

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



1. Name

historic The Tennessee Brewery

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number 477 Tennessee Street ___ not for publication

city, town Memphis ___ vicinity of congressional district

state Tennessee code county Shelby code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Karchmer and Newburger

street & number 477 Tennessee Street

city, town Memphis ___ vicinity of state Tennessee 38103

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Shelby County Courthouse

street & number 160 N. Main Street

city, town Memphis state Tennessee 38103

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Tennessee Historical Commission has this property been determined eligible? yes no
Consensus List

date ___ federal state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Tennessee Historical Commission

city, town Nashville state Tennessee 37219

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Tennessee Brewery is located at 477 Tennessee Street facing east between Butler and Calhoun Streets. The Brewery sits on a bluff overlooking Riverside Drive and the Mississippi River to the west. The surrounding area is industrial and warehouse.

The Brewery has an irregular external organization of windows and ornamental treatment that reflects the functional design of the interior, as dictated by the brewing apparatus. The west facade has four distinct sections, each organized differently yet held together visually through the use of materials and stylistic features of (Richardsonian) Romanesque. The basic exterior materials are red brick with cyclopean rusticated stone at the base floor and smooth white limestone trim at various points of accent. Wall openings with deep reveals are in multiple sizes, some segmentally arched, some linteled and some round arched. Corbelling is used extensively for water tables, and ornate fleur-de-lis tie rod anchors can be seen on the exterior. Each section of the west facade will be more fully described as follows.

The south section is four stories in height and approximately 53 feet wide. The lower floor is rusticated half way up and contains two semicircular rusticated stone arches. Inside the archways, are wooden windows and a doorway (in the north arch). A stone water table separates the first and second floor. The second and third floor is visually joined by grouping the windows under four arches that extend over both floors. Segmented spandrils separate the second and third floor windows within their archways. The fourth floor has very ornate corbelling, stone arches and an arcaded, corbelled cornice rising above the roof line.

The south central section (or tower) is approximately 20 feet wide and is the tallest section rising to six stories. The first floor is fully rusticated with one large semicircular arched opening that extends through the structure. Above the arch is a large white limestone plaque with 1890 carved in relief. The second floor has three windows segmentally arched and divided horizontally with white stone transoms. A stone belt course separates the second and third floor. The third and fourth floors are visually joined under three arches extending over both floors. Windows of each floor are separated by segmentally arched brick spandrils within the arches. The fifth and sixth floor are joined in a similar arrangement of arches. The roof of this section has an ornate stepped and corbelled parapet.

The north central section is four stories in height and approximately 27 feet wide. The first floor is partly rusticated and has two arched brick openings (recently enclosed). The second floor has four segmentally arched windows with stone transoms. The third and fourth floors are visually joined by two archways that extend over the length of the two floors. The roof has an ornate stepped parapet.

The north section is six stories and approximately 51 feet wide. The first floor is partially rusticated with two brick segmentally arched openings. (The south opening contains a doorway. The north opening has been bricked in.) A concrete loading dock extends out from this section. The second and third floor contain two small arched openings partially bricked in. The fourth floor has a row of six segmentally arched windows. The fifth and sixth floor are visually joined by arches extending over the windows of both floors. This section is much less ornate than the other three sections.

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The south side of the brewery was originally highly very visible and was therefore given special attention. It can be divided into four sections. The east section (brew house) is very similar to the south section of the west facade with the exception of the two first floor arches; they are of brick. The rustication on this floor extends only slightly above the base. Also the fourth floor windows are lintelled instead of arched. Otherwise the organization matches the west facade (south section). The east central section is two stories in height with one large semicircular arch in the first floor and one large segmentally arched window in the second. The west central section is three stories in height. The first floor has two large semicircular arches. The second and third floor are joined by three semicircular arches that extend from below the second floor to the top of the third. Windows are separated by deeply recessed brick spandrilles. The west section (boiler room) is one tall story in height. There are four blind arches (one originally contained a doorway).

In plan the building is U-shaped around a covered loading court that can be entered through a tunnel under the tower.

The east elevation can be divided into four masses reflecting the four sections of the west facade. However, this elevation is much less ornate than the west facade and much of it has been stuccoed over.

The interior of the brewery consists of multiple floor levels (approximately sixteen) with floor to ceiling heights varying from eleven to twenty-two feet. Cast iron columns are used throughout the interior as are cast iron stairway railings and other apparatus. The south section (brew house) has a large skylight through which several floors are lighted.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1890

Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Brewery's significance lies in two areas—its architecture and its representation of the industrial history of Memphis. It was in the final decades of the 19th century, after the upheaval of the yellow fever epidemics that Memphis began to establish an industrial base along the bluffs south of the downtown area. With its reliance of the distribution system developing at that time, and its dependence on the artesian water supply of the city, the Tennessee Brewery is symbolic of that industrial growth.

The present Tennessee Brewery was built in 1890, and is a reflection of the prosperity and growth enjoyed by local breweries in many American cities during that period. The founder, J. B. Schorr, was the son of a German family associated with brewing before their migration to the United States. The Tennessee Brewing Company began operations in Memphis in 1885. In 1890, the company's growth had necessitated refurbishing and enlarging the brewery facilities, giving it its present appearance. The financial growth of the brewery continued until the enactment of state prohibition legislation in 1909, halting the massive local sales. In 1920, national prohibition legislation halted out-of-state sales of beer, and after a few years of producing "near-beer" the business was forced to close its operations.

In 1933, J. B. Schorr purchased the facility from the Tennessee Brewing Company, and after the building and machinery were refurbished under the direction of architect Joe T. Wallace, the facility re-opened as the Memphis Brewing Company, producing Goldcrest beer. In 1938, the brand name was changed to Goldcrest 51 to celebrate the company's fifty-first year of operation. The business remained successful until 1954, when growing national competition and rising costs and taxes forced its closing. The facility has been used since 1956 for a scrap metals business and is now being purchased for redevelopment and restoration.

In addition, the design of the facilities adds an outstanding richness and character to the city's built environment. The Richardsonian Romanesque complex of buildings, occupying a prominent position on the riverbluffs, has long played an important role in the city's skyline. The Brewery's architecture has been the subject of many articles and studies concerning themselves with the downtown area, and the structure and its association with industrial development and brewing have been not only highly visible, but also the object of a great deal of public concern.

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(11/78)

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BEGINNING at a point in the intersection of the west line of Tennessee Street with the south line of West Butler Avenue; running thence southwardly with said west line of Tennessee Street 268.2 feet to a point in the north line of Center Alley; running thence westwardly with said north line 150 feet to a point in the east line of another alley; running thence northwardly with the east line of said alley 268.8 feet to a point in the south line of West Butler Avenue; running thence eastwardly with said south line of West Butler Avenue 150 feet to the point of beginning.

Being Lots 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of Block 2, Butler Addition to the City of Memphis, and being the same property conveyed to First Party by deed of record in Book 3581, page 450, in the Register's Office of Shelby County, Tennessee.