
SOUTH CAROLINA INVENTORY FORM FOR HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND
INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES IN A MULTIPLE PROPERTY SUBMISSION

NAME OF MULTIPLE PROPERTY SUBMISSION: Historic Resources of Columbia

PREFERRED NAME OF PROPERTY: Claussen's Bakery (Supplement IX)

HISTORIC NAME OF PROPERTY: Same

COMMON NAME OF PROPERTY: Same

LOCATION: 2001-2003 Green Street, Columbia, S.C. 29205

CLASSIFICATION: Building

OWNER: Old Claussen's Partners
c/o John M. Bryan
2330 Terrace Way
Columbia, S.C. 29205

DESCRIPTION

Claussen's Bakery is a two-story brick building trapezoidal in plan and containing a total of 25,000 square feet. Its south, or principal, facade fronts on Green Street. This elevation is 128 feet long, and at the apex of its stepped parapet it is 30 feet high; this facade is composed of variegated brick. Off-white cast-stone trim appears as window sills, as corner blocks accenting the ends of the lintels, as diamond-shaped inserts above the windows, and, most prominently, as an inlaid tablet spanning the three central bays and carrying the words "Claussen's Bakery." The parapet is visually framed by two ornate shields, or cartouches, on which appear the date of construction: "1928".

The principal entry, located on the south facade, is notable for its sidelights, transom and elliptical hood. The upper surface of the hood is sheathed with copper and is supported by wooden brackets; its front (or vertical) surface consists of a single textured glass plate which was originally lighted from within the hood. Traces of the original paint or gold leaf "Claussen's" sign are evident on the inner surface of the glass. On this elevation all of the original industrial, metal window sashes are intact; these sashes each carry twenty lights, or panes, arranged four panes high and five panes wide.

The principal facade is prominently sited; it visually anchors and dominates one of the entries to the "Five Points" area, Columbia's first suburban shopping district. The remaining elevations are utilitarian, asymmetrical and nondescript. These exteriors, however, do retain their original window sashes identical to those on the Green Street facade, but their walls are composed of a red common brick, and they lack decorative detail. There is one exception: the east and north elevations are laid in common bond, with every header course of dark burned brick. The west elevation has been painted.

The west elevation, 180 feet long and varying in height from 20 to 23 feet, is dominated visually by three large loading doors (12 feet by 12 feet). These doors, one of which has been bricked in, reflect the relationship of this side of the building to both the railroad and the adjacent parking and loading area for delivery trucks. The west elevation is also concave, for the building was sited exactly upon the edge of the railroad's right-of-way. The east elevation (163 feet long by 35 feet high) fronts on an alley. The north elevation (50 feet long by 23 feet high) originally had seven of the typical windows; the sash has been removed from three of these and the openings have been filled with concrete block. The sash has also been removed from one of the windows on the west facade; this opening has been filled with brick.

The interior of the building has no decorative detail. The roof is supported by metal trusses, which permit much of the second story to exist as open space. These trusses are now hidden from view by an added suspended ceiling of acoustical tile. The principal access to this level is by means of the three loading doors, and the western portion of this level consists of poured concrete loading bays immediately inside the doors. The lower level, which is entered by means of the principal entry on the south facade, is punctuated by steel piers and posts placed on ten foot centers; these support I-beams which serve as the joists of the floor above. This substantial framing system was considered necessary to carry the heavy baking equipment which was placed on the second floor.

SIGNIFICANCE

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Commerce/Industry
Architecture

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: L For Office Use Only

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

Claussen's Bakery is significant for its contribution to the industrial and commercial development of Columbia. In addition, the design of the building is significant as an early instance in Columbia of the expression of a corporate image through architecture.

Commerce/Industry

Claussen's Bakery was constructed in Columbia in 1928 for George Frederick Claussen (1882-1946).(1) He was a grandson of Johann Christian Heinrich Claussen, a German immigrant who had established a steam bakery in Charleston in the nineteenth century.(2) During the first half of the twentieth century the family business was expanded and bakeries were built in Greenville, South Carolina, and in Augusta and Savannah, Georgia, as well as in Columbia.(3)

By the 1930s Columbia was an important center for bakery products. A growing potential for distribution by trucks using a rapidly improving system of country roads contributed to the success of businesses such as Claussen's. At Claussen's Bakery supplies arrived by rail and finished products of the bakery, including bread and rolls, were loaded into trucks each morning through bays on the west facade.(4)

By 1940 Claussen's was employing several hundred in the Charleston, Columbia, and Greenville bakeries.(5) The Columbia bakery ceased operating in 1963.

Architecture

Claussen's Bakery, in its design and form, is a typical twentieth century commercial building. The architect adapted the building to its hillside site and railroad access. The building is most notable for its relationship to the phenomena of corporate design. The design for the Claussen's Bakery in Columbia was replicated in the company's Greenville facility. The Greenville Claussen's, built in 1930, is extant but has been altered significantly. The Columbia bakery is the only intact manifestation of this enterprise in South Carolina.

ACREAGE: 1.9 Acres

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: The boundary of the Claussen's Bakery nomination is shown as the heavy black line on the accompanying Richland County Tax Map Number 11308, drawn at a scale of 1" = 100'. The nominated property includes the historic building and the lot on which it is situated.

QUAD NAME: Southwest Columbia, S.C.

QUAD SCALE: 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCE POINT: 17/498280/3716950

NOTES

(1) Deed Books CZ, pp. 34, 224, and DJ, p. 398, Richland County Judicial Center, Columbia, S.C.; Walsh's Columbia City Directory, 1927-29; "A Century of Fine Baking Back of Claussen's," South Carolina Magazine, Summer 1940, p. 29; interview with Henry Claussen, Augusta, Georgia, 2 December 1986.

(2) The News and Courier (Charleston, S.C.), 17 September 1910.

(3) Second Annual Report, Claussen Bakeries, Inc., for the Year Ended December 31, 1955 (Augusta, Ga.: n.p., 1956).

(4) Interview with Woodrow Wilson Weed, Former Sales Manager for Claussen's Bakery, Columbia, S.C., 26 May 1986; Helen Kohn Hennig, Columbia: Capital City of South Carolina, 1786-1936 (Columbia: R.L. Bryan Co., Printers, 1936), p. 321.

(5) "A Century of Fine Baking Back of Claussen's."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"A Century of Fine Baking Back of Claussen's," South Carolina Magazine
Summer 1940, p. 29.

Claussen, Henry H. Augusta, Ga. Interview, 2 December 1986.

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1786-1936. Columbia, S.C.: R.L. Bryan Co., Printers, 1936.

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