

FORT WAYNE PRINTING BUILDING

c. 1911

114 W. Washington Blvd.

The street level of this building is presently vacant, though a local business is under contract to purchase the space. Twenty-seven residential units and laundry facilities for the south block occupy the upper floors. One of the smaller parking garages is located at the rear of the building and there are more parking spaces in the basement that is accessed at the Lillie Building on Wayne Street. The building maintains the industrial feel of the original architecture, with several of the condominium units sporting exposed brick on the inside of the exterior walls.

Ornate terra cotta panels between the upper rows of windows, carved swags above the first floor windows and a decorative wood cornice grace the front façade. Like many buildings of its era, the street façade of this building is quite detailed compared with the alley sides.

Fort Wayne Printing Company, the building's original occupant, was quartered here until it outgrew the structure in 1927. A local businessman, Fred Gaskins, then bought the building and rented it to a variety of commercial tenants. During World War II, the building was used as a recreation hall, the Fort Wayne Servicemen's Club. In 1947, the building was leased by the Earl Groth Company, whose principal store was in this same block (see Kresge-Groth Building). The Groth Company remodeled the storefront and used the entire building as a home furnishing store. After the demise of the Groth Company in 1961, Hutner's, another retailer on the block (see Hutner Building), built an upper-level bridge to connect its store to this building, which it used as a warehouse. After Hutner's closed its downtown store about 1980, the building's sole occupant was the Fort Wayne Plasma Donor Center. Now referred to simply as the Printing Building, it was vacant from 1982 until construction began for Midtowne Crossing in 1989.

The Fort Wayne Printing Building is primarily of local architectural significance as both an industrial example of the neoclassical style and as one of the few known works of a local architect, Ralph Morrison Snyder. In his brief local career, Snyder designed two buildings for the Fort Wayne Electric Works (1908), the Hotel Allen (1908), the Fort Wayne Drug/Pidgeon Millinery Building (1908 – located on the northwest corner of this block), and what was once downtown's largest office tower, the Shoaff (now Inland) Building (1910). The Fort Wayne Printing Building's design exemplifies the reduction of the neoclassical style to a few simple façade elements used to elaborate the front of a new type of mill building the popular in Fort Wayne.

History and architectural information were taken from the National Historic Register nomination written by Craig Leonard in 1987. It was updated through our own research and with assistance from Don Orban.

The Fort Wayne Printing Building was added to the National Historic Register in 1988 and to the Local Historic Register in 1989.