Former Coca-Cola Bottling Plant

205 RUMELY ST. LAPORTE, IN 46350
ARCHITECTURAL DOCUMENTATION FOR MITIGATION EFFORTS RESULTING FROM SECTION 106 FINDINGS

MARTINRILEY
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MILESTONE
VENTURES

Attachments

Attachment A: Photos of Existing Conditions

Attachment B: Photo Key

Attachment C: Photo Log

Attachment D: Folder of Digital Images

Attachment E: Architectural Drawings

Attachment F: Lead and Asbestos Reports

Attachment G: Roof Assessment

Updated Conditions Assessment

DATE: 5 December 2025 TIME: 10:00 AM WEATHER: 20°F, Cloudy

The former Coca-Cola Bottling Plant at 205 Rumely Street in LaPorte, Indiana, was visited and documented to record existing conditions and evaluate the building's current state of preservation. The structure is a one-story, mid-twentieth-century industrial building historically associated with the bottling, storage, and distribution of carbonated beverages (Coca-Cola brand specifically). The building has been vacant for an extended period and exhibits advanced deterioration resulting from prolonged exposure to weather, deferred maintenance, and lack of occupancy. After its use as a bottling facility, it was purchased and used by the LaPorte Community School Corporation as a support services building. This use resulted in numerous drywall partitions being added and paint applied to what was likely previously the glazed green historic interior brick in some areas.

The building was originally constructed with utilitarian efficiency typical of small-city industrial facilities of its era. It features a rectangular footprint, load-bearing masonry exterior walls, terrazzo and concrete floor slabs, steel interior columns, and a flat roof supported by steel trusses. Some historic fabric remains visible today, including infilled window openings on the interior, steel-sash frames of windows, and Coca-Cola signage. The large storefront openings likely once provided daylight to expansive open-span production areas suited for bottling machinery and assembly-line operations (Photos 2, 5, 6). The historic plan likely consisted of a large production floor with ancillary administrative offices near the public-facing elevation and loading docks and overhead doors along the north and east elevations to facilitate truck circulation (Photos 7–16). The northern portion of the building was an addition completed in about 1950 according to the property record while the main portion of the building was constructed between 1920 and 1930 (Indiana Department of Natural Resources 2025, La Porte Assessor 2025).

INTERIOR

The interior design of the building is characterized by ample natural light, themes of green coloring, and a floor plan conducive to manufacturing. The terrazzo floors are light green with dark green bordering. Several areas have glazed green tile on the interior in a running bond brick pattern. A sign that was once limestone or cast stone on the outside of the building, was painted and partially obscured by ceiling tile after the addition was completed and the subsequent use by the school corporation.

Interior conditions mirror the severity of exterior deterioration and reflect years of uncontrolled moisture infiltration. Areas south of the main lobby exhibit extensive ceiling collapse, water staining, and standing debris associated with active roof leaks (Photos 129–135). Freeze–thaw cycles have further site elements, the building envelope, and structural elements.

Former maintenance garage and workshop areas retain their industrial configuration but show extensive water damage, and deteriorated finishes, and overhead doors in poor condition with visible holes (Photos 27–56). The penetrations in doors and windows are contributing to interior damage and decay. The north garage area includes remnants of industrial coolers and

skylights; however, many skylights are broken, boarded, or missing, contributing to ongoing water intrusion (Photos 57–72). Interior office, technology services, and administrative areas exhibit failing ceilings, delaminated finishes, and damaged drywall (Photos 73–106). These areas were most likely subdivided when the school corporation purchased and used the school.

Basement areas were documented and show widespread moisture intrusion, staining, and material deterioration consistent with long-term exposure to water and lack of environmental control (Photos 159–170). Engineering documentation further identifies the presence of asbestos-containing materials within the building, complicating any future stabilization or rehabilitation efforts and raising concerns regarding airborne contaminants due to the compromised building envelope (Attachment F).

EXTERIOR

The exterior of the building is in poor and actively deteriorating condition. The most severe structural concern is located along the south elevation, where the masonry wall exhibits pronounced outward bowing, extensive cracking, and separation of masonry wythes (Photos 19–22). This wall is structurally failing due to loss of lateral stability, deteriorated mortar joints, and movement of the exterior wythe. These conditions present a continuing risk of partial or full collapse. Decorative iron railings once flanked the west main entrance, but these have since been stolen and no longer remain as part of the building.

Exterior masonry across all elevations shows widespread mortar loss, spalling brick, and efflorescence, particularly at areas of former window openings that have been infilled or boarded. Wood and plywood coverings have deteriorated, and cracking is visible in several infilled masonry sections. Rusted steel lintels, peeling paint, and broken or missing glazing are present throughout the building envelope. Ineffective lintels in the original building envelope have caused diagonal cracking in the brick at nearly every window, which greatly contributes to the waning structural integrity of the walls. The remaining Coca-Cola Bottling sign on the exterior is covered by the LaPorte School sign but is assumed to remain beneath. Older photographs show the sign as being heavily stained, but legible (see Additional Photographs below).

The roof system is in advanced failure. Numerous areas of roof decking are open, allowing daylight to penetrate the interior (Photos 187–188). The roof membrane has deteriorated extensively, resulting in long-term water infiltration. Insulation layers have been saturated and prolonged moisture exposure has contributed to corrosion of steel roof framing members in areas. Roof access was limited due to safety concerns; however, visible conditions from both interior and exterior observation confirm failure. Concerns of issues with the roof were documented in 2022 (Attachment G), but these issues have significantly increased in the three years since the assessment.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The former Coca-Cola Bottling Plant is significant for its association with the industrial and commercial development of La Porte during the mid-twentieth century. Bottling plants such as this facility were integral components of regional manufacturing and distribution networks,

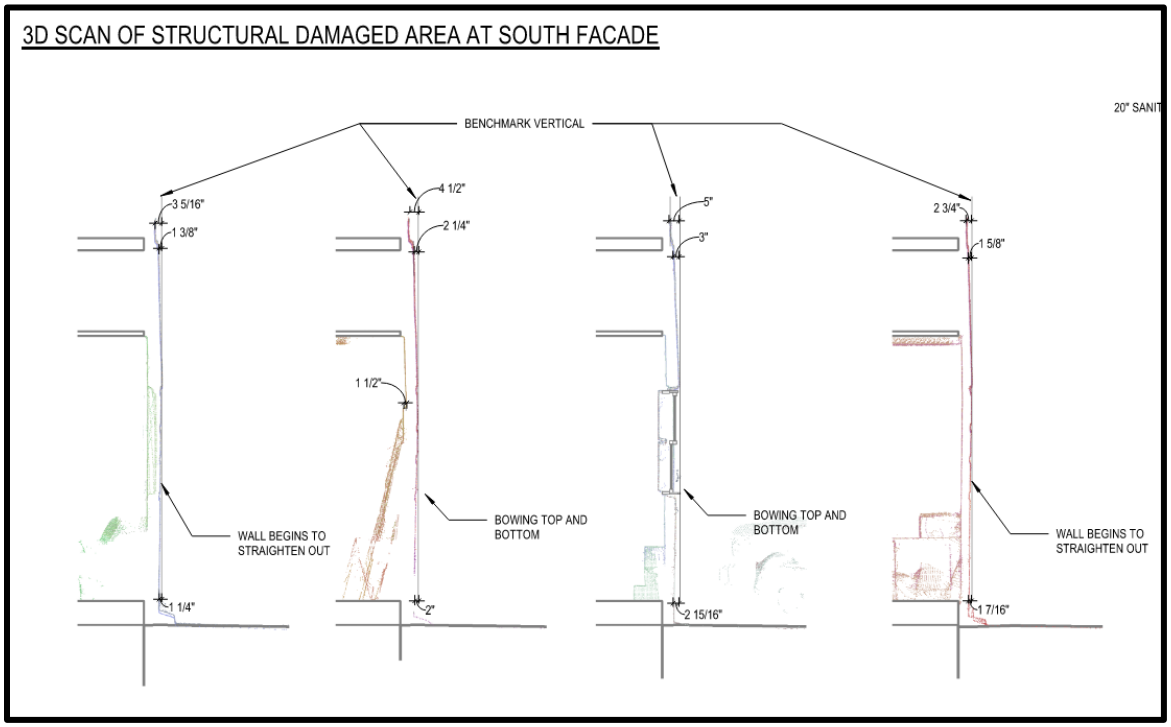
connecting national consumer brands to local and regional markets. The La Porte plant reflects broader patterns of industrial expansion, standardized facility design, and mid-century economic growth within northern Indiana.

The plant's art deco and mid-century design contribute to its significance. The large expanses of glass and glazed tile or brick are typical of Coca-Cola facilities. The glazed green tiles in the building interior are reminiscent of the color of Coke bottles of various eras. The terrazzo floors on the building interior continue the green color scheme, and are also prototypical of the Coca-Cola facilities elsewhere.

Following the cessation of bottling operations, the building continued to serve the community through adaptive reuse by the La Porte Community School Corporation. The structure housed maintenance operations, technology services, and child nutrition programs (Photos 174–186). This continued use extended the building's relevance within the community and reinforced its role as a utilitarian municipal resource.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS

1989, Courtesy of SHAARD



2022 Structural Assessment Diagram by MartinRiley architects+engineers

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MartinRiley architects+engineers. *Floor Plans and Photo Key Plans for Former Coca-Cola Bottling Plant, 205 Rumely Street, La Porte, Indiana*. Project No. F22131, 2024–2025.

Combined Photos of Former Coca-Cola Bottling Plant, La Porte, Indiana. Photographs taken December 5, 2025. Provided by author.

Combined Information from Letters and Reports. Engineering evaluations, consultant assessments, and municipal correspondence regarding structural condition, roof failure, environmental hazards, and redevelopment considerations. Provided by owner, 2025.

SECONDARY SOURCES

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