

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name
other names/site number Upper Central Business District

2. Location

street & number, roughly bounded by O'Keefe, Poydras, Convention Center Blvd, and the Expressway (B.R. 90) N/A not for publication
city, town New Orleans N/A vicinity
state Louisiana code LA county Orleans code 071 zip code 70113&70130

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	386	87 buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	1	0 sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	3 structures
(the 1 federally owned bldg in district is already on Register-5th Circuit Ct. of Appeals)	<input type="checkbox"/> object	0	0 objects
Name of related multiple property listing:		387	90 Total
N/A		Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 18	

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official Leslie P. Tassin, LA State Historic Preservation Officer, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
Date July 6, 1990
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official
Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:)
Entered in the National Register 8/10/90
Signature of the Keeper
Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/warehouse
INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/ warehouse
DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling
RECREATION & CULTURE/art gallery

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival
Italianate
Commercial Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick, concrete
walls brick
roof asphalt; fiberglass
other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The boundaries of the Upper Central Business District encompass a total of 473 buildings, one site and three structures. This district incorporates two certified historic districts, Lafayette Square and the Warehouse District. Contributing elements range in date from the 1820s to 1940 and include principally residential townhouses, industrial facilities, warehouses, and other commercial buildings. The non-contributing rate is 19%, which although a little high for New Orleans, is below average for Louisiana. As the name indicates, the district is only a portion of the CBD. The rest of the CBD is visually separated by the almost completely redeveloped four lane Poydras Avenue and will be nominated as the Lower Central Business District.

At the close of the eighteenth century, the limits of the city of New Orleans were expanded upriver from the initial grid-planned section known today as the Vieux Carre. In 1788 the land which forms most of the Upper Central Business District was owned by Don Bertrand Gravier and Madame Maria Gravier, who had Carlos Trudeau, the Spanish Royal Surveyor, prepare a plan dividing their lands into streets and city blocks. Further upriver, in 1806, the former Delord plantation, which abutted the Gravier property, was subdivided by the surveyor Barthelemy LaFon, thus completing the street and block pattern which exists today in the district. Contemporary writings and maps indicate that there was some development of the area in the last years of the eighteenth century, none of which is still present. This early development consisted of mostly detached Creole style houses, which were to quickly be replaced by the more dense character of the common-wall townhouses favored by the Anglo-American settlers who were to spearhead the growth of the district from the 1820s up to the advent of the Civil War. Following the Civil War, and continuing through the district's period of significance, the principal building activity shifted away from residential to commercial buildings, especially in the portion of the district between Magazine Street and Convention Center Boulevard, the latter being known historically as South Front Street. This area is known today as the Warehouse District.

The character of the Upper CBD is formed by its concentration of masonry structures, most of which exist with common walls shared by their neighbors. There are only a handful of frame buildings in the district. The scale of the buildings in the district is mixed, with most of the buildings being in the three to five story range. The two largest buildings in the district, both of which are intrusions, exceed this scale, standing sixteen to twenty-two stories in

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height. The overall density of the district is enhanced by the fact that there is a relatively small amount of undeveloped land within its boundaries, and most buildings are built on the front property line with no setbacks.

1820-1860 (28.5%)

This period is visible today through the surviving residential townhouses and commercial warehouse structures which are found throughout the district. Technically, the oldest historic resource in the Upper Central Business District is Lafayette Square, the only public park in the district. (Photo No. 32) Lafayette Square was created on the initial 1788 survey of the area, but assumed its present character in 1824, and was named in honor of the Marquis de Lafayette after his visit to New Orleans in 1825. Lafayette Square is designated as a contributing site because, as a landscape feature, it is an integral part of the history and geography of the district. Unexpected in a high density commercial/industrial area, this planned green space links the present district with its early history as a mainly residential area.

Residential development of the district in the 1820-60 period took the form of common-wall townhouses, the majority of which followed the lines of similar developments in the northeastern United States. Rows of identical townhouses were a major feature of construction in the district in the 1830s. Two such rows survive: the four houses located at 630-640 Carondelet Street, built in 1832 by the builder John Fitz Miller, (Photo No. 17) and the row of thirteen townhouses that occupy the entire blockface of the 600 block of Julia Street (Photos No. 27 and No. 22, National Register), built in 1832-1833, designed by the architects A. T. Wood and James H. Dakin. These, as well as other similar rows which no longer survive, were erected as speculative development, with the individual purchasers in some cases being responsible for the final choices on interior work.

In looking at the townhouses in the district, it is important to note that they represent a departure from the townhouses which are to be found in the Vieux Carre from the same period. The Vieux Carre examples most often combined commercial and residential activities in one structure, with the merchant's shop on the ground floor and his residence on the upper floor. There is only one example of this early type of townhouse in the Upper Central Business District, located at 701-703 Tchoupitoulas Street (Photo No. 39).

Stylistically, the townhouses of the Upper Central Business District reflect the dominance of the Greek Revival style in antebellum New Orleans. Two of the finest specimens are located at 721 Camp Street (Photo No. 30) and 822 Camp Street (Photo No. 26), the former featuring a very fine entry doorframe inspired by the designs of the architect Minard Lafever, and the latter sporting a three story cast-iron veranda across its street front. 822 Camp Street was designed by

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the architect Henry Howard. Townhouses from the 1840s and 1850s tended to be larger than earlier ones, as is shown in the row of five townhouses located in the 700 block of Carondelet Street (Photo No. 16), which dwarf their earlier neighbors, illustrated in Photo No. 17.

The pre-1860 residential structures within the Upper Central Business District are concentrated in the area bounded by Howard Avenue, Magazine Street, Lafayette Street and Baronne Street. Within this section of the district are located over fifty examples of townhouse construction.

Commercial buildings from this period are concentrated in the area bounded by Poydras Street, Magazine Street, Convention Center Boulevard and the right-of-way of the Mississippi River bridges. Commercial activity in the district at this time was centered upon the warehousing of raw commodities which were shipped through the port of New Orleans. The streets closest to the edge of the river saw the construction of a number of relatively plain buildings intended for this purpose. The finest surviving examples are located in the 800 blocks of South Peters Street, Fulton Street, and Convention Center Boulevard (Photos No. 53 & 59). One could refer to these and other similar structures as exemplifying a vernacular form of the Greek Revival, with their insistent use of square headed fenestration and simplified cornices.

One of the district's landmark buildings represents antebellum manufacturing in the district. The Gothic Revival style three story warehouse at 923 Tchoupitoulas Street (National Register, Photo No. 44) was built in 1852 by the Leeds Iron Foundry to provide storage for the firm's cast-iron products. Designed by the architectural firm of Gallier, Turpin & Co., the building is the sole surviving remnant of the foundry complex, which once occupied the rest of the block.

The two National Historic Landmark buildings in the Upper Central Business District, Gallier Hall and St. Patrick's Church, also date from the 1820-1860 period. St. Patrick's Church, Photo No. 29, the city's finest Gothic Revival style church, was erected in 1837-1840. The church was begun according to plans by the architect James H. Dakin, but, due to a lawsuit arising from problems in construction, it was completed under the supervision of James Gallier, Sr. Gallier Hall, Photo No. 19, was designed by the architect James Gallier, Sr. to house the government of the city's Second Municipality. Begun in 1845 and completed in 1851, the structure became the city hall for the entire city in 1852. It is widely held to be one of the finest examples of a Greek Revival style government building in the United States.

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1860-1900 (17%)

Construction during the remainder of the nineteenth century, while not as great as the years before the Civil War, nevertheless resulted in the erection of some important new building types in the district. This period is characterized by a steady rise in industrial development, with a shift in building activity away from the simple warehouses of the pre-war years to more complicated structures. Two of the most prominent later nineteenth century industrial complexes in the city are located in the Upper Central Business District. The LaBelle Creole Cigar Factory located at 755 Magazine Street (Photo No. 35) and the vast Maginnis Cotton Mill complex, which occupies the entire block bounded by Annunciation, Constance, Poefarre and Calliope Streets (Photo No. 46), date from 1882 and 1884-85 respectively, and have survived in remarkably original condition. Stylistically, the Maginnis complex is rather austere, with the sole ornament coming in the form of the Victorian Gothic tower on the Calliope Street front of the mill. The Italianate style was used with some success during this period, with the La Belle Creole Cigar Factory making use of the style, as well as the former People's Ice Company building at 201 Julia Street (Photo No. 58), built in 1886. This building is perhaps the best example of the style in the district, with a very rich bracketed cornice which almost seems out of place on an industrial use building.

The 1860-1900 period also saw the construction of smaller scale buildings, such as those which appear in the 1000 block of Magazine Street, (Photo No. 36). According to nineteenth century Sanborn Insurance Maps, these smaller structures were occupied by uses ranging from metal workers to ship supplies.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century industrial development of the district was no doubt assisted by the development of the large railroad yards which were located only a short distance upriver, which would have provided yet another means for shipping manufactured goods around the country. Thus it is only logical that industry would wish to located in the present district, with its access to both the docks of the port as well as the railroads.

1900-1940 (35.5%)

The first forty years of this century saw a substantial amount of building activity in the Upper Central Business District. A survey of the Sanborn Insurance Maps indicates that this activity led to the demolition of a number of earlier structures, principally townhouses and small scale warehouses, and their replacement with much larger buildings intended for various commercial purposes. Of the total figure, roughly 25% date from 1900-1920, while roughly 10% date from 1920-1940.

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The industrial development which had increased in the latter years of the nineteenth century was to continue, as evidenced by the former Gulf Bag Company plant at 333 Julia Street, (Photo No. 42), and the former Federal Fibre Mills building at 1107 S. Peters Street, (National Register, Photo No. 63), built in 1906 and 1903, respectively. The Gulf Bag Company building, designed by the architectural firm of Mackenzie and Biggs, represented the first use of reinforced concrete construction in the city, and probably the entire state. Federal Fibre Mills, designed by the architectural firm of Favrot & Livaudais, was one of the last buildings in the city to feature interior supports of heavy timber. (Later examples feature interior supports of concrete or steel.)

Retail commercial activity in the district in the 1900-40 period is reflected by the number of extant structures built for that purpose. The fine Commercial Style building at 710 Baronne Street (Photo No. 4), built c. 1910, is typical of the period, with its generous first floor display windows. Perhaps the most unusual commercial building in the district is located at 618 Baronne Street (Photo No. 3), built c. 1910 to house an automobile dealership. This building's facade could be said to reflect the Art Nouveau style of Europe with its unique circular frame that cuts through both levels of the facade. On the whole, pre-1920 commercial buildings run from two to five stories and feature moderate Beaux Arts or neo-classical ornamentation. The greatest elaboration is at the cornice and parapet level. 1920-1940 commercial buildings tend to be more stripped-down, with brick cornices, pediment shaped parapets, and recessed brick panels. However, they maintain the essential classical feeling of earlier commercial buildings.

Warehouses and industrial facilities in the district from the 1900-1940 period are characterized by modular bay articulation with large windows or groups of windows. They maintain the two to four story scale established by the nineteenth century building stock. Ornament is sparingly used and where it exists, it is generally worked into the brick in some sort of simple geometric pattern. The only other noteworthy visual elements are the brick cornices and parapets. After 1920, warehouses tend to be even more severe. On the whole, windows tend to be even larger, with steel lintels, and the buildings have an overall skeletal appearance.

New construction by governmental agencies contributed two of this period's more distinctive buildings in the district. The splendid Renaissance Revival style Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals at 600 Camp Street (National Register, Photo No. 33) was designed by the New York architectural firm of Hale & Rogers and erected in 1911-1913. The Orleans Parish School Board had the Modernistic L. E. Rabouin High School built at 715 Carondelet Street in 1936, designed by the architect Rathbone de Buys, (Photo No. 15).

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Intrusions (19%)

An intrusion (or non-contributing element) is defined as a resource less than fifty years old or an historic resource that has lost its integrity. In the opinion of the State Historic Preservation Office, a 19% intrusion rate is unexpectedly low for a major city CBD in continuous heavy use and development for the past fifty years. Intrusions are scattered throughout the district and in almost all cases they remain in scale with their historic neighbors. Only two truly large scale buildings are located within the Upper CBD, and one of these, the Lykes Building, which appears in the background of Photo No. 57, lies on the very edge of the district.

The three structures in the district are noncontributing. They are a power transformer yard (Photo No. 52) and 1970s developments in the as yet incomplete Piazza D'Italia complex, (Photo No. 48).

Integrity of Contributing Elements

Buildings were evaluated on a case by case basis, and if alterations were serious, the buildings were counted as non-contributing elements. In any case, contributing elements are in a good state of integrity. Warehouses, generally speaking, are almost unaltered, as are the residences for the most part. Retail commercial buildings are the only ones which have sustained noticeable alterations, largely at the shopfront level. The visual impact from these alterations is minimal because these buildings are in the minority.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G NHL church within boundaries

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

architecture
commerce
industry

Period of Significance

1820s-1940
1830s-1940
1850s-1940

Significant Dates

1820s-1940
1830s-1940
1850s-1940

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

architect designed bldgs mentioned in text

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Upper Central Business District is of regional significance in the area of commerce because it best represents New Orleans' important role as the ocean-going port for the Mississippi River Valley. Unlike interior ports such as Memphis and St. Louis, New Orleans was the place where goods from the entire Mississippi Valley were received, bought and sold, and transferred to ocean-going vessels. The historical context of the port of New Orleans is represented in the Upper Central Business District by the high concentration of warehouses from various periods which were built to serve the needs of the port. There are a few scattered historic warehouses elsewhere in New Orleans, but the present district contains the concentration. The only other cultural resources remaining to directly represent the port of New Orleans are the Eads Jetties at the mouth of the Mississippi and the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal. Other directly related resources such as historic wharves and docking facilities are of course long gone. The period of significance under commerce spans from the 1830s, the date of the earliest extant port-related buildings, to 1940. The fifty year cutoff is being used as the ending date because New Orleans continued in its role as a significant port into the modern era.

The Upper CBD is of statewide industrial significance because New Orleans was the state's principal industrial center and all but a handful of the city's surviving industrial facilities are in the district. The period of significance under industry spans from the 1850s, the date of the earliest extant manufacturing facility, to 1940. Again, the fifty year cutoff is being used because New Orleans continued in its role as the state's major industrial center into the modern era and the buildings in question continued to serve in an industrial capacity.

The Upper Central Business District is also of state significance in the area of architecture as it contains without question the most wide-ranging

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Sanborn Insurance Maps, New Orleans, 1876, 1885, 1895, 1909, 1940.

New Orleans Architecture: The American Sector. Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, 1972.

Recommendations for National Register Districts in Community Development Areas. Prepared for the Historic District Landmarks Commission, City of New Orleans, by Koch & Wilson/Urban, Consultants, New Orleans, 1979.

Historic District and Landmark files, CBD Historic District Landmarks Commission, 830 Julia, New Orleans.

See continuation sheet

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Historic District Landmarks Commission
830 Julia St., New Orleans, LA 70113

XX encompasses two districts certified by NPS

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property @ 179 acres

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>7</u> <u>8</u> <u>2</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>3</u> <u>1</u> <u>6</u> <u>6</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>7</u> <u>8</u> <u>3</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>3</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>

B	<u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>7</u> <u>8</u> <u>3</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>3</u> <u>1</u> <u>6</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	<u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>7</u> <u>8</u> <u>2</u> <u>2</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>3</u> <u>1</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Please refer to enclosed map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Please refer to continuation sheet.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

(revisions by State Historic Preservation Office)

name/title John C. Ferguson, Senior Architectural Historian

organization Historic District Landmarks Commission date February 1990

street & number 830 Julia St. telephone 504-523-7501

city or town New Orleans state LA zip code 70113

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chronological collection of commercial buildings to be found anywhere in Louisiana. Of particular distinction is the unparalleled collection of historic warehouses. Finally, the district is also architecturally significant because it and the Vieux Carre contain the state's finest collections of party-wall Greek Revival townhouses. The period of significance under architecture ranges from the 1820s to 1940 (50 year cutoff). The Upper CBD, like other New Orleans districts, should be regarded as a toute ensemble of many styles and periods as well as building types. While it is true that certain elements, as explained below, make the greatest contribution to its architectural character and quality, every fifty year old building that retains integrity should be considered contributing.

Commercial & Industrial Significance

The history of the city of New Orleans as a major commercial center is tied inextricably to its port and the businesses which prospered from association with the port. Nowhere else in the city can this record of commercial history be more clearly read than in the Upper Central Business District. There are other port-related buildings scattered about the city, but the Upper CBD contains the only concentration as well as the vast majority of these buildings, dating from the early 1830s through the 1930s.

The development of New Orleans as a port city can be said to have started after the end of the French Colonial period. Due to the rather restrictive policies on trade which were imposed by France, commerce through the port of New Orleans was limited to French vessels and French traders. This fact was to change after the cession of Louisiana to Spain in 1763, as the Spanish Colonial system allowed ports to be open to all nations. This change in policies meant that goods from up the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers could now be traded and sold in New Orleans by Anglo-Americans as well as foreign nationals. By the end of the eighteenth century, the river banks in front of the original city site, the present-day French Quarter or Vieux Carre, were overcrowded in terms of their use as landings for water-borne goods.

New Orleans served as the focal point for river bound commerce from throughout the Mississippi Valley. Early commerce consisted of flatboats and rafts (sometimes of two or three acres) containing produce, lumber, etc. which was floated down to New Orleans. On plantations it was common practice to barge the cash crop to New Orleans for sale. The first steamboat appeared on the Mississippi in 1811. Because it was now possible to travel upstream with ease, New Orleans was launched on its golden age of steamboat commerce. Hundreds of steamboats and ocean vessels arrived in the port yearly, often anchored four deep at their respective wharves. By 1840 the city ranked as the second most important port in the nation.

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The Upper CBD, which became the focus of this commerce, developed in the late eighteenth century as the original city of New Orleans expanded upriver. Unfortunately, none of the commercial buildings built in the district before 1830 survive to the present day, and on the basis of what little we know of the physical appearance of these early buildings, it is not surprising that they were doomed to be quickly replaced with more substantial designs as the economy continued to grow in the years before the Civil War. By the 1830s, the basic pattern for the development of the commercial sector of the district had been established. Concentrated in the area between Magazine Street and the Mississippi River, these buildings were of masonry construction, with shared common walls. Delivery and shipment of goods to and from the riverfront docking facilities was accomplished by large wagons, which necessitated the large ground floor openings found on these early buildings, as seen in Photos No. 53, 59 and 37. Given the agricultural base of the economy of the region, the most common functions for these buildings were as warehouses for cotton and sugar cane which were produced by the upriver plantations.

In spite of the outcome of the Civil War and the end of slavery, the agricultural commodities which were dominant before the war continued to play a major role in the economy of the region and the district in the latter years of the nineteenth century. Sanborn Insurance maps clearly show that a substantial number of these buildings were in use for the storage or processing of cotton and sugar.

After a post-Civil War slump, New Orleans fought back with a series of improvements designed to bolster the commercial life of the port. For example, construction of the Eads jetties at South Pass (1875-79) reduced the size of the bar blocking the Mississippi's mouth and allowed the world's largest, fastest, and most economical vessels to call at the port. In addition, the completion of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1883 linked the harbor with the grain fields of the far West.

Industrial development of the district began in the antebellum period, largely in the form of cotton presses and sugar mills, none of which survive today. In terms of manufacturing, the Leeds Iron Foundry, which occupied an entire city block, was the most prominent industry in the district. Only its warehouse survives today, illustrated in Photo No. 44. The Leeds Foundry, along with a number of now destroyed contemporaries, made New Orleans the center of cast-iron manufacturing in the region, rivalled only by Holly Springs, Mississippi.

The most prominent aspect of the development of the Upper Central Business District in the years between 1860 and 1900 was the steady rise in industrial activity. Large scale operations such as the Maginnis Cotton Mills and the La Belle Creole Cigar Factory, Photos No. 46 and 35, respectively, began in the

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1880s, with the former being perhaps the largest cotton mill in the state. Smaller scale processing is perhaps best represented by the Peoples Ice Company building, Photo No. 58.

In the twentieth century the port was further enhanced by the construction of the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal beginning in 1918. This new channel connected the Mississippi to Lake Pontchartrain and provided a deep water corridor to the Gulf of Mexico. Thus ocean going ships no longer had to wind their way ninety miles to New Orleans via the channel of the Mississippi.

Due to the continued importance of the port, commercial and industrial development continued into the twentieth century, with an emphasis on large scale operations. The district's largest commercial operation, the Woodward-Wight Company (1912), was a major wholesale supplier of hardware, and even had its own railroad siding for the delivery and shipping of its merchandise. National concerns, such as the Eli Lilly Drug Company, built facilities in the district at 630 Camp Street in the 1920s, shown in Photo No. 31. New industrial facilities included the National Enameling and Stamping Company (1903), later Federal Fibre Mills, at 1107 S. Peters Street (Photo No. 63), and the Gulf Bag Company (1906) at 333 Julia Street, (Photo No. 42).

It is interesting to note that even the planning of the city blocks along the riverside edge of the district seems to have been designed to facilitate the city's commercial interests. The blocks bounded by Poydras, Tchoupitoulas, St. Joseph and Convention Center Boulevard, formerly South Front Street, were added to the original 1788 plan starting in 1806 and ending in 1846. These long, narrow blocks permitted the construction of commercial buildings with access from two different streets, thus increasing the amount of goods that could be handled by any one tenant of these buildings.

Architectural Significance

The Upper Central Business District's collection of historic commercial and industrial buildings cannot be matched in any other city in Louisiana. The typical central business district in the state, whether it be in a large city or a small town, is almost completely twentieth century. The small percentage of earlier buildings that exist are, generally speaking, late nineteenth century watered down Italianate commercial buildings. Against this background, the Upper CBD is conspicuous because of its far-ranging chronological collection of commerce-related buildings beginning as early as the 1830s. In fact, roughly 20% of building stock is antebellum commerce-related.

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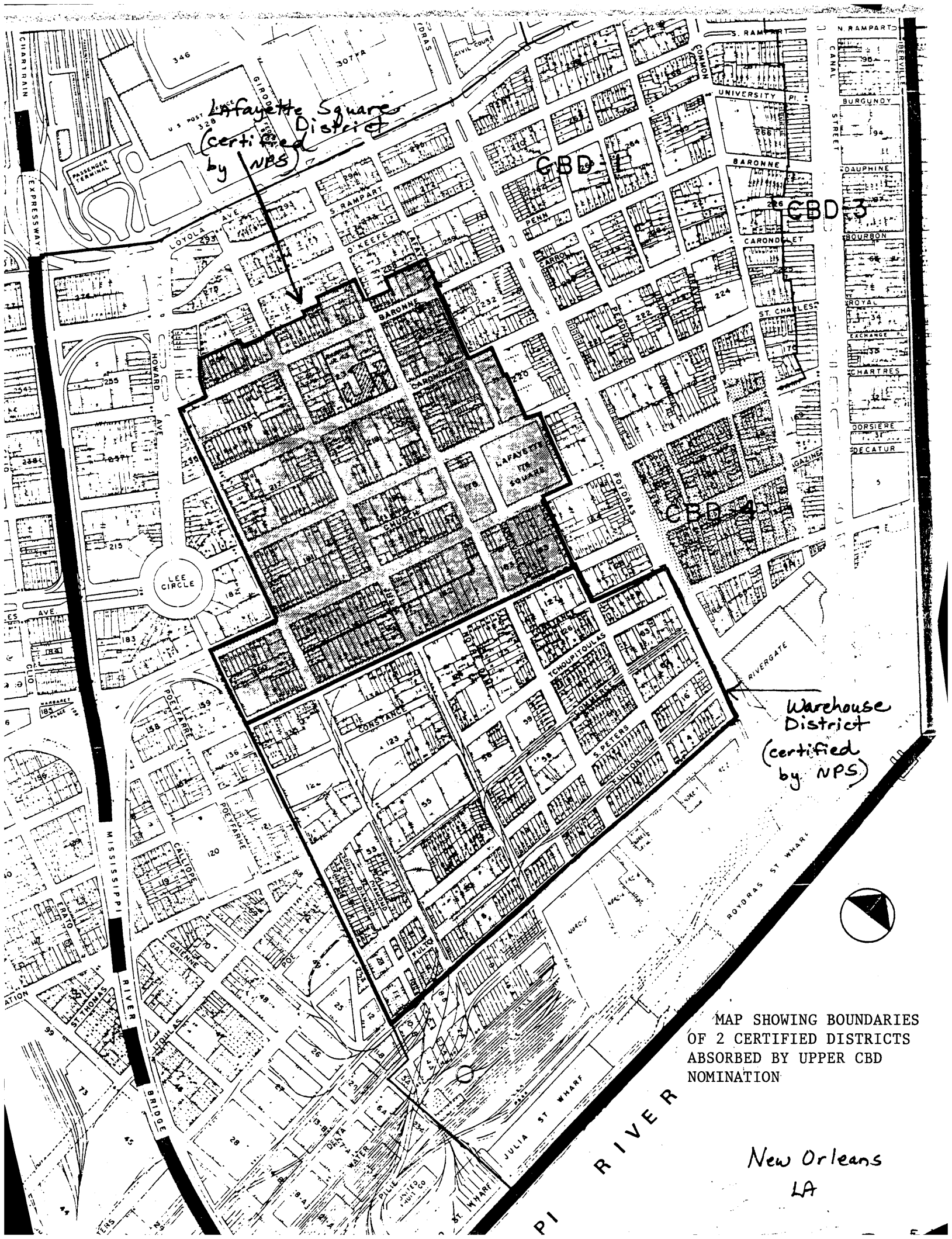
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In terms of antebellum commercial architecture, only three significant collections exist in Louisiana, and all are located in New Orleans. In addition to the buildings found in the Upper Central Business District, important collections can be found in the Vieux Carre National Historic Landmark district, and in the Lower Central Business District, which will be proposed for National Register nomination later this year. The best Greek Revival style commercial buildings in the district, are located in the 500 and 600 blocks of Tchoupitoulas (Photo No. 37) and the 800 blocks of S. Peters and Fulton Streets (Photos No. 53 and 59).

The most architecturally significant aspect of the Upper CBD is its previously mentioned unparalleled collection of historic warehouses, ranging in date from the 1830s to 1940. The warehouses represent a building type found at one time in virtually every larger Louisiana city. Today three of our larger cities have completely lost their complement of historic warehouses, and three more retain only a handful, leaving the Upper CBD as easily the state's premier collection. Indeed, it is the only collection large enough to merit the term warehouse district. Moreover, the three surviving collections outside New Orleans all date from the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries (mostly the latter), are almost entirely of one, two or sometimes three stories, and very few are large enough to occupy even half of a small city block. By contrast, the Upper CBD contains the state's only complement of antebellum warehouses, some of which date to the 1830s. These buildings represent a vernacular form of the Greek Revival, with their square head fenestration and simplified cornices. Late nineteenth and early twentieth century examples are distinguished by their size and monumental character. Most maintain a three to four story scale and many occupy an entire city block. The collection is crowned by the Kraus Warehouse (Photo 62), which shares with the nearby Maginnis Cotton Mill the distinction of an ornamental tower.

In addition to its superb stock of commerce-related buildings, the Upper Central Business District also contains a small but important collection of antebellum residential buildings. This group of more than fifty townhouses is surpassed within Louisiana only by the density of similar building types in the Vieux Carre National Historic Landmark district. Townhouses at 721 and 822 Camp Street (Photos No. 26 and 30) are equal to any Greek Revival style residences in the Vieux Carre, and the row of thirteen identical townhouses known as Julia Row (600-640 Julia Street), is unequalled by any similar development in the Vieux Carre. Continuous commercial development of the Upper Central Business District between 1880 and the present led to the loss of a number of other residential buildings of exceptional quality. Research shows that there was virtually no additional residential construction in the district following the Civil War.



Lafayette Square
(certified District
by NPS)

GBD 1

GBD 3

GBD 4

Warehouse
District
(certified
by NPS)

MAP SHOWING BOUNDARIES
OF 2 CERTIFIED DISTRICTS
ABSORBED BY UPPER CBD
NOMINATION

New Orleans
LA