

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

310

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: Noble Building  
Other Names/Site Number: n/a  
Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

### 2. Location

Street & Number: 324 Pujon St  
City or town: Lake Charles State: LA County: Calcasieu  
Not for Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets, 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  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:  
 national  state  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

*Pam Breaux* 4-29-14  
**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.  

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**Signature of commenting official:** **Date**  

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

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**4. National Park Certification**

I hereby certify that the 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: \_\_\_\_\_

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
 Signature of the Keeper

6-10-2014  
 Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property** (Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public – Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public – State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public – Federal

**Category of Property** (Check only one box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	District
<input type="checkbox"/>	Site
<input type="checkbox"/>	Structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

**Number of Resources within Property** (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Non-contributing	
1		Buildings
		Sites
		Structures
		Objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions.): Commerce/Trade: Professional  
**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions.): Vacant: Work in Progress

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## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions.): Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movement: Commercial Style

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Brick

roof: Asphalt

other:

### 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.)

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#### Summary Paragraph

The 1919 Noble Building is a two-story masonry commercial edifice with a rectangular plan and a flat roof. Constructed of load-bearing masonry, the primary façade is finished with unpainted buff brick and decorative brick panels above the windows. The roof is covered in asphalt roll roofing. Situated in downtown Lake Charles (Calcasieu Parish), Louisiana, next door to City Hall, the Noble Building is centered on the south side of a commercial block facing north on Pujou Street. Although interior alterations have occurred in a portion of the ground floor commercial space, the building retains much of its architectural and historic integrity both inside and out and remains eligible for National Register listing.

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#### Narrative Description

While the structures along the north side of the 300 block of Pujou Street were demolished in the 1960's, the south block of Pujou Street remains intact with other historic commercial structures built along the sidewalk with no setback.

The Noble Building was constructed with methods typical of downtown commercial structures in the early twentieth century. In an effort to create fireproof structures after the Great Fire of 1910, which destroyed much of downtown Lake Charles, the building has load-bearing masonry walls sitting on concrete strip footings. The roof is surrounded by masonry parapet walls and is covered by asphalt roll roofing.

The primary façade (see Photos 1 and 2) faces Pujou Street and is finished with an unpainted, buff-colored brick. It is divided into three bays by brick pilasters, which forms two leasable areas in the first floor commercial space. The western one-third of the first floor houses the Majestic Barbershop, and the eastern two-thirds currently is unoccupied. Although not original to the construction, the current storefront of the easternmost bay is fabricated of aluminum framing with marble panels accenting the base. The original wooden doors with large glass panels (currently covered with paper on the interior due to renovation work) have an upper transom and serve as entry into the eastern lease space. Like the first bay, the central bay also consists of large windows of aluminum framing with marble accent panels at the base. The original wooden storefront of the westernmost

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bay was also replaced with aluminum storefront framing. The large plate glass windows have simple green painted aluminum panels located below them. The entire storefront of this final bay is recessed at an angle into the leased space. Original wooden transoms, consisting of six divided frosted lites, are located above all three storefronts, finishing the lower floor.

The second floor consists of decorative brick panels exhibiting a diamond pattern created with a darker brown brick below wooden counterweight windows, which are subdivided into a ten over one glazing pattern. The ten lites of the upper sash are subdivided unequally with smaller lites at the top. Another section of decorative brick panels sits above the windows, and the façade is finished with a straight parapet wall with a simple decorative cornice formed by three courses of projecting brick and brick coping.

The east and west walls of the building are party walls that abut the adjacent buildings. Visible in only one location in an alcove of City Hall, these facades are constructed with a red brick that is more utilitarian than the brick comprising the street façade.

The rear façade (see Photo 3) faces south and abuts a mechanical yard and parking area for City Hall. Devoid of any decorative features, the same utilitarian red brick is used for this wall. The only door at the rear provides access to the smaller lease space to the west. There are four openings at the first level. The westernmost opening on the first level appears to have been a loading dock at some time, but it has been covered with wood; this opening would have served the smaller lease space. The remaining three windows are large industrial steel windows that are original to the construction. Although all three windows have multiple divided lites with an operable panel in the center, the two windows to the east are slightly smaller in dimension. The five windows of the upper level are the same industrial steel windows that are found on the first level. There are four large windows matching the lower window with twenty-four lites and an operable panel in the center. The second window from the west is a smaller single-hung window with nine lites. A masonry vertical mechanical shaft begins at ground level and runs the entire height of the building. This shaft, located slightly off center on the rear façade, is not original to the building.

The first floor plan of the Noble Building reflects a typical commercial-style building of its time. The western one-third of the first floor is a separate lease space that currently serves as a barbershop. The majority of the barbershop floor plan is open with no partitions and rises to a high ceiling. A small office and restroom are situated under a mezzanine at the rear.

Visitors to the larger, eastern lease space (see Photos 4, 5, and 6) on the first floor that once held the offices of F. Shutts & Sons, gain access through a vestibule off the street. Stairs to the upper level originate in the vestibule, and the entry into the lower commercial space is directly in front of the exterior entry door. The front half of the floor plan is open with no partitions and rises to a tall, pressed metal ceiling. Small rooms such as restrooms and closets line the east wall. Three small offices, each bearing a door with a Shutts name, and a large safe are arranged in the rear under a mezzanine. Although not original to the building, these rear offices were constructed during Elmer Shutts' tenure in the building and served as the offices of the Shutts brothers. The mezzanine is another open space that provides access to an additional safe of similar size as the one on the ground floor. The mezzanine safe sits atop the safe of the first level.

Access to the second level is gained by way of a substantial marble staircase (see Photo 10) that leads from the front vestibule. The floor plan of the second floor is unaltered from its original design. A notable feature is the central hallway that runs parallel with the front façade (see Photo 7). It is flanked by smaller offices to the north and south and retains a wainscot of white subway tile. Original wooden door frames with transoms and interior sidelight windows provide access to the offices (see Photos 8 and 9). The offices opening off the central

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corridor provide access to additional offices that line the exterior walls, creating a layout that is two offices deep off of the central corridor. The second floor housed the offices of the building owner, Charles O. Noble, and others.

### Alterations

The main alteration in the Noble Building is the addition of the mezzanines in the first floor commercial spaces. The mezzanines are constructed to the rear of both spaces. Although it is difficult to date the construction of the mezzanine in the smaller, western commercial space, the construction date of the mezzanine in the larger, eastern space is easier to estimate due to the dimensions of the lumber used and the presence of a safe than can be dated. Constructed during the period of significance soon after the Shutts began leasing the space and before the mid-1940's, the mezzanine in the larger commercial space was built to accommodate the functions of the engineering firm. The private offices of the Shutts Brothers were built below the mezzanine, leaving the remainder of the downstairs space and the space on the mezzanine for employees and work areas. The engineering firm functioned in this space as it is still configured until 1975.

The replacement of the original wooden storefront with aluminum windows is the other chief alteration. The remainder of the windows in the building endure as originally installed. The wooden storefront was replaced in both first floor commercial spaces. The wooden door and transom still remain in the larger, eastern space, but the door and windows were replaced in the smaller, western lease space. The date of this replacement is unknown, but appears to be c. 1950 based on the modern design. The remainder of the windows, both the wooden windows on the second floor of the north façade and the steel windows in the south façade, remain as originally installed.

Despite these alterations, the building retains a significant degree of integrity and is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The building continues to exhibit integrity in the areas of location, design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association. While the building is located on its original site, the surrounding area (setting) has been altered through the demolition of buildings across the street. The floor plan of the building remains largely intact on the first floor despite the addition of the mezzanine and completely intact on the second floor. The addition of the mezzanine and lower offices in the main commercial space occurred early in the life of the building to accommodate the business of Elmer Shutts, who is the subject of this nomination. Because of the construction date and the reason for its construction, this alteration has gained significance in its own right. Due to the presence of the majority of the original construction materials and details, the integrity of the materials and workmanship is clearly evident. Replacement of the original wood storefront with aluminum storefront is the only exterior alteration. Fortunately, the original wood entry door and transom still remains in the larger commercial space, and, with proper photographic evidence, the original design intent could be easily reconstructed.

Because the property maintains the majority of its physical features, it easily conveys the feeling of the period of significance and its association with Elmer Shutts. Currently, the Noble Building is in fair condition with evidence of past termite exposure and water damage on the first floor. However, the essential physical features and feelings of the building are visible enough to convey its significance. If Elmer Shutts were able to see the building today, he would recognize it as his place of business. With the degree of integrity that the building retains and the limited alterations, some of which have gained significance in their own right, the Noble Building remains eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

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**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.)

	<b>A</b>	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
<b>x</b>	<b>B</b>	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
	<b>C</b>	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.
	<b>D</b>	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history

**Criteria Considerations:**

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

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions.): Engineering

**Period of Significance:** 1937-1967

**Significant Dates:** 1937

**Significant Person** (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above): Shutts, Elmer E.

**Cultural Affiliation** (only if criterion D is marked above): n/a

**Architect/Builder (last name, first name):** unknown

**Period of Significance (justification):** The period of significance for the building encompasses the years that Elmer Shutts occupied the building, ending in 1967 when Mr. Shutts retired.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary):** n/a

**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.)

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The Noble Building is locally significant under Criterion B in the area of engineering because of its close association with Elmer E. Shutts, the first engineer for the Port of Lake Charles, which is one of the driving forces behind the industrial economy that thrived in Lake Charles during the historic period and beyond. Industrial operations replaced the lumber trade as the economic engine of Calcasieu Parish in the late 1920's and early 1930's and continues today as the main economic generator in the area. Elmer Shutts maintained his business, F. Shutts & Sons, in the lower floor of the Noble Building from c. 1937 until his retirement in 1967. The engineering firm continued in the building until 1975.

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

## **BACKGROUND**

### Lake Charles and Its Waterways

The first white settlers arrived in southwest Louisiana in the late 1700s, attracted by the prairies for cattle grazing and abundant waterways for the transportation of goods and products. The community of Lake Charles was founded on the shores of a natural lake bounded by the Calcasieu River on the west side. The area flourished, and industrial life began early as the first sawmill and trade port were established in 1855.

The destruction of the Civil War created a market for Louisiana lumber as the South continued to rebuild. This demand brought a need for better access to sawmills in Calcasieu Parish. Congress named Lake Charles an official port shortly after the conclusion of the Civil War, and a Customs Office was established at Cameron, a community south of Lake Charles.

Agriculture and lumber prospered through the late 1800's, and the waterways served as the main conduit for transporting products. However, only shallow draft schooners could navigate the river due to abundant sandbars. Community leaders saw this as an impediment to the lumber industry and other commerce and petitioned the War Department in Washington for a deeper channel. Their requests were denied. The river remained passable to only shallow draft schooners that could traverse the sandbars.

In 1920, leaders of Lake Charles recognized that forestry depletion had caused the decline of the lumber industry and that tremendous quantities of rice were grown within a 60-mile radius of Lake Charles. However, most of the crops were shipped through Beaumont, Texas and New Orleans. They knew that a seaport was necessary to maintain their industrial strength and again requested Federal appropriations. Once again, the request was denied.

The community's luck changed in 1921 when the Louisiana Constitution was altered to allow Police Juries (county commission) to fund and initiate public works projects. The Legislature authorized the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury to call a bond election for dredging and widening Calcasieu River and Lake and for obtaining rights of way.

The people of Lake Charles took matters into their own hands, approving a \$2.75 million bond issue to deepen and widen the Calcasieu River from the Intracoastal Canal to Lake Charles. This provided a navigation route through the Intracoastal Canal to the Sabine River, located on the border of Louisiana and Texas, and the Gulf of Mexico, which made Lake Charles the only seaport to be built and put into operation without any Federal assistance. The citizens had faith that the port would develop industry in the area.

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In 1924, the Louisiana Legislature authorized the Lake Charles Harbor and Terminal District through Act 67 and empowered the District to call bond elections and coordinate fundraising efforts for the construction, operation, and maintenance of port facilities. Additionally, the governor appointed a Board of Commissioners. The job of planning and constructing a terminal facility commenced, and the newly appointed Board of Commissioners recognized the need for a port engineer. The Board sought the expertise of Elmer E. Shutts and appointed him port engineer in 1925. Frank Shutts, Elmer's father, had opened an engineering firm in Lake Charles in 1888, and from early ages, his sons assisted with the engineering and surveying tasks of the business. Elmer Shutts formalized his education, graduating in the first engineering class of Rice University in 1916. Following graduation, Elmer returned to Lake Charles to join his father's business, along with one of his brothers.

Elmer E. Shutts and the Port of Lake Charles  
During Shutts' Ryan Street Office Years, 1925-1937

Elmer immediately set about planning and designing the port facilities. He participated in discussions between the Commissioners and Southern Pacific, Kansas City Southern, and Missouri Pacific railroads to determine the participation of rail lines in the development of the port and facilities needed. He traveled around the nation and the world, studying port facilities to determine the most beneficial arrangement for Lake Charles. By July 7, 1925, the Harbor and Terminal District was prepared to call for a special bond election for the construction of wharves, docks, warehouses, railway facilities, elevators, and other structures necessary for port operation. Elmer Shutts designed each of these early port structures. The Board authorized Shutts to commence a search for an appropriate location for the port in August 1925 and, based on Shutts' recommendation, voted to acquire property bound by the Calcasieu River and Contraband Bayou, known as the Walnut Grove site.

With the first port director, H.J. Luhn, in place, the Board forged ahead with construction of the new facilities. By October 1925, the three transit sheds were complete, and Luhn was allowed to lease space for storage of rough rice at the facilities that became known as the City Docks.

The official opening of the Port of Lake Charles was held on November 30, 1926. A United States Navy vessel, the U.S.S. Cleveland, docked at the newly constructed wharves amid much fanfare. Its destination was Bluefields, Nicaragua. Exchanges between Lake Charles and the rest of the world had commenced, and the foresight of the citizens and Board of Commissioners along with the designs of Elmer Shutts made it possible.

According to the opening day program, three sawmills and eight retail lumber yards operated in Lake Charles, and oil was beginning to have a prominent role in the area economy with seven oil fields in Calcasieu Parish that produced approximately 7,000 barrels of oil per day. Additionally, Calcasieu Parish produced two-thirds of all rice grown in the United States, and cotton acreage had increased to 9,000 acres that produced 5,500 bales of cotton per year.

Lake Charles was thriving, and the port played a significant role in its economic success. In addition to the success of the rice and lumber mills, the area had become a viable site for industry because of the availability of fuel, raw materials, and transportation. All of the critical ingredients were in place. The port also provided, and continues to provide, permanent employment for a significant number of skilled and unskilled workers.

This was only the beginning. The port continued to expand and prosper at a time when the rest of the country was suffering from the Great Depression. As the community persisted in their support of the port through bond elections, Elmer Shutts continued to guide the Board in construction and engineering decisions. In addition to designing each new facility that was added at the site, Shutts personally oversaw the bidding and construction

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process of each structure to ensure quality construction. Not only did Shutts' influence at the port increase, but his influence at his office also grew. Upon the death of his father in 1927, Elmer and his brother, Fred, assumed control of F. Shutts & Sons Engineering. Eight years later, the brothers relocated their office from the original address on Ryan Street (this building no longer exists) to the Noble Building on Pujo Street. Named for Charles O. Noble, who played an integral role in drilling the first oil well in Louisiana, the Noble Building served as the office of the Noble Oil Company (offices on the second floor) beginning in 1935, when the family acquired the property.

### **SIGNIFICANCE UNDER CRITERION B, 1937-1967**

#### Elmer E. Shutts and the Port of Lake Charles During the Noble Building Years, 1937-1967

Business was booming, and the industrial expansion had begun in Lake Charles by 1937. However, the populace was not satisfied. At this time, ships were required to reach the gulf by way of the Intracoastal Waterway to the Sabine River, a 75-mile journey to the west. Port authorities envisioned a better way and submitted a formal request to Congress for a direct channel from Lake Charles to the gulf, shortening the trip to 35 miles. The response was negative at first, but the discussion continued. During this time period, business at the port expanded so quickly that in one year the tonnage growth exceeded the War Department's estimate for a ten-year period. With this prosperity in mind and with the encouragement of Congressman Rene DeRouen and Senator John Overton, Congress finally allocated the money for the project when Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Omnibus Rivers and Harbors Bill in 1938. With Elmer Shutts at the helm of the engineering force, the channel and jetties were completed by July 12, 1941. With the new channel, the trip to the Gulf was shortened to seven hours, and vessels could travel at any time, night or day, and pass in the widened channel.

The newly-dredged channel and the demands of World War II instigated the second industrial growth spurt in Lake Charles. More than 10 major industrial companies constructed plants in the Lake Charles area. Ships waited at the docks to deliver and transport a diverse range of products, and the Port also contracted with the U.S. War Department to store military cargo for the war.

In the early 1940's, the third Shutts son, Harry, joined his two older brothers at the engineering firm. Harry assisted with the workload at the office, addressing the firm's oil related work and supervising projects in other parishes. This afforded Elmer the opportunity to continue his focus on work at the port.

Community visionaries saw the need to develop the infrastructure to support industrial growth in the area. Because of their foresight, industrial development totaling \$225 million was operating in Lake Charles by the conclusion of the war, and Lake Charles did not experience the significant economic downturn that many other communities suffered because of the decline of war production plants.

In the years following the war, Elmer Shutts continued as the engineer who advised the board, designed facilities, traveled to appeal to the government for funds and support, and supervised the bidding and construction of new structures. The community passed bond issues for improvements in 1953 and 1954. Beginning in 1956, construction of a wharf and transit shed on Contraband Bayou, a large bayou running through the City and emptying into the Calcasieu River immediately south of the port property, was begun. Following these improvements, the port authority saw need to build an additional wharf and two transit sheds from the mouth of Contraband Bayou extending north to the third unit of the City Docks, located at the main, original port property. Shutts was in charge of all of these improvements and remained busy with port work with additional bond funds in 1958 and 1960. On April 15, 1960, the Port Authority received word that the

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United States Board of Engineers had approved additional deepening of the Calcasieu Ship Channel to 40 feet and widening of the channel to 400 feet. At the same time, the Port Board proceeded with plans to construct Bulk Terminal No. 1, a dry bulk terminal, on the west bank of the channel about two miles south of the City Docks. The 1960's also brought the construction of the Industrial Canal, a three-mile long canal that intersects with the Calcasieu Ship Channel and the Intracoastal Waterway.

All of this growth took place under the watchful eye and guidance of Shutts, who took great pride in his engineering work at the port, using everyone in his office to accomplish the necessary tasks. His daughter, Elizabeth Shutts Woodward provided details for Shirley Haupt, who wrote, "Port of Lake Charles: A Vision for the Future." According to Ms. Woodward, "They hired my father as engineer. He used my uncles, also. He used everyone they had in the office. My father was very particular about who was doing what." Shutts was directly responsible for the design and supervision of the construction of much of these early facilities. Under his guidance, his office produced plans, wrote specifications, and received bids for these construction projects, including the aforementioned facilities at the City Docks, the Industrial Canal, and the Bulk Terminal. With its downtown location, his office on Pujo Street was well located for easy access to port property and projects, as the port is in close proximity to downtown Lake Charles. In addition to time spent at the office producing the necessary construction documents, Shutts also spent ample time supervising the construction process on site.

Because of his work at the port, Elmer Shutts greatly influenced the trade and industry operations and appearance of early Calcasieu Parish and helped ensure its economic future. Through his engineering design and leadership, he guided the birth of the Port of Lake Charles and its continued development until his retirement in 1967. By that time, the fledgling port had developed physically to include numerous general cargo facilities along with special facilities to accommodate operations such as pumping coconut oil from the Philippines. There were wharves and transit sheds at the original location as well as on outlying bayous. Because of the port and abundant resources, there were in excess of 20 industrial plants operating in the district, with a value totaling one billion dollars. The opening of the newly built Industrial Canal made the area ripe for new industrial development. By 1967, the port's annual economic impact on southwest Louisiana was over 40 billion dollars, and it linked the city of Lake Charles with nearly all major worldwide ports. It is now the 14<sup>th</sup> busiest and the 12<sup>th</sup> largest seaport in the United States. The Port continues to touch the lives of many in Lake Charles and the surrounding communities through jobs, commerce, and investment in the area.

The Noble Building is one of a few surviving buildings directly associated with Elmer Shutts. Shutts built a home for his family on the lakefront across from the port in 1941; the home was designed by Wilson Morris of Houston, Texas. Although this home still exists, it is not the location where his port work was performed. Additionally, Transit Sheds 1, 2, and 3, designed by Shutts at the City Docks, are still in use as port facilities. The sheds currently are similar to Shutts' original designs, with improvements to or replacement of the concrete floors over time. However, the Port of Lake Charles has decided to renovate the sheds themselves to accommodate modern deep water cargo commerce. These renovations are scheduled to begin in the near future. Lastly, the building at the original address of F. Shutts & Sons engineering firm on Ryan Street in Lake Charles no longer exists. The Noble Building is the surviving resource, with the highest degree of integrity, most directly associated with Shutts' long and productive career as the first engineer for the Port of Lake Charles. Twelve years of his port-related career were spent in the now demolished Ryan Street building. However, after relocating his office to the Noble Building on Pujo Street c. 1937, Shutts spent 30 years planning and supervising the construction of the Port of Lake Charles and the alteration of the adjoining waterways serving the port facilities. For 42 years, Elmer Shutts' work directly influenced the development and growth of the Port of Lake Charles into the large and busy port it is today.

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**Developmental History/Additional historic context information**

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## 9. Major Bibliographical Resources

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

- Abstract of Title. 324 Pujo Street, No. 241, 240, Volumes I and II. Mayo Land Title Co., Inc.
- Board of Commission Minutes. Lake Charles Harbor and Terminal District. 1925 – 1949.
- Haupt, Shirley. “Port of Lake Charles: A Vision for the Future.” Port of Lake Charles, 1998.
- “Historic Photographs of Southwest Louisiana.” LOUISiana Digital Library.  
<<http://louisdl.louislibraries.org/cdm/search/collection/PSL/searchterm/Shutts/field/all/mode/any/conn/and/cosuppress/>> (17 April 2013).
- Kaufman, E.R. “A Port City,” in *Lake Charles Centennial Celebration 1867-1967*. Lake Charles, LA: McNeese State College, 1967.
- Lake Charles City Directories, 1928-1950.
- Lane, Bernard H. *The Industrial Development of Lake Charles, Louisiana 1920-1950*. Lake Charles: 1959.
- “Passage to the Sea: The History of the Port of Lake Charles.” Lake Charles Harbor and Terminal District. 2013. <<http://portlc.com/about/history/>> (25 April 2013).
- The Rice Institute Pamphlet*. Volume VI, January 1919, No. 1.
- Ross, Nola Mae Wittler. “Frank Shutts and sons: early builders.” Lake Charles American Press 19 Feb. 1989: 37.
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Company. Maps, Lake Charles, April 1919, April 1925, April 1925-September 1949.

### **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:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency

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Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### 10. Geographical Data

#### Acreage of Property:

#### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 30.227585 Longitude: -93.216678

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

Commencing 150 feet west of the southwest corner of the intersection of Bilbo and Pujo Streets, in the City of Lake Charles, thence west 50 feet, along the south side of Pujo Street, thence south 55 1/3 feet, thence east 50 feet, thence north 55 1/3 feet to commencement.

#### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Noble Building.

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Lauren Harrell, Preservation Architect  
organization: Randall D. Broussard – Architect, LLC  
street & number: 206 South Huntington St  
city or town: Sulphur state: LA zip code: 70663  
e-mail lauren.harrell@rdnarchitects.com  
telephone: 337-527-7000  
date: June 17, 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.

Noble Building  
Name of Property

Calcasieu Parish, LA  
County and State

- **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 3000x2000 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.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Noble Building  
City or Vicinity: Lake Charles  
County: Calcasieu State: LA  
Photographer: Lauren Harrell  
Date Photographed: May 2013

Photo # 1 of 9 (LA\_Calcasieu Parish\_Noble Building\_0001)  
North façade, camera facing southwest

Photo # 2 of 9 (LA\_Calcasieu Parish\_Noble Building\_0002)  
North façade, camera facing south

Photo # 3 of 9 (LA\_Calcasieu Parish\_Noble Building\_0003)  
South façade, camera facing north

Photo # 4 of 9 (LA\_Calcasieu Parish\_Noble Building\_0004)  
Interior view from front door, first level, camera facing southwest

Photo # 5 of 9 (LA\_Calcasieu Parish\_Noble Building\_0005)  
Interior view, Shutts office, first level, camera facing southeast

Photo # 6 of 9 (LA\_Calcasieu Parish\_Noble Building\_0006)  
Interior view of mezzanine, camera facing north

Photo # 7 of 9 (LA\_Calcasieu Parish\_Noble Building\_0007)  
Interior view of central corridor, second level, camera facing west

Photo # 8 of 9 (LA\_Calcasieu Parish\_Noble Building\_0008)  
Interior view of typical office, second level, camera facing northwest

Photo # 9 of 9 (LA\_Calcasieu Parish\_Noble Building\_0009)  
Interior view of typical office entrance from corridor, second level, camera facing south

Photo # 10 of 10 (LA\_Calcasieu Parish\_Noble Building\_0010)  
Interior view of staircase from entry vestibule to second floor corridor, camera facing south

Noble Building

Name of Property

Calcasieu Parish, LA

County and State

List of Figures:

1. Elmer Shutts, engineer; Image courtesy of LOUISiana Digital Library Historic Photographs of Southwest Louisiana Collection.
2. Celebrating 24 years of the Port of Lake Charles newspaper article. Image courtesy of LOUISiana Digital Library Historic Photographs of Southwest Louisiana Collection.
3. Photograph from the Port's opening day. Mr. Shutts is at the far left. Image courtesy of LOUISiana Digital Library Historic Photographs of Southwest Louisiana Collection.
4. Elmer Shutts while still a student at Rice University. Image courtesy of Rice University Centennial Celebration, 2012, "Historian's Blog."
5. Elmer Shutts and the chairman of Calcasieu River and Pass Deep Water committee discuss project details; newspaper article; Image courtesy of LOUISiana Digital Library Historic Photographs of Southwest Louisiana Collection.Noble

Noble Building  
Name of Property

Calcasieu Parish, LA  
County and State



Figure 1. Elmer Shutts, engineer; Image courtesy of LOUISiana Digital Library Historic Photographs of Southwest Louisiana Collection.



Noble Building  
Name of Property

Calcasieu Parish, LA  
County and State



Figure 3. Photograph from the Port's opening day. Mr. Shutts is at the far left. Image courtesy of LOUISiana Digital Library Historic Photographs of Southwest Louisiana Collection.

Noble Building  
Name of Property

Calcasieu Parish, LA  
County and State



Figure 4. Elmer Shutts (left) while still a student at Rice University. Image courtesy of Rice University Centennial Celebration, 2012, "Historian's Blog."

Noble Building  
Name of Property

Calcasieu Parish, LA  
County and State



Figure 5. Elmer Shutts (left) and the chairman of Calcasieu River and Pass Deep Water committee discuss project details; newspaper article; Image courtesy of LOUISiana Digital Library Historic Photographs of Southwest Louisiana Collection.

Noble Building

Name of Property

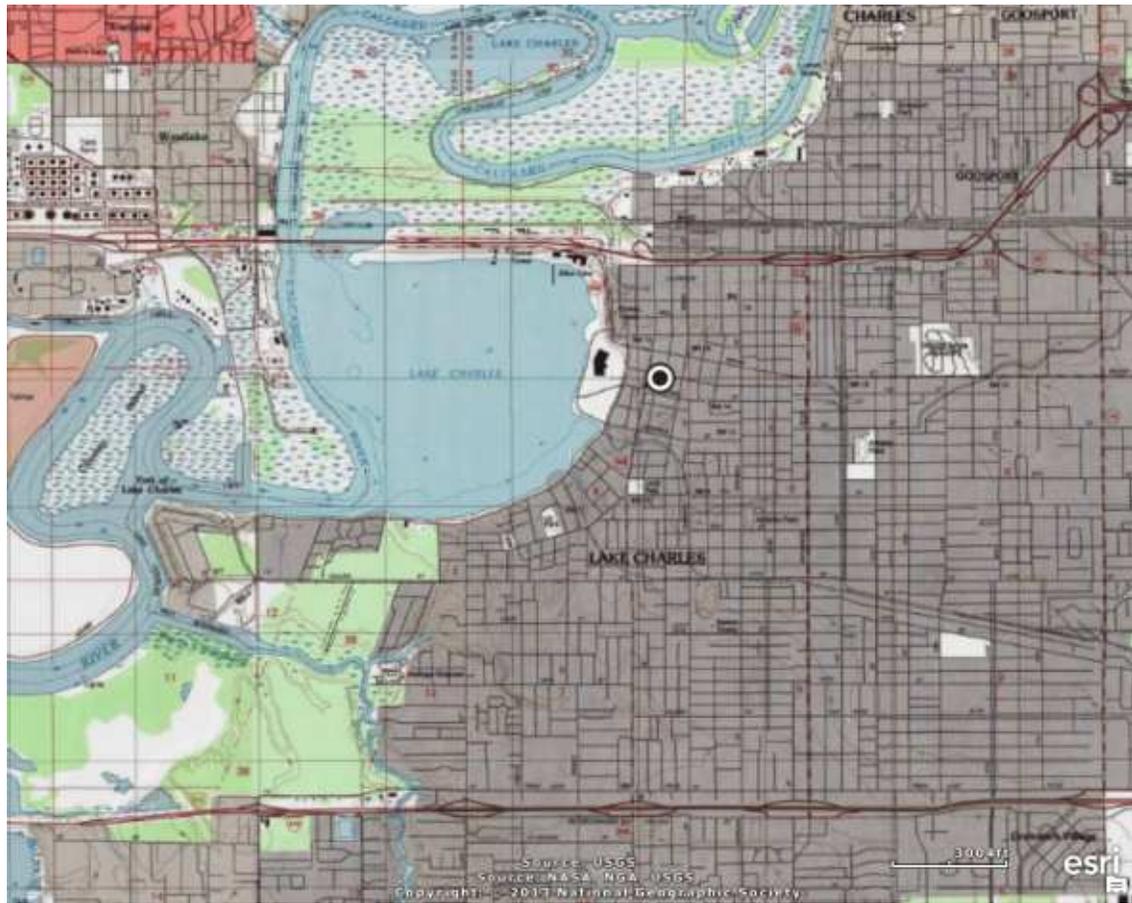
Calcasieu Parish, LA

County and State

**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.

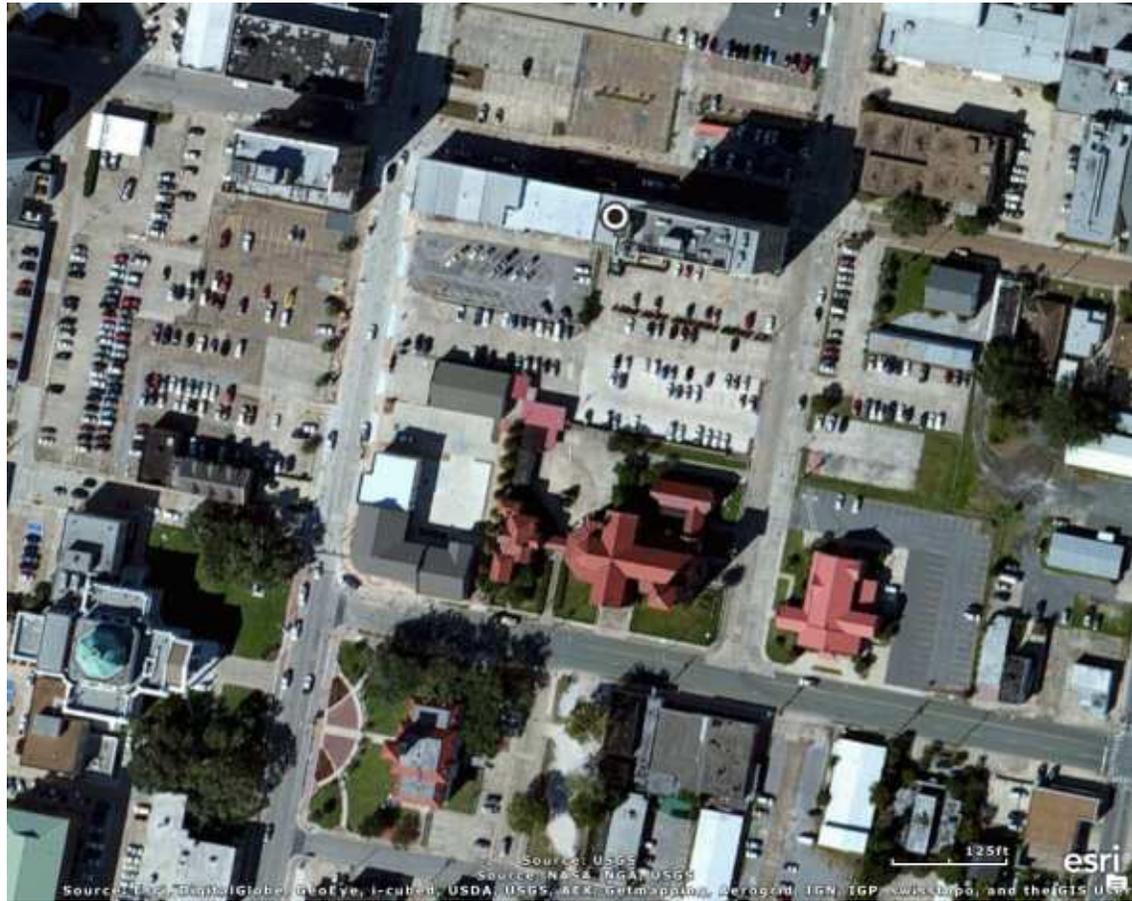
### Noble Building, Calcasieu Parish, LA



Latitude: 30.227585

Longitude: -93.216678

**Noble Building, Calcasieu Parish, LA**



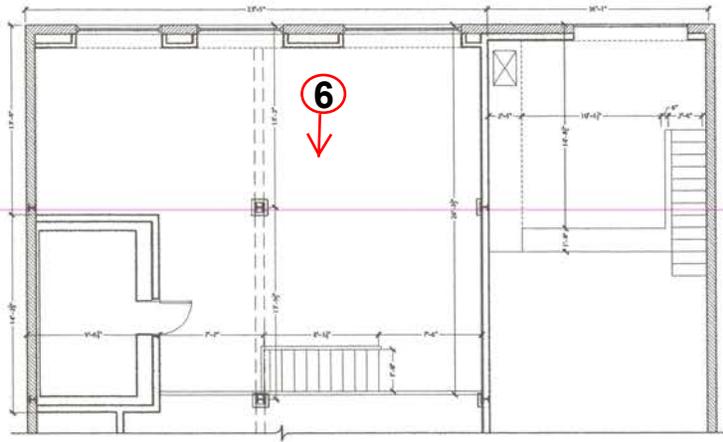
**Latitude: 30.227585**

**Longitude: -93.216678**

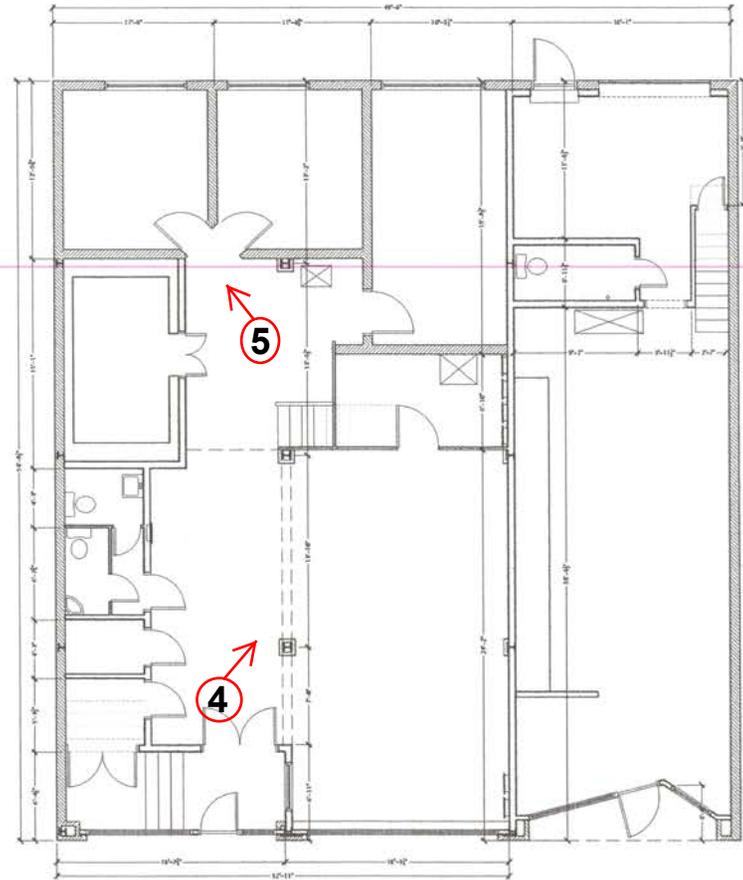
# Noble Building Calcasieu Parish, LA First Floor Sketch Map



2 FIRST FLOOR MEZZANINE PLAN  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



1 FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



1 ↗

Pujo Street

2 ↑

Renovations to:  
**Noble Building**

Pujo Street  
Calcasieu Parish  
Lake Charles, Louisiana 70601

**Jeff Kudla, AIA**  
Architect, LLC

429 Kirby Street  
Lake Charles, LA 70601  
337.436.3658  
337.436.3655 fax

project # 1255.0

date issued: 04/23/2012  
drawn by: JH  
checked by: JH  
revisions:

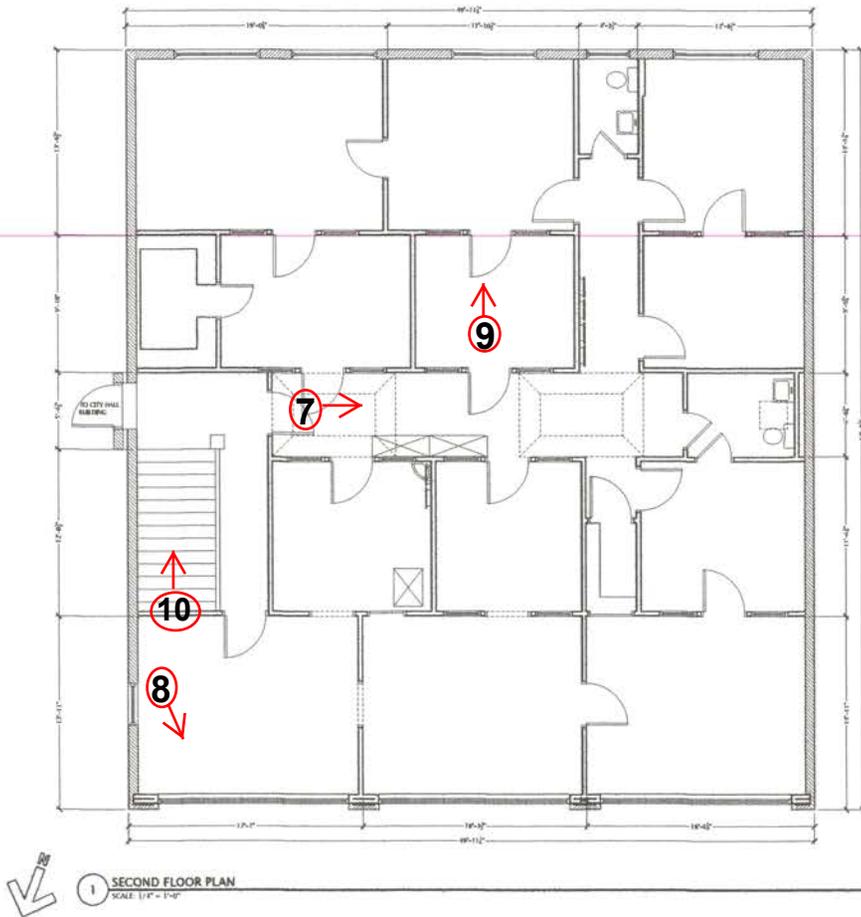
© 2012 copyright  
Jeffrey M. Kudla Architects, LLC

Existing  
First Floor  
Plans

sheet #

A 1.0

**Noble Building  
Calcasieu Parish, LA  
SEcond Floor SKetch Map**



Renovations to:  
**Noble Building**  
Pujo Street  
Calcasieu Parish  
Lake Charles, Louisiana 70601

**Jeff Kudla, AIA**  
Architect, LLC  
439 Kings Street  
Lake Charles, LA 70601  
337.483.3600  
337.483.0003 fax

project #	1255.0
date issued	04/21/2012
drawn by	JL
checked by	JL
revisions	

© 2012 jeffkudla  
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Existing  
Second  
Floor Plan

sheet #  
**A 2.0**

1 SECOND FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

**Pujo Street**



CITY  
HALL

NOBLE  
BUILDING

NO  
PARKING  
LOADING  
ZONE

NO  
PARKING

ONE  
WAY

STOP



NOBLE  
BUILDING

UNDER  
RESTORATION

BARBER & STILL  
CENTER



NO  
PARKING



ELMER E. SHUTTS













National Register of Historic Places  
Memo to File

# Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Noble Building  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: LOUISIANA, Calcasieu

DATE RECEIVED: 5/01/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/20/14  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/04/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/17/14  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14000310

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 6.10.2014 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Office of Chief engineer responsible for much of design &  
expansion of <sup>Lake</sup> ~~Charles~~ Charles' port facilities, including ship terminals  
& Terminal facilities.

CC '67 not necessary - 1967 is logical end to bulk of PRS or 750

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept B

REVIEWER J. Gabbert 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

PAM BREAU  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

April 30, 2014

TO: Mr. James Gabbert  
National Park Service 2280, 8<sup>th</sup> 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: Northwestern State University Historic District, Natchitoches Parish, LA

Jim,

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Baker High School Auditorium 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](mailto: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:



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

PAM BREUX  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

January 31, 2014

Lori Marinovich  
Lake Charles Historic District Commission  
326 Pujoe Street  
Lake Charles, LA 70601

Dear Ms. Marinovich:

We are pleased to inform you that the historic property listed below will be considered by the State National Register Review Committee for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places:

**Noble Building  
324 Pujoe Street  
Lake Charles, LA**

The National Register of Historic Places is the federal government's official list of historic properties worthy of preservation. Listing on the National Register provides recognition and assists in preserving our Nation's heritage. Listing of a property provides recognition of its historic significance and assures protective review of federal projects that might adversely affect the character of the historic property. If the property is listed on the National Register, tax credits for rehabilitation and other beneficial provisions may apply. Listing in the National Register does not place limitations on the property by the federal or state government. Public visitation rights are not required of owners. The government will not attach restrictive covenants to the property or seek to acquire them. A draft copy of the nomination and attachment is included with this letter.

One of your responsibilities as a Certified Local Government (CLG) is to review pending National Register nominations of properties within your community. This is required, in part, to detect any errors in fact, but also to provide local insight or knowledge concerning the property. I hope that you will consider the nomination for this property at your next meeting. After providing a reasonable opportunity for public comment, the Lake Charles Historic District Commission shall fill out the attached CLG review form as to whether or not, in their opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. Within 60 calendar days of notice from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the chief elected official shall transmit their report to the SHPO. If the SHPO does not receive the report and recommendation within 60 calendar days, the nomination process will continue. All comments received will be forwarded to the SHPO Director and the National Register Review Committee for consideration along with the nomination.

We have scheduled the nomination for presentation to the National Register Review Committee on **Wednesday, April 23, 2014**, and would like to receive your comments by that time in fulfillment of the comment period. This letter serves as notification initiating the sixty-day comment period and no further action will be taken on the nomination until we have received your comments or the full sixty-day period has passed.

Ms. Lori Marinovich  
January 31, 2014  
Page 2

You are invited to attend the National Register Review Committee meeting at which the nomination will be officially considered. The Committee will meet at 1:00 PM in the meeting room of the Capitol Park Welcome Center at 702 North River Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70802. Should you have any questions about this nomination before the meeting, please contact me at 225-219-4595 or at [jrichardson@crt.la.gov](mailto:jrichardson@crt.la.gov).

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Pam Breaux".

Pam Breaux  
State Historic Preservation Officer

LAKE CHARLES HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION REPORT FOR:

NOBLE BUILDING

NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION

NAME OF CLG: City of Lake Charles Downtown Development Authority

PROPERTY NAME: Noble Building

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 324 Pujio Street

DATE SENT: April 11, 2014

DATE OF NATIONAL REGISTER REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING: \_\_\_\_\_

Does the nomination meet the Criteria for Listing on the National Register of Historic Places?

Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_ Criterion: A \_\_\_\_\_ B  C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_

Has public comment been included? Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_ Explain:

The DDA held meeting on April 7, 2014 and reviewed in a public meeting session. No objections expressed - No written comments were received - See DDA Resolution 2014-005 attached.

The Commission recommends that the property or properties should be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Commission would like to make the following recommendations regarding the nomination (use additional sheets if necessary): Encourage Applicant to take Advantage of State and Federal Tax Incentives, Restoration Tax Abatement Program. Work with local Calcasieu Preservation Historic Society, on the SWLA Convention Bureau to use Building to promote Cultural Tourism.

The Commission recommends that the property or properties should not be listed on the National Register of Historic Places for the following reasons:

The Commission chooses not to make a recommendation on this nomination for the following reasons:

Lori Marinovich  
Historic District Commission Chair (Print Name)

Lori Marinovich 4-9-14  
Signature Date

Randy Roach, Mayor  
Chief Elected Official (Print Name)

Randy Roach 4/9/14  
Signature Date

If the SHPO does not receive this report and recommendation within 60 calendar days, the SHPO will continue the nomination process. This report and recommendation should be mailed to:

National Register Coordinator  
Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation  
PO Box 44247  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Questions about this form may be directed to the National Register Coordinator – Jessica Richardson at 225-215-4595 or [jrichardson@crt.la.gov](mailto:jrichardson@crt.la.gov).

# City of Lake Charles

326 Pujo Street  
P.O. Box 1178  
Lake Charles, LA  
70602-1178

## Certified Copy

Resolution: 77-14

File Number: 168-14

Enactment Number: 77-14

**A resolution in support of the request by the owner of record and the State Historic Preservation Officer to list the Noble Building located 324 Pujo Street on the National Register of Historic Places.**

WHEREAS, The City of Lake Charles Downtown Development Authority seeks to implement programs through public/private partnership agreements in such a manner as to aid and encourage economic development;

WHEREAS, the potential of millions of investment dollars will be spent to rehab important historical structures within these districts. These structures are a unique addition to the character and culture of the region as well as serving the small business endeavors that reside within them. The economic benefits of these rehab projects have been articulated in Dr. Tim Ryan's report "The Economic Impact of Louisiana's Historic Tax Credit Program" completed in April, 2011;

WHEREAS, several tax incentives are available to owners of structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places;

WHEREAS, under the recently expanded Restoration Tax Abatement Program, the assessed value and the property assessment can be frozen at the pre-improvement level for five years, resulting in the substantial tax savings. The RTA can be renewed for an additional five years. In addition, this program can be used in combination with the federal historic preservation tax credit program, resulting in even more substantial savings;.

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation administers the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit in conjunction with the National Park Service (NPS) and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and two State tax credits in conjunction with the Louisiana Department of Revenue (LDR). The purpose of tax credits is to encourage the preservation of historic buildings through incentives to support rehabilitation of historic and older buildings;

WHEREAS, the tax credits for the rehabilitation of eligible historic properties located in certain areas include downtown development districts and/or cultural product districts. In the Charlestown Cultural District and the Cottage Shops Cultural District. The Downtown Development District and the Charpentier National Register Historic District together form the Charlestown Cultural District;

WHEREAS, the Lake Charles Downtown Development Authority is a recognized Certified Local Government with responsibilities that include reviewing National Register of Historic Places applications for structures located within the district; and

WHEREAS, one significant building eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and thereafter eligible to participate in the tax incentive programs is the Noble Building located at 324 Pujo Street, slated for redevelopment as a mixed use residential/commercial property.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA, in regular session convened, that:

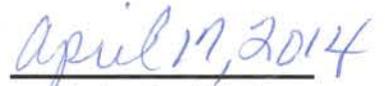
SECTION 1: All of the above and foregoing is hereby made a part of this resolution.

SECTION 2: The City Council of the City of Lake Charles, Louisiana, hereby endorses the request of the record owner, the Downtown Development District and the State Historic Preservation Officer to list the Noble Building located at 324 Pujo Street on the National Register of Historic Places.

I, Lynn F. Thibodeaux, Clerk of the Council, certify that this is a true copy of Resolution number 77-14 passed by the City Council on 4/16/2014.



**Lynn F. Thibodeaux**  
**Clerk of the Council**



**Date Certified**