

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

CIRCLE TOWER – HISTORIC INTERIOR DESIGNATION
(SECOND FLOOR HISTORIC BARBER SHOP AND FIRST FLOOR LOBBY ONLY)

HA-45(CT)
55 Monument Circle
Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana

A PART OF THE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
FOR MARION COUNTY, INDIANA

Adopted by the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission

March 4, 2026

Adopted by the Metropolitan Development Commission

Prepared By:

Staff of the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission
1842 City-County Building
200 East Washington Street
Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana



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Circle Tower - Historic Interior

Historic Area Preservation Plan

I. OWNER: CIRCLE TOWER, LLC

3454 DOUGLAS RD SUITE 250, SOUTH BEND, IN 46635

II. HISTORIC & ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN ANALYSIS

Construction Information

- Date of original design, construction, or origin: 1929-1930
- Architectural Firm: Rubush and Hunter

Physical Description

Circle Tower is the city's finest example of the Art Deco Style, not only for its numerous decorative details in the "Art-Deco" Style but also for its massing, configuration, and location on Monument Circle. Designed by the architectural firm Rubush and Hunter, the building's features include the exquisite arched Market Street entrance with an Egyptian motif in a carved limestone and a bronze painted cast-iron screen (which continues into the lobby). The storefronts are also crowned with bronze colored cresting in the same manner, although some are now missing. Limestone carvings are found in the parapet and the many levels of the ziggurat, which conceals the elevator penthouse.¹

III. HISTORIC AREA DELINEATION & LEGAL DESCRIPTION

The legal description for the building is 87.2ft on Market Street 66.6FT on circle 105ft N Side L11 SQ56 & Vac Air Rights E & ADJ.

For the purposes of this plan, the historic area delineation is the entirety of the public lobby on the first floor and the historic 1930's barber shop on the second floor.

¹ Monument Circle Historic Preservation Plan (HA-40) 2013

IV. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Building

This building's massing and height is significant because it reflects the setback provisions of the 1922 height ordinance. The fenestration pattern and bay configuration are original to the design. Limestone materials with carved detailing, storefronts retaining bronze colored cresting and other bronzed elements also survive. An arched entry fronting Market Street has highly stylized foliar and animal molding. Above this entry is a frieze with raised letters indicating the building name and a large arched transom overlaid with a bronze painted cast-iron grid of Egyptian motifs.² The building was placed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1997 and included in the Monument Circle Historic Area (exterior only) by the IHPC in 2013.

Lobby (Figure 1)

The Art Deco architectural style is evident in the space starting with the lobby entrance (figure 5). The decorative elevator doors with their ornate geometric patterns are an excellent example of the architectural style. The three elevator doors are of solid bronze with medallions showing muscular figures of men as working parts of machines, a salute to the Machine Age that inspired many Art Deco architects (*figures 4 and 9*). The detailing in the space can also be seen in the floors with their contrasting bands and directional motifs that subtly guide circulation toward the elevators (figure 8). Inside, the lobby walls are black travertine marble (*figures 3 and 4*) accented with typical Art Deco motifs in bronze: geometric flowers, stylized greyhounds, birds, zigzags, and concentric swirls (*figures 7 and 10*).³ The floors in the lobby are green terrazzo. One section of original ceiling detailing can be seen in the west corner of the lobby (figure 6).

Barber Shop (Figure 2)

The barber shop space includes several character defining features that are indicative of the Art Deco architectural style and remains virtually unchanged since the 1930's. This is every detail of the space, starting with the black and white geometric patterning of the marble floor (*figure 11*). The character of the space is further defined by the tiles lining the walls (*figures 11 and 12*) and the detailing on the ceiling. The detail continues in the Art-Deco details on the windows (*figure 13*) that are present throughout the space. Its opulent black and silver decor featured motifs of stylized figures pursuing various sports as well as depictions of the shop's services accented with sunbursts and zigzags.⁴

² Monument Circle Historic Preservation Plan (HA-40) 2013

³ Encyclopedia of Indianapolis (2021)- Circle Tower, Glory-June Grieff

⁴ Encyclopedia of Indianapolis (2021)- Circle Tower, Glory-June Grieff

V. PRESERVATION OBJECTIVES

1. The historic Circle Tower first floor main lobby and 2nd floor barber shop and architectural and historic character thereof shall be preserved as a significant resource of Indianapolis-Marion County.
2. Accommodate the adaptive reuse of Circle Tower to facilitate the preservation of the site as a significant resource of Indianapolis-Marion County.

VI. PRESERVATION CRITERIA

- A. Any interior, construction, reconstruction, restoration, rehabilitation, or alteration of the two identified interior spaces shall be appropriate to the property's historical and architectural values and significance. All work to the two designated interior spaces must be reviewed and approved by the IHPC prior to commencement of work.
- B. Any exterior development, construction, reconstruction, restoration, rehabilitation, or alteration of the subject or its site shall follow the Monument Circle District Historic Preservation Plan (HA-40 MCD).
- C. The IHPC shall use the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (36 CFR Part 36) and IHPC Policies and Procedures to determine appropriateness when it reviews and makes decisions regarding development, construction, preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, reconstruction, alteration, and demolition in the historic area.

VII. IDENTIFICATION AND DESIGNATION OF HISTORIC AREA

Circle Tower's historic interior first floor lobby and second floor 1930's barber shop is hereby identified and designated an Indianapolis historic landmark (exterior being previously locally designated by the IHPC as part of the Monument Circle Historic Area).

This plan has been prepared in accordance with the State Statute IC 36-7-11.1, which establishes and empowers the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission. After the approval of this plan by the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission and its adoption by the Metropolitan Development Commission as part of the Marion County Comprehensive Plan, the provisions and requirements of IC 36-7-11.1 and this plan apply to all property and structures within the designated area.

VIII. MAPS, PLANS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

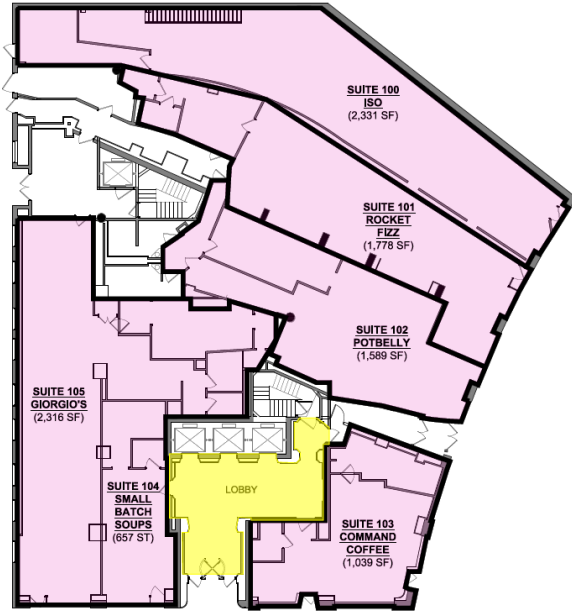


Figure 1: Floor Plan; Lobby Highlighted in Yellow

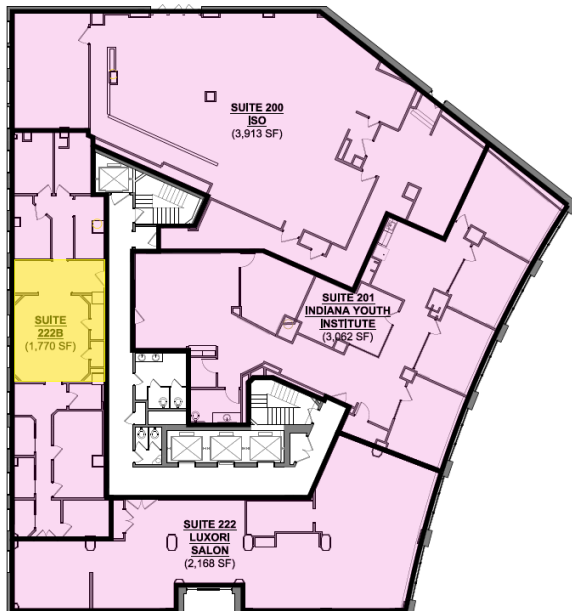


Figure 2: Floor Plan, Barber Shop (Suite 222B) Highlighted in Yellow



Figure 3: First floor lobby



Figure 4: First floor lobby with view of elevator doors



Figure 5: Entrance to lobby off Market Street.



Figure 6: Remaining section of original ceiling in lobby (located in hallway leading to adjacent tenant spaces at west corner of lobby.)



Figure 7 and 8: Original mailbox and terrazzo flooring in first floor lobby.



Figure 9 and 10: Original elevator doors and decorative air vent cover in first floor lobby.



Figure 11: Staff Interior Photograph; Barber Shop (Suite 222B)



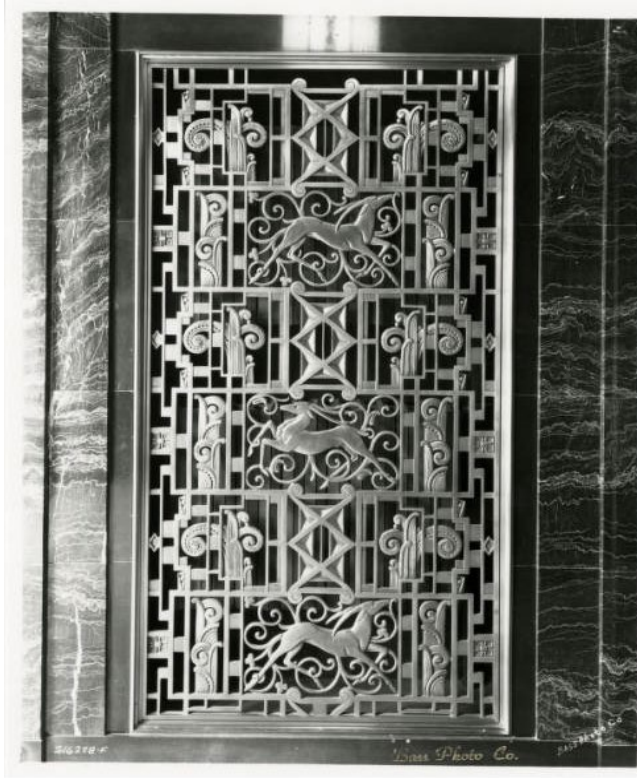
Figure 12: Staff Interior Photograph; Barber Shop (Suite 222B) Tile Detail



Figure 13: Staff Interior Photograph; Barber Shop (Suite 222B) Window Detail



1930's historic photo of first floor lobby (Indiana Historical Society)



1930's historic photo (Indiana Historical Society) of first floor lobby vent cover (and same vent cover today at right)



1930's historic photo (Indiana Historical Society) of exterior of Circle Tower and current photo of same view (taken March 13, 2026)