

Prospectus

Columbus is a city located in south-central Indiana. In 2015, it had a total population of 45,868.¹ It is the county seat of Bartholomew County, and home to more than half of the county's total residents.² Its population density is 1,668.1 people per square mile.³ The city saw impressive population growth in the latter part of the 20th and early 21st centuries, nearly tripling its 1950 population of 18,370.⁴ Reflecting this growth, only 12.2% of housing units in the city were built before 1940.⁵ Although the city is one of the most diverse places in southern Indiana, it is nonetheless very dominantly white, with a 2015 population that was 84.2% white, 8.1% Asian, 4.9% Hispanic or Latino, 2.9% Black, and 3.9% of other or unknown descent.⁶ 52.5% of the population is between the ages of 25 and 64.⁷ 91.8% percent of adults in Columbus hold at least a high school diploma, while 36.9% of adults hold a bachelor's degree.⁸ In 2015, its unemployment rate was 5.5% and poverty rate 11.7%.⁹ An urban center in its own right, Columbus supports the more rural agricultural areas surrounding it, as well as its own industrial and technological economy. Of the employed population in 2015, 44.7% were employed in "management, professional and related" fields, 18.8% in "sales and office" and 16.8% "production, transportation, and material moving." Interestingly, Columbus has the highest

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¹ U.S. Census Bureau. Total Population, 2015. Prepared by Social Explorer. (accessed Sep 27 2017).

² Ibid

³ U.S. Census Bureau. Population Density, 2015. Prepared by Social Explorer. (accessed Sep 27 2017).

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. Indiana City/Town Census Counts, 1900 to 2010. Prepared by StatsIndiana. (accessed Sep 27 2017).

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. Profile for Columbus city, Indiana. Prepared by StatsAmerica. (accessed Sep 27 2017)

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. American FactFinder. (accessed Sep 27 2017).

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. Profile for Columbus city, Indiana. Prepared by StatsAmerica. (accessed Sep 27 2017)

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

concentration of mechanical engineers per capita in the country at 32 for every 1,000 people.¹⁰

[good use of the statistics; it nicely foreshadows the reputation of Columbus as an industry town]

Once a sleepy pioneer town at the confluence of two small rivers, the growth and development of Columbus since the early 20th century has been largely fueled and defined by Cummins Engine Company. Founded in 1919, the company was one of the first to enter the diesel engine market and grew rapidly. By the 1960s, it operated in 98 countries worldwide.¹¹ Today, it is a Fortune 500 company and boasted global revenue of \$17.5 billion in 2016.¹² As of 2014, it employed more 7,000 people in the greater Columbus area.¹³ As the company grew, so did the city. And the company played a large role in shaping that growth, both by attracting a new, more educated, and more diverse, workforce and through directed philanthropy based on the “the trendy postwar notion that a healthy company can't exist without a healthy community.”¹⁴ [interesting] In particular, the company's long-time Chief Executive Officer J. Irwin Miller strove to actualize his innovative vision for the city through the 1954 establishment of the Cummins Foundation. The foundation embraced the ideals of modernist architecture that stressed function and universal accessibility,¹⁵ and the notion that the “arts are among the most civilizing influences of life.”¹⁶ Among other activities, it offered to pay the architectural fees for world-class modern architects to design civic buildings in Columbus.¹⁷ So far, Cummins has

¹⁰ Joann Muller, “Welcome To Cummins, U.S.A.,” *Forbes*, April 16, 2014,

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/joannmuller/2014/04/16/welcome-tocummins-u-s-a/>.

¹¹ “Cummins History,” *Cummins Inc.*, accessed September 28, 2017, <https://www.cummins.com/company/history>.

¹² “Cummins Inc. Overview,” *Cummins Inc.*, accessed September 28, 2017, <https://www.cummins.com/company/overview>.

¹³ Jeff Swiatek, “Cummins and Columbus Say Their Bond Is Strong,” *Indianapolis Star*, March 27, 2014, <http://www.indystar.com/story/money/2014/03/27/cummins-columbus-say-bond-strong/6986941/>.

¹⁴ Muller, “Welcome To Cummins, U.S.A.”

¹⁵ Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Sources of Modern Architecture and Design* (New York: F. A. Praeger, 1968), 9.

¹⁶ Will Miller, “Joseph Irwin Miller,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society; Philadelphia* 150, no. 3 (September 2006): 493–97.

¹⁷ “Cummins History.”

spent \$19.2 million on architectural fees in Columbus, and the program continues.¹⁸ [so Columbus, in many ways, is indistinguishable from Cummins and his corporation].

It is through these activities that Columbus has become most notable. With the support of J. Irwin Miller and Cummins, the city became a place defined by modernist architecture, in physical structure if not thought and practice. From one corner to the other, the city is home to seven National Historic landmarks and more than 90 other internationally notable buildings and works of public art.¹⁹ These buildings were designed by some of the biggest names in modernist architecture, including Harry Weese, Eero Saarinen, Eliel Saarinen, I.M. Pei, Robert Venturi, and Cesar Pelli among others. This abundance has resulted in Columbus being named the sixth most architecturally significant city in the nation by the American Institute of Architects, on a list alongside the likes of New York and San Francisco.²⁰ [that's very interesting; it maintains its reputation as an industrial town while, at the same time, transforming itself into a postmodern city by becoming a destination for architecture]. Perhaps most notable is how nearly all of these buildings are still in very regular use today, as local government offices, schools, churches, office spaces, the post office, and even the county jail.

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Columbus, as a community, is intensely proud of its unique architectural heritage and significance. The city's motto is plastered everywhere: "Unexpected. Unforgettable." For the first 18 years of my life, I lived in Columbus in a medium-sized single family home in a nice neighborhood on the north side of the city. It was one of the first neighborhoods built in what were then outskirts of the city as Cummins' business really began to boom shortly after World

¹⁸ Muller, "Welcome To Cummins, U.S.A."

¹⁹ "A Small Southern Indiana City and an Architectural 'mecca,'" *Columbus, Indiana Visitors Center*, accessed September 28, 2017, <https://columbus.in.us/architecture-story/>.

²⁰ Bob Bishop, "Columbus, Ind.: A Midwestern Mecca Of Architecture," *Weekend Edition Saturday* (National Public Radio, July 21, 2012), <http://www.npr.org/2012/08/04/157675872/columbus-ind-a-midwestern-mecca-of-architecture>.

War Two. It featured large yards, lots of trees, and neighbors who knew your name. My mom worked for Cummins for several years, and my dad commuted to Indianapolis each day for his job at Eli Lilly and Company for more than two decades. My dad's commute differentiated my family from the majority of our neighbors and my peers [[fascinating](#)]. Of the city's 22,617 total workers, 15,866 work within 19 minutes of their home.²¹ From kindergarten through high school, I attended the public schools in Columbus. Until this past January, when my parents moved to Cleveland, Ohio, it was still where I returned on breaks from college. Growing up in Columbus, the story of our architecture was ingrained in me from a young age. I joined into the widely held sense of the exceptionalism of our little city. It's an idea that I couldn't have avoided even if I had tried. This narrative really went beyond our impressive architectural collection. Buoyed by flattering rankings and articles in a host of publications, popular sentiment in Columbus seemed to be that we were better than anywhere else. *GQ* magazine said Columbus was one of "62 Reasons to Love Your Country," *National Geographic Traveler* ranked Columbus its top destination in the United States, *Fortune* said Columbus was one of America's 100 best places to live; the list goes on.²² It seemed like our newspaper reported a new national accolade at least once a week, and the story always seemed to be that all the problems that affected other cities and towns didn't affect ours. Yet, as I grew up and became more aware of the dynamics of my community, complicated tensions and unresolved challenges became increasingly apparent.

In his vision for the city, J. Irwin Miller saw a thriving, diverse community where modern architecture and its values created a place of equal access, democratized arts, and widespread

²¹ U.S. Census Bureau. Workers 16 years and over, 2015. Prepared by Social Explorer. (accessed Sep 27 2017).

²² "Columbus in the Media Spotlight" (Columbus Area Visitors Center, 2016), <https://columbus.in.us/docs/columbus-in-the-spotlight.pdf>.

civic engagement. By most quantitative measures, Columbus has failed to live up to this vision [but it raises questions as to whether it was ever intended to be fully democratized]. In 2015, the city was quite segregated economically. Poverty, for example, is most prevalent in the southeastern portion of the city, around State Street in Census Tract 108, where 24.23% of families have incomes below the poverty level. In Census Tract 103, where I used to live, the poverty rate was just 0.87%.²³ In the 2015 city elections, just 16.4% of eligible voters participated.²⁴ The local community college, part of a statewide system, has a six-year graduation rate of just 26% for a two-year degree.²⁵ The city struggles with a burgeoning opioid and related problems from HIV outbreaks to parentless children.²⁶ To be sure, Columbus has its strengths, but it also faces immense problems not unlike many other similarly-sized Midwestern towns in a globalized world. It's hard to imagine what Columbus would do if Cummins left, something the company promises it won't, but seems to be inching ever towards.²⁷

Through a written analysis, I will use the context of Columbus to consider how public and civic spaces affect social relationships and experiences, and the development of a common culture. I want to consider not just why architecture matters, but who the architecture in Columbus truly serves and how it may impact the perceptions of community of less resourced residents. If modernist architecture is functional and universally accessible, how is it possible that a town that so fully embodies it still faces social problems akin to those most anywhere else?

²³ U.S. Census Bureau. Incomes Below Poverty Level, 2015. Prepared by Social Explorer. (accessed Sep 27 2017).

²⁴ Bartholomew County Clerk of Courts. Official 2015 Election Results. (accessed Sep 28 2017).

²⁵ Chelsea Schneider, "State Concerns Prompt Review of Ivy Tech Programs," *Indianapolis Star*, December 24, 2015, <http://www.indystar.com/story/news/education/2015/12/24/state-concerns-prompt-review-ivy-tech-programs/77771466/>.

²⁶ Julie McClure, "Heroin Use Rising at Record Pace throughout Area," *The Republic*, October 29, 2016, http://www.therepublic.com/2016/10/30/heroin_use_rising_at_record_pace/.

²⁷ Jeff Swiatek, "Cummins and Columbus Say Their Bond Is Strong."



You offer a thorough and nicely written discussion of Columbus. You make excellent use of the data and history to illustrate a unique suburban town that depends on its industry not only for its economic fortunes, but also for its cultural reputation. I could not help wondering, given the broad coverage Columbus receives, how successful the town has become as a tourist destination (the architectural geek in me would love to go on a tour of an architectural town). Simultaneously, as your analysis suggests, such privatization of a town also bears significant consequences, perpetuating inequities along the dimensions of race and class. This provoked my thinking about how the built environment perpetuated inequalities, en/discouraging various people from participating in center town life. The kind of surveillance and the promotion of interdictory spaces will definitely be of interest to you.

Your final project is quite interesting; as you continue to explore this topic, I do hope you will narrow it down to a few emblematic places that can convey how architecture enables or constrains the sociocultural divides within the town.

Great work! Please let me know how I may support this ambitious project.

Grade: 9.5/10 (A)

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