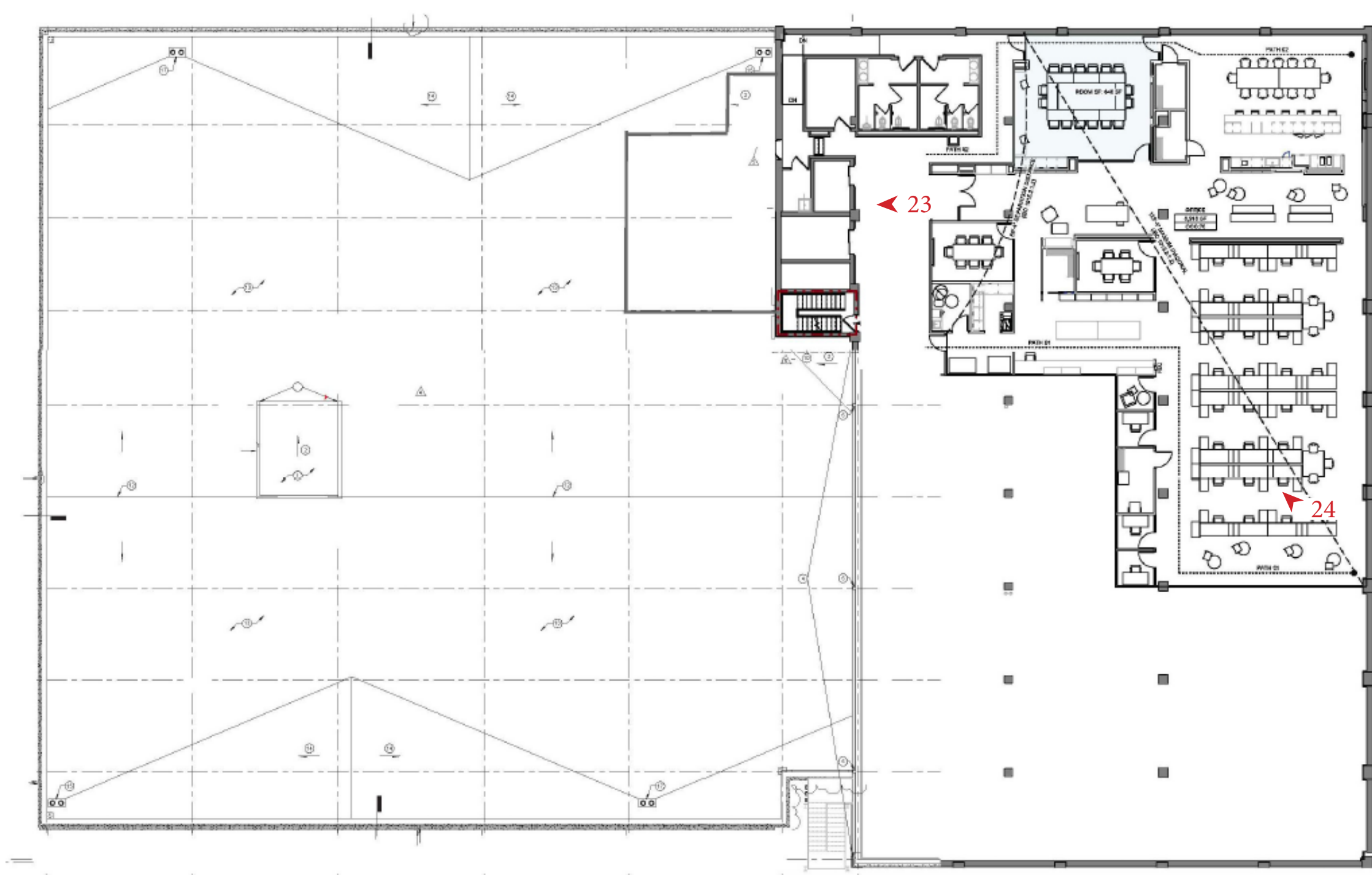


Building C

Building B



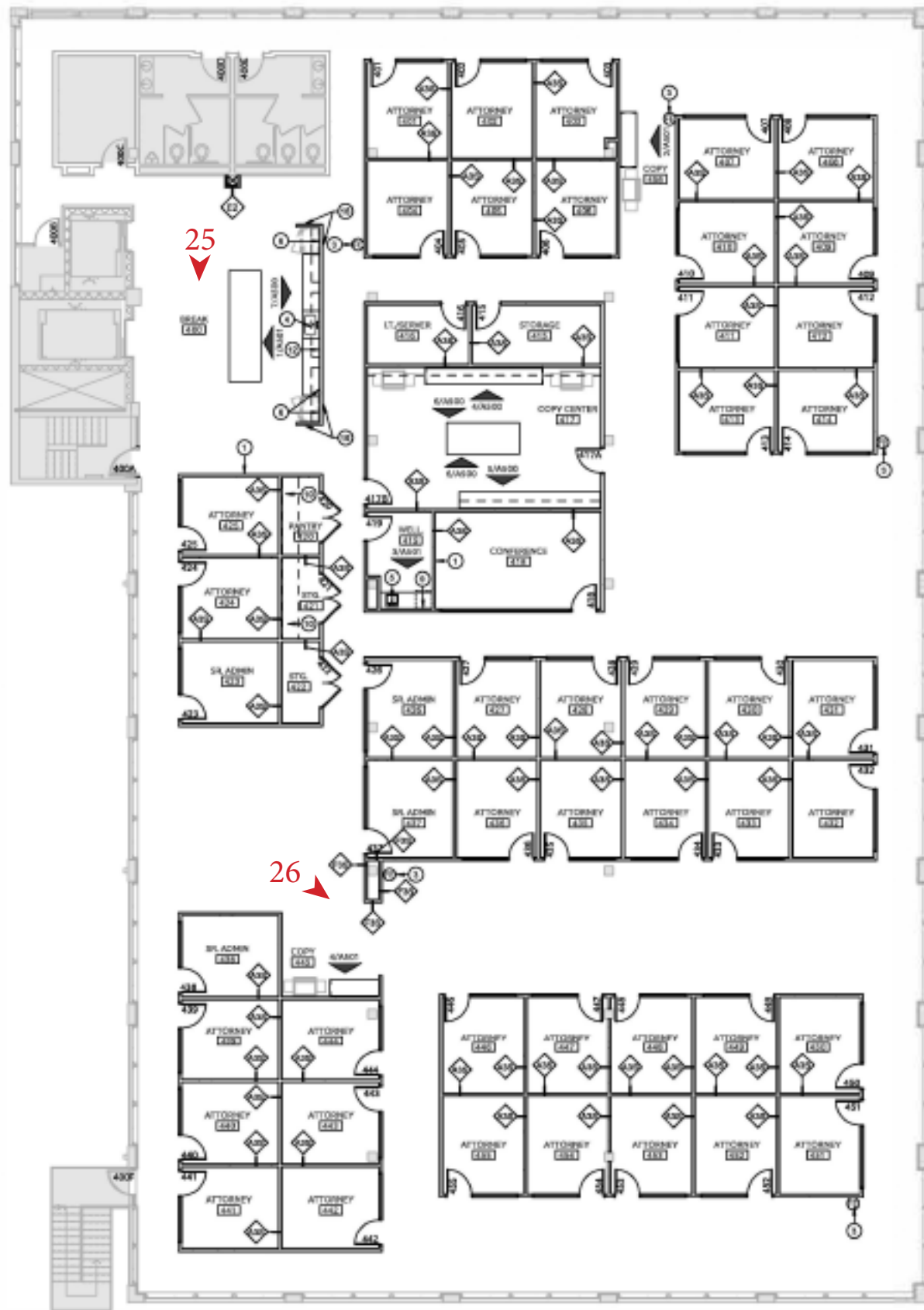




Building C

Building B





Building B



United States Corrugated-Fibre Box Company  
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National Park Service  
 National Register Nomination Photo Key  
 Fourth Floor (Building B) Plan







IN\_MarionCounty\_US Corrugated\_0001



IN\_MarionCounty\_US Corrugated\_0002



IN\_MarionCounty\_US Corrugated\_0003

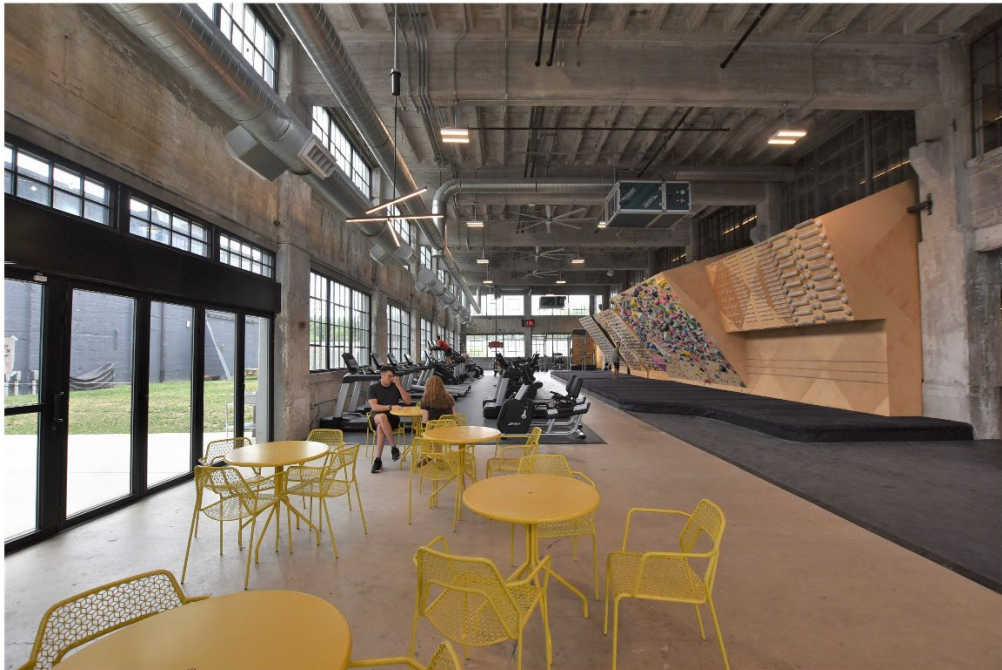


IN\_MarionCounty\_US Corrugated\_0004





IN\_MarionCounty\_US Corrugated\_0005



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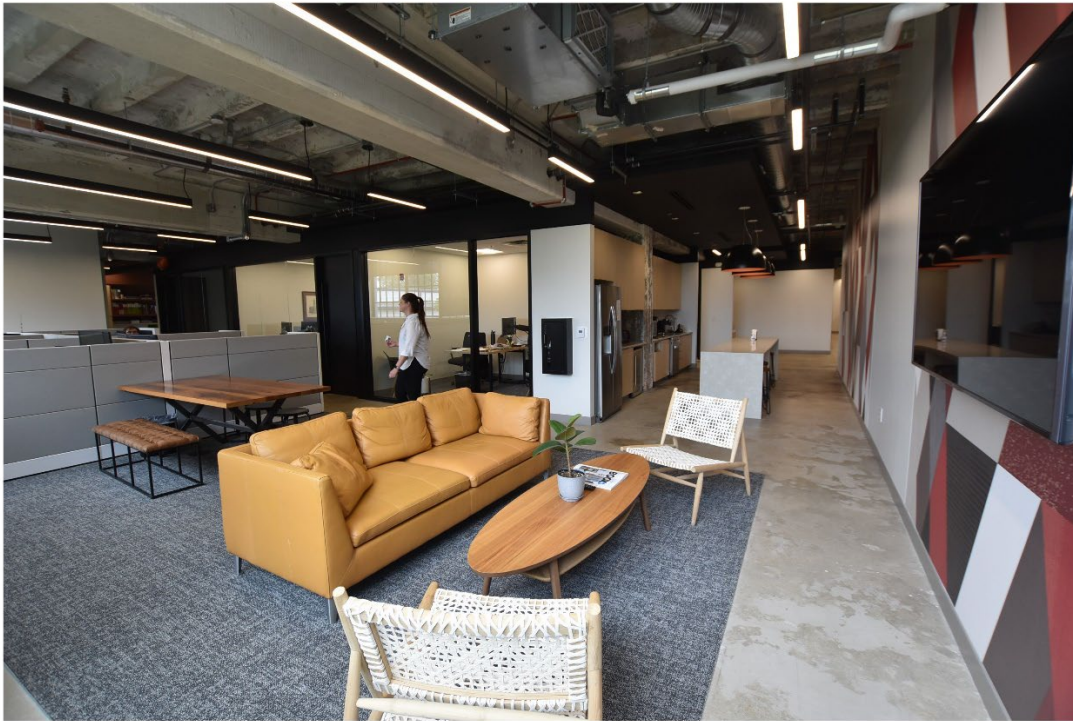


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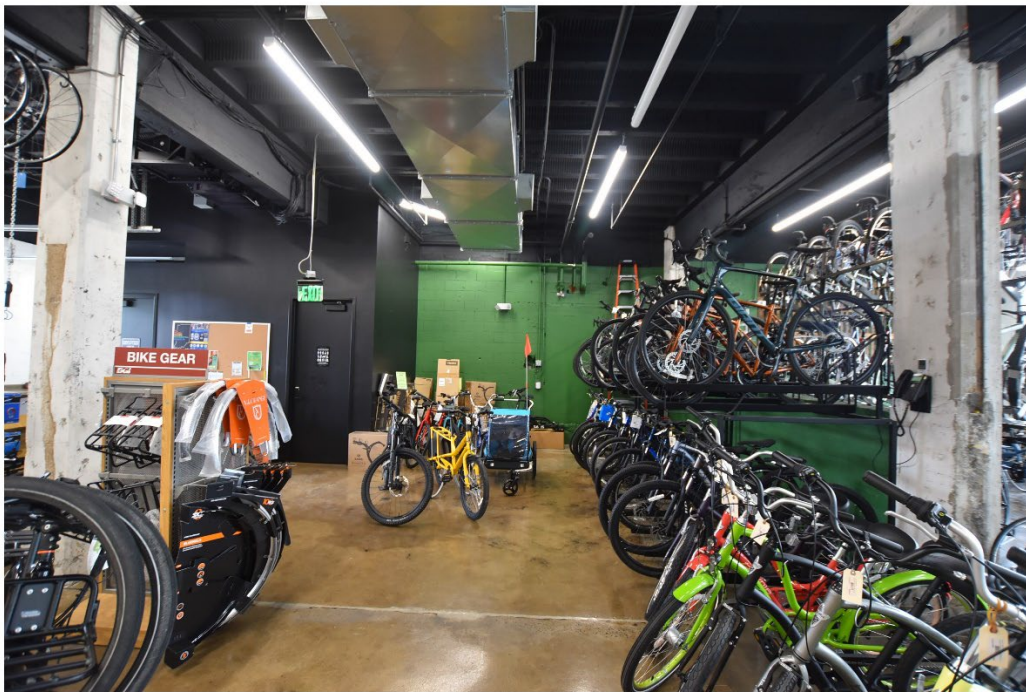


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IN\_MarionCounty\_US Corrugated\_0015

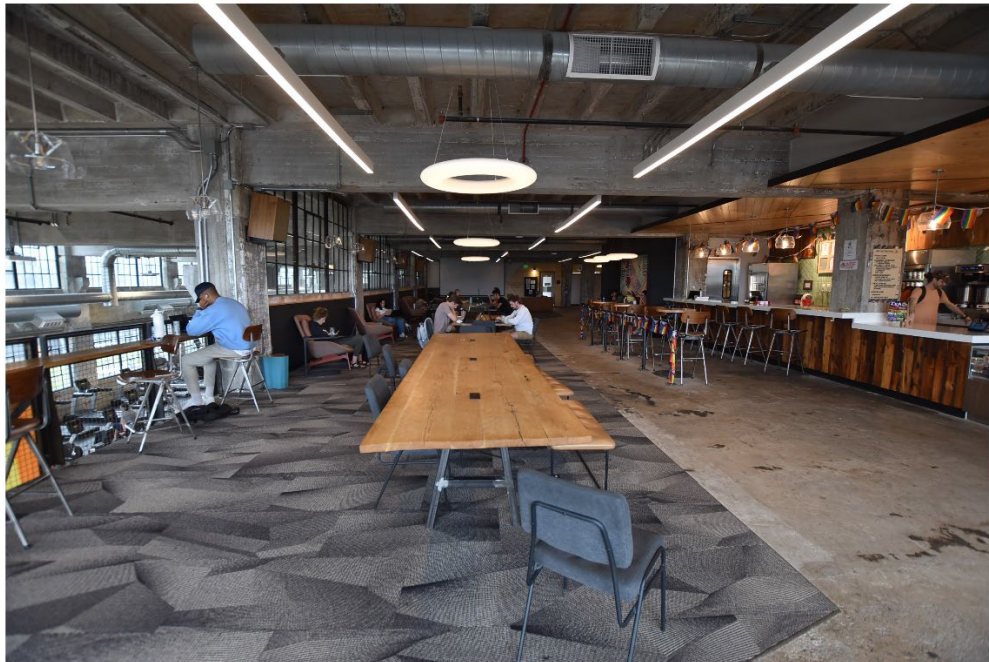


IN\_MarionCounty\_US Corrugated\_0017

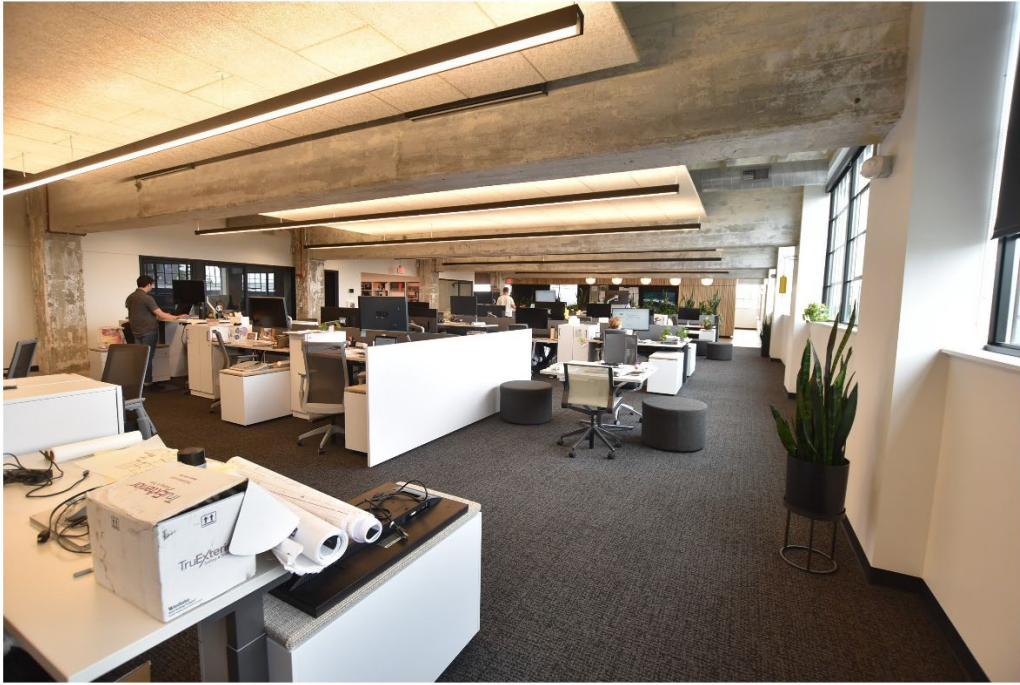




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IN\_MarionCounty\_US Corrugated\_0020



IN\_MarionCounty\_US Corrugated\_0024