

Preservation Chicago Unveils the 2015 Chicago 7 Most Threatened...

A. Finkl & Sons Company Buildings

Generally Kingsbury & The North Branch of the Chicago River



OVERVIEW:

A. Finkl and Sons Steel plant represents the manufacturing and industrial might of the City of Chicago, dating from the early 20th Century. This steel mill comprising 28 acres of land centrally located and surrounded by residential and commercial community area. It represents a bygone era of manufacturing in our central cities. The site was once home to several steel forging factories, fronting the Chicago River, much like the sites on the west side of the river being connected with leather processing and tanning factories, several which still exist and one which remains operational. The purchase of the A. Finkl & Sons Company by an overseas firm and the relocation of the plant to the Southeast Side of Chicago left many of the historic buildings vacant.

HISTORY:

A Finkl & Sons was founded by Anton Finkl, a German-born blacksmith that arrived in Chicago in 1872. He established his steel business in 1880

A. Finkl & Sons Company

Address:

Generally Kingsbury & The North Branch

Neighborhood: West Lincoln Park

Architect: Various

Date: 1903-1950

Photo credits:

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Chicago 7: A. Finkl & Sons Company Buildings



and later incorporated the business as A. Finkl & Sons Company and moving from various locations near the West Loop. In 1891, Finkl constructed a two-story brick flat building near the current Lincoln Park site, likely used as his residence and designed by architect H. P. Bieler as reported in the Sanitary News of April 1891. This was demolished in the 1980s.

In 1903, a permit was issued to construct a single story steam forge, measuring 144'x 60' and designed by architect, B. Barthel and built by Clark Construction on Crooked Street, which still extends through the site, but was vacated by the city in 1916 as the plant continued to grow. Finkl then added a forge ship in 1910, which was designed by E. W. Newman according to the publication the American Contractor. A collection of Standard Oil buildings constructed by such firms as George E. Corbett & Company and the T.A. Cummings Foundry Company, in addition to Standard Oil were later absorbed into Finkl's operations over time.

The existing long foundry building along Cortland Avenue was built for the Cummings Foundry Company, and later sold to the Tarrant Foundry Company in 1922. This building was constructed between 1910 and 1915, with a large 75'x100' addition completed in 1916. Other structures in the area which were later purchased by Finkl were built by the Sheffield Foundry and fronted Kingsbury.

THREAT:

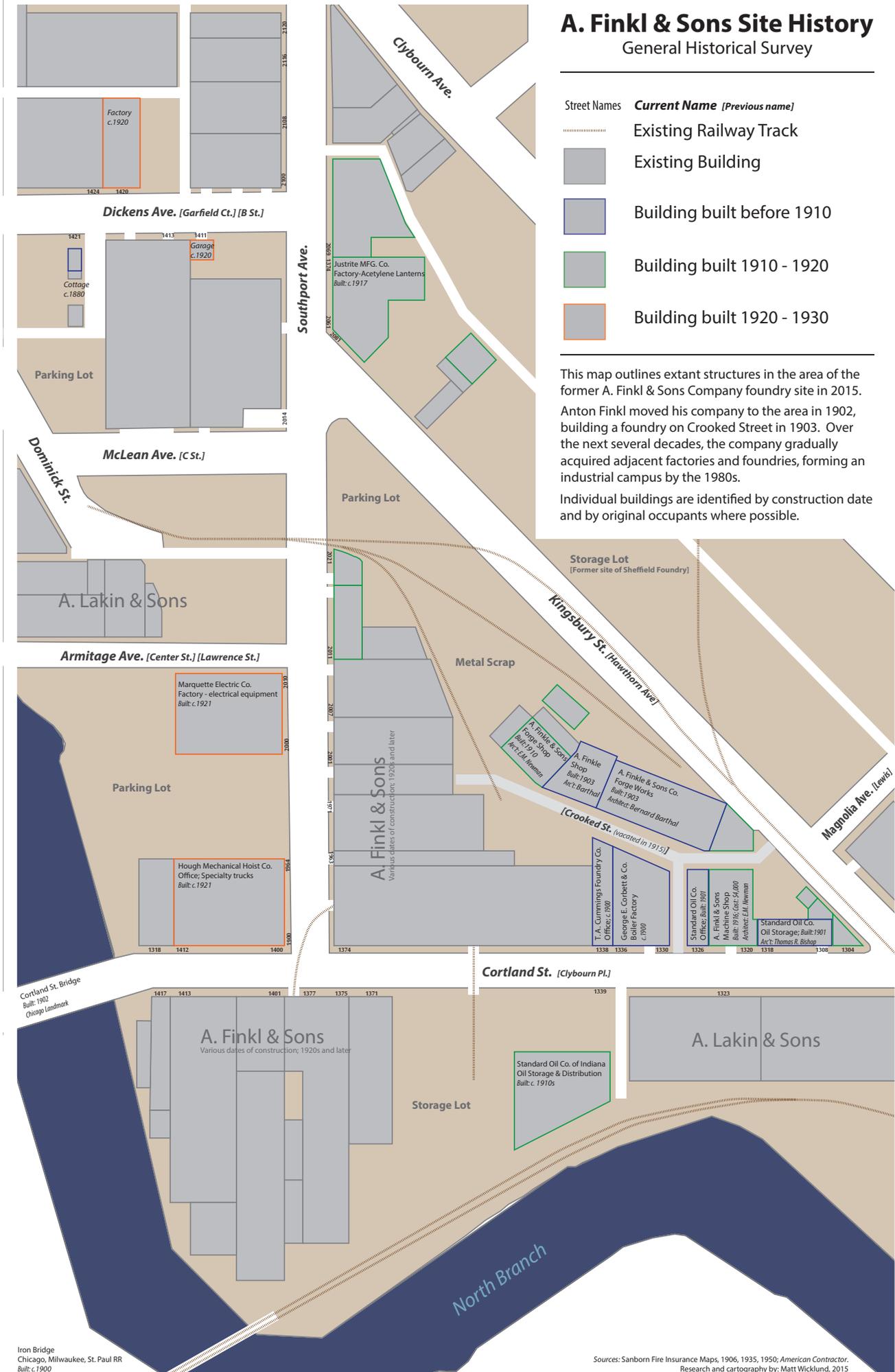
Currently the large commercial site is vacant and demolition permits have been issued for certain parts of the site, situated on the riverfront, without thought given to the many existing historic buildings. Preservation Chicago believes that adaptive reuse is possible and in many cases on the Finkl campus could preserve the industrial history within the PMD-Planned Manufacturing District.

A. Finkl & Sons Site History

General Historical Survey

- Street Names **Current Name** (Previous name)
- Existing Railway Track
 - Existing Building
 - Building built before 1910
 - Building built 1910 - 1920
 - Building built 1920 - 1930

This map outlines extant structures in the area of the former A. Finkl & Sons Company foundry site in 2015. Anton Finkl moved his company to the area in 1902, building a foundry on Crooked Street in 1903. Over the next several decades, the company gradually acquired adjacent factories and foundries, forming an industrial campus by the 1980s. Individual buildings are identified by construction date and by original occupants where possible.



Iron Bridge
Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul RR
Built: c.1900

Sources: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1906, 1935, 1950; American Contractor.
Research and cartography by: Matt Wicklund, 2015