

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1143

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



1. Name of Property

Historic name: Oil and Gas Building
Other names/site number: n/a
Name of related multiple property listing:
n/a
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 1100 Tulane Ave
City or town: New Orleans State: LA County: Orleans
Not For Publication: n/a Vicinity: n/a

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national x statewide local
Applicable National Register Criteria:
 x A B x C D

Pam Breaux 12-2-13
Signature of certifying official/Title: Pam Breaux, State Historic Preservation Officer Date
Louisiana Department of Culture Recreation and Tourism
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: _____ Date _____

Title : _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____


Oil and Gas Building
Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)


Signature of the Keeper

2-5-2014
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Oil and Gas Building
Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce/Trade: Business - Office Building

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Vacant: Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Modern Movement: International Style - Miesian

Other: Mid Century Modern

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation – Concrete

Walls – Glass, marble, brick

Roof – other, tar and gravel

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Oil and Gas Building
Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA
County and State

Summary Paragraph

The Oil and Gas Building is a Mid-century Modern steel and glass skyscraper (fourteen stories) located at the intersection of Tulane Avenue and Rampart Street in the New Orleans Central Business District. (The location is just outside the boundaries of a National Register district.) The immediate setting of the Central Business District has a strong urban commercial character, with nearby buildings ranging in height from five stories to more than thirty stories. This district is also located right next to the Vieux Carré National Register District, which has buildings that are mostly three stories and under. Other surrounding districts are also smaller scale mixed use districts. Thus, the Central Business District, where the Oil and Gas Building is located, stands out on the skyline of the city with its skyscrapers of various sizes. The building has been vacant since circa 2003, with the exception of a nightclub operating out of a portion of the first story. It retains a high degree of integrity on the exterior and at the first floor elevator lobby, which are the sources of its architectural significance and National Register eligibility.

The original plans bear the names August Perez and Associates; Edward B. Silverstein and Associates, Associate Architects. They are dated October 1958, revised January 1959. The local newspaper on February 1, 1959 ran an article announcing that construction had begun.

The building is slated for rehabilitation using the federal and state historic tax credits. The National Park Service awarded it Part 1 certification on April 22, 2013 (preliminary determination of individual eligibility for the National Register).

Narrative Description

Overall Composition:

The Oil and Gas Building has an irregular footprint, dictated no doubt by the curving street intersection onto which its tight urban lot fronts (see attached plat map). The footprint is a six-sided figure that forms something like a very thickly proportioned “L,” open to the front. The wide main front wall is set at an oblique angle to the rest of the “L” shaped structure. This produces a complex angularity that lends notable visual interest to the overall building mass.

Northern and Eastern Elevations:

Because of the footprint noted above, the building’s northern and eastern elevations taken together form the principal view of the building (see Photo 1). From this view, the building presents an elegant and supremely modern vision of abstract sculpture -- a rhythm of articulated elevations that follow the open end of the L configuration. This strongly three-dimensional effect is enlivened by the varying angles of the two elevations.

It is the northern and eastern elevations that feature the building’s signature steel, glass and marble construction. The floor and ceiling levels are marked by strips of white marble of moderate veining. Vertical strips of the same marble mark the ends of each elevation wall. A series of very narrow vertical metal shafts divide each elevation wall into bays and serve as a

Oil and Gas Building

Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA

County and State

counterpoint to the horizontality of the white marble strips delineating the floor and ceiling levels. The vertical metal shafts pierce through the horizontal marble strips and protrude far enough from the building surface to catch the sun and cast a good shadow.

Another counterpoint to the white marble pieces is the building's glass, which is of a medium charcoal tint. The glass runs from floor to ceiling in each bay. Each bay is divided vertically in two by a brushed aluminum glazing bar, and divided horizontally, at the waist level, by a second aluminum glazing bar. (The brushed aluminum bars contrast with the charcoal glass.) One side of each bay features another element -- a small horizontal rectangular pane that pivots out for ventilation. This, too, is outlined in brushed aluminum, adding notable visual interest. Each floor's windows alternate the location of these pivoting windows. For example, on the second floor, the pivoting window is on the right hand side of each bay and on the third floor, the pivoting window is on the left hand side. This continues all the way up the building and thus creates another alternating pattern within the building's exterior skin. This detail is fully in line with the International Style precept of using abstract geometry to substitute for traditional ornament.

The northern elevation features two entrances. One is centrally placed on the forward-most portion of the elevation. Recessed and set at an angle, it consists of a central pair of glass doors and large expanses of tinted glass. Historically, this was the entrance to the first story's principal commercial tenant space. It is flanked by a pair of very large dark colored sheet metal panels embossed with an oversized "&" symbol set inside a circle. These are not original to the building but are in keeping with its style. (The original appearance of the shop front is not known. An early photo at The Historic New Orleans Collection shows this area unfinished.) A second entrance is located near the inside corner of the L. This entrance opens to a deep vestibule, which in turn leads to the elevator lobby (see below).

The three ground floor commercial bays closest to Rampart (the eastern elevation) have been filled in with non-historic material. The only surviving original fabric is a decorative grille at the top of the bay on the left.

Southern and Western Elevations:

The southern and western elevations, clad in white brick, are utilitarian in appearance. The western elevation is punctuated by regular rows and columns of individually placed single windows. Here too, like the street facing elevations, the windows are charcoal with brushed aluminum detailing and a small horizontal operable pane. The windows are divided into four horizontally oriented panes with the center two being the unit that pivots out. The southern elevation is a sheer brick wall with rows of tiny ventilation holes. (There are no written accounts as to why these two elevations are brick rather than marble and glass. Period newspaper accounts simply describe the building as a marble and glass tower. The brick clad elevations are secondary elevations.)

Mechanical Equipment:

The building's two-story rooftop mechanical equipment pavilion is a good deal larger than would have been on an earlier generation of office buildings. Providing for air conditioning was

Oil and Gas Building

Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA

County and State

a more complex process than ordinary heating, and required larger equipment. But, large as the pavilion is, it is set mainly to the rear (see photo 5). Additionally, it has a rectilinear design that does not detract from the building's architectural identity.

Interior:

As noted above, one entrance opens to a deep vestibule. Set at a right angle to the vestibule is the elevator lobby with three passenger elevators set in a line. Behind the elevators are two public restrooms, two sets of egress stairs and a freight elevator. On the first story, the legs of the "L" are mainly given over to commercial shop front tenants. The first story ceiling height is nearly twice as high as the building's other thirteen stories. This lends an element of spatial grandeur to the entrance vestibule and the main elevator lobby. It also provides for a small interstitial space that serves as a storage corridor.

The only fixed features on the upper stories (two through fourteen) are the elevators, the public restrooms, the egress stairs, and the freight elevator. These elements are counterparts of the first story service elements noted above. Each of the upper stories also provide for a modest elevator lobby. The legs of each upper story's "L" are given over to rentable office space. Unlike an earlier generation of office buildings built around a light court for ventilation and featuring a repetitive U shaped corridor on each floor, the Oil and Gas Building has no particularly distinctive configuration on the upper office floors. This is a generation of urban office buildings that featured florescent lighting (producing light without heat) and central air conditioning – both of which made window-less internal offices, service rooms, anterooms and interior meeting rooms a possibility. The upper office floors were intended to be flexible and adjustable to suit the needs of an ever-changing coterie of tenants throughout the building's life. As years passed, dividing walls came and went; internal corridors came and went. Aside from the functional nondescript elevator lobbies, the build-out at Oil and Gas has a rabbit warren-like appearance.

The double height first story entrance vestibule and elevator lobby feature a dark terrazzo floor and walls clad in veiny white marble. Elevator doors are set in tall recessed panels that reach close to the double height ceiling. Elevator doors are of polished aluminum with polished aluminum accents (see photo 7 – fabric seen in photo is temporary and part of the previous tenant's décor). On the Rampart Street side of the first story, a period hanging open-work staircase ascends to the previously noted interstitial space (see photo 8).

Elevator lobbies on the upper stories are nondescript and feature various finishes and floor materials. Like the office build-out, each is the product of numerous remodelings.

Assessment of Integrity:

The architectural significance of the Oil and Gas Building rests upon its exterior, where changes have been relatively minimal (shop front level modifications and the loss of a few sections of marble on the upper stories), and the first floor elevator lobby. The building retains the seven aspects of integrity delineated by the National Register: location, setting, design, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association.

Oil and Gas Building
Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA
County and State

Most importantly, the building's striking Mid-century Modern geometry is very dominant. It overwhelmingly "reads" as a period steel and glass skyscraper.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Oil and Gas Building
Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA
County and State

Period of Significance

1959

Significant Dates

1959

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

August Perez and Associates, Architect

Edward B. Silverstein and Associates, Associate Architect

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Oil and Gas Building is significant in the area of architecture (National Register Criterion C: Design), at the state level, as a particularly important expression of post-WWII modernism within Louisiana. It is a superb example of an icon of post-war modernism: the glass skyscraper. The period of significance under Criterion C is the date of construction: 1959.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

National Architectural Background:

America in the years following World War II saw the triumph of Modernism in commercial and institutional buildings. Modernism's roots were in the International Style as it evolved in Europe during the 1920s. It all grew out of art and architectural reform movements that came together in the Bauhaus School of Design in Weimar, Germany. The Bauhaus sought to marshal artists and architects in the service of humanity towards "the building of the future." This carried strong associations with political reform, socialism and a mandate to respond to the machine age.

The dominant architectural genre that emerged had a "stark cubic simplicity (Nikolas Pevsner)," profoundly devoid of traditional ornament or decoration of any kind. It featured a machined metal and glass framework, flat neutral surfaces (often white) pierced by ribbon windows that sometimes turned the corner, flat functional roofs, a general horizontal feel, and the use of pilotis, or slender poles, to elevate the building mass and make it seem to float above the

Oil and Gas Building

Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA

County and State

landscape. Building designs were supposed to take their cue from their practical function, following the oft repeated maxim of the day, "form follows function."

The term International Style was coined by two Americans, Henry Russell Hitchcock and Phillip Johnson, for their ground-breaking 1932 exhibition on Modern Architecture at New York's Museum of Modern Art. The term stuck and came to define the movement. In the ensuing years the International Style enjoyed a modest patronage among Americans of advanced taste. After the Second World War, it became near universal for commercial and institutional buildings in America. Historians have noted a number of reasons for this artistic triumph.

One is the enormous influence of two former Bauhaus directors, Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe, who fled Nazi Germany and established themselves in seminal seats of architectural learning and education (Harvard and the Illinois Institute of Technology, respectively). Their graduates read like a *Who's Who* of American architectural practice in the post-war decades. Then there was the style's powerful quasi-religious underlying philosophy. Designing with integrity in a mode of architecture that was an honest and true reflection of the Modern Era--the "Machine Age"-- appealed to intellectuals and the greater art world in general. The style's qualities as a geometrical abstraction were no less appealing. Finally, the style received hugely favorable publicity in a vast array of venues. By the late 1940s, the International Style was triumphant. As Phillip Johnson wrote in 1952, "The battle for modern architecture has . . . been won."

But it was not quite the same Modernism as had emerged in Europe some thirty years earlier. The style had evolved. The old neutral wall had become less prominent. Glass became the dominant material. Abstract building elevations were given an element of regularity through a modular surface grid with inset panels of glass and sometimes panels of aluminum or other materials. Finally, there was the application of the style to skyscrapers. Indeed, the modular grid is generally thought to have originated as a means of reconciling the essential horizontality of the traditional International Style with the vertical thrust of tall buildings. In 1950s America, Mies Van der Rohe emerged as the undisputed master of the glass office tower. Architectural historians generally label these buildings Miesian, whether designed by the master or other architects who followed his lead. Its most prolific practitioners were Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, a huge firm that did much to spread the steel and glass skyscraper as a corporate emblem.

The modular grid, with its many and various panels, became standard for mid-century modern commercial and institutional buildings across America, regardless of size or height. But it is in the modular grid, steel and glass skyscraper that Mid-century Modernism achieved a particularly compelling statement. These are surely the landmarks of the genre. A grouping of gleaming steel and glass skyscrapers was *the* look of the modern city to Americans circa 1950, ranging from aesthetes to chamber of commerce boosters. Carter Wiseman, an architectural historian and Loeb Fellow at the Harvard College of Design, quite correctly identifies the Miesian (steel and glass modular grid) skyscraper as the "icon of urban America in the 1950s" (*Twentieth Century American Architecture: The Buildings and Their Makers*, 2000).

Oil and Gas Building

Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA

County and State

“It was in tall buildings . . . that Modern could create its most triumphant power symbols,” observes architectural historian Alan Gowans (*Styles and Types of North American Architecture: Social Function and Cultural Expression*). The triumph of modernism in America coincided with America’s emergence as the richest and most powerful nation in the world. American corporations such as General Motors and RCA had larger annual budgets than whole nation states. Modern architecture in America came to proclaim and celebrate corporate wealth and influence. The clusters of steel, smooth panel and glass towers that came to form the heart of many a large American city were potent symbols of corporate power.

Styles, of course, can become outmoded. By the mid-1960s, criticism of, and dissatisfaction with, standard (modular grid) modernism was mounting. Many complained about the “rectilinear sterility” of modern buildings. New architectural genres were coming to the fore. One was Brutalism, a chunky, boxy, rough concrete style whose massiveness was a departure from the smooth surfaces of modular grid modernism. The other has been called “New Formalism,” a glossy almost neo-classical take on modernism’s architectural vocabulary, unashamed of ornament – with columns, arches, frills and decorative screens.

Modernism in Louisiana:

The authors of this document identified steel and glass modular grid skyscrapers as a particularly important mid-twentieth century property type in a series of historic context essays on Louisiana Architecture: 1945-1965. The contexts were commissioned by the Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation in 2009 via a grant from the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office (LA SHPO). Approved by the LA SHPO, they are posted on that agency’s website: www.louisianahp.org.

The findings of the above referenced historic context studies were based on fieldwork throughout Louisiana, particularly (but not exclusively) in the state’s largest cities, which were clearly high probability areas. The cities were New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Monroe, Shreveport and Lake Charles. Subsequently the authors did additional research and fieldwork on mid-century modern architecture via National Register nominations in Shreveport, New Orleans, and Alexandria. Clearly, the state’s largest and most impressive concentrations of mid-century modern architecture are in New Orleans and Shreveport (the latter being the state’s second largest city until the late 1950s).

The following general observations can be made when attempting to evaluate Louisiana’s modern commercial and institutional buildings from the period 1945-65: Firstly, the national “name” architects of the period hardly ever practiced in Louisiana. (One presumes this is true of many other states.) The sole known commercial/institutional exceptions are Skidmore, Owings and Merrill’s 1951 Pan American Life Building and 1962 John Hancock Building (both in New Orleans) and Edward Durrell Stone’s 1964 World Trade Mart (New Orleans). Secondly, it was not all “brave new world” totally up-to-date modernism in Louisiana’s commercial and institutional buildings in the period 1945-1965. Traditional International Style buildings (i.e., of the same type built in the 1930s) continued to be built right alongside state-of-the-art steel and glass (modular grid) skyscrapers. There was even some “holdover” Art Moderne work. One

Oil and Gas Building

Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA

County and State

suspects that Louisiana is far from alone in these findings. After all, seldom does a style abruptly end.

The authors identified the following subtypes of modern architecture in Louisiana's post-war commercial and government buildings: (1) traditional (1930s) International Style; (2) holdover Art Moderne; (3) "everyday modern"; and (4) modular grid modern. While these categories are not perfect, they correlate to what the authors saw on the ground during their fieldwork. And, of course, there are various modern commercial and government buildings in Louisiana that do not fit into any of the foregoing categories. Modernism lends itself by definition to one-of-a-kind statements.

New Formalism and Brutalism buildings from the period 1945-65 are very few in number in Louisiana. Notable New Formalism designs include the New Orleans Public Library (1958) and the Automotive Life Building (1963) in New Orleans, both designed by the city's foremost Modern architects, Curtis and Davis.

Traditional (1930s) International Style:

Some buildings remained true to the classic white (or almost white) box with ribbon windows and a minimally articulated flat roof. In some cases blond or light colored bricks were substituted for the neutral white stucco or plaster enveloping walls. But there were others, less pure, that still reaffirmed the basic abstract International Style geometry.

The elements that carried forward into mid-century from the International Style include: an essentially horizontal feel (even in taller buildings); bands of windows, sometimes emphasized with a modest ledge (and sometimes the window sequence is punctuated with periodic blank, neutral or opaque panels); flat roofs, sometimes emphasized with a ledge; strongly rectilinear compositions; substantive exterior walls (as opposed to curtain walls); and a profound absence of ornament.

Some examples permit themselves a modest amount of texture and variation with brick surfaces contrasting with stucco surfaces. Some also convey some warmth through the use of bricks of a warm hue (red, orange or occasionally pink). Finally, some examples order their elevations by imposing periodic vertical strips – almost as if dividing the façade into bays. Indeed, some might wonder where this kind of regularizing articulation ends and where the modular grid begins. In such cases, however, the horizontal ribbon window geometry remains dominant.

Holdover Art Moderne (or Streamlined Moderne):

The Art Moderne, or Streamlined Moderne, style has as its vocabulary: building corners that end in dynamic curves; walls that come together curving inward to mark an entrance; rounded forms; ribbon windows (that may also curve); glass blocks in bands and sometimes whole walls; bold jutting geometric forms that may mark an entrance; flat roofs with parapets; and multi-color effects (especially contrasting colors in bands that reinforce building massing).

Most post-war Art Moderne buildings in Louisiana are small with modest styling -- a curving wall accented in contrasting colored brick bands, a strong upright architectural mass with a sign

Oil and Gas Building

Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA

County and State

in streamlined lettering, or a buff brick tavern with a more or less continuous band of glass block windows providing interior illumination.

“Everyday Modern”:

The vast majority of historic post-war commercial and government buildings in Louisiana might be termed “everyday modern.” This grouping recognizes a broad swath of smaller commercial and professional office buildings that would have been considered “up-to-date” in their day, but which do not fit comfortably into any well-defined modernist genre. Many, probably most, of these buildings did not involve the services of a professional architect. Instead, the builder and client between them came up with the design, often choosing elements from other buildings they knew, illustrations they had seen, and/or from stock parts easily ordered from a building supply manufacturer. Some of the resulting buildings have a striking visual character, others are very basic.

Builder/owner designed commercial and government buildings tended to focus more on code and permit compliance rather than on any concern for visual character. Features could also be chosen without regard to one particular modernist genre or another – for example, a severe ‘50s glass box paired with a stylish brick Art Moderne chimney-like element marking the entrance and bearing a sign with stylized lettering.

Some “Everyday Modern” buildings reach beyond established commercial modernism with an occasional nod to Frank Lloyd Wright. For instance, one might find a Wrightian Prairie Style planter accenting the entrance of a ribbon-windowed professional office building. Or one may find a geometrically abstract and smoothly designed commercial building with a prominent front-facing wall faced in rough fieldstone, laid up in narrow horizontal slabs.

One clue to the builder nature of an “Everyday Modern” design may be its “façadism”-- all the stylistic elements limited to the façade with the side walls left blank. Had an architect designed the same building, he would have been concerned with the entire building as a consistent work of design and articulation, not just the public front. Such an architect designed building would “read” from the three-quarter view. Another clue to “builder jobs” is that one sees a jumble of applied stylistic elements, lacking any consistent disposition or treatment.

Finally, the “everyday modern” category includes minimalist retail buildings found on the outskirts of cities, and in smaller towns, across the state. These typically feature a flat roof, blank masonry side walls and an all-glass (or mostly glass) commercial display front. Sometimes the end walls of the glass façade are marked with corbelled brick, and the area between the end of the glass shopfront and the ground is filled with brick or panels of metal. In their day, many such buildings also featured eye-catching illuminated signs powered by noble gases: argon, krypton or neon.

Modular Grid Modern:

In the mid-twentieth century, all-glass (or mostly glass) modernist buildings and modular grids went, more-or-less, hand in hand. They were both dependent upon post and beam construction which permitted the exterior wall to hang as if a curtain (hence the name curtain wall). And

Oil and Gas Building

Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA

County and State

despite the apparent limitations of this genre, the modular grid webwork could produce a great variety of designs and visual effects.

Modular Grid Variations:

- The heavier exposed skeleton look versus a smooth taut building skin.
- A horizontal versus a more vertical feeling conveyed by the gridwork. Those associated with Mies van der Rohe, or his many protégés, could achieve an elegant and harmonious balance.
- Clear versus tinted glass (light green or light blue were popular tints).
- All glass curtain walls versus glass used in combination with panels.
- Neutral panels versus metallic panels with a baked-on color (here again, light blue or light green were popular).
- Panels of a single color versus panels of different colors (sometimes contrasting).
- Smooth panels versus panels with a rougher surface (textured stucco or masonry).
- Panels in a relatively inexpensive material, as described above, versus a high-end material (marble or polished granite).

Modular grid design was used in all sizes of commercial and government buildings in Louisiana. They generally fall into three groupings: (1) skyscrapers; (2) moderate size buildings of three or four stories with strong horizontal lines; and (3) small professional offices (the latter being the larger category).

Importance of Modular Grid Skyscrapers:

As noted previously, extensive mid-century modern fieldwork in high probability areas across Louisiana made it abundantly evident that steel and glass skyscrapers were major expressions of modernism within the state (as they are indeed nationally, per above). The six skyscrapers identified below stand out in sharp contrast to the bulk of the state's historic mid-century modern commercial and government buildings – which are small builder-designed professional offices or small commercial buildings. Per the national context at the beginning of this section, these buildings are recognized as icons of the modern American city – as powerful symbols of corporate wealth and power.

Louisiana's Modular Grid Skyscrapers:

Louisiana's six steel and glass modular grid skyscrapers from 1945 to 1965 are located in Shreveport (2) and New Orleans (4). These were the only two cities whose downtowns were large and developed enough in the period to have produced works of modern architecture on this scale. Broadly speaking, the six are in the nine to twenty story range. None are completely modular grid on all elevations. All survive with their exteriors largely intact.

The other five modular grid 50-plus year old skyscrapers in Louisiana (in addition to Oil and Gas) are as follows:

Oil and Gas Building

Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA

County and State

1. Maryland Casualty Life Insurance Co. Building (now a Quality Inn); 1956, Curtis and Davis, Architects. 210 O'Keefe Ave., New Orleans; not listed individually on the National Register. The nine story Maryland Casualty Life Insurance Co. building employs gray and aqua glass panels, clear glass windows, and aluminum framing to create its grid. Located at a corner and in a tightly packed area, its modular grid encompasses two elevations (the others being brick).
2. Hilton Garden Inn, 821 Gravier Street, New Orleans; not listed individually on the National Register. At 17 stories, this building is rather broad and is essentially a party wall building (modular grid on one elevation only). It has bands of aluminum windows with colored panels between each floor. The lower several floors were converted to a parking garage in the 1990s, which required adjustment of the curtain wall.
3. Texaco Building, 1501 Canal Street; 1951, Claude E. Hooton, Architect. National Register, 2006. The Texaco Building is a 17 story building on the edge of New Orleans' Central Business District. It has brushed aluminum windows, glass, blond brick, and green colored enamel panels.
4. Henry C. Beck Building, Shreveport; 1955, Neild-Somdal Associates; not listed on the National Register. This twenty story skyscraper uses blue aluminum panels (now faded to gray), clear glass windows, and aluminum vertical members to create its modular grid. It features uninterrupted glass curtain walls on three elevations. The curtain wall on the western elevation is interrupted by a brick elevator shaft.
5. Petroleum Tower, Shreveport; 1958. National Register, 2013. This sixteen story building features curtain walls of glass and aluminum panels on three elevations. The fourth elevation is a sheer brick wall.

Mid Twentieth Century New Orleans and the Oil and Gas Building

The construction of the Oil and Gas Building, a major office building within its local context, represents in some respects what was occurring across the board in American cities and towns in the post-World War II years. It was a period of great prosperity and explosive population growth, and the venerable City of New Orleans was no exception.

The city's primary historic role (and the foundation of its economy) was its status as a major world port. The mid-twentieth century was a period of major growth for the Port of New Orleans wherein it re-established the preeminence it had enjoyed in the 1850s. After a period of decline in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Port of New Orleans in the World War II and post-war years was once again neck-in-neck with the Port of New York.

The following information, taken from the pending National Register nomination for the International Trade Mart (Orleans Parish), constructed five years after the Oil and Gas Building, further expounds on the explosive growth of the port of New Orleans following World War II:

Oil and Gas Building

Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA

County and State

“In 1950, the Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans produced a report, *A Long-Range Program for the Development of the Port of New Orleans*, describing the expansion and updating of the port’s docks and warehouse facilities. It was noted that the “Port holds a most strategic position in the path of maritime trade routes, connecting, as it does, the region of greatest productivity in the United States, the Mississippi Valley, with the markets of the world, particularly in Latin America and the Orient. [The port] has come now to be recognized as one of the ranking ports of the world.” Moreover, it was clear that because New Orleans had no significant manufacturing base the success of the port depended on transshipment of goods rather than goods produced locally.

Consequently, a trade mart was essential to the port’s and New Orleans’s viability and prospect for growth...The enormous expansion of port activity between 1955 and 1964 is outlined in Daniel S. Juhn’s study, *Growth and Changing Composition of International Trade through the Port of New Orleans, 1955-1964*. He reports that in 1955, New Orleans was the largest port in the United States in dollar volume of trade, with exports overshadowing imports. He noted that “Foreign trade has always been of vital importance to Louisiana, and the economic development of the state has been closely tied to the growth of the Port of New Orleans. A review of the data concerning foreign trade through the Port of New Orleans in the ten year period 1955-1964 indicates that growth is the main theme.” New Orleans’ percentage growth in waterborne foreign trade in this period grew by 42.4 percent and was exceeded only by Chicago. For both ports, grain was a major export commodity. Major export tonnage for New Orleans also included chemicals and petroleum products.”

A secondary, but quite important economic engine for the city of New Orleans in the post-war years was growth in the oil and gas industries. For example, both Shell Oil and Texaco (with regional headquarters in the city) built new high-rise office buildings in the Central Business District (CBD). Also, as pointed out in the above quote, a major export for the city of New Orleans included chemical and petroleum products from the oil and gas industries.

As the economy boomed (due largely to the above economic factors), additional office space was sorely needed in downtown New Orleans (as it was across America). Numerous major high rise office buildings were constructed in the city’s CBD in the 1950s, some built for specific tenants and others (like Oil and Gas), speculatively built. Examples include: Shell Oil Building; Texaco Building; Saratoga Building; Maryland Casualty Life Building; and the Oil and Gas Building – all built within a few years of each other (1952-59).

The Oil and Gas Building was originally known by its address, 1100 Tulane Avenue (per the original plans and early newspaper articles). The New Orleans *Times Picayune*, on February 1, 1959, announced “Work on New Building Begins,” with the subtitle “14 Story Structure to Cost \$2,250,000.” On May 17, 1959, the paper reported that Monterey Oil Company had leased a whole floor and that the name had now been officially changed to the Oil and Gas Building. The September 13, 1959 issue ran a photo of the building under construction on the front page, describing it as “a tower of marble and glass.” The 1961 New Orleans City Directory shows that the vast majority of tenants were in the oil and gas and related industries.

Oil and Gas Building

Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA

County and State

The developers were Harry and Shepard Latta, operating under the corporate name 1100 Tulane Building Company. The two were responsible, according to a July 22, 1959 article in the *Picayune*, for the nearby Shell Building, the Saratoga Building, and the Maryland Casualty Life Building, all from the 1950s.

As noted elsewhere, August Perez and Associates of New Orleans was the lead architectural firm, with Edward B. Silverstein and Associates, also of New Orleans, as associate architects. Neither firm has been the subject of published scholarly analysis.

August Perez and Associates was founded by August Perez, Jr. in 1940. Regrettably, there are no biographical entries for Perez, Jr., in the on-line directories of the American Institute of Architects. There is for August Perez III, who received his Bachelors of Architecture from Tulane University in 1956. A promotional booklet published by the firm in 1963 documents numerous commissions for government, commercial and residential buildings. Major commissions include Blue Plate Mayonnaise (1942, 1947, National Register), New Orleans; Shell Oil Building, New Orleans, 1954; Union Passenger Terminal Station (1955), New Orleans; this building; the Louisiana Supreme Court Building, New Orleans (1959); the Public Welfare Building, Baton Rouge (1958), and the State Office Building, New Orleans (1959). (Two of these buildings, the Supreme Court and the State Office Building, have been demolished.)

The associate architectural firm for the Oil and Gas Building was headed by Edward B. Silverstein, who received his Bachelors in Architecture from Tulane in 1932. He practiced under the firm name Rolfs and Silverstein 1945-48; Weiss and Silverstein, 1949-53; and Edward B. Silverstein and Associates, 1953-1976. The latter served as associate architect for two quite important Curtis and Davis commissions: the Port of New Orleans Exhibition Center (Rivergate, 1964-68, demolished) and the New Orleans Superdome (1971-75). (Curtis and Davis were the city's premier modernist architects.)

The Oil and Gas Building continued to serve as an office building until Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Conclusion:

When compared to the other modular grid skyscrapers, the Oil and Gas Building is noteworthy in several respects. Its surface modular grid design is particularly complex and intricate, making it a tour-de-force in crisp rectilinear abstraction. The analogy of Piet Mondrian's paintings comes to mind. With its large areas of glass curtain walls and alternating marble panels, the Oil and Gas Building is a sophisticated piece of modern design within the context of Louisiana's overall legacy of mid-century modern commercial buildings. (As noted previously, most post-war commercial buildings are builder-designed.) Finally, it has an interesting irregular shape fitting with its particular site. As a major expression within the state of what is regarded as an icon of mid-century modern architecture (the steel and glass skyscraper), the Oil and Gas Building is thus eligible for individual listing in the National Register under Criterion C.

Oil and Gas Building
Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

1100 Tulane Ave. Building Plans. August Perez and Associates; Edward B. Silverstein and Associates, Associate Architects. October 1958/revised January 1959.

AIA Historical Directory of American Architects. 1962 and 1970.

Annual Report of the Mayor [City of New Orleans]. 1959-1960.

August Perez and Associates. *August Perez and Associates, Architects*. New Orleans: 1963.

Fricker, Jonathan and Fricker, Donna. "Louisiana Architecture, 1945-1965: Modernism Triumphant." Historic context essay prepared for the Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation via a grant from the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation, 2009, www.louisianahp.org.

Gowans, Alan. *Styles and Types of North American Architecture: Social Function and Cultural Expression*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992.

New Orleans City Directory, 1961.

New Orleans *Times Picayune*. Various dates in 1958 and 1959.

Pending National Register Nomination, International Trade Mart, New Orleans, Orleans Parish, Louisiana.

Wiseman, Carter. *Twentieth-Century American Architecture: The Buildings and their Makers*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2000.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

Oil and Gas Building
Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA
County and State

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): n/a

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than 1 acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 29.954120 | Longitude: -90.074251 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

See attached property plat map.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Boundaries follow property lines of the parcel of land historically associated with the building.

Oil and Gas Building
Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jonathan and Donna Fricker
organization: Fricker Historic Preservation Services, LLC
street & number: 998 Stanford Ave, #203
city or town: Baton Rouge state: LA zip code: 70808
e-mail jonathanfricker@gmail.com
telephone: 225-246-7901
date: July 2013

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Name of Property: Oil and Gas Building

City or Vicinity: New Orleans

County: Orleans **State:** LA

Photographer: Donna Fricker

Date Photographed: Feb/March 2013

Oil and Gas Building
Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA
County and State

Location of Digital Files: LA Division of Historic Preservation

PHOTO LOG

Photo 1

Camera facing south/southwest
Main elevations

Photo 2

Camera facing south/southwest
Window detail

Photo 3

Camera facing west/southwest
Tulane Ave shop front

Photo 4

Camera facing west
South Rampart shop front

Photo 5

Camera facing north
South elevation

Photo 6

Camera facing southeast
Western elevation

Photo 7

Camera facing west/southwest
Elevator lobby (fabric is not permanent and was set up for an event in the space)

Photo 8

Camera facing southeast
First floor staircase leading to interstitial space

Photo 9

Camera facing southeast
Typical elevator lobby on upper floors

Photo 10

Camera facing east
Typical upper floor view

Photo 11

Oil and Gas Building

Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA

County and State

Camera facing southeast

Typical upper floor view west side of building

Photo 12

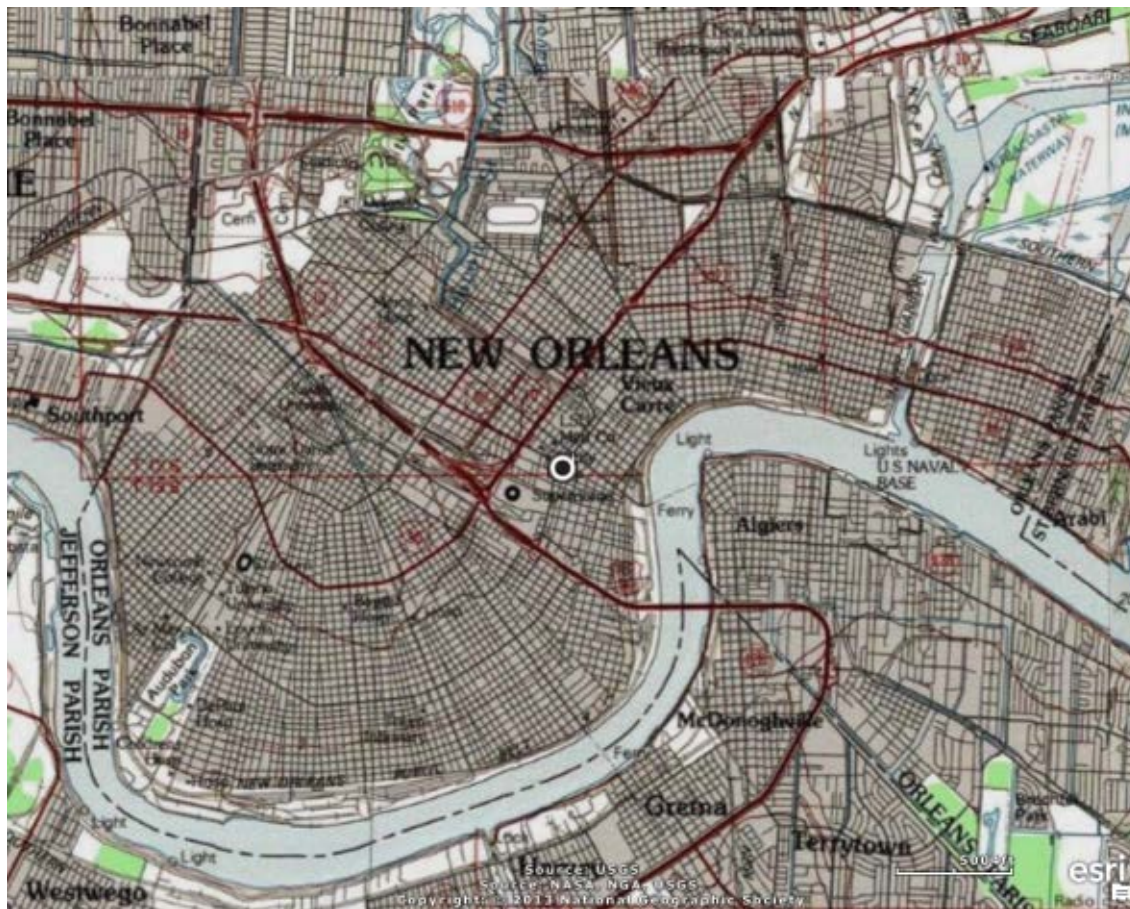
Camera facing northeast

Windows as seen from interior

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Oil and Gas Building, Orleans Parish, LA



Latitude: 29.954120

Longitude: -90.074251

Oil and Gas Building, Orleans Parish, LA



Latitude: 29.954120

Longitude: -90.074251

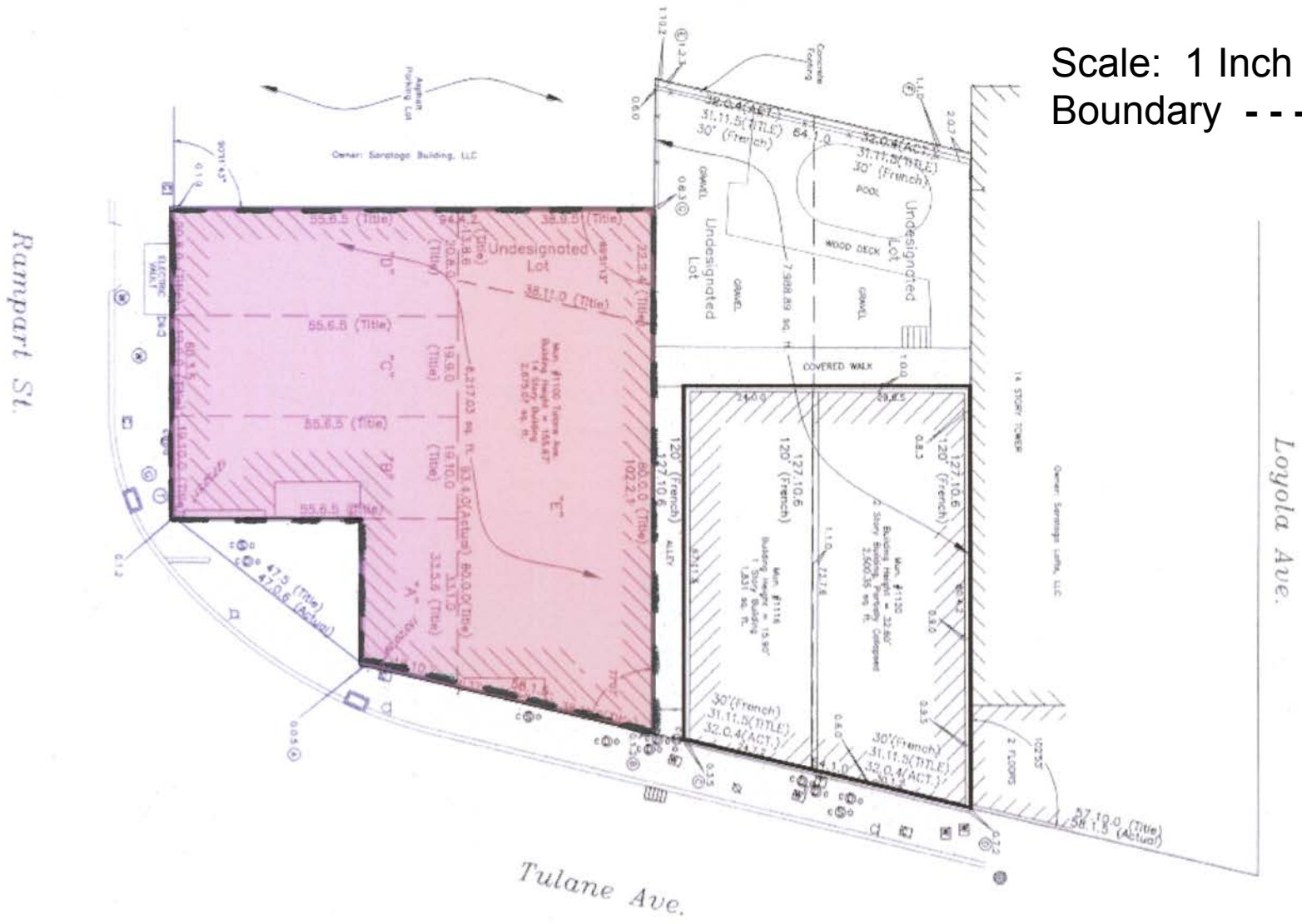
Oil & Gas Building
 1100 Tulane Avenue
 New Orleans, LA 70112
 Lots A, B, C, D, E and Undesignated Lot

Oil & Gas Building
 Orleans Parish, LA



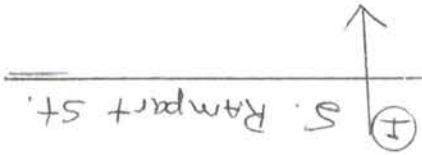
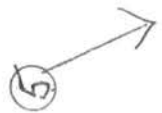
Gravier St. (Side)

Scale: 1 Inch = 30 Feet
 Boundary - - - -

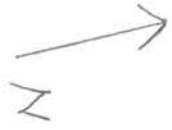
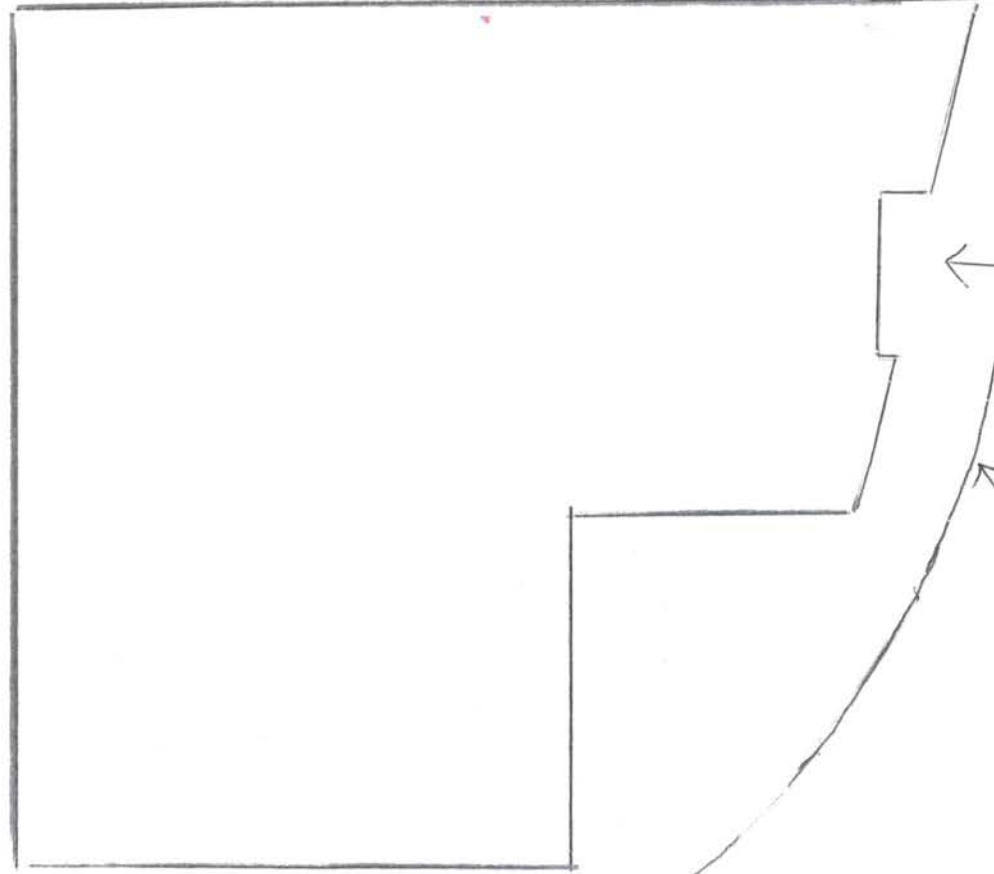


Oil + Gas Building
New Orleans
Orleans Parish, LA

SITE PLAN / PHOTO
KEY



S. Rampart St.

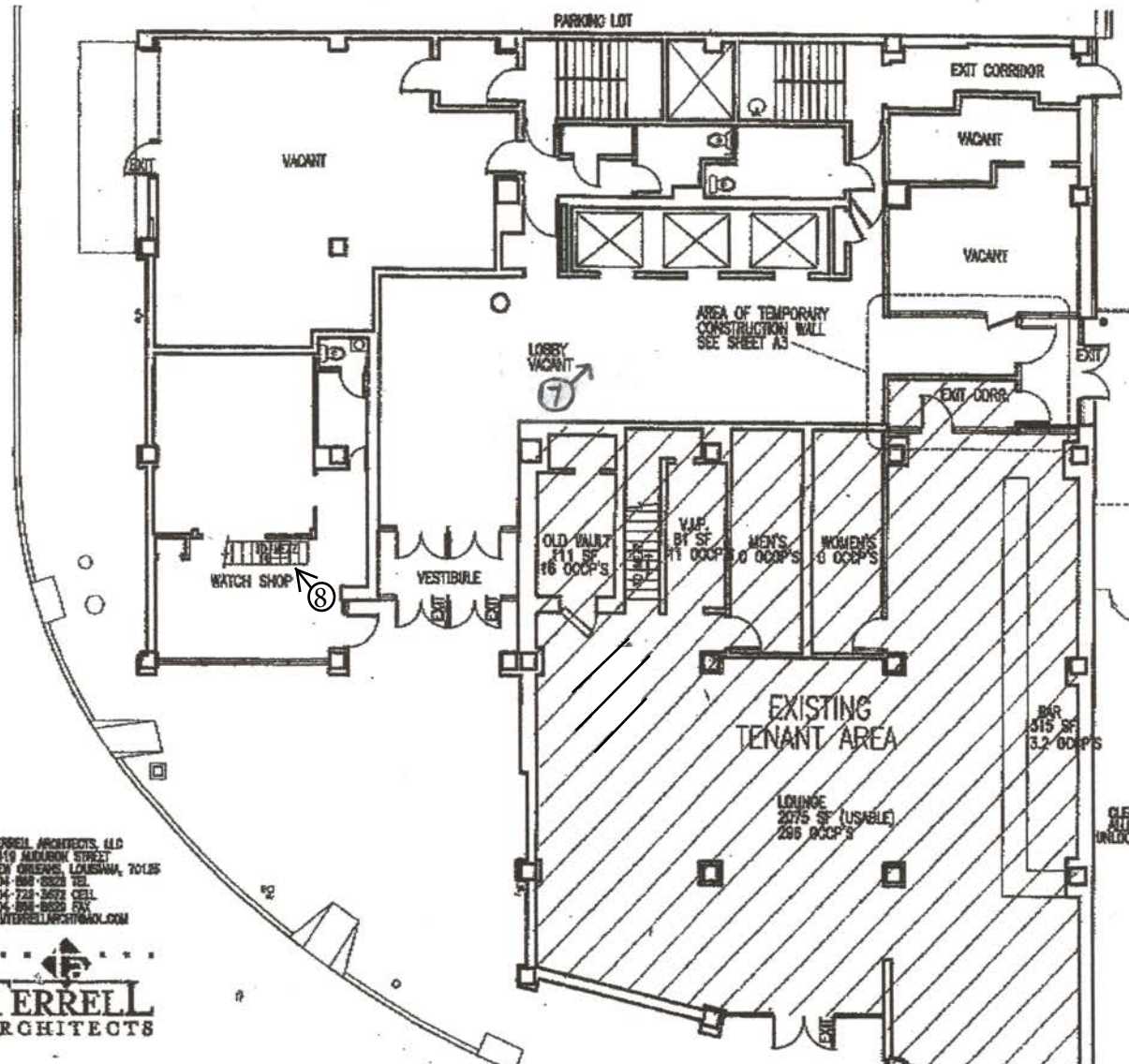


Tulane Ave



Oil & Gas Building
Orleans Parish, LA
Interior Photo Key - First Floor

SCOPE OF WORK:
WORK IS LIMITED TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION WALL AND ASSOCIATED DOORS. THE WORK DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY OTHER WORK OR INVESTIGATION FOR CODE COMPLIANCE FOR THIS TENANT OR EXISTING BUILDING



OCCUPANT LOAD
(per New Orleans Fire Prevention)

FIRST FLOOR	- 300 OCCUPANT
MEZZANINE	- 30 OCCUPANT
TOTAL CAPACITY ALLOWED - 300 OCCUPANT	

- 330 OCCP'S x 0.2 EGRESS CAPACITY FACTOR = 66 INCHES OF REQ'D EGRESS WIDTH
- SECONDARY REAR EXIT REQUIRES: 33" OF REQ'D WIDTH

OCCUPANT LOAD (per N.F.P.A. 101. 200)

FIRST FLOOR	- 326 OCCUPANT
MEZZANINE	- 42 OCCUPANT
TOTAL OCCUPANT LOAD - 368 OCCUPANT	

- 368 OCCP'S x 0.2 EGRESS CAPACITY FACTOR = 73.5 INCHES OF REQ'D EGRESS WIDTH
- SECONDARY REAR EXIT REQUIRES: 36.75" OF REQ'D WIDTH

TERRELL ARCHITECTS, LLC
2419 ALABAMA STREET
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA, 70125
504-886-2823 TEL
504-728-3672 CELL
504-886-8629 FAX
WWW.TERRELLARCHITECTS.COM



FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

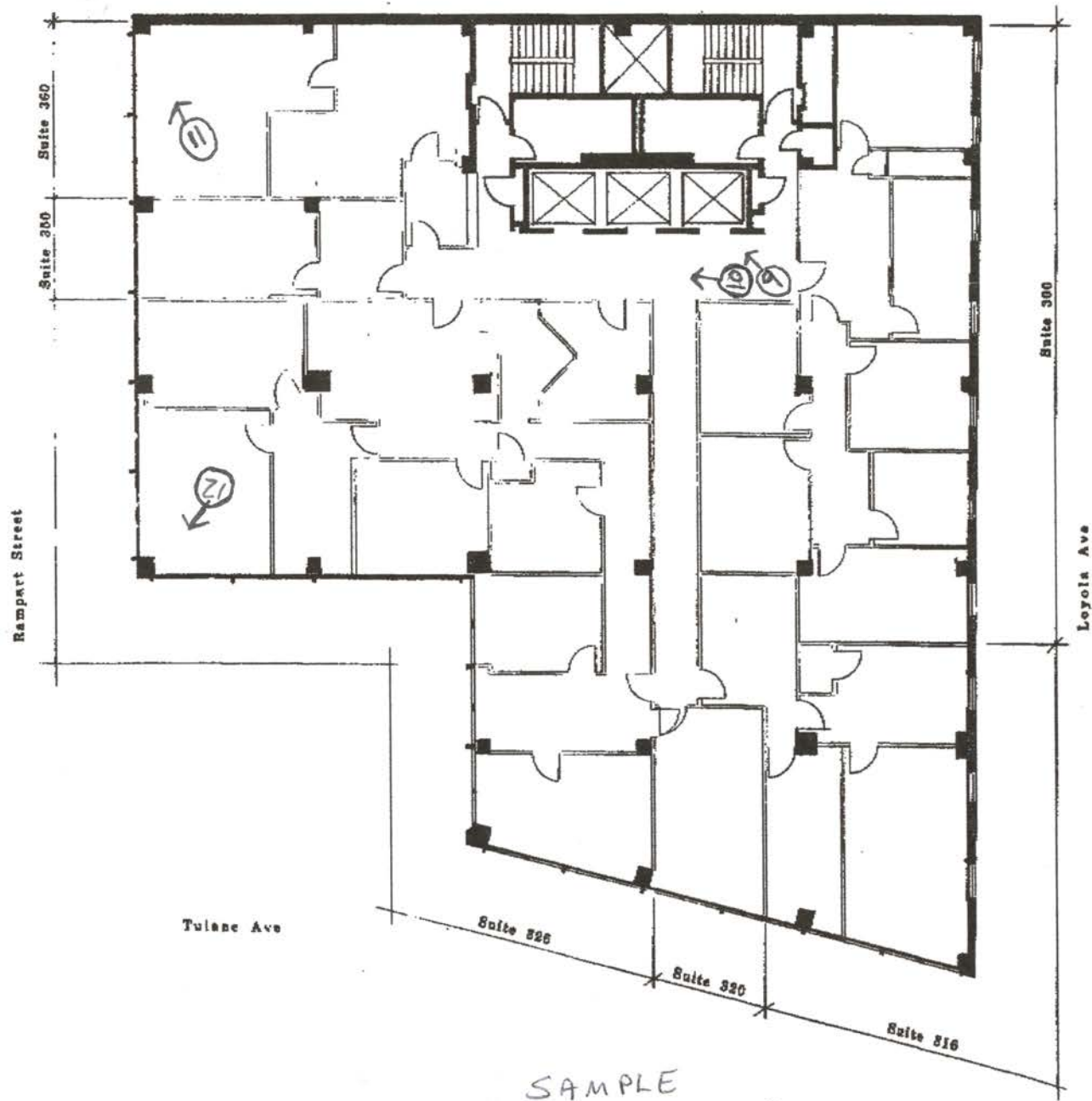
TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION WALL
OIL & GAS CENTER
1100 TULANE AVE.;
NEW ORLEANS LOUISIANA



ADJACENT RESTAURANT
REVIEWED FOR
STATE FIRE MARSHAL
AS PER REVIEW LETTER
BY RON C. MATHIS
Ron C. Mathis

275054





Oil & Gas Building
Orleans Parish, LA

Interior Photo Key - Upper Floors



SAMPLE
UPPER FLOOR







SUPER BUMP PARTY
AFROJACK DOCHARTIN
2 CHANZ
ADVENTURE CLUB
WEDNESDAY PER 11
TICKETS \$15

PARK









THIS CAR UP





47

47

47

FIRE







UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Oil and Gas Building
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: LOUISIANA, Orleans

DATE RECEIVED: 12/20/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/21/14
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/05/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/05/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13001143

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 2-5-2014 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

one of the few identified Mission, Grid Curator wall^{tall} buildings in LA of
the Period of Early Modernism. Intact exterior & good interior
Public space

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept C

REVIEWER J. Gubky DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N see attached

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



JAY DARDENNE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana
OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM
OFFICE OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

December 13, 2013



TO: Mr. James Gabbert
National Park Service 2280, 8th Floor; National Register of Historic Places
1201 "I" Street, NW; Washington, DC 20005

FROM: Jessica Richardson, National Register Coordinator
Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation

RE: Oil and Gas Building, Orleans Parish, LA

Jim,

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Oil and Gas Building to the National Register of Historic Places. The second disk contains the photographs of the property in TIF format. Should you have any questions, please contact me at 225-219-4595 or jrichardson@crt.la.gov.

Thanks,

Jessica 

Enclosures:

- CD with PDF of the National Register of Historic Places nomination form
- CD with electronic images (tif format)
- Physical Transmission Letter
- Physical Signature Page, with original signature
- _____ Other:

Comments:

- Please ensure that this nomination receives substantive review
- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- _____ The enclosed owner(s) objection(s) do _____ do not _____
constitute a majority of property owners.
- _____ Other: