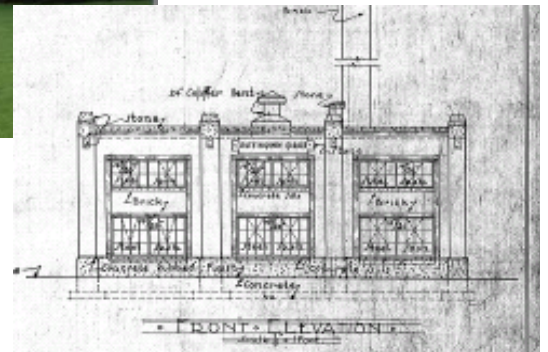
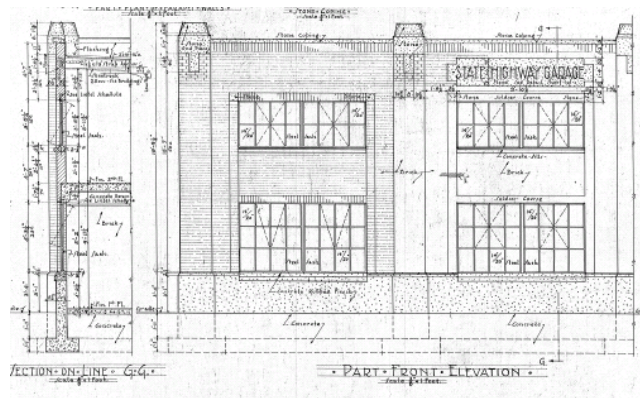


**A HISTORIC SURVEY  
AND NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATIONS OF THE  
INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S  
DISTRICT GARAGES**

**1919-1965**



**PREPARED BY  
INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES  
CULTURAL RESOURCE SECTION**



**December 2007**



## **ABSTRACT**

In the Spring and Summer of 2007, the Cultural Resource Staff of the Indiana Department of Transportation's (INDOT) Office of Environmental Services, conducted a survey and National Register of Historic Places evaluation of INDOT's district garages. The primary purpose of the survey and evaluation is to identify the garages eligible for the National Register, in order that INDOT is in compliance with the Indiana Historic Preservation and Archaeology Law (Indiana Code 14-21-1-18). The report, containing 29 garage evaluations, was submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office on September 18, 2007 for review and concurrence. In a letter dated October 26, 2007, the SHPO concurred to the eligibility recommendations and provided some comments concerning the report. Subsequently, a revision to the report was prepared with an evaluation for the previously unsurveyed Old Dale Subdistrict Garage in Spencer County in the Vincennes District. The Old Dale Subdistrict Garage was recommended eligible. On January 23, 2008, the SHPO concurred to its eligibility.

Since this time, INDOT-CRS was asked to evaluate the existing Madison Subdistrict Garage, which occupies buildings associated with the Jefferson Proving Ground (JPG) in Jefferson County. Consequently, a records check indicated that three buildings (Buildings #223, 227, and 231) on the Madison Subdistrict Garage property were previously determined eligible as part of the Cultural Resource Management Plan for the JPG. As a result, the three buildings are protected under a historic covenant as stipulated in a Memorandum of Agreement between the U.S. Army, the Indiana SHPO and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. INDOT-CRS has updated this report to incorporate Buildings #223, 227 and 231 of the Madison Subdistrict Garage as eligible properties. Please see Appendix A, Seymour District Garages for more details.

In summary, the INDOT garages determined eligible include:

**Centerville Subdistrict Garage**

**Madison Subdistrict Garage (Buildings #223, 227, and 231)**

**New Albany Unit Garage**

**Old Dale Subdistrict Garage**

**Old Madison Subdistrict Garage**

**Old Rensselaer Subdistrict Garage**

**Tibbs Complex**



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

As the Indiana Department of Transportation's (INDOT) operations expand to meet the ever challenging task of maintaining the state's growing road network, accordingly, its equipment and facilities must evolve to meet these demands. Resultantly, a common pattern of modernization has been the gradual replacement of many of INDOT's oldest district garages, including those built during the agency's earliest days, when it was known as the Indiana State Highway Commission (ISHC). Although modernization is necessary to keep pace with the growing transportation network, it is important for INDOT to recognize those structures significant in its history and take appropriate measures to ensure that these properties are not carelessly demolished or allowed to deteriorate past any salvageable function.

Therefore, Patrick Carpenter, meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for History and Architectural History, of INDOT's Office of Environmental Services, Cultural Resource Section, has prepared *A Historic Survey and National Register of Historic Places Evaluations of the Indiana Department of Transportation's District Garages 1919-1965* to comply with the Indiana Historic Preservation and Archaeology Law. Under Indiana Code 14-21-1-18, a Certificate of Approval must be obtained before using state funds to alter, demolish, or remove a historic site or structure if it is owned by the state and or listed in or eligible for listing in either the Indiana Register of Historic Places or the National Register of Historic Places (Please refer to the INDOT Cultural Resources Manual available at <http://www.in.gov/indot/7287.htm> for further details). As such, *A Historic Survey and National Register of Historic Places Evaluations of the Indiana Department of Transportation's District Garages 1919-1965* provides National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) evaluations for each garage, thereby allowing INDOT to comply with state law and take measures to ensure its NRHP eligible garages are considered for preservation.

As a brief overview, the first district garages were erected in the late 1920s. By 1936, there were 36 garages, six for each district, across the state, plus the Central Garage in Indianapolis. These early garages played a key supporting role in the development and maintenance of the ISHC's Early Formation and Growth Period. After nearly a thirty-year hiatus, the next period of district garage construction began in 1964 with the establishment of the Unit System at the peak of the Interstate Era in Indiana. The garages surveyed and evaluated for the National Register represent these two major periods in INDOT's history.

## 2.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Initially, INDOT Highway Management provided the Cultural Resource Section a photographic inventory of all INDOT facilities and a list of those sites with structures predating 1965. Among the INDOT properties on the list were district garages and interstate rest areas. However, Indiana rest areas have been determined non-exempt from the Interstate Highway System Programmatic Agreement. Thus, the rest areas are not considered under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and therefore INDOT cultural resource staff excluded them from the survey. As a result, the survey focused solely on conducting research and reconnaissance of INDOT district garages.

Primarily, only those garages currently owned by INDOT were intended for survey. However, a few garages transferred out of INDOT ownership were identified in the survey process. These garages were subsequently included in the survey for comparative purposes and to broaden the

historic context and evaluation criteria. For garages discovered subsequent to this study, the evaluation criteria established for this survey will provide a model for determining their National Register eligibility.

Historic research was conducted to develop the historic context from which the garages would be evaluated for the National Register. Critical resources employed during the research process included State of Indiana Yearbooks from 1929-1936 and 1960-1963, which provided yearly updates on ISHC operations, the newspaper clipping files at the Indiana State Library with copious amounts of articles covering the state's transportation history, and plans and drawings for select garages.

Photographs were culled from the Highway Management property inventory and through field visits to garage sites. Due to time limitations and the statewide scope of the survey, not every garage received the same degree of documentation. Nevertheless, the Highway Management inventory photographs provided sufficient conveyance of the garages' form and design. Although interiors were generally not accessed due to time restrictions, a tour of the well-preserved Centerville Subdistrict Garage in Greenfield District provided a helpful template of understanding interior layout and function.

Criterion for evaluating the district garages was developed through the establishment of the historic context. Through research, it became apparent that there were two distinct periods of garage construction, each related to major transformative changes in the state highway system, the Early Formation and Growth Period and the Interstate Era. Therefore, the garages were evaluated within their respective contextual era. Specific criteria established for evaluating the garages for the NRHP is explained in detail in Section 4.0

Based on the historic research and Highway Maintenance Inventory, each INDOT facility with a garage predating 1965 was identified and evaluated for the National Register. In a few locations, the garage has been razed, with only its supporting buildings remaining. Storage sheds and other ancillary buildings without their respective historic period garage are unable to convey historic significance without the context of the original garage. Thus, storage sheds and other support buildings were not evaluated as individual properties.

Although the garages from the Interstate Era built in 1964 and later have not met the 50-year age criteria for eligibility, they were included in the survey to anticipate later evaluation needs. The Interstate Era garages included in this survey are only those built by 1965. The systematic construction of unit garages continued post-1965, and resultantly this survey only captures the first phases of this garage building era. As the Interstate Era garages have not met the NRHP 50-year age criteria and those surveyed do not represent the full collection, they are not likely to be NRHP eligible at this point. Future revisions to this survey may indeed view Interstate Era garage significance from a different perspective.

### **3.0 HISTORIC CONTEXT**

The historic context is not a comprehensive account of INDOT's history. Rather, the focus of the historic context pertains to two distinct periods, the Early Formation and Growth Period 1919-1936 and the Interstate Era 1958-1965 (-and after), which were identified through historic research as the major transformative periods in Indiana's twentieth century transportation history. It is within each

of these periods that the Indiana State Highway Commission (ISHC), which INDOT was once known, undertook major district garage construction. Therefore, the following historic context provides the necessary framework for gauging the potential significance of INDOT's district garages.

#### **A. EARLY FORMATION AND GROWTH PERIOD 1919-1936**

With the advent of the automobile in the early twentieth century and improvements in their mass production, many Americans could travel faster and farther than ever before. Indiana residents were no different than the rest of the country in their quick acceptance of the automobile. For instance, in 1920, the number of motor vehicles registered in Indiana totaled 325,992 and by 1930 there were 900,000 registered vehicles.<sup>1</sup> This remarkable increase in automobiles introduced a great strain on existing roads, more accustomed to horse and buggy. The weight, wear and sheer volume of these vehicles required much more durable roads than had previously been expected.

Understanding the importance of a reliable transportation system to sustain the country's development, a Federal government mandate called for states to assume more responsibility in roadway construction and maintenance. Indiana was slower in adopting legislation creating a state highway commission than other states, in some part due to the abundance of gravel in the northern part of the state and crushed stone in the southern part that provided ample supplies for local municipalities and counties to build and maintain roads more easily than other parts of the country.<sup>2</sup> Eventually however, bowing to national trends, in 1919 the General Assembly formed the Indiana State Highway Commission (ISHC), which was tasked with laying out a system of state highways which would reach every county seat and city of 5,000 inhabitants or more, making a network of highways connecting every market center in the state.<sup>3</sup> Once formed, the ISHC was funded by gasoline, license fees and federal aid.<sup>4</sup>

Every year after its formation, the ISHC adopted hundreds of miles of road under its jurisdiction. In 1919, there were 133 miles of road under contract with an additional 400 miles planned for the next year.<sup>5</sup> By 1926, the ISHC maintained 5,042 miles of road,<sup>6</sup> and by 1932, road miles had ballooned to 8,422.<sup>7</sup>

In recognition of the critical role maintenance played in the growing transportation system, a central garage was erected in 1920 at West and Market Streets in Indianapolis. The central garage served as the hub for the entire state roadway network and housed the primary administrative, maintenance and materials testing functions for the ISHC. Interestingly, prior to the central garage's construction, ISHC operations were scattered among existing state government buildings. For instance, before moving to the new central garage, the Bureau of Materials and Tests was located in a 12 ft. x 12 ft. room in the basement of the Statehouse.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the Central Garage, at its formation the ISHC was organized into five maintenance districts with headquarters at Vincennes, Seymour, Greenfield, Ft. Wayne and Monticello with each consisting of five subdistricts<sup>9</sup>. By 1922, it had become apparent that the district territories were too large to adequately cover. Hence, the boundaries were redrawn to incorporate the Crawfordsville District. At the same time, each district was divided into 6 subdistricts.<sup>10</sup> These district boundaries are remarkably similar to today's district configuration, with the exception of the shift from district headquarters from Monticello to LaPorte.

As a further reflection of the rapid increase in maintenance needs, expansion of the central garage was undertaken only ten years after its initial construction. In 1931, the building was reconstructed incorporating the brick walls from the original structure into the first two-stories and described as a three-story monolithic type reinforced concrete measuring 109 ft. by 198 ft.<sup>11</sup> Further, by 1936, a new testing laboratory was built at the facility and was described as a, "...building of modern design, housing one of the most complete highway testing laboratories in the middle west, fully equipped for present-day testing methods."<sup>12</sup>

Despite the struggling United States economy due to the stock market crash of 1929 and the resulting Great Depression, the ISHC sustained its remarkable expansion. A key factor in the escalation in the state highway network, in spite of massive economic hardships, is attributed to an aid relief program instituted by the ISHC. Primary facets of the relief program included:

- 1) Adding heavily traveled roads to the system to relieve tax burden on counties
- 2) Hiring as many contract workers as possible, taking advantage of low price levels
- 3) Undertaking day labor projects near centers of population and giving employment to as many as possible by part-time work<sup>13</sup>

As a result of its work relief program, the ISHC became a major employer during the Great Depression. For example, during the months of July and August 1932, the number of men employed by the ISHC was 8,000 while that number had previously never exceeded 3,600.<sup>14</sup> From its work relief program, the ISHC expanded its roadway miles, with 8,983 miles of road in 1936, an increase of over five hundred miles in four years.<sup>15</sup> As evidenced by the increase in road miles, it is clear that even with the economic pressures brought forth by the Great Depression, the ISHC's growth did not stagnate. On the contrary, the Great Depression was a catalyst for the ISHC in creating and maintaining a larger state transportation network.

Of course, with the expansion of roads came a corresponding increase in maintenance work. Another critical factor in the growing maintenance load was the continual increase in automobiles on the roadways. Despite the lingering pressures of the Depression in the 1930s, the public dependency on the automobile was firmly established and had no indication of abating. T. A. Dicus, ISHC chairman, elaborated in 1939,

**Maintenance of the state highway system is now of the chief responsibilities of the Commission. With ten-thousand miles of road in the state highway system, maintenance problems have increased materially. The increase of thirty-six percent in traffic volume on the state highway system during the past five years and the increasing use of the system for both passenger and freight transportation makes the maintenance problem one that can not be overlooked.**<sup>16</sup>

By the late 1920s, it was apparent that the central garage could not solely handle the maintenance needs of the entire state. Moreover, it was apparent that the rented facilities at the districts were not adequate for ISHC operations. Therefore, it was during this period, when the ISHC was rapidly assuming more responsibility that new district garages were constructed.

### **A.1. District Garages**

Prior to the construction of district garages, the ISHC kept its district equipment and offices in rented buildings and warehouses, but it became difficult to secure proper accommodations in these private buildings. An important element missing in the rented buildings was that they were not fireproof. Therefore, the ISHC found that the construction of new fireproof buildings was necessary to meet the specifications particular to roadway maintenance operations.<sup>17</sup>

A key role of the ISHC built garages was that more trucks were overhauled in the field garages instead of going to the central garage.<sup>18</sup> In essence, the new garages allowed more work to occur at the district-level instead of transporting equipment to and from the central garage in Indianapolis. ISHC Supervising Architect B.B. Straight explained,

**Each garage cares for the equipment in its own sub-district, and all repairs are made at these garages except extensive repairs; these are sent to the central garage in Indianapolis. Because of the distance from Indianapolis, the sub-district garages must carry an adequate stock of repair parts for the different makes of equipment in use.**<sup>19</sup>

Eventually, all maintenance work was done at the district level, further decentralizing ISHC operations in the expanding statewide road network.

Accordingly, district garages were constructed at a rapid pace. By 1929, the ISHC had begun making plans for the systematic construction of new garages statewide. In fact, by this time, a 40ft. x 100ft. subdistrict garage had been built in Goshen on land donated by the Goshen Chamber of Commerce, and at the same time there were plans for four other garages.<sup>20</sup> By 1930, 13 subdistricts had new garages.<sup>21</sup>

By 1932, garages had been built in the following locations:

District	Sub-District	Date of Construction
Crawfordsville	Crawfordsville	1928
Crawfordsville	Fowler	1930
Crawfordsville	Terre Haute (Ft. Harrison)	1930
Ft. Wayne	Bluffton	1932/33
Ft. Wayne	Ft. Wayne	1930
Ft. Wayne	Goshen	1929
Ft. Wayne	Waterloo	1928
Greenfield	Anderson	1932
Greenfield	Indianapolis	1927
Greenfield	Ridgeville	1932/33
LaPorte	LaPorte	1930
LaPorte	Plymouth	1930
LaPorte	Rensselaer	1932
LaPorte	Valparaiso	1932
Seymour	Bloomington	1925
Seymour	New Albany	1932
Vincennes	Dale	1931

Vincennes	Paoli	1930
Vincennes	Vincennes	1932

Table 1: Shaded entries indicates status unknown/non-extant

Although new garages were erected in districts across the state, the need seemed to outweigh the pace of new construction. The Commission reported in 1932,

**We are in urgent need of new garage sites and buildings for housing our equipment and offices at 12 other sub-district headquarters...The new fireproof buildings that are being constructed, together with the high-wire fences being constructed around the ground is aiding materially in eliminating many of the troubles experienced in handling the work.**<sup>22</sup>

The construction of new garages did continue and by 1935 only Frankfort and Columbus were without a garage. The “modern, up-to-date and efficiently constructed” and “for less than \$30,000.00” garages were described as being built in “recognition of the important place that maintenance now occupies in the highway industry.”<sup>23</sup>

The ISHC considered the garages a great force in improving not only maintenance operations, but worker quality and morale. B.B. Straight elaborated,

**Up to 4 years ago only a few of our garages could be called modern to any great extent, the majority being old factory buildings, livery stables or warehouses-some without floors, so that mechanics had to lie on earth floors when working under a car...With such conditions, the need for better housing for both men and equipment was imperative. The highway commission felt that by providing better housing facilities and a better environment for the workmen, the quality and quantity of work turned out would be improved. After seeing the men at work in their new quarters, I believe that the results are worth the costs. The men seem to take as much pride in their new quarters as they do in their own homes.**<sup>24</sup>



Seymour District Garage. “Modern Garages and Road Maintenance” Indianapolis News, Saturday June 6, 1936.

Remarkably, thirty-six garages were built in the span of eight years. The construction of the district garages was a noteworthy achievement for the ISHC. Indeed, the new district garages were highly regarded and promoted to the general public and highway industry. Arguably, the most impressive aspect of the garages was that they actively served ISHC (and later INDOT) operations until the late twentieth century. In fact, several of these early garages are still actively serving their original function for district maintenance operations. The continuing presence of the majority of these garages until the last decade can likely be attributed to the foresight of the planners and architects responsible for their design and construction.

## A.2. Architecture and Design

### 1928-1932

Designed specifically to accommodate ISHC operations, district garages were tailored to meet a particular function of equipment storage and maintenance. Thus, ISHC district garages were designed to exhibit a straightforward form deliberately maximizing function while minimizing decorative and unnecessary architectural embellishments. Typically, the extant garages erected between 1928 and 1932 consist of brick or tile construction, with a two-story, stepped parapet false front façade fronting a barrel-shaped roof supported by a riveted bowstring steel truss covering the office and service equipment room. Square stone-capped pilasters separate the two-to-three-bay façade, and regularly spaced rectangular steel-sash multi-pane steel-sash casement windows with concrete sills flanking each elevation. Of those extant garages built prior to 1932 it appears that the service room contained two bays for equipment and storage.

These first garages were essentially utilitarian structures, typical of industrial and commercial architecture of the 1920s and 1930s. Despite their ordinary appearance, at least some of these garages were not designed by ordinary architects. In 1932, architectural fees were paid to Vonnegut, Bohn and Mueller for the design of garages at Central, Dale, New Albany, Vincennes, Anderson, Bluffton, Ridgeville and Bloomington.<sup>25</sup> Of these eight, only the garages at Anderson, New Albany and Dale are currently owned by INDOT. Another, the former Ridgeville Subdistrict Garage is still extant, but is no longer owned by INDOT. Other garages designed by the firm have likely been demolished. Thus far, records have not indicated if Vonnegut, Bohn and Mueller designed additional ISHC garages prior to 1932. Nevertheless, at least one extant garage at the Evansville Subdistrict shares enough similarities that an association between its design and Vonnegut, Bohn and Mueller seems like a reasonable assumption.

#### VONNEGUT, BOHN AND MUELLER ARCHITECTS

Vonnegut, Bohn and Mueller were one of the most prominent and prolific architectural firms in Indiana in the late nineteenth century and early-to-mid-twentieth century. The firm was established in 1888 when Bernard Vonnegut and Arthur Bohn formed a partnership that lasted until Vonnegut's death in 1908. One of the firm's first major commissions was the Das Deutsche Haus (the Athenaeum) in downtown Indianapolis, one of the largest clubhouses in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Bernard Vonnegut's son Kurt a MIT graduate joined the firm subsequent to his father's death. That partnership produced the Severin Hotel (Omni Severin), the Kahn Tailor Company Building (Litho Press), and the William H. Block Company Building located in Indianapolis. In the 1920s, the firm gained a new partner, Otto N. Mueller with that incarnation designing Treadwell Hall at Arsenal Technical High School, the first Indiana Bell buildings and the pre-World War II Hook's Drug Stores.<sup>2</sup> The firm, through its many incarnations was responsible for many landmark buildings in Indianapolis and across the state.

1. Connie J. Zeigler, "Vonnegut and Bohn," *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, eds. David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows (Indiana University Press; Indianapolis, Ind., 1994), 1389

2. *Ibid.*



New Albany Subdistrict Garage. Designed by Vonnegut, Bohn and Mueller Architects, 1932.



Evansville Subdistrict Garage. Designed by Vonnegut, Bohn and Mueller Architects? 1933.

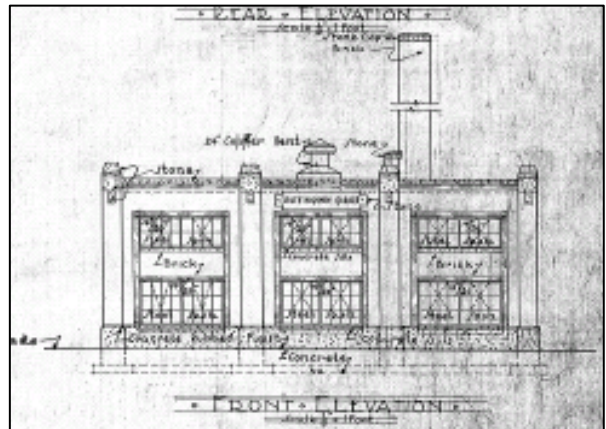
### 1933-1936

A shift in district garage design occurred when the Standard Sub-District Garage Plans and Standard Storage Buildings Plans prepared by L.A. Turnock were approved by the ISHC in September 1933.<sup>26</sup> It appears that after this point, Vonnegut, Bohn and Mueller were no longer involved in garage design, based on lack of subsequent references to the firm and the implication that ISHC was designing its own garages. The standardization of garage plans is not surprising, as highway safety standards and design manuals are fundamental tenants of transportation agencies. Applying standard designs to district garages would have been a logical measure for the ISHC. What may be more surprising is that the ISHC design actually incorporated more architectural ornament than the older garages.

ISHC architect B.B. Straight described the architectural and decorative details of the garages as such,

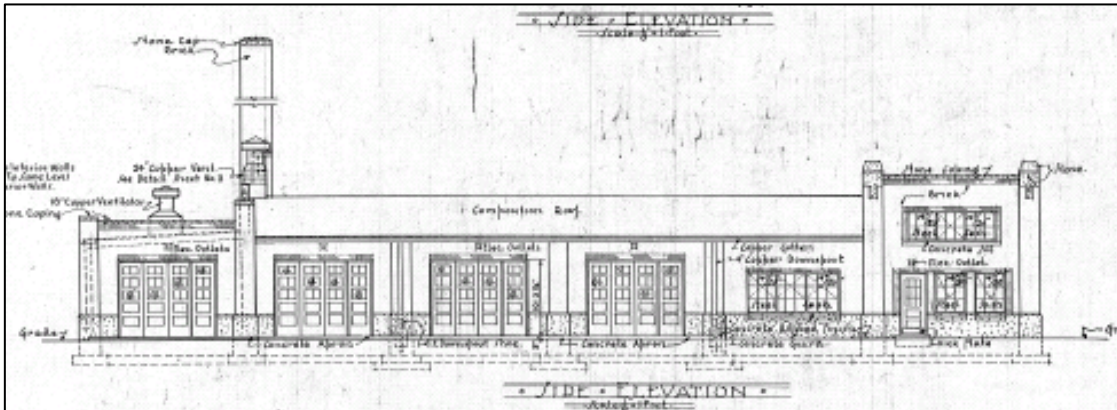
**All walls, both exterior and interior, to a height of approximately 3 ft. 6 in. above the floor, are concrete. Wall forms are lined with plywood or masonite, and the surface is finished by rubbing. The sills for the windows are of cast concrete and line up with the top of the wall. The masonry starts on top of the concrete walls. On the outside of the walls are faced with common brick, and all interior walls and the inner sides of the exterior walls are faced with double-brick sized glazed tile. Trimmings, copings and inscription panel are of Bedford stone.<sup>27</sup>**

Although the garages designed after 1933 hewed closely to the earlier garage design, in particular keeping the overall rectangular shape and the bowstring steel truss roof system, a few distinguishing characteristics are apparent by casual observation. In particular, the ISHC designed garages included highly accentuated



Plans for Standard Sub-District Garage. Revised 4-4-1934.

pilasters with ziggurat stone caps, implying a slight Art Deco reference. Moreover, the soldier bond border and square corner stone blocks surrounding the multi-pane casement windows provided further decorative touches, common to this era, not seen on earlier garages. Finally, a defining signature of the ISHC designed garage was the stone inscribed “State Highway Garage” plaque on the facade.



Plans for Standard Sub-District Garage. Revised 4-4-1934.

Not all ISHC garages fit the institutionalized design standard though. Two extant garages, Fowler and Seymour, consist of a false-front façade with the office and service room both contained under the barrel-shaped roof more common to the early garages. Other standard decorative elements of the garages, including the ziggurat capped pilasters appear the same as the Standard Subdistrict Plans. Research to date has not indicated the reason for the design variation or if other no-longer extant garages also exhibited these characteristics.



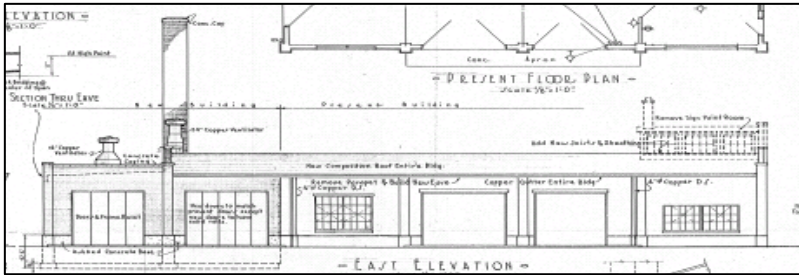
Tipton Subdistrict Garage

Another garage exhibiting a design variant is the Tibbs Complex, built in 1933 in Indianapolis. Like the Standard Sub-district Garage Plans designed garages, Tibbs consists of a two-story, rectangular office block header fronting the equipment service area. Contrastingly, Tibbs features concrete diamond shaped stones regularly spaced below its cornice. Moreover, instead of rising above the parapet, the ziggurat stone capped pilasters taper into the building below the cornice. In addition, where the pilasters begin to taper, a contrasting ziggurat pattern descends down the pilaster. Although no longer extant, a photograph of the former Ft. Wayne District Garage shows a remarkable resemblance to Tibbs, with a zig-zag belt course running between the tapered pilasters. Although the ISHC Standard Plan garages hint at an Art Deco inspiration, Tibbs and the former Ft. Wayne District Garage clearly aspired to a higher-style Art Deco design. Research to date has not indicted why Tibbs and Ft. Wayne featured this architectural embellishment or if other garages no longer extant also exhibited this design.

### A.3. Garage Modernizations

Near the end of its garage building phase, the ISHC began systematically modernizing its existing garage facilities. It was during this modernization effort that garages were expanded with additional

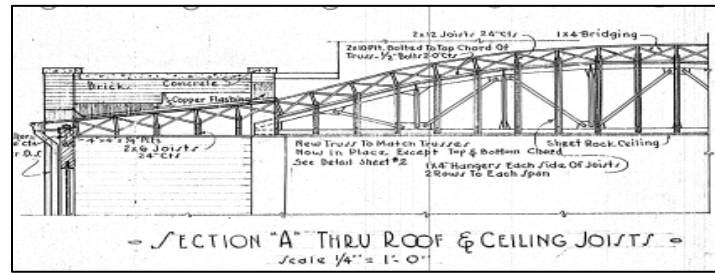
service bays. Extant garages built prior to 1933 exhibit evidence of rear bay additions, as indicated by distinct change in materials with the furthest bay typically housed under a flat-roof section. Drawings for the Rensselaer Subdistrict Garage approved in 1936 show remodeling plans for its facility and offer an illustrative example of the alterations that likely occurred at other garages. As indicated in the plans, the original Rensselaer Garage consisted of the front office block with a raised 2<sup>nd</sup> story paint room directly above, and two service bays below the barrel-roof section. Primary remodeling consisted of the addition of two service bays at the rear and the removal of the paint room above the office. Based on the extant garages from this era's form and design, it is reasonable to assume that most if not all underwent similar renovations.



**Rensselaer Subdistrict Garage. 1936 Remodeling, April 7, 1936.**

bays. These service bay additions seemingly indicate that the maintenance demands placed on the subdistrict garages was even more than the ISHC had planned only four years earlier. Therefore, the remodeled garages through their architectural evolution provide a physical representation of the growth and expansion of the state highway system.

A fascinating aspect of the widespread remodeling of the pre-1933 garages is the relatively short time span between their original construction and their expansion in 1936. For instance, Rensselaer Garage was constructed in 1932, making it only four years old before it was expanded with two additional



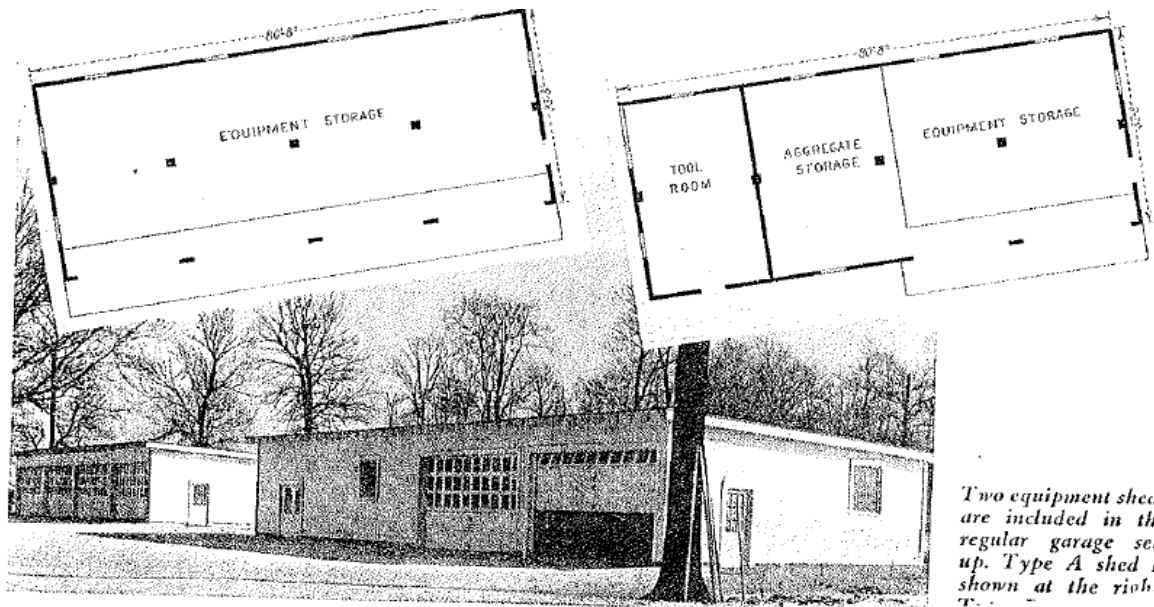
**Steel Truss Roof . Rensselaer Subdistrict Garage. 1936 Remodeling, April 7, 1936.**

#### A.4. Interiors

Generally, the garage floor plan was simplistic with few internal divisions, consisting typically of office and stock rooms in the front block, a large open equipment service area, and a paint room and boiler room at the rear. B. B. Straight described the interior layout as such, “On the first floor are the superintendent’s office, stockroom, service room for repairing and servicing cars and equipment, equipment paint room, fuel room and boiler room. Above the superintendent’s office and stockroom is a room for painting signs.”<sup>28</sup> Essentially, garages housed four major functions; administrative, equipment repair, painting (sign and equipment) and storage. A few basic features evident in extant garage interiors include the exposed bowstring steel roof trusses, tile walls, metal work benches, a single bathroom, and metal shelving units in the stockroom.

#### A.5. Support Buildings

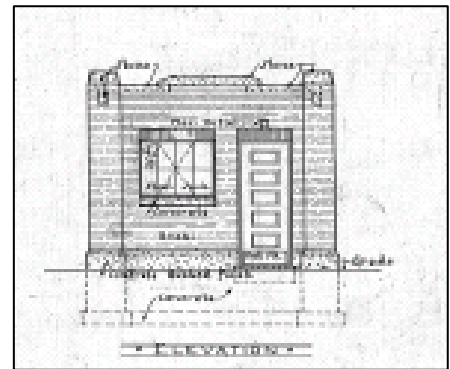
For the earliest garage facilities, wood-frame sheds with open bays for equipment storage were likely the only accompanying support buildings. However, storage sheds were not necessarily built simultaneously with the garages. It seems likely that support buildings were not constructed until either funds were available or specific needs arose. For instance, in October 1931, the ISHC maintenance division was authorized to construct 14 sheds at various garages.<sup>29</sup>



**Storage Sheds. Appearing in Better Roads, May 1937.**

After 1933, with the approval of the ISHC designed Standard Storage Shed Plans, two storage sheds and an oil house were erected with each garage. The wood frame, weather boarding covered storage sheds, were described by B.B. Straight as measuring approximately 33' x 81' with concrete foundations. He explained their function, "... to care for the equipment that cannot be stored in the garages. In fact, very little equipment is stored in the garages except in cold weather, when some trucks are kept there for easy starting."<sup>30</sup> Storage sheds came in two designs, the Type B shed containing three garage bays, while Type A consisted of two garage bays, a tool room and an aggregate storage room. These standard storage sheds were also constructed at the older garage complexes, likely during the garage modernization efforts in 1936. Remarkably, many of these original storage sheds remain with overall historic integrity intact. Some common alterations include roll-top door replacements, sheathing in vinyl siding, and rear and side additions.

Oil houses have not fared as well, with most now razed. As detailed in the Plans for Standard Sub-District Garages, the oil house was designed as a brick square block, with decorative details matching the garage. Specifically, the oil house featured corner ziggurat stone capped pilasters, steel-sash multi-pane casement windows with concrete sills, and stone coping on the parapet.



**Oil House. Plans For Sub-District Garage.**

## **A.6. Summary**

Today, the extant Early Formation and Growth Period garages have experienced various sorts of fates. Some have been abandoned while others remain active and continue to serve district maintenance operations. Active garage facilities exhibit a range of the evolution of district maintenance operations, with the additions of modern prefabricated metal buildings and salt storage domes. Only a few garages, such as the Centerville Garage, retain much of their historic integrity

with minimal modern alterations. It is often times those garages that are still active where most alterations have occurred, as they have had to remain viable. Although all the existing district garages built in the Early Formation and Growth Period played an important role in INDOT's history, those garages that display the most historic integrity are best able to convey that significance. Thus, the garages with intact historic integrity are recommended eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (Refer to Section IV. National Register of Historic Places Eligibility for evaluation criteria).

## **B. INTERSTATE ERA 1956-1965**

By the post-World War II era, tremendous changes in settlement patterns, brought forth by a population boom and rampant suburbanization, introduced a major shift in the nation's transportation system. In Indiana, the resulting increase in traffic congestion and accidents became a growing concern for the ISHC. Accordingly, the ISHC began making major improvements to the state's highway system in the post-war period, including the construction of bypasses around towns and the dualization of existing roads. By 1960, the ISHC maintained 11,000 miles of roadway in Indiana.<sup>31</sup> For perspective, at its formation in 1919, the ISHC maintained only 133 miles of road-an increase of over 10,000 miles. In effect, Indiana had one of the largest state roadway networks at the time, and according to John Peters, Chairman of the ISHC in 1960, it had climbed to one of the top ten states in highway development.<sup>32</sup>

The new and dualized highways provided faster and safer routes, and ushered in a new era of road construction in Indiana eventually culminating in the development of the Interstate Highway System that produced an explosion of highway construction never before seen in Indiana. Although plans for a national interstate system had been discussed since the 1930s funding was not provided until President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. Eisenhower had championed the need for an interstate system after witnessing the deplorable conditions of the nation's roads and being impressed with Germany's Autobahn highway. The resulting Act was considered "... essential to the national interest to provide for the early completion of the "National System of Interstate and Defense Highways.""<sup>33</sup>

Although interstates were introduced across the country and produced great changes to transportation and economic systems wherever they passed, Indiana was especially affected. In part due to its central location in the Midwest, by the 1950s several interstates were planned for Indiana. The routing of interstates through Indiana was due largely to its location, but another critical factor may have been the push provided by lobbyists and industry organizations. One such group was Indiana Highways for Survival, Inc. a self-described, "non-profit, non-political group" that produced literature promoting interstates. A brochure released from the group in 1958, exclaimed: "Indiana must modernize its highway system to:

**MEET INDUSTRIAL GROWTH  
SOLVE HIGHWAY CONGESTION  
IMPROVE TRAFFIC CONTROL  
HANDLE INCREASED POPULATION  
MAKE OUR HIGHWAYS SAFE<sup>34</sup>**































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