
Indiana Heritage and Culture Council

Report on the Indiana State Archives

Prepared by the
Indiana State Archives Task Force

**Submitted to
Governor Frank O'Bannon
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The Indiana Heritage and Culture Council, created by Governor Frank O'Bannon's Executive Order 01-12, wishes to acknowledge the following Indiana State Archives Task Force members, who served and assisted in the completion of this report:

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Recommendations of the Council Adopted December 6, 2002

At the October 4, 2002 meeting of the Indiana Heritage and Culture Council, Senator James Merritt, chair of the Archives Task Force, presented the report of his committee. On the basis of the report and Council's motions made at that meeting, the Indiana Heritage and Culture Council respectfully recommends the following:

Primary Recommendation

The Council recommends that the State of Indiana construct a state of the art Archives building for the Indiana Commission on Public Records at a location central to the Government Complex and the Indiana Historical Society.

- That the building should consist of approximately 75,000 square feet and be designed to incorporate the state of the art technology for a Twenty-First Century State Archives.
- That the building incorporate space for the state's central microfilm laboratory (and a facility to permit development of document imaging for ease of access to Indiana's government archives), a conservation laboratory, and a center for the preservation and storage of government information created and stored in electronic format.
- That the building be funded through a public/private approach.
- That the State explore development of a partnership with the Indiana Historical Society for the Archives building. Any partnership will address the need for parking for both institutions.
- That the State fund immediate repairs and improvements to the current Archives structure, including prevention of roof leaks, installation of proper temperature and humidity controls, and the prevention of infestation by rodents and vermin.

Planning Recommendations

The Council recommends that:

- The State examine recent construction of other state archives for design and cost.
- The State explore alternative sites in the downtown area within proximity to the government complex.
- The State visit other state archives to determine strategy used, problems encountered, and situations to avoid in order to make use of best possible experiences.
- It continues to serve as the group to develop a plan for Indiana's State Archives building.
- The Indiana Commission on Public Records explore building relations with Indiana's counties, cities, towns and other local governments regarding outreach of archival and records management needs. The result will be a network of local government archives under the direction of the Indiana State Archives.
- It continues to seek public outreach in the design of the Archives building to further define the mission of the Archives.

Summary Statement of the Indiana State Archives Task Force September 20, 2002

Two options emerge. The first, and least expensive, would see the installation of appropriate air handling equipment to control temperature and humidity at the present location in the 6400 Block of East 30th Street. From a fiscal point of view, this option may seem desirable. However, there are significant liabilities, as well. Public transportation is inadequate in that section of the city. This leads to questions of accessibility. It also highlights the desirability of putting online as much of the archival collections as possible so that researchers can access records in the State Archives by using the Internet. This is a great convenience, particularly for citizens who reside some distance from the capital city. Still, a location remote from the Government Center complex deprives the State Archives of the visibility it deserves in state government. Already, certain departments and agencies have exhibited a reluctance to transfer records to the East 30th Street facility. This strikes a blow to the mission of the State Archives as the central repository of state records. There is also a question relating to the security of the collections in the Archives. The building on East 30th was constructed to serve as a warehouse and the building lacks the structural integrity of buildings such as the State Library and Historical Building, which was the previous home of the State Archives. One of the tornadoes on September 20th came within a dozen city blocks of the building at 6400 East 30th Street. Several buildings of similar vintage and construction type experienced very significant damage. The upgrade needed to make the present building capable of adequately withstanding a storm of

the type that struck on September 20th might very well be even more expensive than a new building.

The second option involves construction of a state of the art archival facility in or adjacent to Government Center complex. A structure comprising 75,000 square feet should be more than adequate to house not only the State Archives but also the Commission on Public Records for at least fifty years. For the convenience of the public and of state government employees, a location in the vicinity of the Indiana Historical Society Building is most desirable. The state owns the land now serving as the parking lot for the Historical Society Building. That is a possible location. Another possibility would be to expand the Historical Society Building by adding a wing on the north side of the building to house the State Archives. It is our strong recommendation that the first step on the road to securing a permanent home for the State Archives is for appropriate representatives of the state and Indiana Historical Society to explore ways in which a creative partnership can be forged that would prove mutually beneficial. In considering funding options for construction of a new, permanent home for the State Archives the prospect of donor involvement should not be overlooked. As was demonstrated by the successful effort to secure a new Indiana State Museum, there are citizens who treasure the heritage and culture of our State of Indiana, and they are willing to generously support projects that contribute to the richness of Indiana's cultural heritage.

A History of the Indiana State Archives

In 1912, in a “Report on the Archives of the State of Indiana,” Harlow Lindley, alarmed at the dispersion and loss of the state’s records, recommended “that steps be taken to provide, furnish, and equip a permanent place for the preservation of the public records of the State in an orderly manner.”

Responding to Lindley’s recommendation, the Indiana General Assembly in 1913 created a Department of Indiana History and Archives within the State Library and charged it with “the care and custody of official archives” of state and local governments. Space for such a department finally became available in 1934 with the opening of the Indiana State Library and Historical Building. The first systematic transfer, evaluation and arrangement of public records in a central location began at this time. To aid this process, the state of Indiana created a Commission on Public Records in 1935 to develop an orderly procedure for the disposition of the public records of the state. Unfortunately, the Commission had no staff and many agencies remained unaware of its existence. Similar commissions were created in each Indiana county in 1939 to oversee the disposition of county records.

In 1949 the Indiana State Library established a central microfilm facility as a tool to eliminate records requiring large amounts of space.

Following the creation of the Indiana Department of Administration in 1961, a State Records Center was opened for the temporary storage of inactive state records. This enabled the State Archives to transfer many non-

permanent agency records to this facility. A second central microfilm department was also opened within IDOA.

Indiana’s records program made significant strides in 1977 with a legislative mandate to establish three distinct information management programs. The Archives Division, Indiana State Library was directed to inventory all state records and establish retention schedules. A separate inventory of state records containing personal information was also mandated as a tool for handling access to information. The third new tool for information management, a state forms management program, was handled by the Indiana Department of Administration.

These overlapping programs highlighted the need to centralize all records functions into one agency. After a thorough study, the Indiana General Assembly in 1979 created the Indiana Commission on Public Records. In addition to the State Archives, the following programs were assigned to the new agency: retention schedules, preservation, state records center, forms management, and micro-filming.

This new information environment assures that the official records of Indiana state and local governments are identified, accessioned, preserved and made accessible to the public at the Indiana State Archives. However, lack of appropriate space and document security continue to hamper the State Archives’ mission.

Present Location of the State Archives

The Indiana State Archives was relocated in March 2001 to temporary space in a state owned warehouse at 6400 East 30th Street. The building was constructed in the 1950s as a manufacturing facility for RCA. Besides the State Archives, the building houses offices, shops, and warehouse space for the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (special dealer sales), Indiana Department of Administration (forms distribution and general warehousing), and Indiana Department of Transportation (electronic tech shop and sign shop). Adjacent to this building is a newer facility, constructed by the Indiana Department of Administration in 1993, that houses storage space for BMV and IDOA printed forms, as well as the State Records Center operated by the Commission on Public Records. The Records Center currently stores 167,000 cubic feet of inactive state records for state agencies.

The State Archives occupies 37,862 square feet of space at the 6400 East 30th Street facility, including staff offices, a public reading room, processing area, conservation lab, stack space, and two vaults. The space is on one floor and contiguous, save for the vaults, which are in a separate area approximately 800 feet from the Archives work areas. The stack and vault areas are equipped with new compact shelving purchased at the time of the move. It can be disassembled and moved to a new location.

The original building at 6400 East 30th Street

has a central heating and cooling plant. There are no zone controls to counteract dramatic fluctuations in temperature between different areas of the building. Temperatures in the Archives stack, patron service, and work areas in winter are unacceptably high [see Chart]. Summer temperatures are often uncomfortably cool for the public and staff. There is no humidity control in the original building, except for air conditioning in the summer. Winter humidity readings in the stacks are significantly below recommended levels for archival storage of records. Summer readings are too high [See Chart]. The two vaults are equipped with state-of-the art temperature and humidity controls.

Both the original and new buildings at 6400 East 30th Street are equipped with a wet-pipe fire suppression system, which is zoned. The two vaults have a gas fire suppression system of their own.

Both buildings at 6400 East 30th have flat, tarred roofs. There has been one leak in the roof in the Archives main area so far. Two leaks in a roof joint over the vault area were recently repaired. During heavy rains there are several leaking points in the roof at the State Records Center.

Because the Archives location at 6400 East 30th Street is considered temporary, efficient layout of space was not a priority. Existing

| Date | Stacks | | Vault | |
|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| | Temperature | Humidity | Temperature | Humidity |
| 03/19/2001 | 76 | 15 | na | na |
| 03/23/2001 | 80 | 15 | na | na |
| 01/23/2002 | 78 | 38 | 70 | 45 |
| 02/24/2002 | 78 | 33 | 70 | 45 |
| 03/09/2002 | 62 | 32 | 70 | 44 |
| 04/05/2002 | 79 | 34 | 70 | 43 |
| 05/24/2002 | 78 | 46 | 75 | 40 |
| 06/19/2002 | 60 | 60 | 75 | 45 |
| 07/01/2002 | 65 | 55 | 75 | 45 |

walls and corridors were kept whenever possible. Staff and volunteers have no access to work areas except through the reading room. This traffic pattern interrupts patron concentration in the reading room. The layout places a serious strain on staff time and energy, especially the location of the vaults in a separate area 800 feet from the reading room.

Alain Van Ryckeghen, technical director of Insects Limited, Inc., toured the spaces at 6400 East 30th Street on March 28, 2002. He cited numerous potential pest management problems at this location, including cracks in the concrete foundation, absence of a “dirty” room to store and treat incoming records that are infested with mold or insects, and loading dock doors at ground level without protective sills.

The Indiana State Archives location at 6400 East 30th Street is approximately eight miles from the government center in downtown Indianapolis. This physical separation poses major problems for staff and users. For one, it places a major professional burden on the staff’s ability to perform the most basic of archival functions—appraisal. The Archives staff must work closely with state agencies in developing administrative histories to understand the administrative, fiscal, and legal value of records created in the execution of an agency’s functions. In order for the State Archives to document the performance of functions of various state agencies, Archives staff must work closely with the Commission’s records management staff at the initiation of the records retention scheduling process. Thornton W. Mitchell, in the April 1970 issue of *The American Archivist*, states that the archivist “must know as much or more about the organization whose records he is appraising than any other person. He must know how and why the particular records series fit into the total documentation; he must know what other records there are in the same and in the other agencies and how they relate to those being appraised.” The current isolation of the State Archives does not allow for this to occur, jeopardizing the identification and preservation

of agency records deemed permanent in order to protect government and individual rights and responsibilities.

This physical separation also places a serious hardship on state employees needing prompt access to agency records in the State Archives. A number of agencies have inquired about the possibility of getting their records back from the State Archives. Others have indicated a reluctance to transfer additional records to the Archives. This situation invites a return to decentralization of agency records. Such a development would hamper public access to agency records, as well as making inefficient use of expensive office space in the Indiana Government Center for records storage.

Having the State Archives at 6400 East 30th Street imposes a major burden on Archives staff, who must now make trips downtown by truck to pick up records being transferred by agencies to the State Archives. Formerly, staff picked these agency records up with a cart, using the tunnels under the Indiana Government Center.

The Commission on Public Records operates a microfilming department in the Indiana Government Center. Microfilming of records is vital to the State Archives for purposes of preservation and space reduction. The move of the State Archives to 6400 East 30th Street has severely hampered the Archives’ ability to get material microfilmed, due to the distance between two operations.

Finally, patrons, staff, and volunteers who rely on public bus transportation find it very difficult to reach the State Archives. The bus serving East 30th Street does not go downtown, making transfers virtually impossible. The conservation technician, who relies on bus transportation, only works at the State Archives when another staff member can provide automobile transportation to and from a downtown bus stop. Two volunteers who use public transportation can only work when another volunteer or a staff member can pick them up.

Potential Future Locations for the State Archives

1. The first solution is to stay at 6400 East 30th Street. This would require a substantial upgrading of the existing facility. A new heating and cooling system will have to be installed, with zoned controls in the different spaces and humidity control of all records storage areas. Electric lines need to be upgraded, with a back up generator for freezers and essential equipment during power outages, which have been frequent. The entire building needs state-of-the-art wiring for full electronic access. A dry pipe or gas fire suppression system is mandatory in records storage and work areas. The conservation lab needs to be fitted with running water, drainage sinks, a fume hood with exhaust vents, and an emergency exit. Pest management issues, including openings in the foundation of the building, lack of a “dirty” room, and ground level loading doors, need to be addressed. The layout of the Archives needs to be changed to separate staff and patron areas, and to eliminate the separate reception desk at the front door. Some minimal public amenities are needed, including a lounge where patrons can access vending machines and take a break. Microfilm services need to be provided onsite.
2. Relocate to an existing structure in the downtown area. A number of buildings have been suggested as potential future sites for the State Archives, including the old Indiana State Museum building and Union Station. Each would place the State Archives in reasonable proximity to the Indiana Government Center and other historical agencies downtown. Public transit issues would be resolved. All of these sites, however, present the same challenge as staying at 6400 East 30th Street—massive upgrading of an existing facility to accommodate the needs and services of the State Archives. The weight and volume of the records and shelving presents significant load bearing requirements for older buildings. An environment suitable to storage and protection of historic records, including microfilm and electronic media, will have to be created. This will necessitate major mechanical, electrical, HVAC, and security upgrades. Sufficient, user friendly, working space for staff and research space for patrons will have to be carved out of a building designed originally for other, very different, purposes. A past examination by the Indiana Historical Society of the Indiana State Museum building suggests that conversion of an existing building to a library/archival facility would involve significant costs and problems.
3. A third solution is to build a new facility for the Indiana State Archives on or near the Indiana Government Center in downtown Indianapolis. This new facility should be adjacent to the Indiana State Library and the Indiana Historical Society buildings, with access to the government center tunnel network. Such a location would give state employees immediate access to the State Archives and facilitate the pickup of records from agencies. Archives staff could again work closely with agencies and the Commission’s records management staff on records scheduling issues. It would also facilitate research by historians, genealogists, environmental site assessors, lawyers, and other persons using the complementary resources of the State Archives, the State Library, and the Indiana Historical Society.

Recommendations for a New Building

Managing the new information environment facing Indiana state government and preserving the governmental heritage of Indiana requires the construction of a new facility to house the Indiana State Archives. The facility should be located downtown adjacent to the Indiana government complex. It should contain approximately 75,000 square feet of space. The central components will be stack areas for the storage of paper records and two vaults for the storage of critical records, photographs, microfilm masters, and electronic media. These areas will have state-of-the-art environmental, security, and fire suppression environments.

There will be a reading room close to the stacks for researchers, with carrels for scholars doing extended research, and areas for viewing paper records, microfilm, and visual images. Space should be included in this area for storage of self-service microfilm, finding aids and reference materials, copying equipment, and terminals for searching on-line materials. An adjacent shelving area for frequently referenced records such as aerial photographs and military records would cut staff retrieval time.

A well-equipped conservation lab is essential to the mission of the State Archives. It should include generous space for work tables, for equipment such as sinks, document presses, paper cutters, and for shelves for work in progress. Specialized spaces are required for storage of conservation supplies and chemicals. A separate area with a fume hood is essential for chemical treatment of documents. A quality freezer for contaminated film is needed. The laboratory needs a separate “dirty area” for cleaning contaminated documents before they are treated in the laboratory proper. Until cleaning begins, incoming contaminated records need to be stored in a separate room, ideally near the receiving area.

Space should also be included adjacent to the conservation lab for a darkroom and a photographic laboratory to process and print negatives.

A well-designed processing area for records undergoing arrangement and description is mandatory. This should include ample work space for foldering and boxing records and for handling special electronic media, photographs, maps, and oversized documents. There should be shelves for storing collections undergoing processing, and data terminals for entering accessioning information. Separate entrances should be included for moving records from the loading dock and to stack areas. There should be a large “box” room adjacent to processing for the storage of bulky archival supplies such as manuscript boxes and archival folders.

The State Archives currently has over two dozen volunteers involved in the indexing, arrangement, and preservation of records. Consideration should be given to a separate work area for volunteers involved in indexing and arrangement.

Two staff office clusters should be included in the building. The first, for Archives staff involved with patron service, processing, and volunteers, should be near the reading room and processing areas. A separate area, with space for Commission on Public Records personnel involved in records management and appraisal—including electronic records—and the administrative staff, can be located in another part of the building.

Microfilming operations at the Commission on Public Records should be consolidated in the building with the State Archives, in order to provide microfilming services to the State Archives. The micrographics area will require special venting for film processors and other

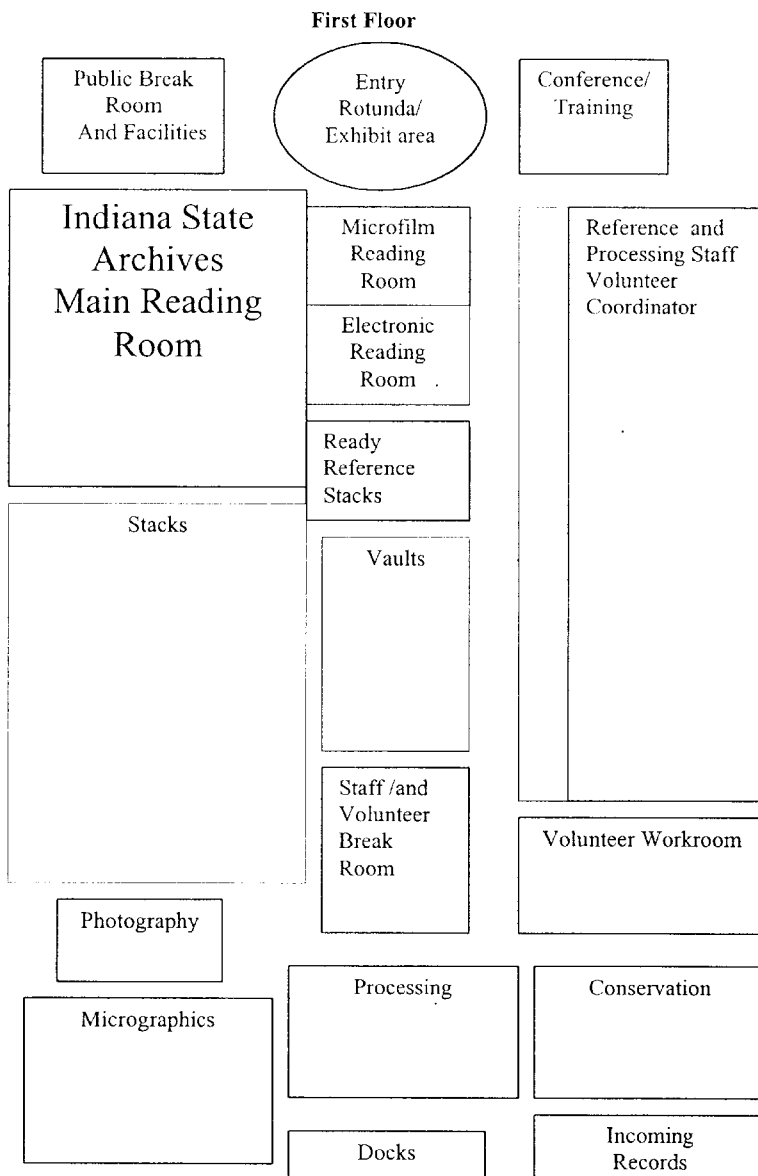
equipment, and a cooler for storage of raw microfilm. Space should also be included for the establishment of a digital format conversion service for paper records and microfilm.

Staff and volunteers should have access to a break room. Depending on the location of the new building, amenities for patrons also need to be considered.

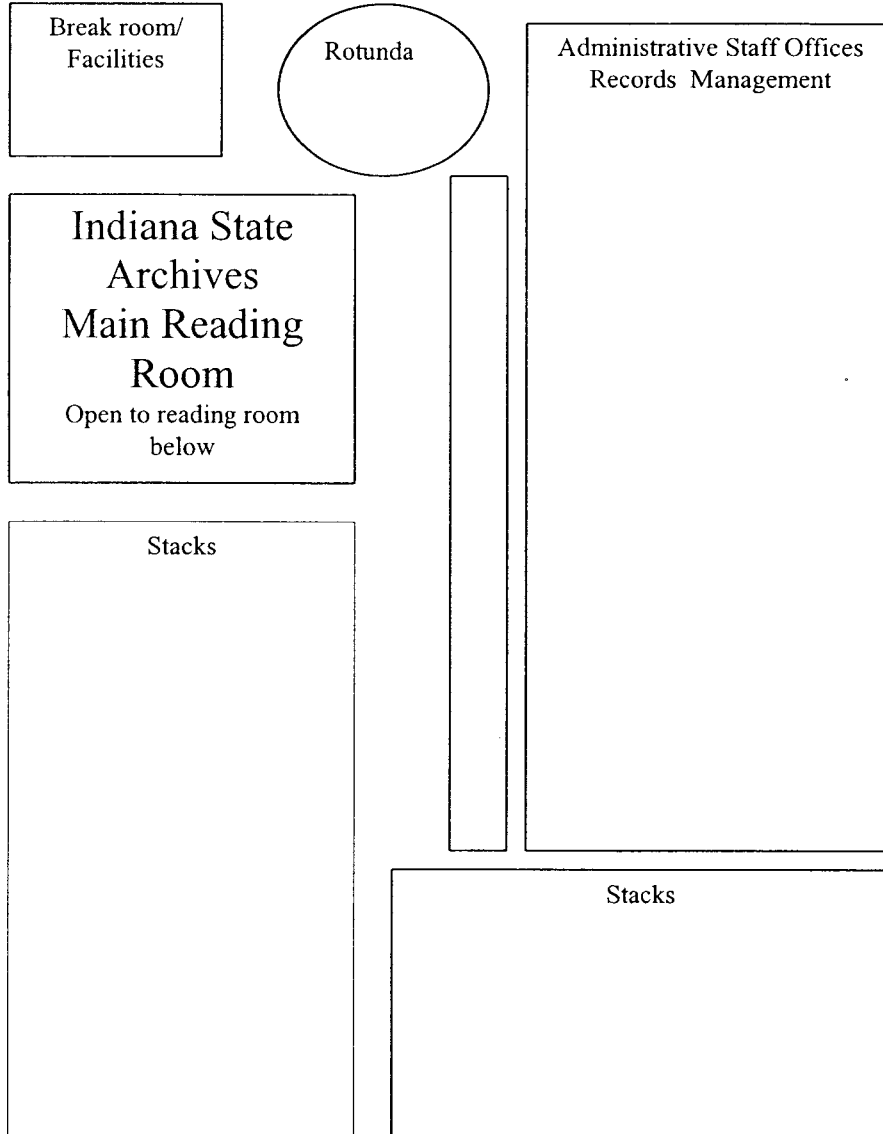
The State Archives has never had adequate space in which to exhibit its many historic treasures. A small exhibit area near the entrance to the building would make this possible.

A visual conceptualization of the new State Archives facility appears below and on the next page.

A number of states have erected new facilities for their state archives in recent years, including Michigan, Minnesota, Kansas, and California. Much can be learned from their experiences. The Web sites on page 11 provide some useful information, and the Indiana State Archives (317-591-5222) can provide copies of items provided by several states.



Second Floor



Web sites of inter est:

South Carolina: <http://www.state.sc.us/scdah/facilityfloorplan.htm>

Delaware: <http://www.visitdover.com/tours/attractarchive.html>

California: http://www.ss.ca.gov/archives_about.htm

Georgia: <http://www.sos.state.ga.us/archives/bu/sbfaq.htm>