

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1142

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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



1. Name of Property

Historic name: Olinde Building

Other names/site number: Olinde's Furniture & Appliances; Corona Building

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 1854 North St

City or town: Baton Rouge State: LA County: East Baton Rouge

Not For Publication: n/a Vicinity: n/a

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

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

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

Signature of commenting official: Date

Title : State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Olinde Building
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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



Signature of the Keeper

4/28/2014

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

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

REC'D
APR 29 2014
NATIONAL REGISTER

Olinde Building
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce/Trade: Specialty Store

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic: Multiple Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

No Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: Brick; Walls: Brick, concrete;

Roof: Asphalt

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.)

Summary Paragraph

The Olinde Building stands at the corner of North and North 19th Street in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, along what was once a busy commercial corridor. It is located two miles east of the Mississippi River and downtown Baton Rouge. The Olinde property covers 1.2 acres, occupying the north half of city square 303. Paved and unpaved parking areas take up approximately 70

Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

percent of the property, on the south and west sides of the building. The other half of square 303 is largely empty, with the remnants of demolished buildings and one light industrial metal building and a roofless brick structure. The square is bounded by North, North 19th, North 18th, and Main streets. The neighborhood is mixed commercial and residential, but is heavily blighted. The Olinde Building is a rectilinear brick commercial building encompassing 34,000 square feet with one- and two-story sections. Its overall dimensions are 170 feet, 6 inches long (along the North Street side) and 120 feet wide (along the North 19th Street side). The Olinde Building was constructed in four stages, beginning in 1925. The original one-story masonry building (1925) at the corner of North and North Nineteenth streets has design elements including decorative white glazed brick cladding, large display windows, and flat roof. Surrounding the one story building is an L consisting of three additions built in 1938, c. 1945-46, and 1962 respectively. While the 1925 building is early 20th century commercial style, the additions each adopted some simple elements from architectural styles popular at the times of their construction including glass block and large plate glass windows on the 1938 addition. Overall, the original building features the most detail in its glazed brick and the additions are rather simply detailed. The Olinde Building was vacant for about 10 years and is currently undergoing rehabilitation, but it will be easily recognizable to anyone who was familiar with the building during its period of significance, 1938 to 1963. In its massing, materials, details, and workmanship the Olinde Building retains its integrity and is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Narrative Description

The Olinde Building is a single building that is an amalgam of four buildings of varying dimensions that were constructed between 1925 and 1962. While the owners of the property made moderate efforts to harmonize the additions over the decades, such as the all-brick exterior, ultimately the Olinde Building is a boxy, utilitarian plant. The additions and adaptations were dictated by function with little consideration given to design or style. The building has no architectural distinction but is typical of mid-20th century retail stores that relied on volume sales of an extensive range of products, with its ample square footage, open interiors, extensive free parking, and easy street access. The history of the Olinde Building's construction explains how the building's current footprint evolved. (See the Aerial Map which shows the building in outline with each segment's construction date page 25).

Chronology of Construction

1925: A retail building commissioned by two businessmen brothers was designed by Baton Rouge architect Charles H. Charlton, Jr. for the northeast corner of North and North 19th (then Dufrocq) streets. It replaced a 1905 building with the same square footprint that was demolished to make way for a more modern building. The new store was designed as a retail rental property and was divided into four shop spaces. It was a one-story, modern broad-front style, with a striking white glazed brick exterior and prominent display windows on the street-facing east and north facades. A sophisticated design was used for the brick which was laid in a combination of stacked bond, running bond, and soldier courses. The subtle design created an attractive texture and emphasized the window openings. A diamond shape punctuated the frieze at regular intervals and was aligned with the openings, adding another accent to the large display windows.

Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

There were three windows on the east elevation (Dufrocq/North 19th Street) and five on the north elevation (North Street). It is unclear where the entries were placed (no plans or photos of the 1925 building have survived). The display windows extended from the floor to the header and included a transom. The building's flat roof facade was capped by a layered molded cornice.

1938: The first expansion of the building was a two-story warehouse built on the south side of the 1925 store. The Olinde family, who bought the store in 1938, hired Baton Rouge architect, Norman V. Riviere, to draw up the plans (but again, neither architectural drawings nor any exterior photos from the pre-World War II era have been located). The new building featured structural steel trusses which spanned the width of the building and were supported by load-bearing masonry walls. The barn-like building's main purpose was to house and showcase the new owners' tractor and farm implement business. The interior was largely open to the ceiling to allow for easy movement of large machinery. See Figure 6 for a circa 1940 view of the interior of the tractor showroom. The new building had upper floor office and storage spaces on the east side. This space was mezzanine-like and is shown clearly on the 1939 Sanborn Insurance Map. It was later subsumed by a full second floor added in the 1949 remodeling. The exterior cladding continued the white brick motif of the 1925 store but without decorative elements or glazed brick. The orderly fenestration of display windows was also repeated on the new building's east facade. An entry door flanked by two display windows lent a unifying look to the entire east elevation. The new display windows were not perfectly aligned with the 1925 building's openings but the slight differences did not detract from the overall visual symmetry. The entry door opening was narrower than the repeating display windows, but matched the height. The second story of the North 19th Street facade repeated the three first floor openings with glass block windows of the same width but roughly half the height. The flat roof was obscured behind a stepped gable roofline outlined in tiles. The south elevation was a largely a blank brick wall with a small single-hung windows near the roofline. The windows, which were later bricked up, were in repeating sets of three. A large loading door was also located on the south elevation but its exact placement is not known. There were apparently some similar windows on the north elevation overlooking the roof of the 1925 block but the Sanborn Insurance maps of 1939 and 1949 are not clear on this point. The west facade, the rear of the building, was a solid brick wall with one doorway opening on the northwest corner.

1940-1947: At some point in this seven-year span, a one-story addition was added to the north elevation, joined to the west wall of the 1925 building. It was one bay in width, approximately 19 feet in width and 40 feet deep. The 1949 Sanborn map identifies it as a "warehouse" with brick walls and garage door opening onto North Street. (This addition, though slight, counts as one of the four separate buildings that were combined for the Olinde Building.)

1949: The 1938 addition, the "tractor barn," was completely remodeled in 1949. The tractors and farm implements were moved out and a full second floor was installed. The first floor interior was reworked into furniture showrooms (see Figure 5A). The second floor was also used for furniture and appliance displays as well as offices and storage areas. Another addition was added at this time, a one-story, rectangular building that was joined to the west end wall of the former tractor barn. Intended for the tractor and farm implement division, this masonry addition was

Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

formed around steel trusses and had a gable roof. This new building functioned as a repair shop as well as displaying farm equipment.

1962: The final expansion of the Olinde building was in 1962, when the 1949 farm supplies-workshop was demolished and a new two-story block was added to the west end of the building, uniting the east and west sides of the existing building into a rectangle. A Baton Rouge engineering-architectural firm, R.W. Jones & John E. Meeks, was hired for the project. The 1940s one-story addition to the original 1925 store was integrated into the overall exterior with the addition of a display window (replacing the garage door opening). The new two-story addition was designed to provide work spaces for shipping and transportation on the first floor and offices and expanded storage on the second floor. The exterior continued the use of white brick but without an orderly fenestration pattern. A wide loading door was built on the south side, opening onto a wide alleyway. Another oversize doorway was added to the west side, with a steel door and interior ramp. A second door was placed in the west facade, a single entry door on the northwest corner. The north side of the addition had two large second-story windows. The west side appears to have had two or more small windows on the second floor.

1970s: In the early 1970s, the north and east facades were completely covered with composite gravel-covered panels mounted on furring strips (See Figure 11). A small part of the south facade, at the southeast corner, was also covered in the ground-to-roof panels. The stepped gable was removed from the 1938 addition roof for a linear roof line. All the glass was removed from the first floor display windows on the east and north facades and the openings were covered with plywood. The glass block windows on the second floor of the east facade were not removed but were also covered by the mono-chromatic panels. The recessed entry door on the east facade was the only public entrance. The south and west sides of the building were not refaced, but the second floor windows were boarded up.

2010-2014

During 2010, new owners took over the Olinde Building, which had been vacant for about 10 years. It had been securely boarded up and received basic maintenance during this period. In 2011, the composite gravel panels were removed from the east and north facades revealing the white brick exterior and the intact 1925 storefront exterior. An adaptive reuse plan to transform the building into rental apartments was initiated in 2012 and historic building status was sought for the site. On 6 June 2013, an application for Historic Tax Credits to the National Park Service/National Register of Historic Places was given preliminary approval with the notation: "appears to meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation and will likely be listed in the National Register of Historic Places if nominated by the State Historic Preservation Office according to the procedures set forth in 36 CFR Part 60." Construction on the Olinde Building began in the spring of 2013 and was completed in February of 2014.

Current Building Description

The Olinde Building's exterior has a similar footprint and characterizing features from its 1938-1963 period of significance. The one- and two-story components, white brick exterior, and prominent display windows have made it a familiar presence in the Baton Rouge landscape. The

Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

Olinde interior has been periodically altered as the functions of the building fluctuated. The interior has been reconfigured for its current use, as apartments for low-income residents.

East Façade (see photos 1 and 2): This is the traditional public face of the building, on the North 19th Street (formerly Dufrocq Street) side where two oldest segments of the Olinde Building are joined. To the north is the 1925 store and on the south is the two-story 1938 tractor barn. The 1925 facade has been returned to near its original appearance. The molded cornice, which was destroyed in the 1970s remodeling, has been recreated using evidence from the building materials and a photograph. The storefront's intricate brick patterning has also been redone to match exactly. When the rehabilitation began, it was hoped that the original white glazed bricks could be reused but the facing was severely damaged by the 1970s installation of composite panels on furring strips, which were nailed directly into the bricks. In consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and National Parks Service, the patterned brick facades of the 1925 building on the east and north elevations have been carefully replicated using bricks that duplicated the original color, texture, strength, and composition. The historic mortar has also been duplicated. The corbelling and other decorative details have been recreated with comparable materials and workmanship. The 1925 east facade is dominated by three display windows which reuse the original window openings. The new multi-pane windows, which include transoms, are consistent with windows from the historic period. The 1938 building, on the south side of the east facade, has retained its white brick facing, which blends with the more elaborate patterned brick of the north side. The historic window and door openings were used for this facade as well. The two first floor windows are slightly lower than the three to the north but continue the historic window motif. The center opening is an emergency-only doorway. It is a single door painted white with no hardware. The three glass block windows on the second floor have been refurbished and returned to their original appearance. The stepped gable from 1938 has not been restored (it was destroyed in the 1970s remodeling) but the now linear roofline is consistent with the one-story block's uninterrupted straight roofline.

North Façade (see photos 2 and 3): The restoration of the 1925 storefront, described above, continues on the north facade. There were five large openings on the North Street side of the store which have now been rehabilitated into windows. It is not clear where the building's entryways were in the pre-1938 period. The large windows, restored white glazed brick facing, cornice, and decorative details give the 1925 storefront a clear identity as the original historic building, but within the context of the overall building. The west side of this facade includes the one-bay 1940s addition and the two-story 1962 construction. The one-story addition has a visible demarcation with the 1925 building where the decorative white brick changes to a single plain pattern. This wall also has a large, multi-pane display window but it is slightly smaller than the ones to the east and breaks the orderly fenestration. The west corner of the north facade is part of the two-story 1962 addition. It is faced with white brick in a running bond pattern that matches the one-bay block's brick course. There are two second floor and two first floor windows on this wall. The second floor window openings are original to the building; the two smaller first floor windows were added during the recent construction. These are double-hung, aluminum clad windows with no mullion divisions.

Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

West Façade (see photos 4 and 5): This two-story elevation is now the entrance to the Olinde Building. The former ground-level freight door has been retained and is the only public entrance and exit from the building. The opening's industrial roll-up door was removed and has been replaced with a double leaf glass door that approximates the size of the original freight door. The prominent, traditional glass doors recall Olinde's retail era. The white brick cladding continues on this facade in the running bond pattern. A single utility door to the north of the main entrance has not been altered. It is a steel door with a metal frame. Fifteen windows have been added to the facade, seven on the first level and eight on the second floor. The single existing window, located on the second level above the roll-up door, has been bricked in. The new windows are grouped at the center of the building in two repeating rows. Two windows at the south corner of the building are separated from the massed windows by blank wall, but are aligned with the others. The windows are simple double-hung, aluminum clad windows with no mullion divisions, the same as the new windows on the first floor of the north facade's west corner. These windows have metal frames and a simple brick sill. Their utilitarian appearance corresponds with the building's historic non-display windows. The roof line is linear and unbroken. On the north corner of the building an 8 feet x 17 feet concrete block enclosure has been added as the electric yard. Its exterior will be faced with white brick to blend with the rest of the building.

South Façade (see photos 1, 5, and 6): This elevation encompasses the 1938 and 1962 additions. This side of the building was traditionally a work and loading area. The 1938 section is the oldest part of the south facade, running from the east corner to about two-thirds of the length. The roofline drops about three feet at the seam. The traditional white brick cladding remains, and has been repaired and repointed. The 1938 building originally had 21 six-light, single sash metal windows on the second floor. The windows were detailed with a deep inset and simple brick sill. They had three-over-three panes and were grouped along the wall in sets of three. The southeast corner of the building was covered with the 1970s composite panels along with the east facade. This covered the easternmost set of three windows which included one of the original windows. The other 18 windows were individually covered and some windows removed. The openings have been restored and new metal windows, duplicating the six-pane, metal mullion originals, installed. On the west side of the wall two new openings were added to the second floor. Here aluminum windows twice as tall as the original 1938 windows have been installed. The top of the windows align with the top of the smaller windows. Seven new window openings have been added to the first floor of the south elevation. They are the same style as the two larger windows, with aluminum frames, to distinguish them from the historic windows. The first floor windows are placed in an orderly fenestration underneath the second story openings. Some of the first story windows on the west side are slightly below grade because of the uneven ground. There is no entry or exit on this elevation. A large doorway in the 1962 addition was once a freight door and later a public door. It has been bricked over and is now undetectable. The reuse of the building's original windows emphasizes the historic nature of the Olinde Building. As with the new windows on the north and west facades, the utilitarian metal style is compatible with the historic windows and is typical of materials used in unadorned retail and warehouse buildings of the same era.

Light Well (see photo 15)

Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

One major alteration to the building was necessary in order to use the interior space for apartments. A light well has been added to the center of the building. It is a narrow space, approximately 13 feet x 80 feet in size, landscaped with low-maintenance plants and rocks. A portion of the roof and first floor walls were removed for this construction. The courtyard is in the center of the building. Its south wall is the where the 1925 and 1938 buildings conjoined and its west wall is the elevator shaft. The new light well was conceived and executed with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects with Guidelines for Applying the Standards* as the guiding principle. The *Guidelines* address the need for natural light in the re-purposing of historic buildings, stating it is an approved alteration and/or addition if sensitively and properly done: [It is recommended that when] "Creating an atrium or a light well to provide natural light when required for the new use [be done] in a manner that preserves character-defining interior spaces, features, and finishes, as well as the structural system."

Interior

Throughout its 75 years, the Olinde Building interior has been periodically reconfigured to accommodate the shifting priorities of its owners. During the period of significance, the building's use as a large volume retail store required large open spaces for display and for storage. In late 2013, when the building was nominated for the National Register, it was in a transitional phase, undergoing construction for low-income rental apartments. This work was largely completed by February 2014. The discussion of the building's interior thus encompasses different periods. Despite the adaptive reuse of the building, the interior retains many of historic materials and features. The interior spaces are described below, broken down by sections. The Aerial Map (page 25) is a guide to the four sections of the building.

Original 1925 Store: This one-story section of the building was characterized by large display windows on the north and east facades providing natural light. Originally, the interior consisted of four unconnected shop spaces. Prominent arched doorways were added after 1938 for easy passage between the areas. A pressed tin ceiling covered the entire 1925 store ceiling (still extant). The walls were plaster over brick with cornice molding.

1938 Addition-Remodeled 1949: The two-story addition, planned as a showroom for tractors and farm equipment, was initially a double-height open space, with the truss construction and brick walls left exposed (see Figure 6). The 1949 remodeling added a full second floor and finish work to both floors, with plastered and painted interior walls, but very little detailing. The floors were polished concrete on the ground floor. In the 1949 configuration, the front (east) part of the building was display space on the first floor. The second floor was primarily offices and storage, with spaces divided by non-load-bearing partitions.

1945-46 Addition: This one-bay, single story building was added to the west side of the 1925 store as a warehouse/garage. The original interior seems to have been concrete slab floor, unfinished brick walls, and a roll-up industrial garage door. In 1962, this working area-warehouse was absorbed into the new addition added to the west side of the building, but remained one story.

Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

1962 Remodel and Addition: The final construction project during the Olinde Building's period of significance was a two-story addition to the west side that completed the rectangular footprint. The new space continued the motifs of the 1949 remodeling, with a concrete floor and plaster over brick interior walls on the first floor and exposed brick walls on the second floor. The utilitarian interior had little detailing and partitions were added and moved as needed. A stairwell with simple hardware was installed in the northwest corner (extant). Two very large windows were built into the north side's second story facade to accommodate the offices in that corner of the building, but there was little concern for natural lighting as most of the space was for furniture and large home appliances.

Current Interiors

First Floor (see Photos 8-22)

The building's ground floor has been reconfigured for 23 apartments, a community room, a lobby, two offices, and a light well. The necessity for individual spaces has altered the former open expanses of the Olinde showrooms and storage areas, but the building's historic fabric is visible in every part of the building. Several areas on the ground floor retain examples of the building's commercial past. The new public entrance on the west facade is the former loading dock area. The lobby retains the layout of a concrete ramp leading to the doorway which is the original opening (the roll-up metal door now replaced with two-leaf glass doors). Adjacent to the ramp and entrance area is a large, enclosed community room with exposed brick walls (now painted white) and windows that look out on the lobby area. The corridor on the south side of the building stretches the entire length (east-west) imparting an idea of the building's size. The corridor is punctuated with sections of original brick walls that appear as pilasters in the hallway. In some of the apartments, brick doorways and other features have been retained. For instance, in one apartment (103) off the south corridor, a brick wall with its openings has been used as space dividers in the main room. The materials and massing of the brick wall have not been obscured and provide a strong visual idea of the site's warehouse past.

In the oldest part of the Olinde Building, the 1925 store, the entire ceiling is covered with a replicated pressed tin ceiling to match the original. The original 1925 tin shingles were removed during construction for cleaning and repairs, but reuse plans had to be abandoned when the materials were found to be too fragile and damaged to be reinstalled. (The replicated pressed tin materials and installation were approved by the State Historic Preservation Office in consultation with the National Park Service). There are five apartments that retain the oldest historic elements of the building -- pressed tin ceilings, exposed brick walls and large display windows. These apartments (113, 114, 116, 117, and 120, on the east and north sides) are strong representatives of the building's commercial past. Along with two east-facing apartments in the 1938 section (111 and 112) they are dominated by the almost full wall display windows, which were key to Olinde's retail business. As the company's core products changed (from hardware and farm supplies to furniture and appliances) the display windows were the public and immediate reflection of Olinde's mission.

The building's large-scale industrial elevator has been retained after refurbishing and re-installed in its original site, where the 1938 and 1962 additions join. Similarly, the unadorned, utilitarian

Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

stairwell in the northwest corner of the 1962 addition retains its original hardware and appearance.

Second Floor (see photos 23-34)

As with the ground floor, the east-west corridor provides a vivid image of the building's length with the added detail of its original metal trusses. The corridor's ceiling is open to the metal trusses showcasing the building's historic fabric. On its west end, the corridor blends with the large, open commons area. This undefined space (possibly for gatherings and community socialization) is framed by the original brick passageway (1962) which is partly defined by the hallway to the elevator. This opening marked the joining of the 1938 and 1962 buildings but also was the line between public display areas (1938, or east side of the floor) and the non-public storage spaces and offices on the west side of the 1962 addition.

An enclosed storage room along the west wall is another open unobstructed open space that recalls the building's past as a commercial enterprise with large utilitarian areas. There are 14 apartments on the upper floor and all have some historic features. The two apartments on the east wall (215 and 216) are defined by the original 1938 glass block windows. They also have exposed brick and on their north and south walls, respectively, the industrial, six-lite, single sash metal windows that characterized the non-display areas of the second floor (both 1938 and 1962 sections). In the southeast apartment (215) one of the three metal windows is the original that was used as a template for the replacement windows.

Integrity

The Olinde Building's exterior has been largely returned to its historic appearance of a utilitarian commercial building unified by white brick, display and industrial windows, and a flat roof. The solid mass of a building anchoring the corner of North and North 19th streets was a defining element of the North Street corridor in the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s and is present today. The rehabilitation of the building has in most areas rehabilitated or replicated the design, materials, and workmanship from that period while feeling and association with the commercial significance of the building has been affected to a degree because of the reduction in large open spaces.

The building sits on its original site and thus, retains integrity of location. The building's interior showcases its past by emphasizing its construction (steel trusses) and significant parts of its varied history, in the pressed tin ceiling and scale of the 1925 building, the unadorned staircases of the 1962 building, and the large swaths of exposed masonry walls and open spaces on both floors. Although the interior has been reconfigured and, necessarily, altered for its new purpose as apartments, all parts of the building retain elements of its historic materials which are emphasized by layout and design.

The surrounding neighborhood has undergone drastic changes since the early 1960s. By the turn of the 21st century, the once tightly-packed, diverse community had dwindled to a hollowed-out landscape of vacant lots, a scattering of light industrial businesses, and blighted buildings, which has affected, to a degree, the integrity of setting, association, and feeling. While setting has been affected slightly with the loss of some structures immediately surrounding the Olinde Building,

Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

there are still commercial and residential structures left in the area to show that this area is a mixed neighborhood, much like it was when this building was built and developed. There are strong signs of rejuvenation, however, which will help to strengthen the exterior integrity of feeling and association. Although the historic fabric of the neighborhood cannot be un-demolished, the in-fill of new buildings of appropriate scale, materials and appearance is returning density to the urban grid. The development of new townhouses on the north side of North Street returns some of the area's fabric with a massing of buildings that are consistent with the historic pattern. And, the redevelopment of the Olinde side of its city square is another element, surrounding the historic building with a fully utilized grid of landscaping and orderly parking.

The Olinde Building has gone through many changes, both during and after its period of significance. The building was in constant use as a retail outlet from 1925 to 2000, and most of its adaptations and reuses are easily identifiable. The current rehabilitation into apartments has required some important alterations, but in all areas the building's history can be seen. Neither these recent changes nor the additions and adaptations of the past have significantly diminished the integrity of the building or its ability to convey its commercial past.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location

Olinde Building
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce

Period of Significance

1938-1963

Significant Dates

1938, 1949, 1962

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

1925: Charlton, Jr., Charles H. architect

1938: Riviere, Norman V., architect

1962: Jones, R.W. & Meeks, John E., engineers

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1938 when the Olinde family purchased 1854 North Street and opened the Baton Rouge branch of their hardware-farm supplies-tractor business. The property was expanded and adapted to the business which shifted from hardware-farm supplies to consumer goods after World War II, reflecting Baton Rouge's change from regional agriculture center to urban, metropolitan area. The period of significance ends with the National Register 50-year cut-off date, in 1963, when Olinde's had completed the transition to a major furniture and home appliances retailer.

Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

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

The Olinde Building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as locally significant under Criterion A for its prominent role in the mid-20th century commerce of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. It is the only existing building in the city that embodies the two distinct economic eras of 20th century Baton Rouge: (1) a regional center serving an agricultural economy, and (2) urban center with a modern industrial, professional economic base. The building's era of significance begins in 1938, the year the store opened, and ends in 1963, the 50-year cutoff for nominated properties. In 1938, the Olinde Hardware & Supply Company's primary focus was tractors, farm supplies, building materials, hardware, and basic home appliances. The products carried by the store were based on the agriculturally-driven economy of the Baton Rouge region. The city provided services and products for people within a 50-mile radius, an area that was heavily agricultural. In the post-World War II era, the Olinde store began to shift its focus to consumer goods to accommodate the increasingly affluent and urbanized population of the city. This metamorphosis was sharply delineated in 1949 when the Olinde tractor and farm supplies building (which accounted for more than half of the site's square footage) was remodeled into showrooms for furniture and home appliances. The company continued to flourish in its post-hardware and farm supplies era, becoming "Olinde's Furniture and Appliances." By 1963, the last year of the era of significance, Olinde's was one of Baton Rouge's largest retailers and one of the region's best-known furniture and appliance stores. The Olinde Building is a rare historical resource that embodies a city's economic transition within one business, located on the same site. There are several other extant buildings in Baton Rouge that housed farm supply or furniture businesses during the mid-20th century but none of these businesses made the significant change seen in the Olinde Building. Only the Olinde Building made the transition from agricultural-centric goods to consumer goods, mirroring Baton Rouge's transformation from regional rural center to modern city. The Olinde Building is a tangible symbol of the historical economic pattern that shaped 20th century Baton Rouge and as such is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

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

In 1938 Humphrey T. Olinde (1890-1955) opened Olinde Hardware & Supply Company in the building at 1854 North Street. He bought the one-story commercial building in late 1937 from a Baton Rouge bank which had taken it over in a foreclosure. The building was only 10 years old and located in a stable secondary commercial area, with good parking and room for expansion. Humphrey Olinde was a member of a successful mercantile family from New Roads, a market town 38 miles north of Baton Rouge. The North Street business was the Olinde's calculated move into a larger market, capitalizing on the expertise they had developed with their long-established (1880) general store and farm supply business in New Roads. The Baton Rouge Olinde's was to be much like the operation in Point Coupée Parish, selling hardware, building supplies, home appliances, tractors, farm implements, and agricultural supplies. Although the Great Depression still loomed over the economy in 1938, the Olinde store was almost immediately successful. The store's motto (adopted in 1948), "Growing with Baton Rouge," was prescient. When Olinde's opened there were numerous farm supply and furniture stores in Baton Rouge but no one store had Olinde's range of products under one roof. Following the model of the general store-farm supply that had been successfully established by Beauregard Olinde (1864-1919) in New Roads, his son Humphrey continued to employ a multi-faceted approach to retailing in Baton Rouge. To announce their store opening in February of 1938, the Olinde's ran a large advertisement for several days in Baton Rouge newspapers (see Figure 1). The ad proudly stated that the store carried:

"Fairbanks-Morse Electric Refrigerators, radios, light plants and water systems, Coleman heaters, and bottled gas, Valspar paints and varnishes, K&M Asbestos roofing, asbestos shingles, composition roofing, corrugated and channel drain roofing, Red Chain feeds, poultry supplies,

Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

builders' materials (lime, plaster, cement, metal laths, etc.), pipe and fittings, fencing, electrical supplies, stoves and ranges, agricultural implements (John Deere) and seeds."

This extensive list was only a partial accounting of the inventory. Many other products, including crockery, glassware, and washing machines, were shown in accompanying photographs.

The Olinde's seemingly scattershot business plan was actually a very effective model in the context of 1930s Baton Rouge. Although the city had been the site of Standard Oil's major U.S. refinery since 1909, as well as home of the state capital and two major universities (the then segregated Louisiana State University for whites and Southern University for African Americans), Baton Rouge was still strongly tied to the pre-industrial economy of Louisiana. In 1910 Baton Rouge had a population of 14,897, placing it third in size among Louisiana cities, behind New Orleans (287,104) and Shreveport (16,013). Standard Oil's influence on Baton Rouge was readily apparent in the 1920 Census when the city's population increased more than 30 percent to 21,782. It jumped again in 1930 to 30,729. While the dramatic population increase was attributable to new jobs in the oil refining industry and the supporting businesses that sprang up in its wake, this did not translate into an urban population. Many of the new Baton Rouge residents were from rural Louisiana and retained their farm habits and outlooks, including keeping yard chickens, raising vegetable gardens, and doing their own home repairs. In addition, there was a large portion of oil industry employees who commuted to work from rural areas where they continued to plant crops, raise livestock, and thought of themselves primarily as farmers with a "town job" to keep the farm afloat. Olinde's served these customers' needs very well. With one stop, a part-time farmer or a town resident with a garden could find all the products and services needed for crops, from a top-of-the-line John Deere tractor to seeds and fertilizer. In addition, housewives could shop for home appliances, dishes, brooms, sofas, kitchen tables, and cleaning supplies.

In 1938, when the Olinde family opened for business in Baton Rouge, it might appear that they did not fully understand the rapid urbanization of the city. A major part of the new store was the John Deere dealership. Almost as soon as the North Street property was purchased, Humphrey Olinde commissioned a new building for the tractors and farm implements. This two-story brick building (described above in Section 7) more than doubled the size of the store. Olinde's decision to operate a tractor dealership and pour money into a new building for agricultural supplies might appear out of place in a growing urban area. But coming from rural Point Coupée Parish, the Olinde's keenly grasped that the capital city was still the center of a major agricultural region, populated with many farms and few services. Baton Rouge drew customers from a 50-mile radius, so even though the number of farms in East Baton Rouge Parish had fallen from 2,137 in 1920 to 1,406 in 1930, the surrounding parishes of Iberville, Ascension, Pointe Coupée, West Feliciana, East Feliciana, St. Helena, Livingston, and St. Landry remained predominantly agricultural. In the United States as a whole and the South in particular, the mechanization of farms was slowed by the lack of capital during the Depression. In Louisiana, the displacement of draft animals by tractors had lagged further behind most states because of the high rate of farm tenancy. In 1940, almost 60 percent of Louisiana farms were worked under a tenant agreement. Despite the lag, the tractor's inevitability was accepted by the majority of farmers in the 1930s. They realized that mechanization was essential for successful commercial farming. At the same time, New Deal recovery programs and the winding down of the Depression made capital more available to a wide range of farmers who were eager to buy or upgrade their tractors.

The Olinde Hardware & Supply Company was well positioned to capitalize on the increase in tractor and farm equipment sales. There was a long history with the John Deere Company, dating back to the New Roads store, and the Olinde's and their employees were experts on the agriculture of central Louisiana region where sugarcane was the major cash crop. For instance, Olinde newspaper advertisements trumpeted their tractors' "outstanding features for sugarcane cultivation" (see Figures 2 and 2A). The store also catered to farmers by staying open late one week night and all day on Saturday (in the pre-World War II South it was a common custom for many retail outlets to close at noon on Saturdays). Mechanized farm equipment was a steady and profitable market in the late 1930s, and accelerated with the advent of World War II. During the war, the escalating demands for farm products

Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

and the concomitant loss of farm workers to the military and war industries lent a new urgency to mechanization. In 1940, there were only 6,937 tractors in the entire state of Louisiana. Of these, 1,691 were on sugarcane farms. By 1945, there were 6,499 tractors on sugarcane farms alone, and the number of cane harvesters (much sought after by Louisiana sugarcane planters) soared from 79 to 422 between 1942 and 1946. While there are no extant records from Olinde's John Deere dealership, Tom Olinde, the current president of the business, confirms that farm equipment was very profitable for the company in the 1930s and 1940s.

The farm boom from World War II lasted until 1948 when a drop in prices led to retrenchment. In Louisiana, as in all U.S. agriculture, mechanization of farms continued despite this temporary setback. As farm equipment became more sophisticated and the pool of farm laborers continued to diminish, tractors and other engine-driven tools became even more desirable. But these machines were also more expensive to buy while the number of customers (farmers) steadily declined. In East Baton Rouge Parish, land devoted to crops was 30 percent in 1944 but would dwindle to 11 percent by the end of the 1950s. The urbanization of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish had intensified during the war period. The city's population increased an astounding 262 percent between 1940 and 1950, from 34,719 to 124,829. (Although some of this enormous increase was due to expansion of the city limits, Baton Rouge experienced an unprecedented in-flow of new residents). The Baton Rouge experience was in sync with the state's postwar profile when Louisiana shifted from rural to urban. In 1940, Louisiana was 54 percent rural, but 10 years later, in 1950, the state's population was 59 percent urban (see Figure 3).

The changes in Baton Rouge were not ignored by the city leaders. In 1944, the city commissioned its own study of the population. The numbers were clear: with 55 percent of the city's workers employed in industry, Baton Rouge had joined the U.S. mainstream (See Figure 4). This new reality of an industrial city did not change Baton Rouge or Olinde's overnight. It was a gradual process, especially for Olinde's. The store had been very successful in its first decade in Baton Rouge. Olinde's became an established brand among the city's residents. The store was located in a satellite commercial area two miles east of the traditional downtown. When Olinde's opened at North and North 19th Street (then called Dufrocq), what was called "the North Street area" was a mixed residential and retail area. There was a concentration of neighborhood services and some larger businesses that required more space than just a storefront. Within a block of Olinde's were several cafes, a barber shop, a liquor store, a shoe repair shop, small grocery and fruit vendors, at least one other hardware store, automobile repair shops, garages, and small offices. Residences included apartments, rooming houses, two-family homes and single-family homes. Many of the residents were Italian immigrants who had moved to the area between 1900 and 1920, when it was on the perimeter of the city. After World War II, there was an exodus of North Street area residents to the developing suburbs and the more residential neighborhoods. Automobile dealerships, warehouses, and furniture stores moved in, sometimes demolishing residential properties for used car lots, parking, and expansion. Olinde's took advantage of this neighborhood shift to expand its plant. A small one-story, one-bay building, previously discussed in Section 7, was added sometime around 1945 or 1946. A few years later, in 1949, the 1938 warehouse-tractor barn underwent a major remodeling. The farm equipment was moved out of the warehouse (the two-story building facing North 19th Street) and the ground floor was remodeled as a modern furniture showroom. A complete second floor was added for more furniture and home appliance displays and to expand the busy company's storage and office space. This reorienting of the tractor warehouse to furniture showroom marked a new vision for Olinde's (See Figures 5, 5A, 6).

In the late 1940s, the management of Olinde's had passed to J.B. Olinde (born 1925), the son of Humphrey Olinde and grandson of Beauregard Olinde. A combat veteran of World War II who returned to Baton Rouge and enrolled in law school at LSU after the war, J.B. Olinde was an affable, gregarious man who enjoyed the challenge and teamwork of retailing. He joined the family business after law school and his energy and enthusiasm are widely credited with building Olinde's into a major retail force in Baton Rouge. Unfortunately, no pre-1988 business records or papers of the Olinde store appear to have survived, or have not been located. J.B. Olinde has been the institutional memory of the company but is now retired and at age 88, suffers from memory loss. Without him, or company records, most of the details of the Olinde history are lost. Alternatively, the arc of Olinde's commercial path is seen through records such as the U.S. Census and its supplements, Baton Rouge city directories,

Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

newspapers of the era, and a few published interviews with J.B. Olinde when he headed the company. Concerning Olinde's shift from hardware-farm implements to furniture-appliances, J.B. Olinde developed a simple explanation for reporters: "That (furniture) was all you could get during the war." While the shortage of farm equipment during World War II was a problem, Olinde's shrewd business instincts were almost certainly the larger factor in repositioning the business to consumer goods. By moving the farm equipment out of the prime spot in the store in 1949, then completely off-site in 1954, Olinde made his intentions clear. In 1955, the Olinde's divested the business of farm machinery altogether by selling the John Deere dealership (See Figure 7). At the same time, the store's full-page newspaper ads gave increased attention to leisure time items such as televisions, radios, and stereos, while stressing the nonessential extra features of standard household items like refrigerators, freezers, and washing machines. The only tractors to be seen at Olinde's were the new riding lawn mowers popular with suburban homeowners (See Figure 8).

Whether J.B. Olinde formally studied the East Baton Rouge population figures is unknown, but the exploding Baton Rouge population was increasingly made up of small families with disposable income. East Baton Rouge was one of the top 20 parishes in per capita income in 1940, and in the top three in 1950 and 1960. The competition for this household income was formidable. There were more than 40 furniture businesses listed in the 1960 Baton Rouge city directory. Olinde's stayed at the top of this contested marketplace by using aggressive advertising and offering a variety of credit plans. J.B. Olinde was a sharp student of credit practices and introduced several innovations in the Baton Rouge market. These included buying furniture and home appliances on a payment plan with no interest. Olinde's readily extended credit to local citizens who would not have qualified for bank loans. These customers included college students who were a large population in Baton Rouge and were a steady source of future affluent customers. The company maintained a reputation for integrity on all levels which made its emphasis on using credit attractive to customers. Olinde's enthusiastic promotion of consumer goods is epitomized in a jaunty cartoon that was used often in its 1962 and 1963 full page newspaper ads: Two couples are shown seated in a shabby, bare house. The hosts, in patched clothing and sitting on crates, happily tell their stylish visitors, "Everything we got is paid for!" Underneath is the company's riposte: "Olinde's says: Use our easy terms for a higher standard of living!" (See Figure 9).

The cartoon's presumption is that the majority of readers will agree with this consumerist point of view and have the means to act upon it. The Olinde management was on firm ground in this view. The U.S. Census's supplemental report on Louisiana in 1959 showed that Baton Rouge residents had the highest incomes in Louisiana, in every category -- family, single male, single female. This was both as an "urbanized area" (a city) and the SMSA (standard metropolitan statistical area). In the SMSA, the median family income was \$5,830 and in the city of Baton Rouge the median was \$5,733 which compared favorably with the U.S. median family income for 1960 of \$5,620. This affluence was generated by an urban economy that was divided among several strong sectors: government, manufacturing, retail and wholesale businesses, construction, and the service industry.

By 1963, the last year of the period of significance, Olinde's was thriving as one of the city's best-known furniture-appliance retailers. The store had completed its transition from a hardware-agricultural supplies general store to a major outlet for household furniture and appliances. The store was moved to a much larger new building in 1988. The Olinde's continued to use the North Street site as a discount outlet and storage facility but sold the building in the 1990s. Another discount business opened in the Olinde Building but closed by 2000. The building was vacant for a decade until purchased by the current owners in 2010.

Olinde's unique position as the only business in Baton Rouge to reflect the city's twentieth century economic arc is underscored by the substantial number of comparable businesses that existed in the same time frame. During the period that Olinde's was a John Deere dealer (1938-1954) there were between four and eight other farm implement businesses active in Baton Rouge as well as 10 to 12 stores that dealt principally in feed, farm supplies and other agricultural products. In the furniture-home appliances field, the competition was bigger. Counting businesses that identified themselves as selling furniture in some form, there were between 30 and 45 sites listed in Baton Rouge city directories between 1938 and 1960. Some of the buildings that housed those farm equipment,

Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

agricultural supplies, home appliances, and furniture businesses in the Olinde era of significance are still extant. However, none of Olinde's competitors in either field made the same (or comparable) commercial transformation. Olinde's was the only Baton Rouge business that followed the city's trajectory from regional center for the agricultural economy to urban center with a modern work force who aspired to "a higher standard of living," to use Olinde's own advertising phrase.

The Olinde Building at 1854 North Street is a recognizable Baton Rouge landmark that looks much as it did during its 1938-1963 heyday. The North 19th Street facade once again presents a public face of a store known to generations of Baton Rouge residents (see Figure 10). Today the Olinde Building provides a powerful visual anchor that clearly evokes its time and place in history. The Olinde Building's unusual arc that bridged Baton Rouge's two 20th century identities make it a significant part of the city's history and eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Historic Note

The Olinde building's period of significance is 1938 to 1963 but the building dates from 1925 and its first 10 years provide a window on a little-known part of Baton Rouge history. The northwest corner of the Olinde building is an intact 1925 modernist storefront building that was subsumed by the post-1938 additions. The 1925 store was built by two Italian immigrant brothers, Luca Corona (1878-1967) and Agostino Corona (1881-1929), who viewed their investment as a monument to their success in America.

When it was built, the corner of North and North 19th Street (then called Dufrocq Street) was the center of a robust Italian immigrant community. The North Street area provided Italian immigrants and their families with a complete commercial-residential community. The small stores and shops that lined the street fulfilled most of the working class residents' basic needs and also offered employment. Housing was available in single family homes, apartments, boarding houses and small rental units. Sacred Heart Catholic Church was established in 1924 a block south on Main Street for the Baton Rouge Italian community. It was known as "the Italian church" and staffed with Italian-speaking priests.

Like most of the estimated 106,000 Italians who streamed into Louisiana between 1880 and 1920, the Corona brothers were penniless Sicilians who came to work in the sugarcane fields. They arrived in separate family groups as youngsters but reformed an extended family group and married two sisters, also from an immigrant Sicilian family. By 1903, they had saved enough money to leave farm work behind and moved to Baton Rouge. The Coronas lived in several different places in the North Street area and initially ran a bakery. Luca Corona, the older brother, was the leader of the extended family which included their mother, half-siblings, in-laws, and many cousins. Luca Corona was involved in several businesses, eventually expanding his holdings to Port Allen, in West Baton Rouge Parish. Corona was impressed with the North Street corridor's commercial strength and in 1925 commissioned Baton Rouge architect Charles H. Charlton, Jr., to design a retail building for the corner of North and Dufrocq streets. This notice was published in Baton Rouge newspapers in February:

NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS.

Sealed bids will be received up to noon Saturday, February 28, 1925, for the erection of a brick commercial building, corner of Dufrocq and North streets for Mr. L. Corona, Port Allen, La. Plans and specifications can be obtained from the architect.
CHAS. H CHARLTON, Jr.
Singletary Building

The building was planned as a commercial rental with four separate store spaces. Corona placed newspaper advertisements for tenants:

Olinde Building
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Corona Building

Stores for Rent or Lease
Corner of North & Dufrocq
New Building--Good Location
Phone 840-W
Luca Corona
Port Allen, La.

The Coronas' ownership of the building was not remarkable. They had owned the previous building on the site that was demolished for the new one. And, by 1925 many buildings in the North Street community were owned by Italians. But the Corona Building took land ownership a step further among Baton Rouge Italians. The Corona Building was a visible symbol of Italian prosperity. The Corona Building's emergence as a successful business enterprise marked an important shift. In the early years of the 1900s, most buildings in the North Street area were owned by non-Italians and rented or leased to Italian businesses or residents. In the next decade, Italians began buying the aging buildings from their landlords. The Corona Building, however, marked the first commercial building planned, built, and owned by Italian Americans in the North Street corridor. It was so successful that non-Italian businesses rented space there. Again, this contributed to the Corona Building's importance as an unmistakable, visible landmark of Italian accomplishment and full partnership in the community.

The Corona Building was unusual in its modernist design and newness but fit easily into the North Street corridor. Tenants changed over the years, but usually included a cafe and a furniture store. The shop spaces were apparently fully rented until the early years of the Depression. In 1929, Agostino Corona died suddenly of a heart attack leaving his brother Luca to oversee their family businesses. By 1933, the Coronas' businesses had collapsed and Luca Corona was faced with complete ruin. For the Corona Building's mortgage, Luca Corona turned the building over to the bank in 1935. He was able to rejuvenate some of his investments in West Baton Rouge and had several successful businesses.

In 1936-37, two different hardware businesses leased the building from the bank but had short lifespans. In late 1937, Harvey T. Olinde bought 1854 North Street and its long life as Olinde's began. Throughout the Olinde years the original building remained largely intact. Even the alterations were beneficial in the end. Inside, the 1940s lowered ceiling covered the tin pressed ceiling and the 1970s exterior panels covered but didn't destroy the showcase window openings and original white glazed brick cladding. With the removal of these alterations in 2011, the Corona Building could be clearly seen despite the major additions of the Olinde era.

Today, Baton Rouge's Italian heritage can be seen in the thousands of Italian surnames found in the telephone directory and other citywide compilations of surnames such as voter lists. The Greater Baton Rouge American Italian Association vigorously promotes Italian traditions and celebrates the successes of Italian descendants. But there is very little tangible evidence of the Italian American experience in Baton Rouge; there is practically nothing left in the historic building stock to directly represent this high-profile community. The North Street Italian American community followed the traditional paths of second- and third-generation assimilation and dispersed into the larger community after World War II. Other small, tightly-knit Italian nodes in pre-World War II Baton Rouge have also vanished, most without leaving behind any visual reminders of their existence. Today there are only a handful of historic buildings that directly represent Baton Rouge's Italian heritage. Sacred Heart Church, mentioned above, is one site that would be an important addition to the National Register, but other buildings have undergone extensive alterations and many have been lost to neglect and deterioration. Now the long-lost Corona Building has re-emerged within the rehabilitation of the Olinde Building. It is not a part of the National Register consideration for 1854 North Street but provides an unexpected but welcome bonus for Baton Rouge's Italian American history.

Olinde Building
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

- Baton Rouge Advocate, Baton Rouge State-Times, Baton Rouge Times, Morning Advocate, Sunday Advocate* newspapers, 1930-2010.
- Bartholomew, Harland, *Master City-Parish Plan, Metropolitan Baton Rouge, Louisiana*. Harland Bartholomew & Associates, City Planners, St. Louis, Missouri, 1948.
- Baton Rouge City Directories, 1935-1965.
- Biamonte, John V., Jr. "Community Life in the Italian Colonies of Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana, 1890-1950." *Louisiana History*, Autumn, 1989.
- Brownell, Blaine A., and David R. Goldfield. *The City in Southern History: The Growth of Urban Civilization in the South*. Port Washington, New York: National University Publications, 1977.
- Burby, Raymond J., "Baton Rouge: The Making (and Breaking) of a Petrochemical Paradise." In *New Orleans and Urban Louisiana, 1920-To Present*. Thomas A. Becnel, editor. Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies, 1997.
- Carleton, Mark T. *River Capital: An Illustrated History of Baton Rouge*. Woodland Hills, California: Windsor Publications, 1981.
- Cater, John James. "Successful Succession: A Study of a Fifth Generation Baton Rouge Family Firm." *Entrepreneurial Executive*, Volume 9, 2004.
- Conrad, Glenn R. and Ray F. Lucas, "The Louisiana Sugar Industry in the Twentieth Century." In *Agriculture and Economic Development in Louisiana*. Thomas A. Becnel, editor. Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies, 1997.
- Draughon, Ralph Jr. *Down by the River: The Story of the Baton Rouge Riverfront*. New Orleans District, U.S. Corps of Engineers, 1998.
- Eggart, Mary Lee. *A Guide to the Art and Architecture of Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church, Baton Rouge, Louisiana*. Privately printed, 1998
- Esperdy, Gabrielle. *Modernizing Main Street: Architecture and Consumer Culture in the New Deal*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Goins, Charles Robert, and John Michael Caldwell. *Historical Atlas of Louisiana*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995.
- Gottfried, Herbert and Jan Jennings. *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940*. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1988.
- Hennick, Louis C. *Street Railways of Louisiana*. Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, 1979.

Olinde Building
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Margavio, A.V. and Jerome J. Salomone. *Bread and Respect: The Italians of Louisiana*. Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, 2002.

Shanabruch, Charles. "The Louisiana Immigration Movement, 1891-1907: An Analysis of Efforts, Attitudes, and Opportunities," *Louisiana History*, Spring, 1977.

Shelley, James E. and Hans J. Sternberg, *We Were Merchants: The Sternberg Family and the Story of Goudchaux's and Maison Blanche Department Stores*. LSU Press, 2009.

Sanson, Jerry Purvis. *Louisiana During World War II: Politics and Society, 1939-1945*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999.

Sinclair, Dean, "Equal in All Places: The Civil Rights Struggle in Baton Rouge, 1953-1963." In *New Orleans and Urban Louisiana, 1920-To Present*. Thomas A. Becnel, editor. Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies, 1997.

Tobin, Sidney, "The Early New Deal in Baton Rouge as Viewed by the Daily Press," *Louisiana History*, Autumn, 1969.

Williams, Robert Charles. *Fordson, Farmall, and Poppin' Johnny: A History of the Farm Tractor and its Impact on America*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1987.

Works Progress Administration, *Louisiana: A Guide to the State*. New York: Hastings House, 1941.

MAPS

Sanborn Insurance Maps, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1885, 1891, 1898, 1903, 1908, 1911, 1916, 1923, 1939, 1949.

INTERVIEWS

Anders, Smiley, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, *Baton Rouge Advocate* columnist, telephone interview with Harriet Swift, 6 June 2012.

Lombardo, Lena, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, former office manager, Olinde's, 1947-1988, interviews with Harriet Swift, 6 and 20 February 2013.

Loupe, Dr. Denton, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, former director, Louisiana State University Agriculture Center, telephone interview with Harriet Swift, 15 February 2013.

Olinde, Tom, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, president of Olinde's Furniture, son of J.B. Olinde, interview with Harriet Swift, 6 February 2013.

Serio, Sal, Metairie, Louisiana, curator of Italian American Special Collections, Jefferson Parish Libraries, telephone interview with Harriet Swift, 7 May 2012.

Simmons, Charles O. Jr., Baton Rouge, Louisiana, grandson of Luca Corona, telephone interview and information by email, with Harriet Swift, 30 May, 4 June 2012.

PUBLIC RECORDS

East Baton Rouge Parish Conveyance, Succession records, 1900-2010.

U.S. Census, population reports and supplemental volumes, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950, 1960.

UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL

Olinde Building
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Corona, Luca, "This is the past of my life," 14-page handwritten memoir in Italian, 1957.

Maygarden, Benjamin et al. *Historical Research and Archeological Survey of the Historic Portion of Southern University, Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana*. Submitted to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, 1999.

Winans, Fonville, Photograph Collection, Aerial Views of Baton Rouge, 1947, Louisiana Digital Libraries, <http://louisdl.louislibraries.org>.

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
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

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

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 1.2 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 30.453978 | Longitude: -91.170776 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Olinde Building
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

4. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

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

The Olinde Building property consists of the north side of City Square 303 (formerly Square 3) in Baton Rouge, totaling eight city lots, numbers 9-11. The north side of the square is bounded by North Street. On the east is North 19th Street (formerly Dufrocq) and on the west, North 18th Street. The south side boundary is the western elevation of the building. The surrounding lots (8, 12, 13, 14, 15) are in transition from uncoordinated gravel and paved parking areas to a large landscaped garden to the west of the building and parking spaces on the south and west perimeters.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries encompass the historic building only.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Harriet Swift
organization: Preservation Consultant
street & number: 918 Poland Ave
city or town: New Orleans state: LA zip code: 70117
e-mail harrietswiftnola@gmail.com
telephone: 504-945-6842
date: October 3, 2013

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

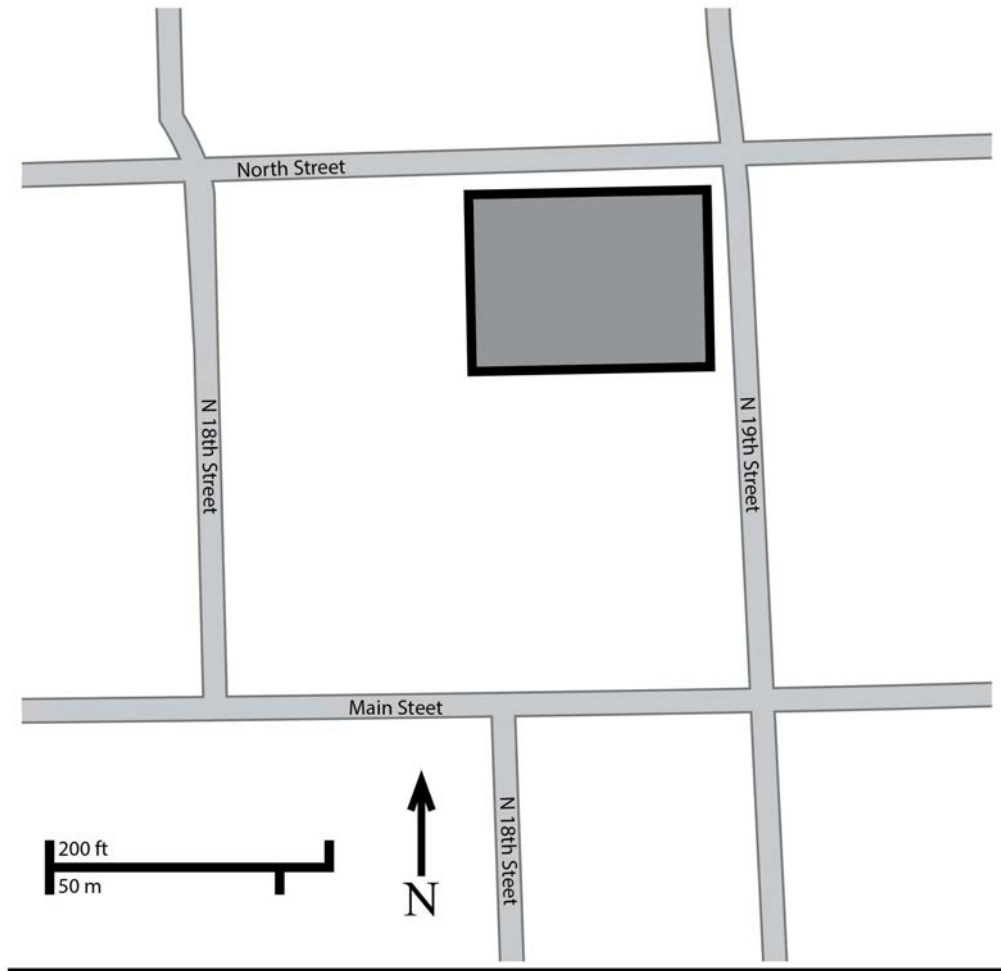
- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any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

SKETCH MAP

Olinde Building
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

OLINDE BUILDING, 1854 NORTH STREET, BATON ROUGE



Olinde Building

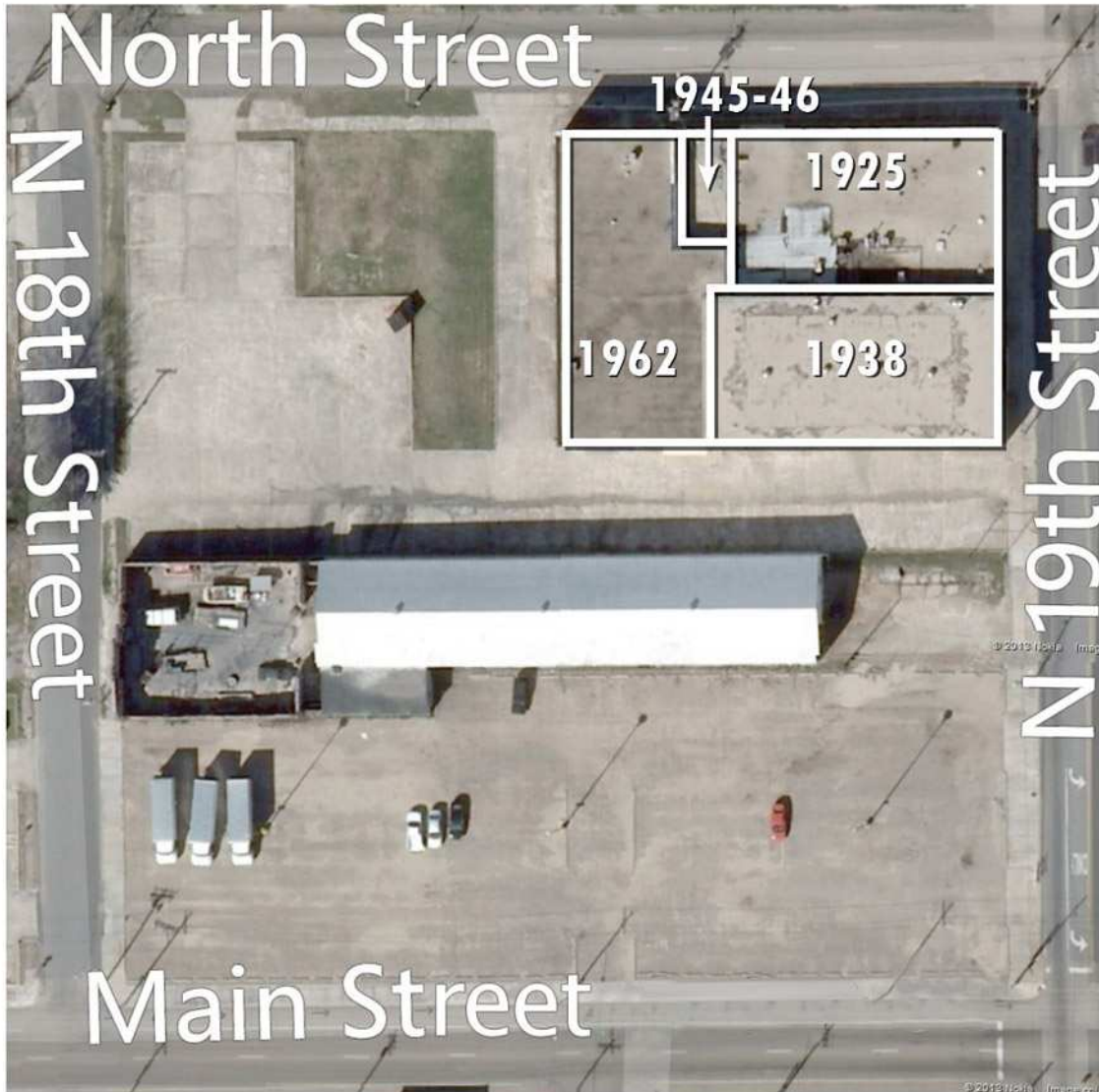
East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

ADDITIONAL MAPS

1. Aerial Map showing Olinde Building with parts of building labeled by dates.
2. 1939 Sanborn Insurance Map, showing Olinde Building and surrounding square.
3. 1949 Sanborn Insurance Map, showing Olinde Building and surrounding square.

AERIAL PHOTO OF OLINDE BUILDING, 2011 (BING MAPS)

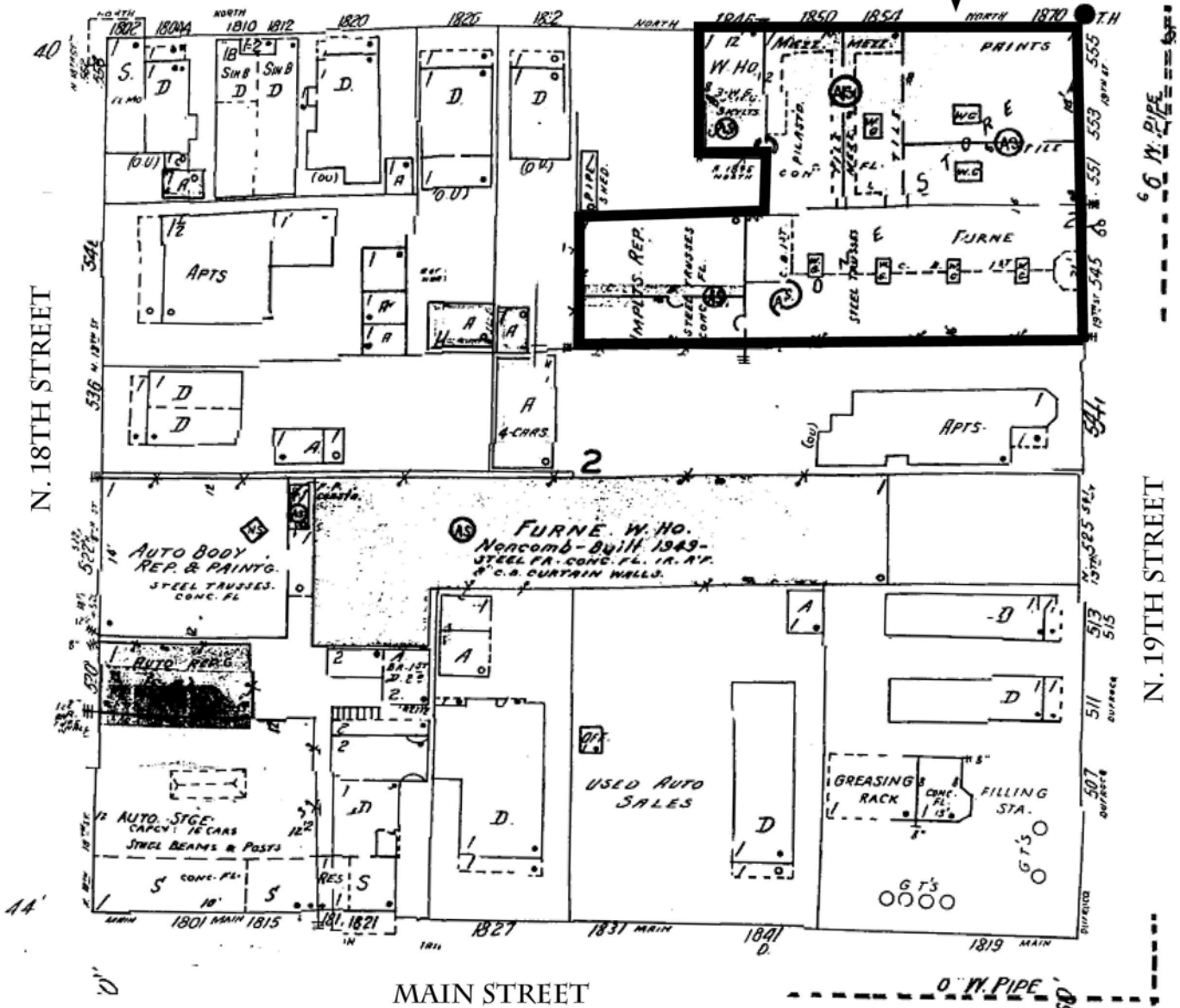


Olinde Building
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

1949 SANBORN INSURANCE MAP, SHOWING OLINDE BUILDING

NORTH STREET



Olinde Building

Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

List of Figures

1. 1938 newspaper advertisement announcing the opening of Olinde's Hardware & Supply Company.
2. 1940 newspaper advertisements for Olinde's John Deere tractors.
 - 2A. Newspaper ad announcing arrival of tractors for sugarcane cultivation.
3. Chart tracking Baton Rouge's population, 1930 to 1960.
4. Chart showing Baton Rouge employment by sector, 1944.
5. 1949, full page advertisement for Olinde's "modernized" store.
 - 5A. Photos of remodeled furniture showrooms, 1949.
6. Radio broadcast from Olinde's tractor showroom, about 1940 or 1941, showing the 1938 building's interior before it was remodeled.
7. 1954 newspaper advertisement, announces that John Deere department has been moved.
8. 1963 full page advertisement devoted to household goods, including a "tractor" -- a riding lawnmower.
9. 1963 cartoon used in Olinde advertisements urging Baton Rouge citizens to buy consumer goods on credit.
10. Olinde's south facade, from about 1966, shows the building's appearance though most of the period of significance.

Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

Figure 2.

June 2, 1939, *Baton Rouge State-Times* ad announcing arrival of new John Deere tractors, and February 10, 1939, *Baton Rouge State-Times* ad for free movies sponsored by John Deere and Olinde's

IT'S HERE
-the **NEW, SMALLER, Lower-Priced JOHN DEERE Two-Row CULTIVATING TRACTOR**
Olinde Hardware & Supply Co.
John Deere Department
NORTH AND DUFROCQ STS. PHONE 7272
come in and see it

Another big **FREE JOHN DEERE DAY** **5 TALKING PICTURES**
"The TUTTLE TUGGER"
An All-Hollywood comedy packed with fun and laughter.
"AROUND THE FARM CLOCK"
An interesting educational picture showing up-to-date power farming methods and equipment.
"THE MARK of the GENUINE"
An instructive picture that shows how to keep your farm equipment working like new.
"Mr. SHEPPARD LOOKS INSIDE"
An inside picture of the precision manufacturing of modern farm tractors.
"WHAT'S NEW IN FARM EQUIPMENT"
A showcase of new ideas, new designs, new John Deere equipment to cut your costs.
SATURDAY AT 1:30 P. M.
JOHN DEERE DEPARTMENT
Corner North and Dufrocq
Admission by **FREE TICKET ONLY**
Bring the wife and boys along and have a big day with us. You'll enjoy every minute of our program.
If you don't have tickets, or need more, ask us for them. They are free to farmers.
Olinde Hardware & Supply Co.
North and Dufrocq Streets

Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

Figure 2A.

January 29, 1951, *Baton Rouge State-Times* ad announces arrival of new tractors, emphasizing their suitability for sugarcane farming.

IT'S HERE!

**COME IN AND SEE THE NEW
JOHN DEERE HI-CROP TRACTOR**

For Sugar Cane Cultivation

Bring your tape measure and check the high clearance of this Hi-Crop Tractor yourself. Let us show you its front and rear wheel-thread adjustability and its many other outstanding features. Inspect the matched equipment that's built for it. We're certain you'll agree the new Model "G" is the Hi-Crop Tractor you've been wanting and needing. So, come to your JOHN DEERE headquarters . . . OLINDE'S . . . today!

OLINDE
FARM EQUIPMENT

Open Every Weekday
and Saturday until 6 p. m.

JOHN DEERE Two-Cylinder TRACTORS
First in Modern Design and Proved Performance

Tel. 3-1755 North Street at North 19th

Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

Figure 3.

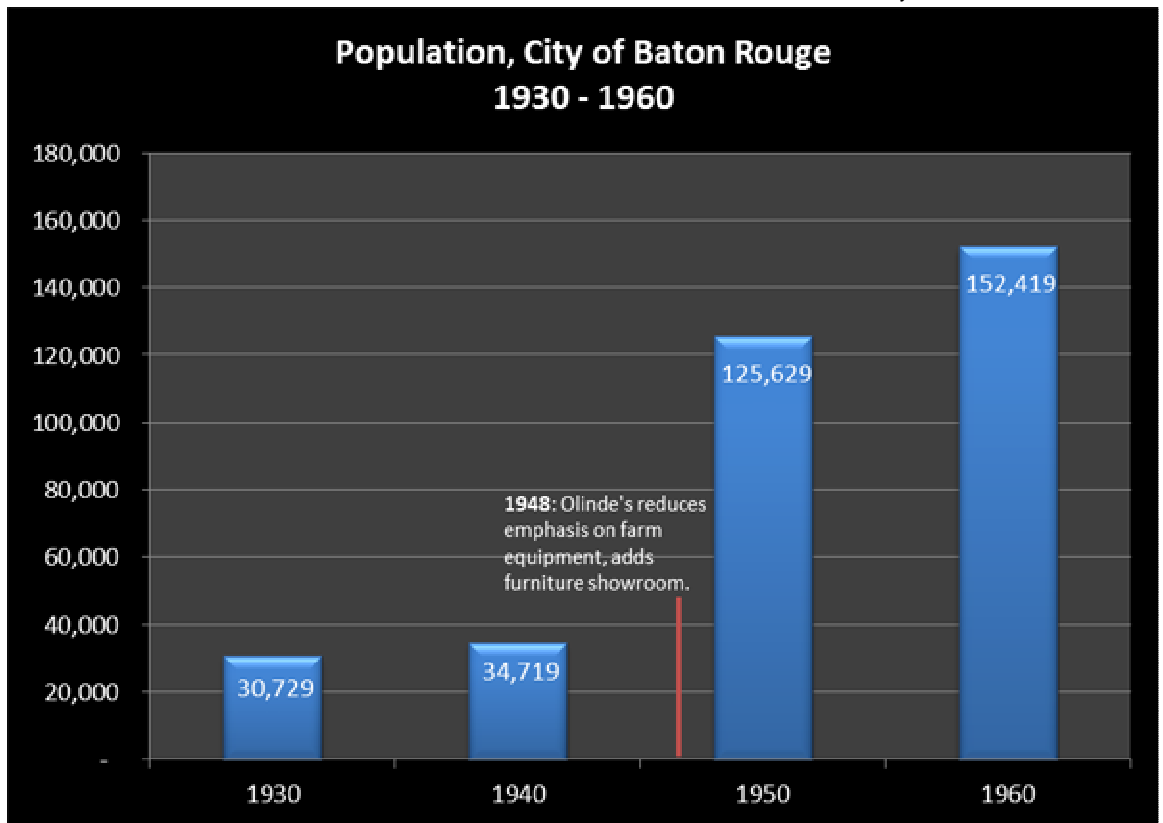
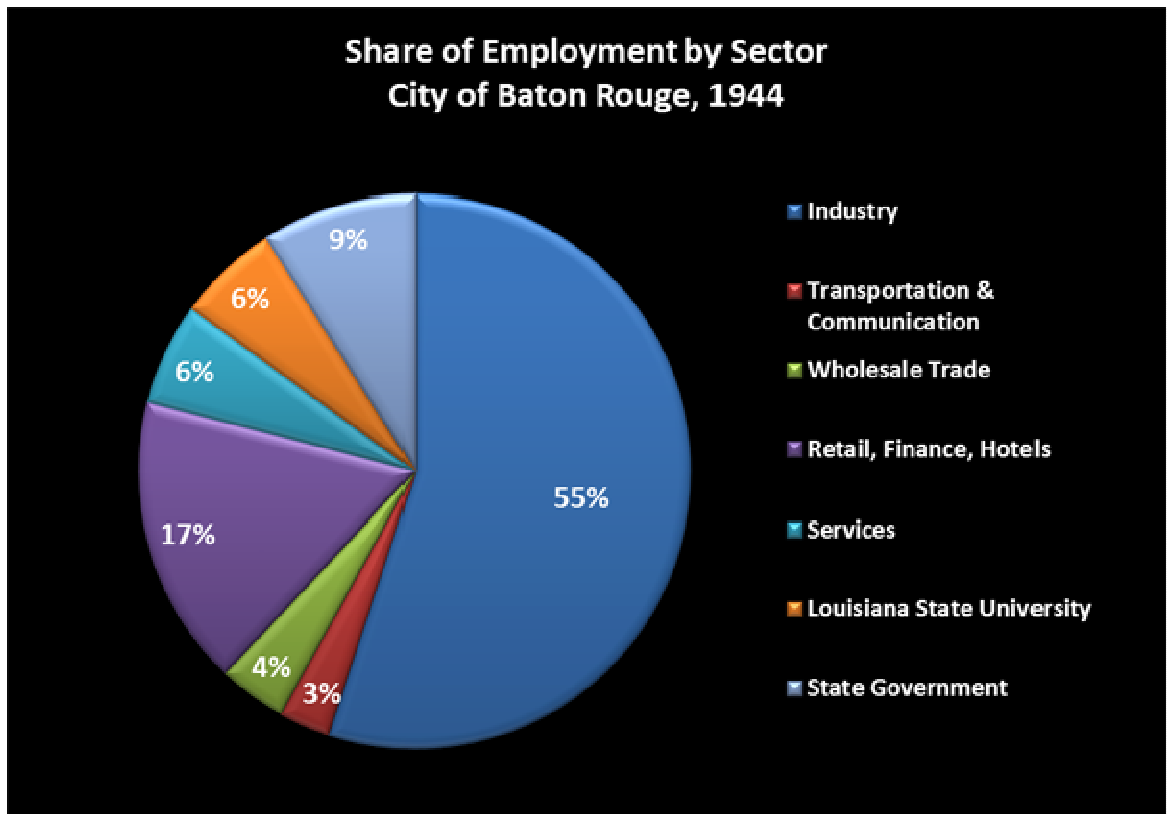


Figure 4.



Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

Figure 5A.

Photos of Olinde's new showrooms in 1949; the 1938 tractor building was extensively remodeled into furniture galleries.



Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

Figure 6.

The 1938 addition housed the Olinde tractor dealership and farm supplies. This photo from about 1940 shows a live radio broadcast in progress at a tractor show. Note the trusses and the upper windows.



Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

Figure 7.

January 22, 1954, *Baton Rouge State-Times* ad notes that Olinde's John Deere Dept. has a new location. The shift away from agricultural products is now very clear.

SAVE! SAVE!

USED TRACTORS

JOHN DEERE "H" & EQUIPMENT
\$800.00

1. Cultivator	3. Double Middlebuster	\$795
2. Disk Plow	4. Disk Harrow	

8N FORD & EQUIPMENT \$1390.00

1. 2-Disc Plow	3. Rear Mounted Mower
2. Bush & Bog	Fully Guaranteed


CASE VAC TRACTOR
W/Side Mower \$475.00

John Deere Model "B"	(Late Model)	\$1,190
John Deere Model "B"	(On Steel)	\$495
John Deere Model "G"	(Late Model)	\$1,475
John Deere Model "A"	(Guaranteed)	\$985

We also have other tractors and implements in stock at very attractive prices. We have what you need at the price you can afford!

*As little as 10% Down
Long Easy Terms*

New Location John Deere Dept.
530 Myrtle St. (Railroad Ave.)
½ Block From Highland Rd.
Next Door to Olinde Whse.



Dial 3-1755

North at N. 19th St.

Baton Rouge—Opelousas—New Roads

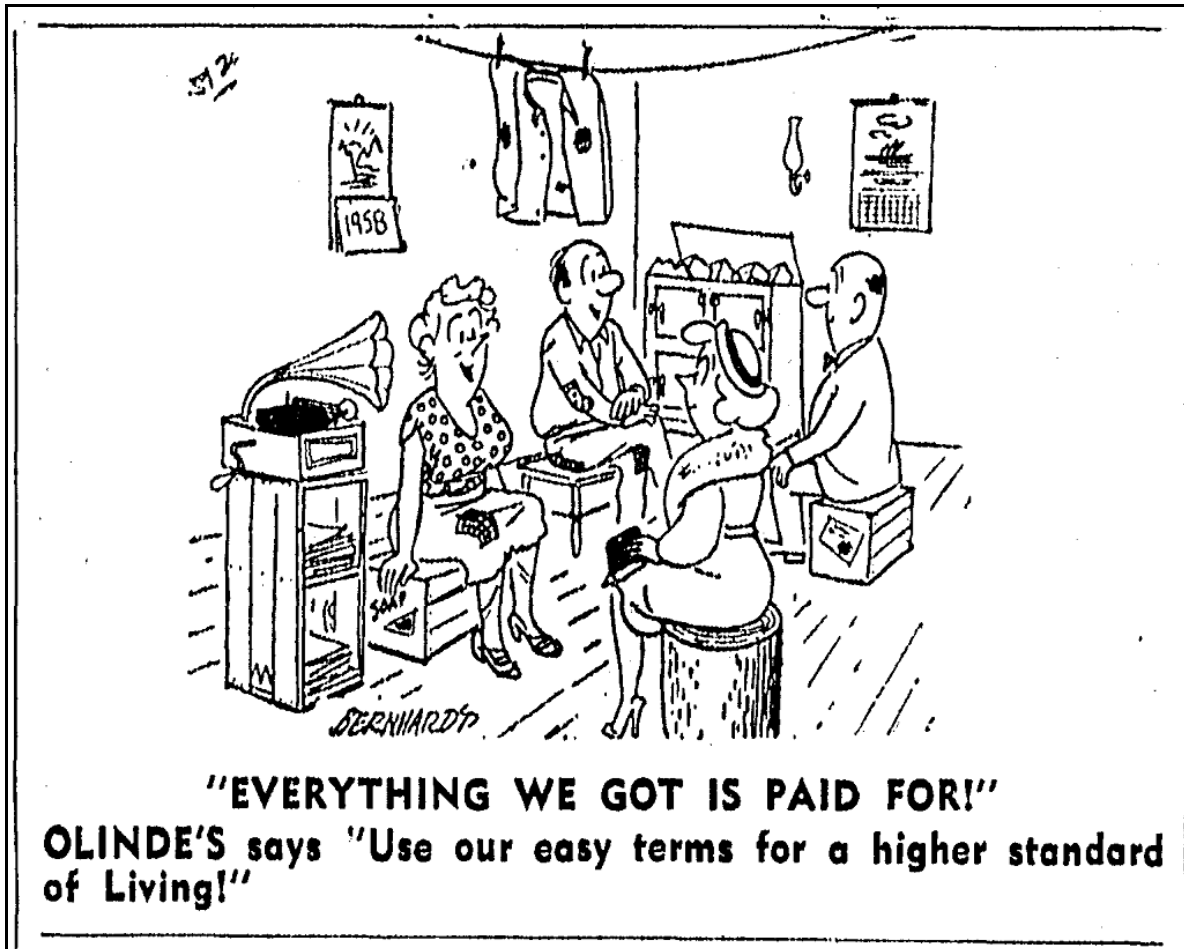
Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

Figure 9.

This cartoon appeared regularly during 1962 and 1963 in Olinde's newspaper advertisements.



Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

Figure 10.

The main entrance of Olinde's circa 1965. Although this is slightly past the era of significance, the building's appearance was unchanged through most of the 1950s and early 1960s.



Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

Photographs

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

Photo Log

Name of Property: Olinde Building

City or Vicinity: Baton Rouge

County: East Baton Rouge Parish

State: LA

Photographer: Harriet Swift

Date Photographed: February 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 34: Southern and eastern elevations showing original metal window in first bay of southern elevation and original glass block windows on eastern elevation; camera facing north.

2 of 34: Northeast corner showing original 1925 building in foreground and 1938 addition at far left; camera facing southwest.

3 of 34: Northern elevation, two story 1962 addition in foreground; camera facing south.

4 of 34: Western elevation, new main entry is located on this elevation; camera facing east.

5 of 34: Southwest corner, showing the eastern and southern elevations, 1962 addition, and 1938 building at right; camera facing northeast.

6 of 34: Southern elevation, showing the original metal windows at far right corner, replacement metal windows, and new windows at first floor, camera facing southeast.

7 of 34: Original metal window (right) and replacement metal windows on southern elevation, second floor, camera facing north.

8 of 34: View looking east from the 1962 addition towards the original building showing the new lobby area and community room.

9 of 34: View looking west from the main lobby towards the lobby entrance. Lobby includes original exposed ceiling framing.

Olinde Building

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

10 of 34: View looking west from rear corridor towards the lobby entrance. Community room is on the left.

11 of 34: View of an original arch that was bricked in with the 1962 addition and the pressed tin ceiling in new Unit 119, camera facing northwest.

12 of 34: Closer view of an original arch that was bricked in with the 1962 addition in new Unit 119, camera facing west.

13 of 34: View looking south down a hallway along the original rear elevation of the 1925 building showing exposed brick walls and arches bricked in with the 1962 addition.

14 of 34: View of the restored pressed tin ceiling in new Unit 115.

15 of 34: View of the new light well, camera facing west.

16 of 34: View of an original brick column integrated into new Unit 104, camera facing northwest.

17 of 34: View of original brick (now painted) in new Unit 104, camera facing southeast.

18 of 34: View of hallway in 1938 addition, first floor, that runs west-east; camera facing east.

19 of 34: View looking down hallway leading to elevator, located to the east of the community room; camera facing north.

20 of 34: View of the community room, camera facing northwest.

21 of 34: Another view of the community room showing some exposed brick (now painted) walls; camera facing northwest.

22 of 34: View of original 1962 stair in northwest corner, camera facing north.

23 of 34: Second floor storage room; one of two larger open spaces on the second floor; camera facing northwest.

24 of 34: Second floor storage room; one of two larger open spaces on the second floor; camera facing southeast.

25 of 34: View of exposed brick walls (one unpainted, one painted) in new Unit 201; camera facing northwest.

26 of 34: View of main hallway on second floor (runs west-east) showing common space – the second of larger open spaces on this floor; camera facing east.

Olinde Building
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

27 of 34: View of hallway and common space – second of larger open spaces on this floor; camera facing northeast.

28 of 34: View of the main hallway on the second floor from the common open space; camera facing east.

29 of 34: View of the common open space from the main second floor hallway; camera facing northwest.

30 of 34: View of the common open space on the second floor and the elevator; camera facing northwest.

31 of 34: View of the original 1938 trusses exposed in the second floor hallway.

32 of 34: View of the stairwell along the eastern elevation; camera facing east.

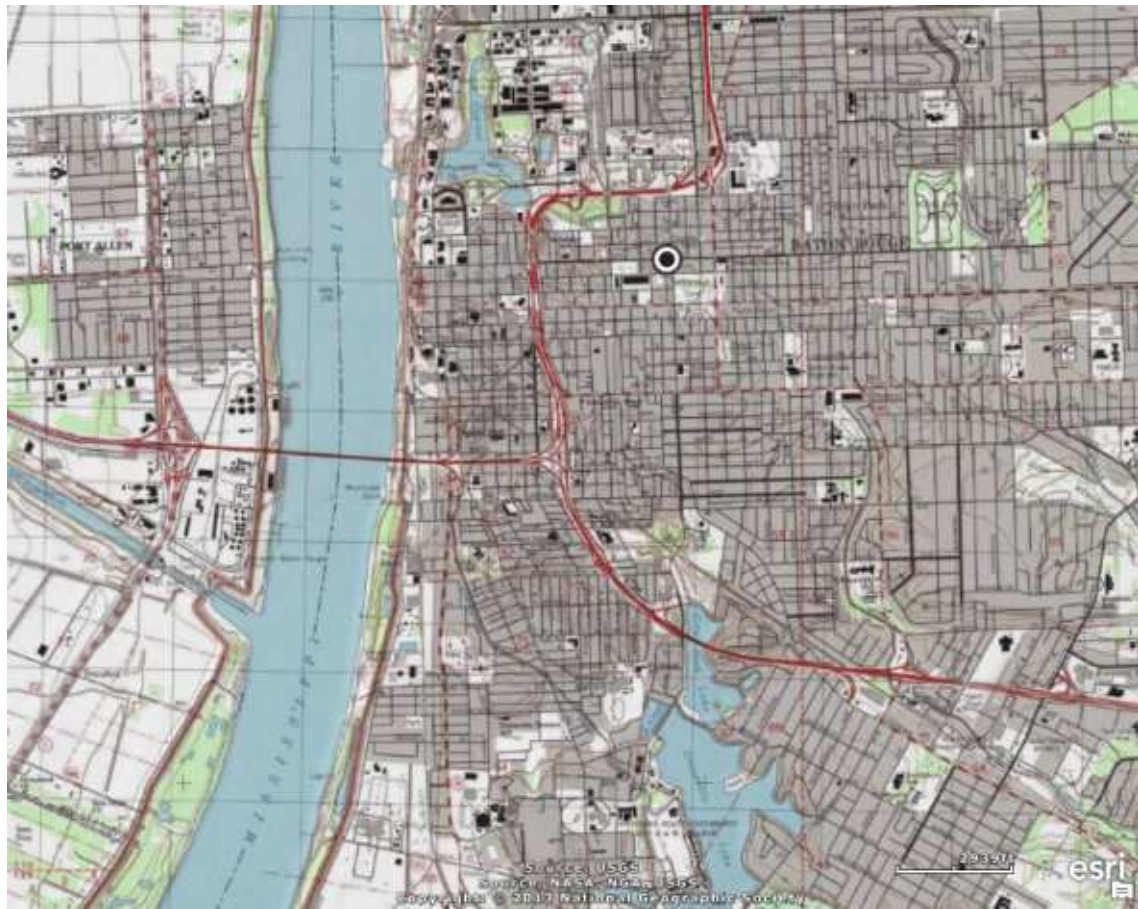
33 of 34: View of original 1938 glass block windows on the eastern elevation and metal window on the southern elevation; camera facing southeast.

34 of 34: View of the original 1938 glass block windows in the bedroom of new Unit 215; camera facing southeast.

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.

Olinde Building, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA



Latitude: 30.425978

Longitude: -91.169775

Olinde Building, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

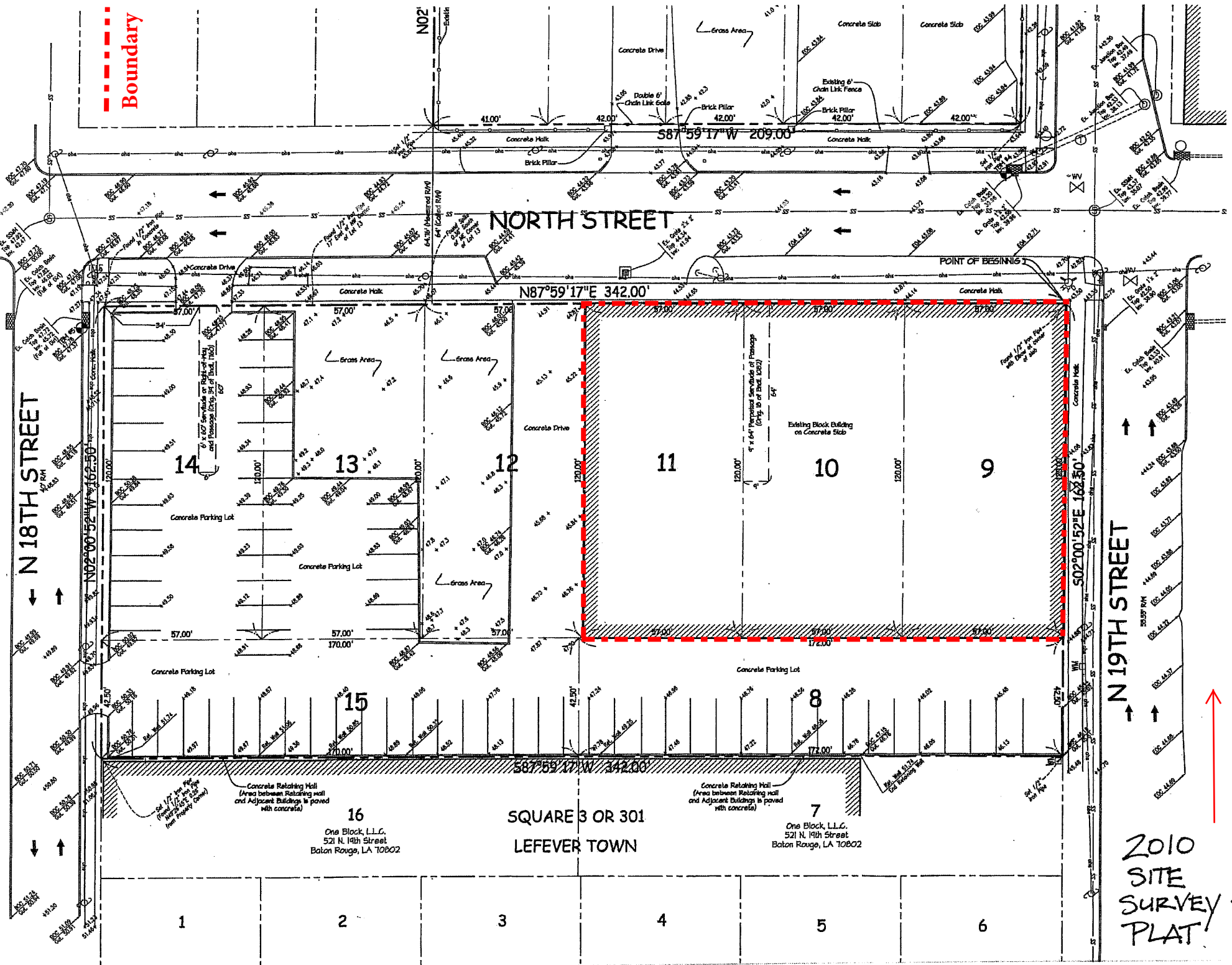


Latitude: 30.425978

Longitude: -91.169775

Plat Map/Boundary Map

Olinde Building, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana



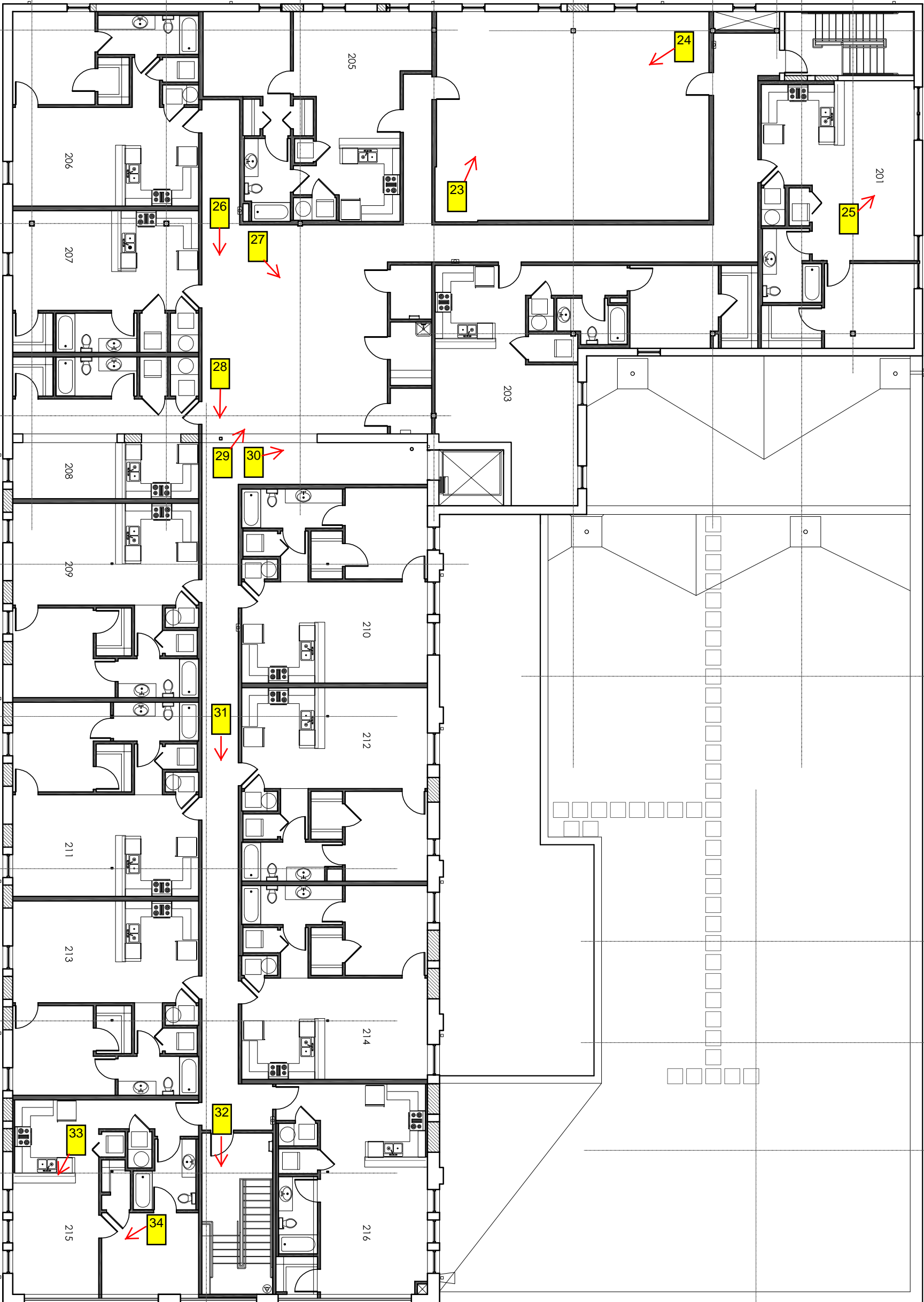
Olinde Building
East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
First Floor Photo Key



North Street

North Nineteenth Street

Olinde Building
East Baton Rouge Parish
Second Floor Photo Key



North Street

North Nineteenth Street





LEASING
202-288-1915

























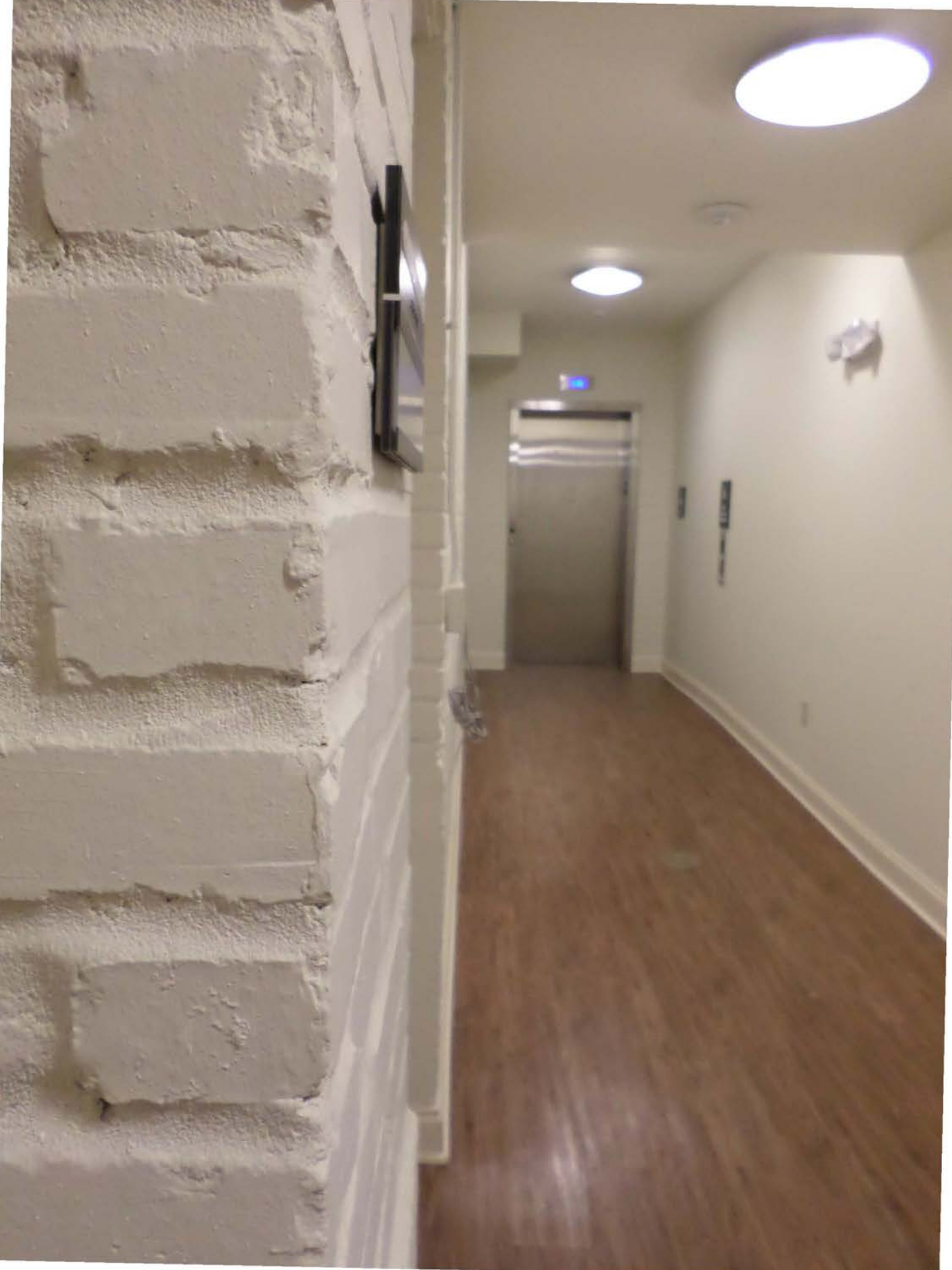








104

































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: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY Olinde Building
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: LOUISIANA, East Baton Rouge

DATE RECEIVED: 4/04/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/21/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13001142

DETAILED EVALUATION:

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 4-28-2014 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Part II tax credit plans accepted
This nomination, this building and its treatment
should not be considered as a good example
of Preservation in the Application of the
Sec. of Interior's Standards for the treatment
of historic Properties.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A

REVIEWER JG -J.P.L.-C.S. B.G DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Corona Building

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: LOUISIANA, East Baton Rouge

DATE RECEIVED: 8/17/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/12/12
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/27/12 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/03/12
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12000825

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 10/02/12 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

See attached comments

RECOM./CRITERIA Return 10/2/2012
REVIEWER [Signature] DISCIPLINE _____
TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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

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



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

The United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Return/Evaluation Sheet

Property Name: Corona Building

Reference Number: 12000825

Reasons for Return:

This nomination is being returned for substantive revision. The nomination does not make compelling argument for the eligibility of the Corona Building under Criterion A, under either Community Planning and Development or Ethnic Heritage.

Properties nominated under Criterion A must have a direct association with the event or broad pattern of events in question. In community planning and development, it would be expected that a property have a direct impact on the planning or development of a community. Construction of the Corona Building appears to follow a pattern of development, rather than serving as a catalyst for development. For an individual building to be eligible in this area of significance, a nomination needs to demonstrate that the construction of this particular building influenced the further development of the area.

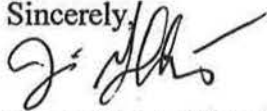
For a property to have significance in ethnic heritage, it should have a direct association with the identity of the ethnic group. Its historic use should reflect and promote the cultural traditions of the group. Mere ownership or use of a commercial building by an ethnic group is not sufficient to embody importance to that group. An exception to this might be if an ethnic group was restricted to use of specific buildings, businesses, or areas by law or strong, proscriptive social tradition (for example, Jim Crow laws and social practices that restricted the free movement and trade of African Americans). While the Corona Building was owned by Italians, and the surrounding neighborhood had a heavy Italian population, there is nothing that indicates that the building or the various businesses in the building was restricted to Italians.

If this property is resubmitted under different criteria or areas of significance, please demonstrate that the building has a direct association with the events or personages of importance. Please also make sure that in Section 9, the box is checked that denotes

“preliminary determination of individual listing under 36 CFR 67 has previously been requested.”

We appreciate the opportunity to review this nomination and hope that you find these comments useful. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at (202) 354-2275 or email at James_Gabbert@nps.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Gabbert", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jim Gabbert, Historian
National Register of Historic Places
10/2/2012



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

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

December 13, 2013

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

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

RE: Olinde Building, East Baton Rouge, Parish, LA

Jim,

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

Thanks,

Jessica

Enclosures:

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

Comments:

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

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Olinde Building

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: LOUISIANA, East Baton Rouge

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

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13001142

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT _____ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

See Comments

RECOM./CRITERIA Return

REVIEWER [Signature]

DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____

DATE _____

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

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



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

The United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Return/Evaluation Sheet

Property Name: Olinde Building

Reference Number: 13001142

This nomination is being returned for technical revision.

The boundaries described in the nomination include a large tract of land that is not historically associated with the property. The west half of the block, which now consists of parking and a grassy area, were not related to the historic function or significance of the property (see the Guidelines for Selecting Boundaries on page 56 of *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*). Please resubmit with more appropriate boundaries.

The property is nominated for its importance in commerce at the local level. This commercial entity served as a "general store" of sorts, and implement dealer, and as a furniture dealer. The commercial function of these businesses required large, open spaces for the display of goods. The building has subsequently been altered in a conversion to residential use. Please provide a more explicit description of the original space (perhaps broken down by section), a description of the current configuration, and a more detailed assessment of how the changes affect the integrity of the building as it relates to its area of significance.

The accompanying photographs do not accurately reflect the conditions of the building as it stands today. Please submit more current photographs, keyed both to a site plan and to the updated description.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at (202) 354-2275 or email at <James_Gabbert@nps.gov>.

Sincerely,

JIM GABBERT

Jim Gabbert, Historian
National Register of Historic Places
2/5/2014



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

March 25, 2014

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

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

RE: Olinde Building, East Baton Rouge, Parish, LA

Jim,

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

Thanks,

Jessica

Enclosures:

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

Comments:

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

LOCAL OFFICIAL'S WAIVER

October 7, 2013

Colin Magee
Land Use and Zoning Coordinator
Office of the Planning Commission
City of Baton Rouge – Parish of East Baton Rouge
1755 Florida St, Third Floor
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Dear Mr. Magee:

This will confirm that I am fully aware of the effects of listing a property in the National Register of Historic Places. I recognize that, under the National Historic Preservation Act, I am entitled to comment on the proposed listing of property within my jurisdiction.

Following is the address of the property within my jurisdiction that is currently under consideration for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places:

**Olinde's Furniture Store
1854 North St
Baton Rouge, LA 70802**

I hereby waive my comment period for the nomination as provided for in the National Park Service's regulations (36 CFR Part 60).

Sincerely,

Melvin F. "Kip" Holden

*MELVIN F. "KIP" HOLDEN
Signed at Baton Rouge, La, this 17th day of October, 2013*

Susan F. Boudreau

Notary Public

*SUSAN F. BOUDREAU
9243*

RECEIVED
OCT 15 2013
OFFICE OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION



Gulf Coast Housing Partnership

October 18, 2013

Jessica Richardson
Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation and Tax Incentives
1051 North Third Street, Room 415
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Re: Forms pertaining to National Register nomination of Olinde Building

Dear Jessica:

Enclosed with this letter are two fully executed forms pertaining to the nomination of the Olinde Building to the National Register and our forthcoming hearing in November. Please let me know if you need anything else from us before the hearing next month.

Yours truly,

Rafe Rabalais
Project Manager
Gulf Coast Housing Partnership
Rabalais@gchp.net
504-525-2505, xt. 209

OWNER'S WAIVER

October 17, 2013

Colin Magee
Land Use and Zoning Coordinator
Office of the Planning Commission
City of Baton Rouge – Parish of East Baton Rouge
1755 Florida St, Third Floor
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Dear Mr. Magee:

This will confirm that I am fully aware of the effects of listing a property in the National Register of Historic Places. I recognize that, under the National Historic Preservation Act, I am entitled to object to the proposed listing of my property by a notarized, written statement. If I am the sole owner and I object, my property will not be listed. If there are multiple owners of this property and a majority of the owners object, the property will not be listed.

Following is the address of my property:

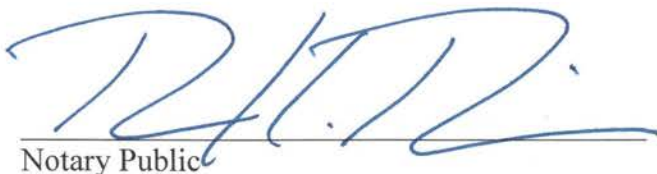
**Olinde's Furniture Store
1854 North St
Baton Rouge, LA 70802**

I hereby waive my right to object to the proposed listing and notify you that I request my property be listed in the National Register at the earliest possible date.

Sincerely,



Kathy Laborde
Managing Member, 1854 North Street, L.L.C.



Notary Public



TREVOR KADE THEUNISSEN
NOTARY PUBLIC
NOTARY ID NO. 89347, LSBA NO. 32724
MY COMMISSION IS FOR LIFE.
STATE OF LOUISIANA

1300 1142

J. Shull
11/27/2012

H32(2280)

NOV 27 2012

Ms. Kathy Laborde
President
Gulf Coast Housing Partnership
1610 A Oretha Castle Haley Blvd
New Orleans, LA 70113

Dear Ms. Laborde:

Thank you for your letter of November 6, 2012, requesting that I review the National Register nomination for the Corona Building, located in East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana. The nomination was submitted to the National Park Service and returned for substantive revision.

I have carefully reviewed the entire file for this property, including the Part 1 tax credit applications and the original nomination. While the story of the Corona brothers is interesting, the building in its present form does not retain sufficient integrity to represent the significance claimed in the submitted National Register nomination. The building constructed and owned by the Corona brothers until 1935 occupied the corner lot; subsequent additions made to the building to accommodate its new use by the Olinde family overwhelm and subsume the original Corona Building into a much larger building. The building as it stands represents the post 1938 period of occupancy.

The Olinde business, as outlined in the initial Part 1 submission, is an interesting one. I concur with the original response to the Part 1 submission of December 14, 2011, that denied the application based on the role the Olinde Furniture Company might have played in ethnic history as a company that bucked the segregated commercial norm. There is not enough documentation to support that conclusion. I do suggest, however, that further investigation into the overall commercial context of the Olinde Company is warranted. By looking at the development of family and large-scale furniture/appliance business practice in Baton Rouge, and how the Olinde Furniture Company fit into this context, a case for eligibility might be made under Criterion A.

Should you elect to pursue this line of inquiry, resubmission of this additional information in an amended Part 1 application would undoubtedly be more expeditious than incurring further delays by first going through the formal National Register nomination process. If the amended Part I is approved, this would allow the applicant to obtain review of the Part II application. A revised National Register nomination could be processed and submitted thereafter.

Sincerely,

Carol D. Shull


Carol D. Shull
Interim Keeper of the National Register
of Historic Places

cc: LA SHPO

bcc: 2280 Loether, Shull, Reed, Gabbert
Basic File Retained In 2280

FNP:RGReed:OP:11-27-2012:s:/nr/ corona-olinde RGR revise

Carol Shull/WASO/NPS
11/08/2012 03:30 PM

To "Pat Duncan" <pduncan@crt.la.gov>
cc James Gabbert/WASO/NPS@NP, Paul
Loether/WASO/NPS,
bcc
Subject Re: Corona Building 

Dear Pat,

We have received their letter and will review it carefully with the file. It was good to talk to you. Thank you for emailing us the photos.

Warm regards,

Carol

Carol D. Shull
Interim Keeper of the National Register
of Historic Places
Chief, Heritage Education Services
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street NW
Washington, DC 20005
202-354-2234
FAX: 202-371-1616
"Pat Duncan" <pduncan@crt.la.gov>



"Pat Duncan"
<pduncan@crt.la.gov>
11/07/2012 10:27 AM

To <Carol_Shull@nps.gov>
cc
Subject Corona Building

Carol.

I just heard from the applicant asking how we will know that you have actually received their letter. If it occurs to you, considering everything that comes your way, please shoot me a quick e-mail confirming that their letter is in your hands.

Thanks.

Pat

Patricia Duncan
Architectural Historian
National Register Coordinator
Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation

Office of Cultural Development
Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
PO Box 44247, Baton Rouge, LA 70804
Tel: 225-219-4595

www.louisianahp.org

LOUISIANA
OFFICE OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT



DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DEVELOPING OUR CULTURAL ASSETS

LOUISIANA

Pick your Passion [®]



[Louisiana Office of Cultural Development - Info | Facebook](#)

11/5/12

Jim,

PLEASE REVIEW
i, TITAN GIVE TO
CAROL. WE'LL
DISCUSS AS A TRIO
EITHER TOMORROW
OR NEXT WEEK.

TK




Gulf Coast Housing Partnership

November 6, 2012

Ms. Carol D. Shull, Keeper of the National Register of
National Park Service 2280, 8th Floor
National Register of Historic Places
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Ms. Shull,

The decision of the National Park Service to return the nomination of East Baton Rouge Parish's Corona Building to the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office without listing the resource in the National Register was deeply disappointing to the team who worked on the nomination. The nomination was supported by the Louisiana SHPO and approved by the state review board in a unanimous vote with no opposition of any sort. We have all carefully read historian Jim Gabbert's evaluation in his recent letter. We have considered his thoughtful, reasoned arguments but feel that they are not sufficient to exclude the Corona Building from the National Register. We respectfully disagree with his conclusions and to that end, ask that you, as the Keeper of the National Register, review the nomination of the Corona Building (number 1200085).

The building was nominated under Criterion A, citing two areas of significance, (1) Community Planning and Development, and (2) Ethnic Heritage/European. Both are discussed below.

Community Planning and Development: The reviewer wrote that because the Corona Building "appears to follow a pattern of development" rather than shaping it, the Community Planning and Development category was not appropriate. We see this differently, that the Corona Building is a strong visual reminder of the unplatted streetcar suburb that developed along the North Street corridor. Baton Rouge eliminated its streetcars and all the tracks in the 1930s. The city development driven by streetcars underpins modern Baton Rouge but has

Please submit this
letter directly to the
Keeper of the National
Register, Ms. Carol
Shull.

Thank
You!

virtually been erased from the urban grid. We feel that the Corona Building provides an important landmark of the city's development and streetcar history.

Ethnic Heritage/European, Italian: This is the most crucial area of the Corona Building's importance. The Corona Building is significant in the area of ethnic heritage because it is a very rare survivor to represent the impact of the Italian immigrant community in Baton Rouge's history. The Italian presence in early twentieth century Baton Rouge was greater than percentage-of-population figures would reveal. Although the city's 1930 population of 30,729 included only 1,776 Italians and Italian Americans (about 5 percent of the total), they were the largest non-black ethnic group in the city. And very importantly, they were concentrated in certain neighborhoods; dominated the small grocery business; and were active in various religious, civic, political, and social organizations.

Today Baton Rouge's Italian heritage can be seen in the thousands of Italian surnames found in the telephone directory and other citywide compilations of surnames such as voter lists. The Greater Baton Rouge American Italian Association vigorously promotes Italian traditions and celebrates the successes of Italian descendants. But there is very little tangible evidence of the Italian American experience in Baton Rouge; there is practically nothing left in the historic building stock to directly represent this high-profile community.

In our view, this is what makes the Corona Building so important and such a worthy addition to the National Register. It was one of the anchors of the North Street corridor, once Baton Rouge's premier Italian American neighborhood. The North Street area provided Italian immigrants and their families with a virtually complete commercial-residential community, with stores that fulfilled most of their basic needs, offered employment and also housing, with apartments, boarding houses and small rental units. Sacred Heart Catholic Church, known as "the Italian church," and staffed with an Italian-speaking priest, was only two blocks away.

The reviewer states that "mere ownership or use of a commercial building by an ethnic group is not sufficient to embody importance to that group." This view radically underestimates the achievement and impact of the Corona Building to the North Street community. "Mere ownership" was a tremendous accomplishment for Luca and Agostino Corona, the two immigrant brothers. Their

building was not a hastily thrown up storefront but a carefully planned modern building designed by one of Baton Rouge's leading architects of the period. Their modern building was a visible symbol of Italian prosperity and even triumph. The reviewer is correct that the Corona Building was not limited to use by Italians. But this is comparable to saying that Sacred Heart Church, "the Italian church," was not a community symbol and touchstone because it was not limited to Italian Catholics. The Corona Building's emergence as a successful business enterprise marked an important shift. In the early years of the 1900s, most buildings in the North Street area were owned by non-Italians and rented or leased to Italian businesses or residents. In the next decade, Italians began buying the aging buildings from their landlords. The Corona Building, however, marked the first commercial building planned, built, and owned by Italian Americans in the North Street corridor. It was so successful that non-Italian businesses rented space there. Again, this contributed to the Corona Building's importance as an unmistakable, visible landmark of Italian accomplishment and full partnership in the community.

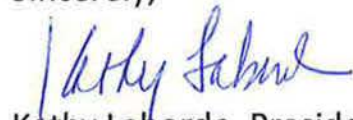
The North Street community was once a large, tightly packed area of homes and businesses but today it is a hollowed-out landscape of overgrown vacant lots and under-used industrial buildings. The Italian American community followed the traditional paths of second- and third-generation assimilation and dispersed into the larger community after World War II. The area then became part of a light industrial section that catered to the auto industry, with large-scale automobile dealerships, used car lots, and repair shops. Almost all of the residential units and most of the small shops disappeared in the post-World War II era. Any resident of the 1920s North Street corridor would not recognize the once close-grained neighborhood today except for the Corona Building (despite its additions). Only two other buildings remain from the North Street corridor's Italian period, both commercial buildings. In the next block, the c. 1922 Tobias Building, 1952 North Street, is largely intact, but the larger and more historically notable Tobias-Gass store building (1917), 1967 North Street, has been substantially altered. Other small, tightly-knit Italian nodes in pre-World War II Baton Rouge have also vanished, most without leaving behind any historic building stock. Today there are only a handful of historic buildings that directly represent Baton Rouge's Italian heritage. Sacred Heart Church, mentioned above, is one site that would be an important addition to the National Register, but other buildings have

undergone extensive alterations and many have been lost to neglect and deterioration.

The remarkable history and legacy of the estimated 106,000 Italians who poured into Louisiana between 1880 and 1920 has been largely ignored. Historians, communities, schools, and cultural groups are now belatedly beginning to delve into the Louisiana Italian story but there are huge gaps to fill. Although the Register recognizes European ethnicity as a legitimate reason for listing, we in Louisiana seem to have overlooked its potential as a powerful tool in reclaiming Italian history. Currently the state has only two Register listings connected to Italian American history and culture. It is important that Louisiana begin to fully use this tool before we lose any more of the historic building stock representing Italian heritage.

We feel that the Corona Building embodies many crucial aspects of the Italian experience in Baton Rouge and as one of the last extant buildings from the North Street corridor's Italian community is eminently worthy of the National Register. There are many buildings in Louisiana and other states in the Register because they are "a rare surviving example," "one of the few structures left to represent ...", or have "status as a rare survivor of a once common type ...". These phrases are used repeatedly in National Register nominations to explain why some otherwise unremarkable buildings and structures are included in the listings. The Corona Building deserves to be ranked with these other "rare survivors" in our national record. The first generation of Italians to live and work in Baton Rouge have left very few written records but the Corona brothers bequeathed a well-built, handsome commercial building to their community. It is one of the few structures left to bear witness to the once robust Italian American neighborhood. We earnestly ask for your help to ensure that their lives and their history will not be allowed to disappear with their neighborhood.

Sincerely,



Kathy Laborde, President
Gulf Coast Housing Partnership



Carolyn Bennett, Executive Director
The Foundation for Historical Louisiana



"Pat Duncan"
<pduncan@crt.la.gov>
11/07/2012 10:02 AM

To <Carol_Shull@nps.gov>
cc
bcc
Subject Corona Building Photos

Hi, Carol. I really enjoyed talking with you on Monday, even though it was a problem child that brought us together.

The PDF of Corona Building pictures that I promised to send is attached. I apologize that the last picture is turned. I don't know why the software did that, because I did not scan it that way. I think you can still see what you need.

The applicant apparently sent the letter out yesterday via Fed-Ex. I assume it will take a few days to make it through your system. I told them to attach a note asking that the letter go directly to you rather than to Jim.

Have a good week.

Cordially,

Pat

Patricia Duncan
Architectural Historian
National Register Coordinator
Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation
Office of Cultural Development
Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
PO Box 44247, Baton Rouge, LA 70804
Tel: 225-219-4595

www.louisianahp.org

LOUISIANA
OFFICE OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT



LOUISIANA
Pick your Passion

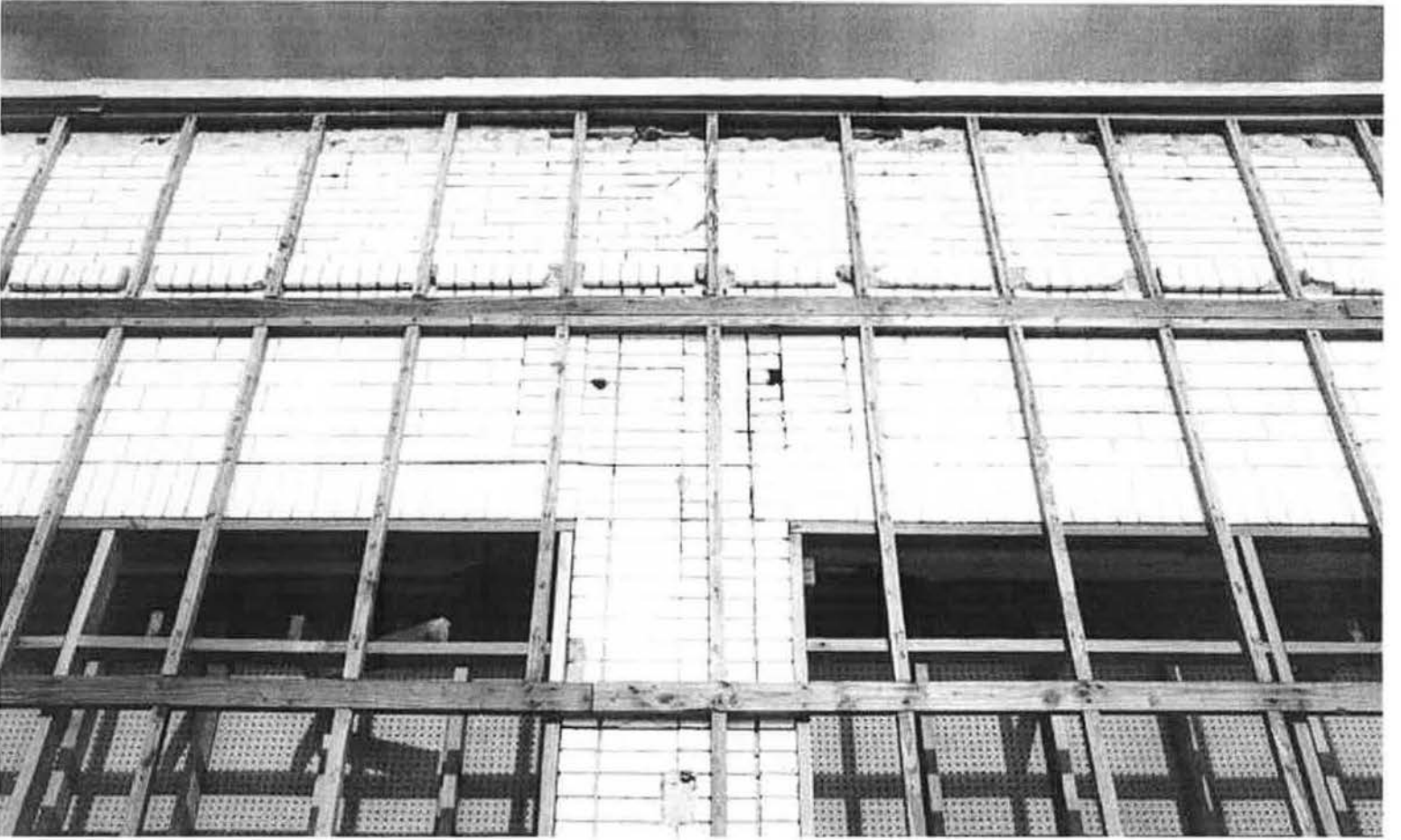
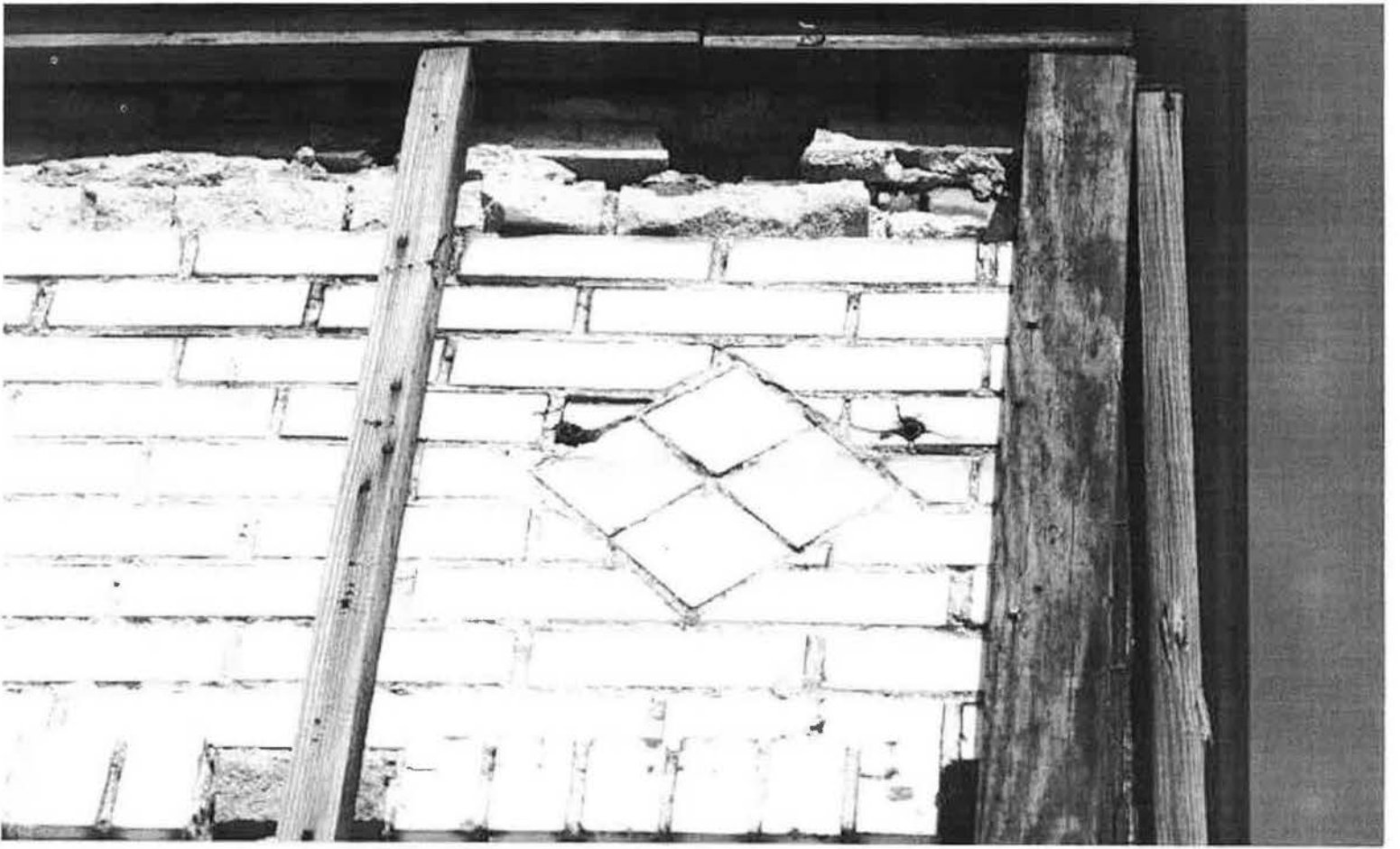


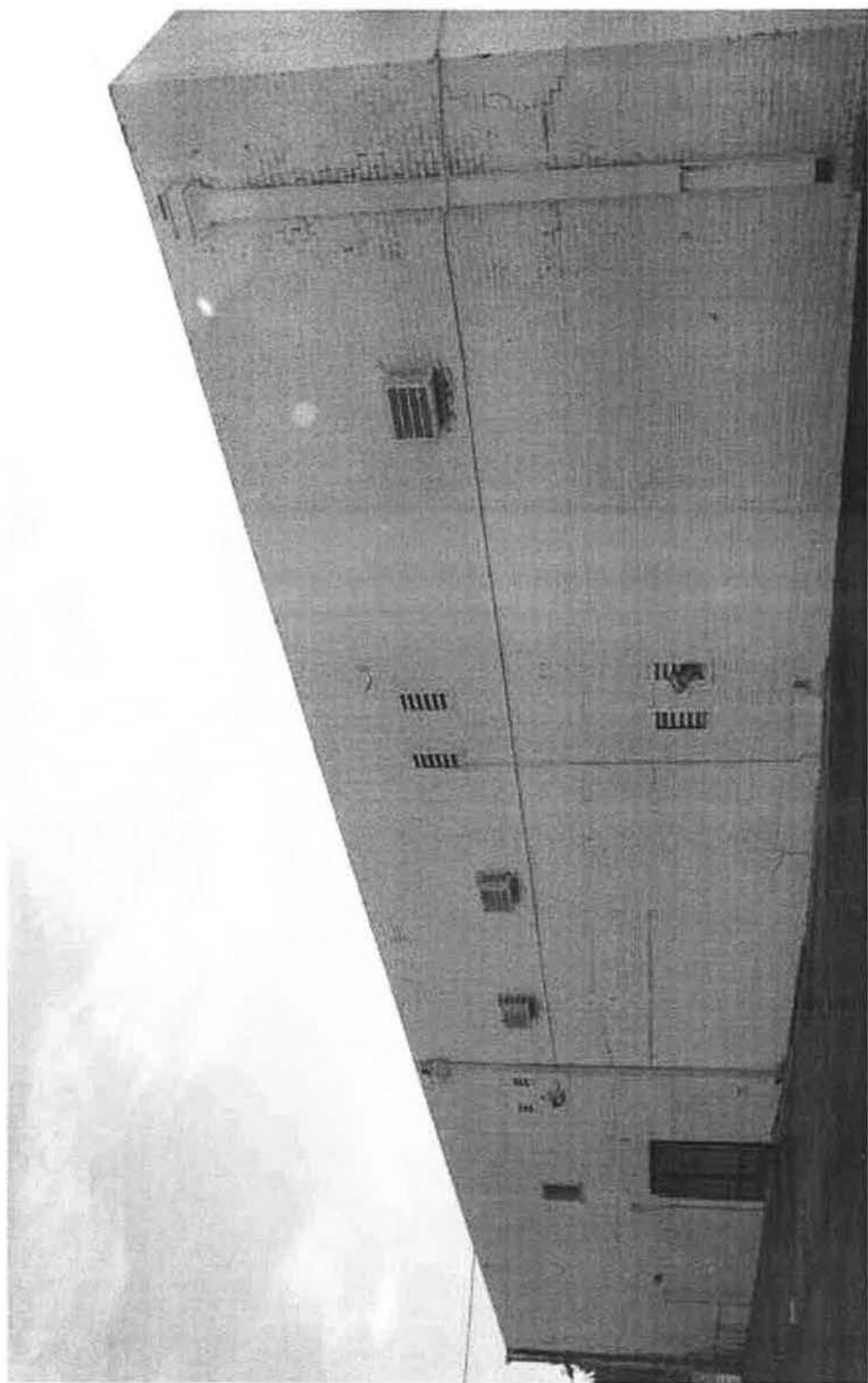
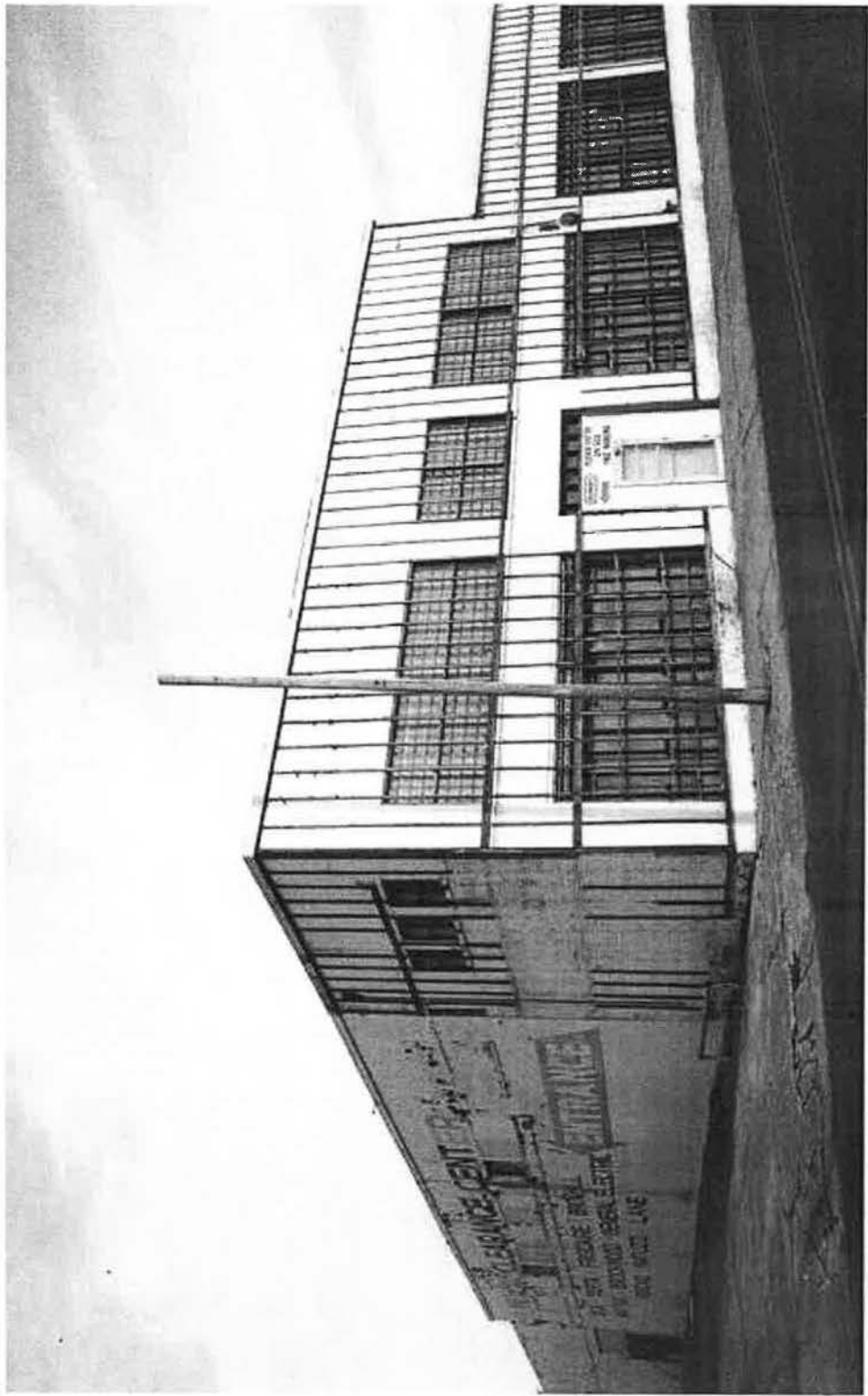
[Louisiana Office of Cultural Development - Info | Facebook](#)

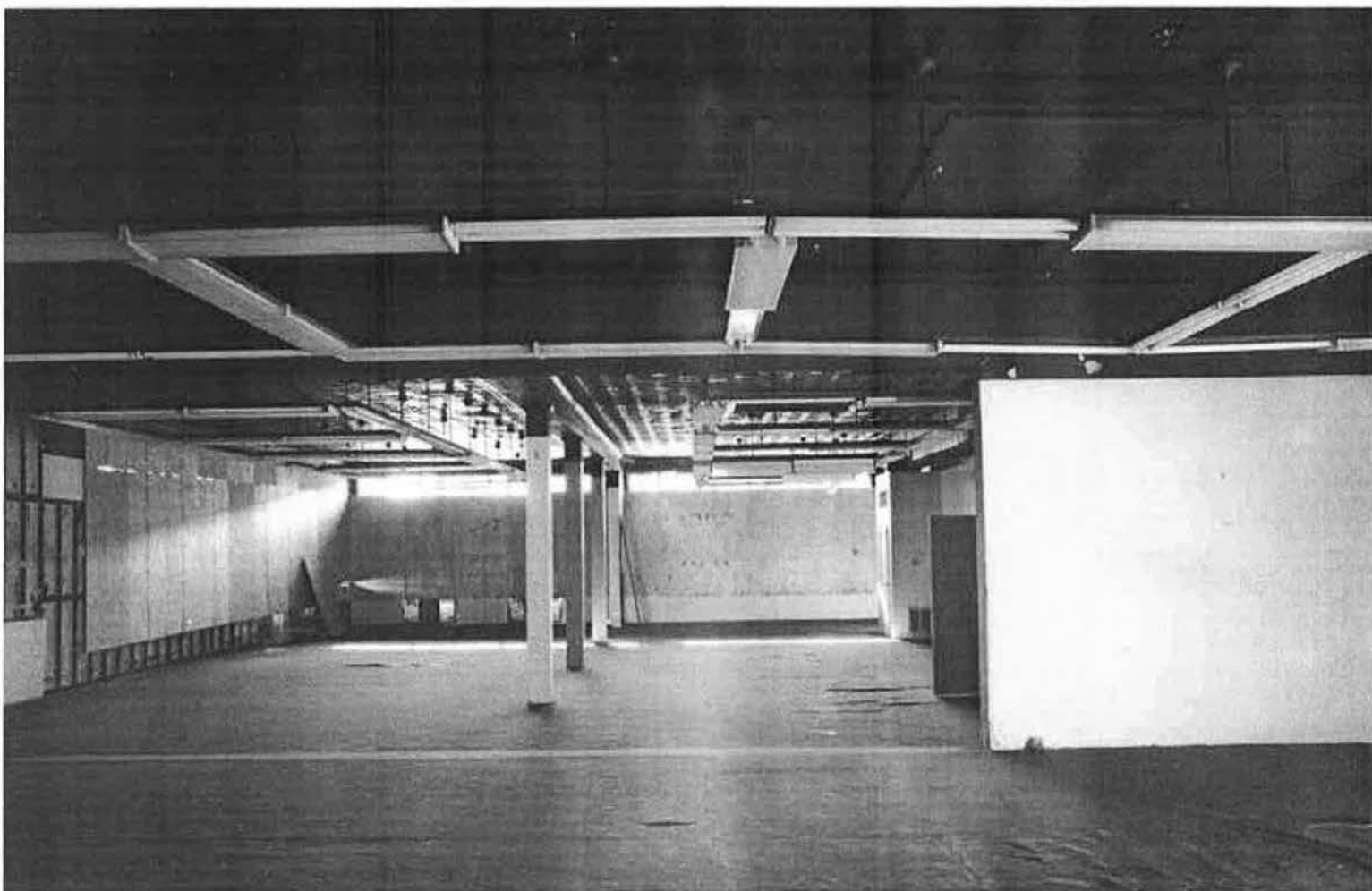
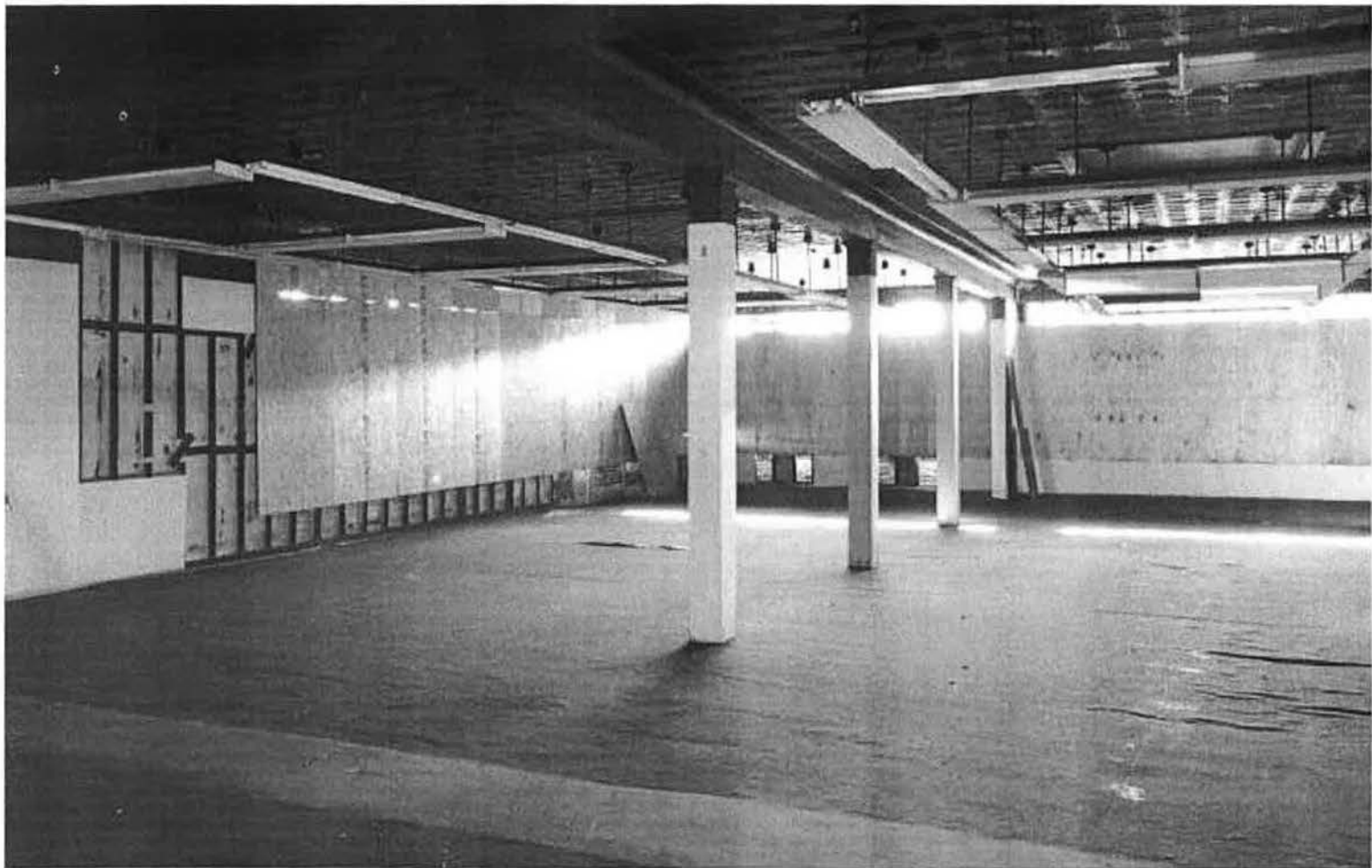


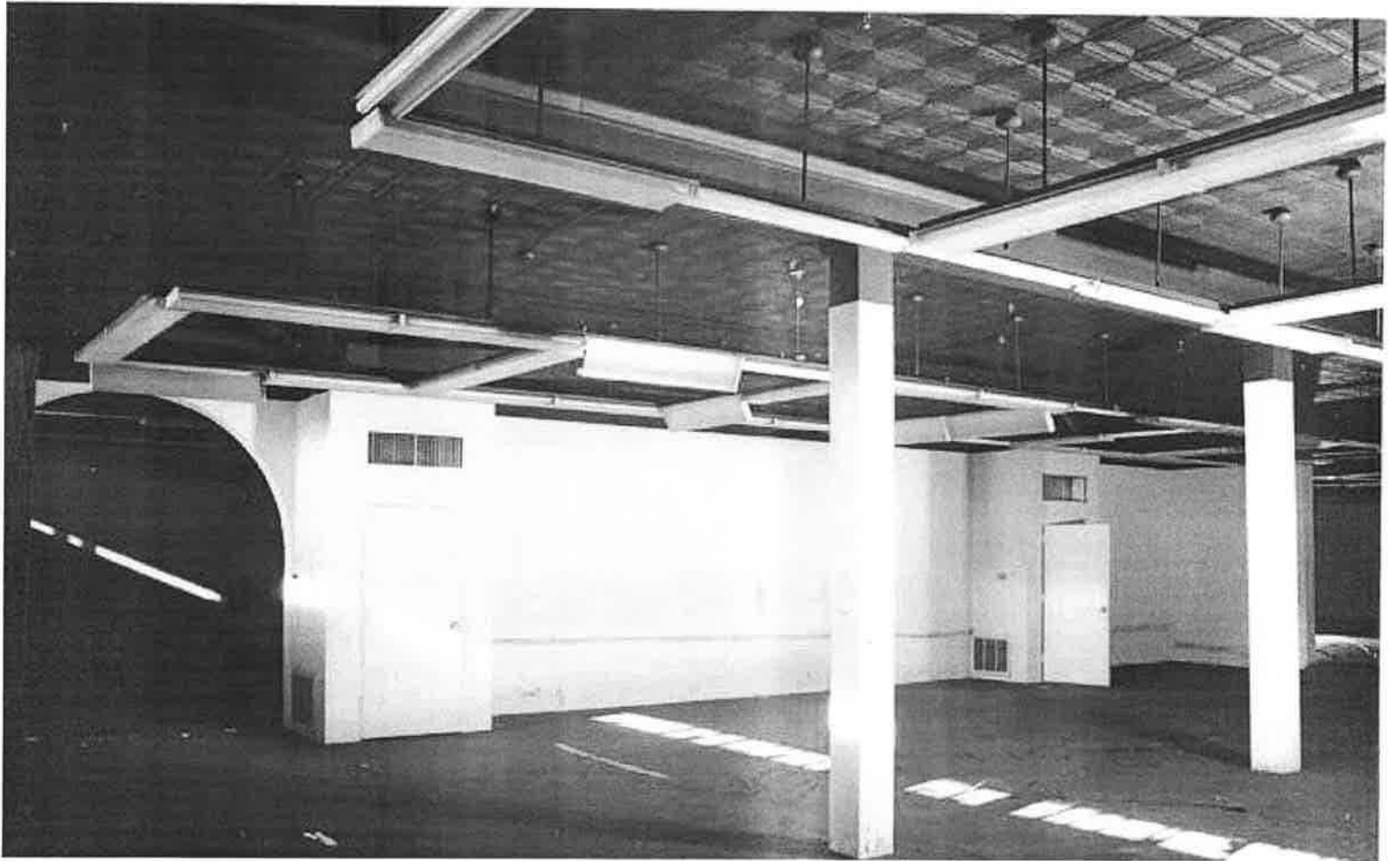
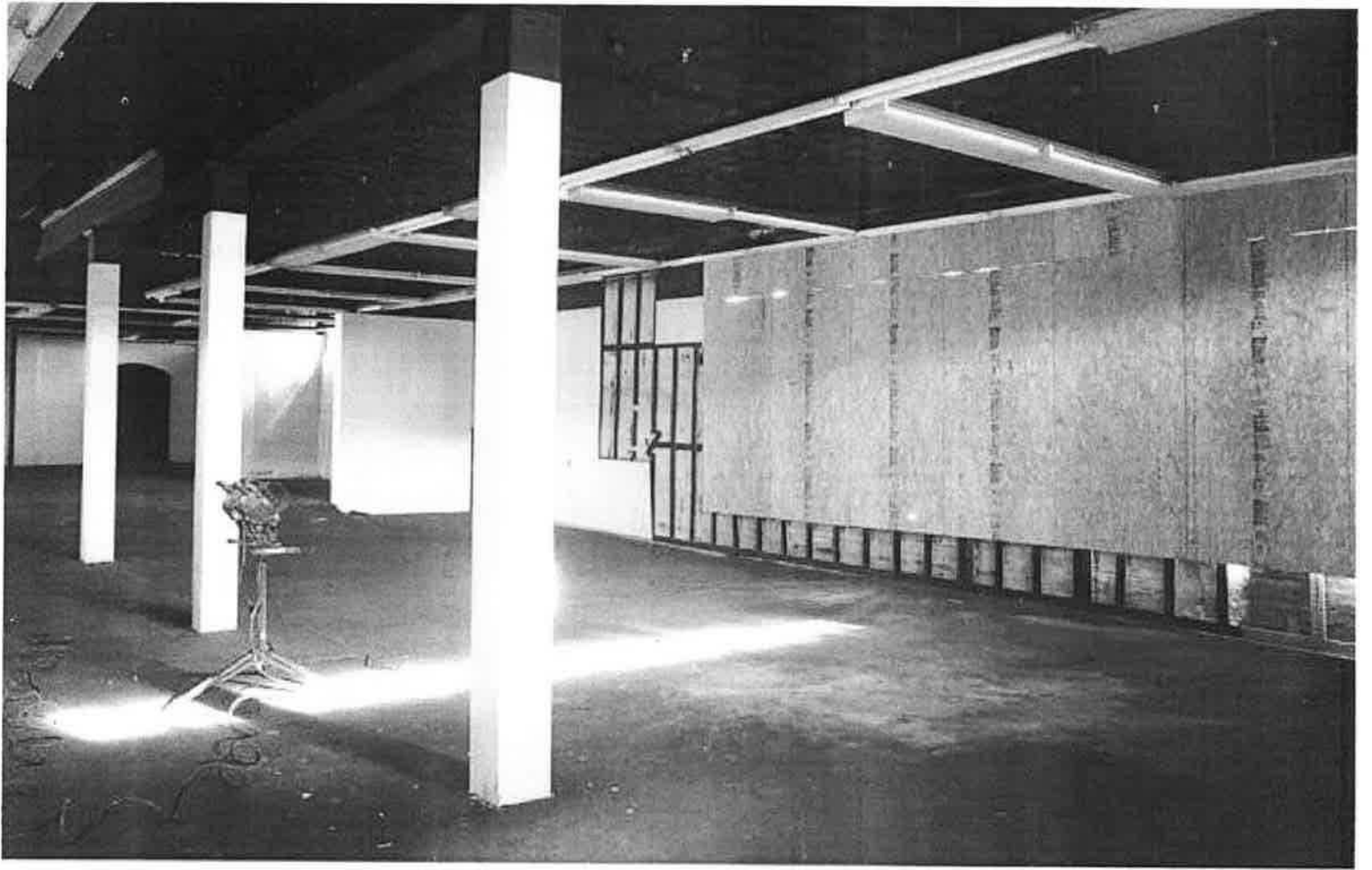
Corona Building.pdf

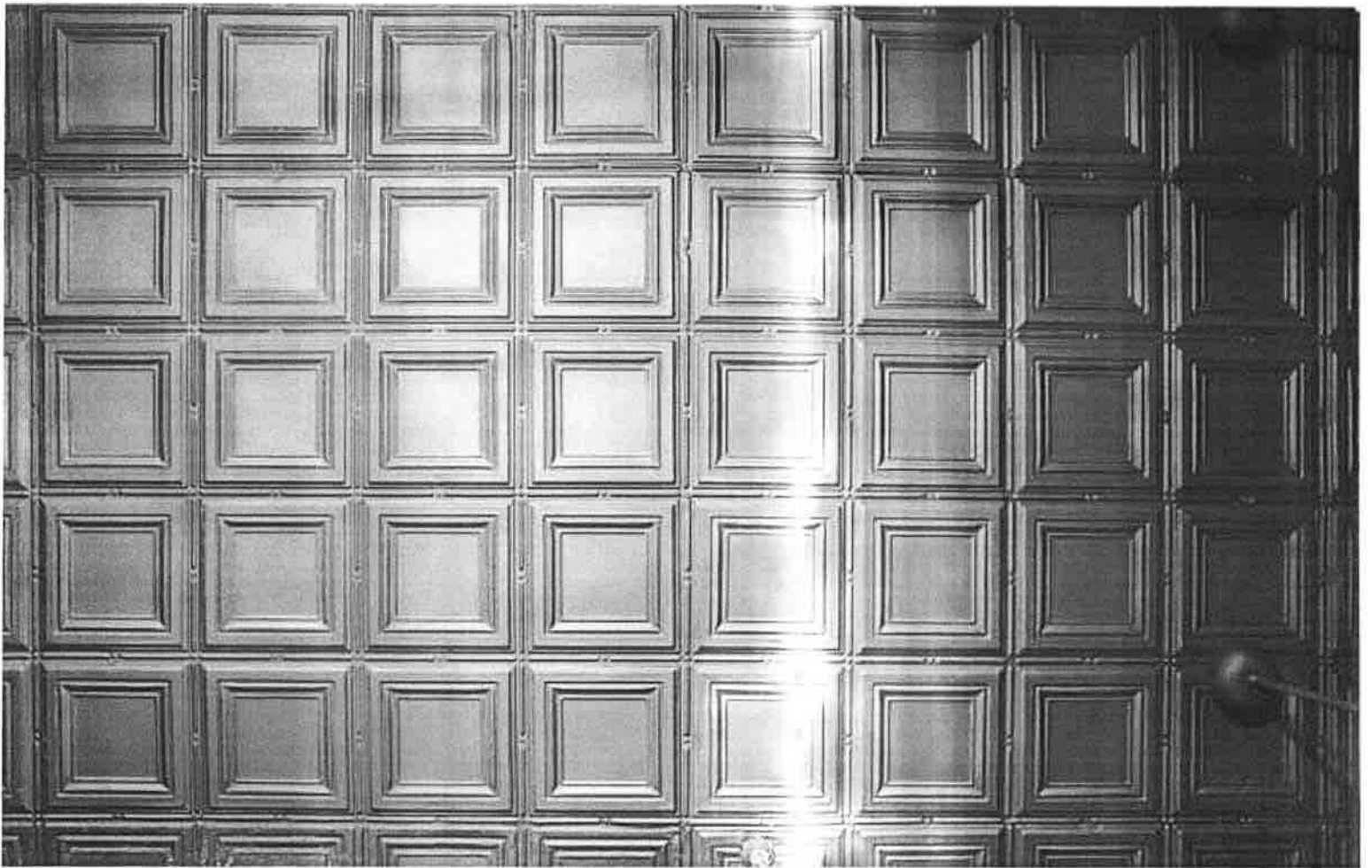
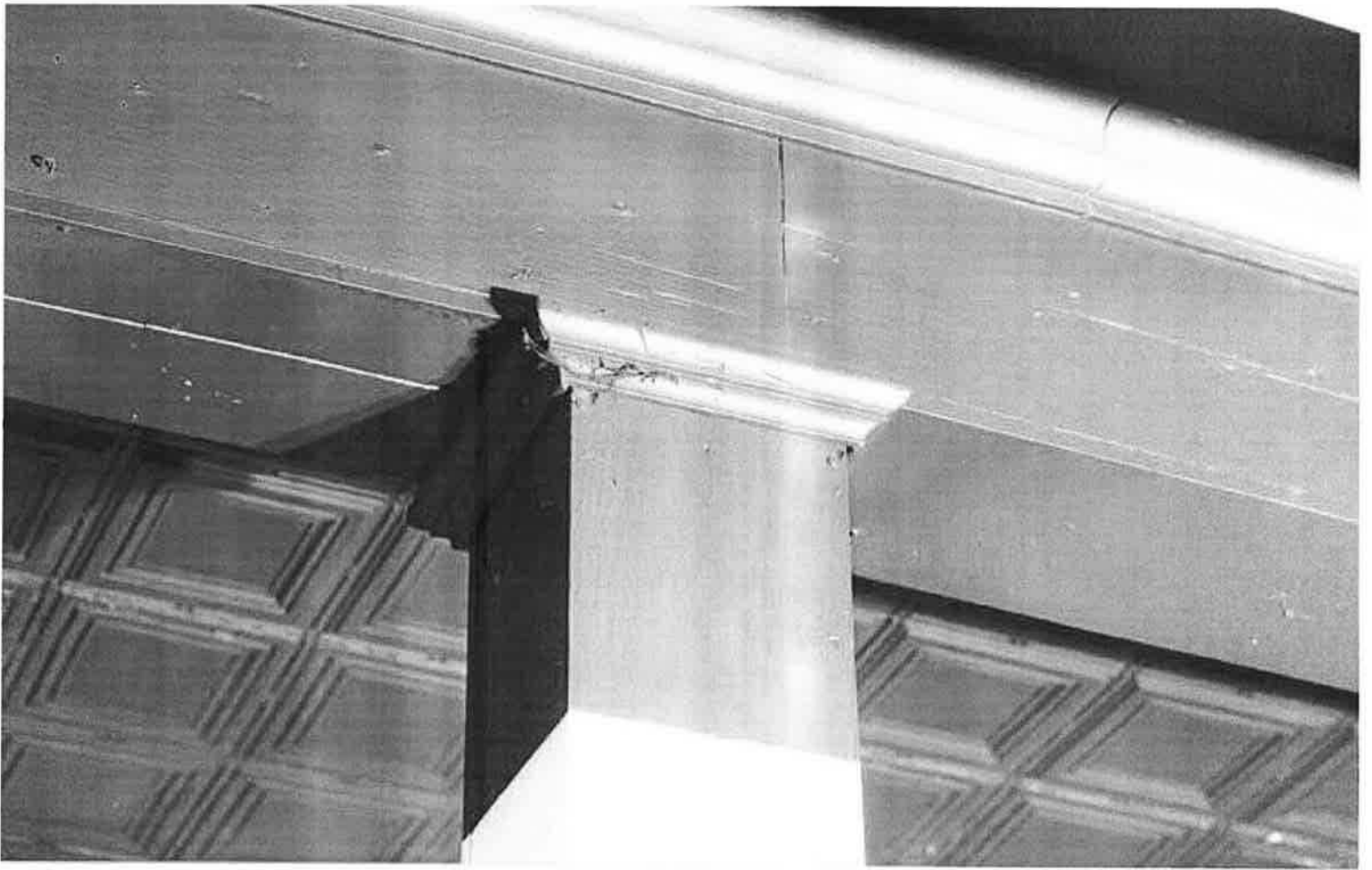




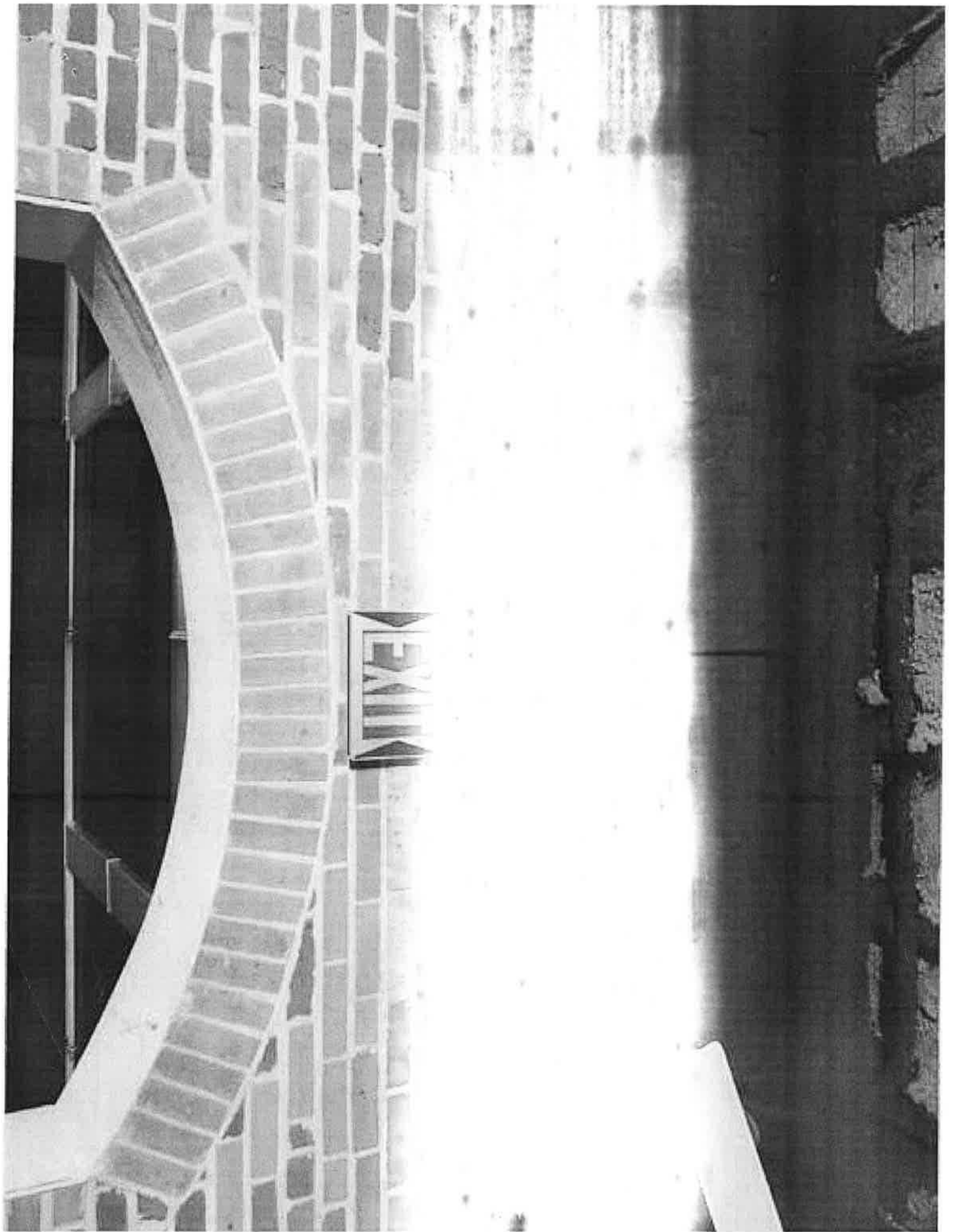












Corona
Lucan~~o~~ didn't
mention this bldg
in his memoir I
occupied with
his business in
W. Balm Range.

no one in family had
heard of

integrity

Don't know
what windows of
corner looked like.

Could not recognize
interior from
Corona period =

(tin ceiling - all
gone arches

Comer's L fell
low subdivided =

p. 17 - 12 last
paragraph =

What, about
neighborhood =

random, light

industrial,

lots of demolition -

tree - lot also

left = There is
a church =

No photos of this.
Italian neighborhood =

North St Community =

All willing to give up
Community development
~~to~~ argument & keep
ethnic Community =

- wouldn't recogn. neighborhood =

Other small nodes of Ital =
disappeared

only a few left Ital
Sacred Heart Church =

Rare surviving example =

Review Board = passed -
virtually no comment

Pat thinks "technically
eligible"

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Corona Building

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: LOUISIANA, East Baton Rouge

DATE RECEIVED: 8/17/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/12/12
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/27/12 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/03/12
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12000825

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 10/02/12 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

See attached comments

RECOM./CRITERIA

REVIEWER

DISCIPLINE

TELEPHONE

DATE

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

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



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

The United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Return/Evaluation Sheet

Property Name: Corona Building

Reference Number: 12000825

Reasons for Return:

This nomination is being returned for substantive revision. The nomination does not make compelling argument for the eligibility of the Corona Building under Criterion A, under either Community Planning and Development or Ethnic Heritage.

Properties nominated under Criterion A must have a direct association with the event or broad pattern of events in question. In community planning and development, it would be expected that a property have a direct impact on the planning or development of a community. Construction of the Corona Building appears to follow a pattern of development, rather than serving as a catalyst for development. For an individual building to be eligible in this area of significance, a nomination needs to demonstrate that the construction of this particular building influenced the further development of the area.

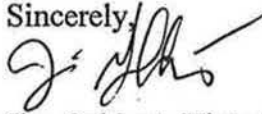
For a property to have significance in ethnic heritage, it should have a direct association with the identity of the ethnic group. Its historic use should reflect and promote the cultural traditions of the group. Mere ownership or use of a commercial building by an ethnic group is not sufficient to embody importance to that group. An exception to this might be if an ethnic group was restricted to use of specific buildings, businesses, or areas by law or strong, proscriptive social tradition (for example, Jim Crow laws and social practices that restricted the free movement and trade of African Americans). While the Corona Building was owned by Italians, and the surrounding neighborhood had a heavy Italian population, there is nothing that indicates that the building or the various businesses in the building was restricted to Italians.

If this property is resubmitted under different criteria or areas of significance, please demonstrate that the building has a direct association with the events or personages of importance. Please also make sure that in Section 9, the box is checked that denotes

“preliminary determination of individual listing under 36 CFR 67 has previously been requested.”

We appreciate the opportunity to review this nomination and hope that you find these comments useful. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at (202) 354-2275 or email at <James_Gabbert@nps.gov>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Gabbert", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jim Gabbert, Historian
National Register of Historic Places
10/2/2012



825

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Corona Building
other names/site number Olinde's Furniture Store

2. Location

street & number 1854 NORTH STREET

N/A	not for publication
N/A	vicinity

city or town BATON ROUGE
state Louisiana code LA county East Baton Rouge code 33 zip code 70802

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 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 statewide local

Pam Breaux Pam Breaux, State Historic Preservation Officer 8-16-2012
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

Corona Building
 Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish,
 Louisiana
 County and State

5. Classification

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

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property
 (Check only one box.)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Category: Commerce/Trade-Specialty Store
 Commerce/Trade-Restaurant

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Category: Vacant
 Sub-category: Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

No Style

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Brick
 walls: Brick
 roof: Asphalt
 other: Concrete, Wood

Returned

East Baton Rouge Parish,
Louisiana
County and State

Corona Building
Name of Property

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

Baton Rouge's Corona Building, built in 1925 in East Baton Rouge Parish, is a rectilinear, one-story brick commercial building located at the corner of North Street and North 19th Street (formerly Dufrocq Street) about 1.2 miles east of downtown Baton Rouge. It is in a modest commercial neighborhood known as the North Street Area in the early twentieth century and part of the larger Mid City district in the post-World War II era. The building's exterior features large window openings, typical of a retail space and representative of a modern broad-front building typology. It has later, one-story and two-story, unornamented brick warehouse additions and has undergone some exterior alterations. The original 1925 building is still quite distinct within the additions, and the significant features of the building, including its fenestration patterns and materials, retain their integrity. It would be easily recognizable to anyone from the 1925-1940 historic period and, therefore, retains its National Register eligibility. The purpose of this nomination is to assist the building's restoration by opening the door to the historic tax credit application process.

Narrative Description

The Corona Building is located on the southwest corner of the intersection of North Street and North 19th Street in the Lefever Town section of Mid City Baton Rouge. It is an example of the unornamented, utilitarian commercial buildings that were constructed during the 1920s. The Corona Building was designed to be a multi-unit commercial building and served that purpose for 10 years, from its opening in 1925 until 1935. In 1937 or 1938 new owners began using the entire building for a single retail hardware, appliance and furniture business. The building was subsequently enlarged with various parts of it adapted to the needs of the business. The building was last used as a warehouse.

The current building covers 34,000 square feet. It has been vacant for several years but is in good condition and is well secured. At it now stands, the Corona Building was constructed in at least three stages between 1925 and 1962. Its overall dimensions are 170'6" long (along the North Street side) and 120' wide (along the North 19th Street side), including the original structure and the subsequent additions.

The oldest, most historically significant portion of the building is located on the corner of North and North 19th streets. It was built in 1925, replacing another commercial building with a similar footprint. This portion is 114' long by 65' wide, and is a three-width thick, load-bearing brick structure, one-story, and built right up to the sidewalk. On either side (i.e., to the south and west) of this original building are two-story additions which had various window and door openings. These different sections of the Corona Building are now easily discerned but for at least four decades were hidden beneath street-facing panels. Around 1970, in an effort to modernize and harmonize the building's public exterior, the entire north and east facades were re-faced with composite gravel-covered panels mounted on furring strips. The panels covered all the original store windows and gave the building a uniform exterior.

Two years ago (2010) the current owners of the building removed the panels and the 1925 corner building and additions were revealed. The furring strips were left in place but the original fenestration pattern was again clearly visible. The panels covered all the original store windows. The large window bays are all approximately 18' long and 11' tall.

The main elevations are the east (North 19th Street) and north (North Street) sides, which encompass the original Corona Building's street facades. The most distinctive feature of the Corona Building's exterior is the white glazed brick on the two original portions of the east and north facades. This brick is decoratively laid in a combination of stacked bond, running bond, and soldier courses. The patterning creates a pleasing effect and emphasizes the window openings. A brick lozenge (a decorative detail in a diamond shape) is laid in the glazed brick at the intersection of each exterior column and exterior header. Although it was likely destroyed when the building was refaced with the composite panels, a cornice

East Baton Rouge Parish,
Louisiana
County and State

Corona Building
Name of Property

appears to have been located along the top of the building. A reasonable assumption is that this cornice was made of glazed terra cotta tile to match the glazed brick, which was common for buildings of the 1920s and 1930s. Non-glazed brick was used on the post-1925 additions and alterations to all elevations of the building.

The east elevation has five large window openings and one door on the ground floor, with three of the windows being in the original building. The display window openings extended from the floor to the header, which would have been typical for a retail store to showcase its products. Various types of historic steel windows dominated the window market from 1890 to 1950 and were likely used in this building. Because the Corona Building was constructed before the widespread use of large panes of sheet glass, these openings were most likely divided into smaller panes by metal or wooden muntins. The south end of the east elevation includes a post-1925 addition, a two-story block with three wide, but short, windows on the second level.

The north elevation, facing North Street, has five large window openings and one door. Three of the windows and the door are in the original building, and the door appears to have been built in a modified window opening.

Architectural evidence (the area beneath one window appears to be plastered rather than composed of brick, and a small portion of a ground-level driveway survives) also suggests that one window on the north elevation was once a large opening for vehicles. As with the east elevation, the segment containing the original Corona Building continues the glazed white brick facade with decorative patterns and subtle diamond-shape inlays and the missing cornice. The newer part of the north elevation at the west end of the building dates from 1938 and is covered in white (non glazed) brick. It includes a narrow one-story section and a two-story section. The second story has two windows, and the exterior treatment and proportioning of the fenestration of this addition is very similar to the original Corona building.

The south elevation faces a service alley. It has a row of 12 small windows in the second story, most of which have been boarded and painted over. On the ground floor there is one large, double door near the west end of this façade, opening onto a parking lot. The configuration of this door indicates that it may have originally been a vehicle entrance, most likely for loading and unloading freight.

The west elevation has one small window on the second story, and on the ground floor there are two doors which open onto the above-mentioned parking lot, which wraps around two sides of the building.

The interior of the original 1925 building is intact to an unusual degree, given the building's eight decades of constant use as a retail outlet and warehouse. The original 10"x10" columns that engage chamfered wood beams at 25' (north-south) intervals are still extant today. Simple detailing was used to create a capital at the top of each column. The most conspicuous original element is the pressed tin ceiling that covers almost the entire ceiling of the Corona-era building. It was protected by a dropped ceiling (now removed) and is easily identifiable as the same ceiling shown in 1938 photographs published shortly after the new appliance-furniture store opened in the building. An interior brick wall was constructed at some point during the building's history on the southernmost east-west column line. Inside the original Corona building, the column grid is 25' x 15'. The 1938 addition is 42'6" x 65' with a column grid of 21' x 18'. The original western-most exterior wall of the Corona building is still visible as a now interior wall in the 1938 addition. This three-width thick brick wall shows the outlines of arched windows that were bricked in when the addition was constructed, and also contains two arched doorways into the addition.

The later additions to the original structure were framed of load-bearing brick with interior steel pipe columns and metal trusses. One addition was completely two story; the other, as mentioned above, has a narrow one-story section as well as a two-story portion. They were built in 1938 and 1962. The absence of any ornamentation in these additions suggests that they had a totally utilitarian purpose, constructed to provide office and warehouse space. However, the additions have some interesting architectural features, including metal three-by-three awning windows, the original elevator which was extra large for moving furniture and features a pull-gate, and a vault, which pinpoints the administrative area within the warehouse.

Assessment of Integrity:

East Baton Rouge Parish,
Louisiana
County and State

Corona Building
Name of Property

There is no doubt that the Corona Building retains its integrity of location and association. As related to its significance, location and association are the most important of the seven aspects of integrity for this candidate. Additionally, the facility's design, workmanship, and much of its materials also retain a great deal of integrity. Despite the fact that the post-1935 additions increased the footprint of the Corona Building several times over, the original 1925 exterior remains prominent. When the large facade panels were added to the building in the 1970s, the north and east elevations were left largely intact, with only the loss of the cornice and glazing materials. With the removal of the panels in 2010, the Corona Building once again became recognizable from its historic period of significance. For example, exterior design elements such as materials and fenestration rhythm remain. (The furring strips currently visible on the exterior in photos have been temporarily left in place as a security measure but will be removed during an upcoming restoration.) Thus, it retains a very strong link to its earliest iteration in that the original building's historic character is intact and recognizable. Interior design elements such as the column grid and pressed tin ceiling of the 1925 building are also firmly in place. Comparison of the interior in June 2012 to the same interior sections shown in February 1938 photographs confirms the integrity of the building's core. Only the building's setting (see Part 8), and as a result its feeling, have been compromised by time. Although this loss is regrettable, the building retains enough integrity to qualify for the Register. As one of the last testaments to the thriving North Street Italian community as well as to the once thriving commercial area that served the surrounding streetcar suburb (see Part 8), the Corona building is a good candidate for the National Register.

Returned

Corona Building
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish,
Louisiana
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
 - B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
 - C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
 - D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.
- Not applicable

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.
- Not applicable

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Community Planning and Development
Ethnic Heritage/European

Period of Significance

1925-1940: Community Planning and Development
1925-1935: Ethnic Heritage

Significant Dates

1925, 1935

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

1925: Charles H. Charlton, Jr. (original Corona Building)
1938: Norman V. Riviere (Olinde warehouse addition)
1962: R.W. Jones & John E. Meeks (Olinde addition and remodeling)

Returned

East Baton Rouge Parish,
Louisiana
County and State

Corona Building
Name of Property

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for the building in regards to Community Planning and Development is from 1925 to 1940, which is based on its date of construction and ends when the area's significance as a streetcar suburb started to wane. The building's period of significance for its importance in Ethnic Heritage is from 1925-1935, which is based on the date of construction and ends when the original owner, Luca Corona, lost the building to the bank during the Depression, ending its association with the Italian-American community.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Corona Building is being nominated for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its local significance in the areas of:

1. Community Planning and Development; as part of an early twentieth century commercial corridor-streetcar suburb in Baton Rouge, now one of only three pre-World War II buildings still extant in that neighborhood.
2. Ethnic Heritage/European for its representation of the Italian American experience in Baton Rouge.

Criterion A: Community Planning and Development

Historical Background of Streetcars in Baton Rouge

In 1900 Baton Rouge was the capital of Louisiana, an important port on the Mississippi River and site of the state's premier public university. But, despite these attributes, with a population of just 11,269, Baton Rouge was only the third largest city in Louisiana, behind New Orleans (287,104) and Shreveport (16,013). Baton Rouge was a small, insular Southern town at the beginning of the twentieth century but that would change in the coming decades.

Baton Rouge's modern era can be dated to its introduction of a street railway system in the 1890s. Like many Southern cities which took decades to recover from the Civil War, Baton Rouge lagged behind Northern, Midwestern and Western cities in developing street railways, the prime symbol of urban maturity in the late nineteenth century. After many financial and bureaucratic struggles, Baton Rouge began operating a streetcar line in 1890. The first cars were pulled by mules on tracks. They were an immediate success, and Baton Rouge quickly made plans to expand routes and bring electric streetcars to the city. Electrification of streetcar routes began in 1893 by Capital Railway and Lighting Company. Typical of street railway operations of the era, the companies running the streetcars changed several times; but transportation progress continued. Further railway expansion occurred in 1913 when the East Boulevard Line opened and again in 1924 when the North Baton Rouge Line was completed.

The early Baton Rouge streetcar route was a simple rectangle that followed the city grid, beginning downtown: westward on Main Street, south on Lafayette and St. Louis, east on Government Street, north on Dufrocq (now North 19th Street), then west again on Main Street. Baton Rouge residents enjoyed the ease and conveniences that the streetcar brought. American cities like the Louisiana capital readily embraced the streetcars which allowed a man, woman or child to travel in 10 minutes what would take them 30 minutes to walk. Living outside the downtown core became a feasible alternative for working people, giving birth to the "streetcar suburb." Public transit on a large scale meant that not just wealthy people with private transportation could live several miles from their shops and offices. The inexpensive fares and relatively low cost of land at the rim of the cities made streetcar suburbs a staple of American cities in the early twentieth century. Neighborhood oriented commercial facilities, such as grocery stores, bakeries, and drugstores, clustered at the

Corona Building
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish,
Louisiana
County and State

intersections of streetcar lines or along the more heavily traveled routes. Because stores were originally built along streetcar lines, commuters could exit the streetcar near their homes, do some household shopping, and continue by walking to their residence. These retail centers also provided shopping for the non-employed family members, usually the housewife, but also the extended family of grandparents, spinster aunts, and children in school. Homes, usually on small lots, were within a five- to ten-minute walk of the streetcar.

Beginning in the 1930s, many cities began changing over from street railways to buses while the private automobile was gaining ascendancy. As streetcars faded, streetcar suburbs began to shift to a more commercial nature, especially tilting toward entities serving the automobile industry such as garages, auto storage, gas stations, and auto sales. Parking lots also became more prevalent. This dramatic shift from streetcars and pedestrians to the needs of the automobile is another reason why so few historic buildings in these former streetcar suburbs have survived. (In Baton Rouge, buses began replacing streetcars in 1932, with all streetcar transportation ending in 1934).

Historical Background of the North Street Area as a Streetcar Suburb

In Baton Rouge, the city grew along the streetcar routes, following the straight lines set out by the streetcars lines eastward (along the Main and Government streets corridors) and southward (along the St. Louis-Lafayette corridor). Commercial growth swiftly emerged on the routes, with the corners becoming prime business spots. The corner of Main and Dufrocq, the farthest northeast point of the streetcar route, did not follow the typical growth pattern of a streetcar corner because one corner (southeast side) was the historic Magnolia Cemetery, taking up the equivalent of six city blocks to the east and south. This barrier forced development north on Dufrocq Street up to North Street, one block north. The eastern end of the line and of the city limits until the 1920s was Dufrocq Street, a north-south demarcation. East of Dufrocq was rural East Baton Rouge Parish which was never one of Louisiana's richest or most productive agricultural areas. Owners of agricultural land found it was often more profitable to subdivide their property and sell it as lots than to raise crops. Consequently, there was little resistance from landowners as the city inched eastward. This urban periphery was a magnet for many rural working class people, both white and black, as well as immigrants. North Street, one block north of the dominant eastern corridor thoroughfare, Main Street and its streetcar line, was a well-known, if lightly occupied, roadway. It was prominently marked on Baton Rouge maps from the days of the early nineteenth century, boldly extending past Dufrocq Street into the unincorporated hinterlands. North Street also had a resonance and prominence among Baton Rouge citizens as one of the pivotal sites in the 1862 Battle of Baton Rouge. Fierce hand-to-hand combat had ranged up and down North Street on August 5, 1862, when the Confederate forces attempted to retake the state capital from the occupying U.S. Army. In the post-Civil War decades, North Street was more known for its racetrack and saloons than as a residential neighborhood.

On the 1885 Sanborn Insurance map, North Street is only shown as far as North 13th Street; there were no insured buildings to document beyond that point. By 1891, just after inauguration of streetcar service, the Sanborn map shows individual buildings farther east on North Street, with several located east and west of Dufrocq Street. The buildings were primarily single family homes with large open spaces between each one. By 1898 (eight years after the street railway opened, five years after it went electric powered) some commercial sites were appearing on the three blocks of North Street east and west of Dufrocq. Most of the non-residential structures were warehouses and barns. A detail that seems to confirm the area's reputation for bawdy entertainments was a "cock pit" carefully labeled and drawn to scale alongside a warehouse close to the present-day Tobias Building.

Subsequent Sanborn maps of 1903, 1908, 1911, 1916, and 1923 show steady infill of Dufrocq and North streets. Dufrocq between Main and North was mixed residential and commercial, while North Street was primarily commercial on the south side and residential on the north. The area had developed to such an extent by 1921 that business owners collaborated to take out a full-page ad in the Baton Rouge *State-Times* announcing that "this area" had become a "busy business center" that was "completely out of the high rent district" around downtown, specifically: "The old idea that Main and Third are the exclusive business centers is fast becoming obsolete." The six advertisements on the page are the J.H. Goodman Variety Store, Tobias Gass Company, East End Bargain Store, Palace Pharmacy, Joe Valle Fancy Groceries, all in the 1900 block of North Street, south side; and Peter Louis General Merchandise & Groceries, 1800 block of North Street, south side. (The latter block is the one in which the Corona Building stands.) Soon the North Street neighborhood, and especially its commercial core extending from St. Gabriel (North 18th Street) along the south side of North Street, past the Dufrocq & North streets nexus, to Duggan Lane (North 22nd Street), became one of the most

East Baton Rouge Parish,
Louisiana
County and State

Corona Building
Name of Property

complete representations of the unplanned or unplatted streetcar suburb in early twentieth century Baton Rouge. The commercial node drew on the households to the east and west on North Street and from the more residential blocks north of North Street. There were several planned Baton Rouge suburbs tied to the advent of the streetcar, but the North Street Area developed on its own, from market forces and from happenstance. There were other shopping areas farther north on Jackson Road and to the east on Plank Road but the North Street corridor offered a wider variety of products and services.

Embedded at the heart of the neighborhood, the Corona Building was built in 1925 to capitalize on the robust commercial corridor at the corner of North Street and North Dufrocq Street. It was a functional, one-story brick building conceived to fit in with the 1920s streetscape of a small American city. Although a modest building with few architectural flourishes, it was a significant contribution to the North Street area of Baton Rouge, representing a substantial financial and business investment by small businessmen. The Corona Building represented the new century, with its uncluttered lines, clean, white glazed brick exterior and multiple large display windows. It was not a nineteenth century barn that had been clumsily retrofitted as a store or a hastily built one-room frame building to capitalize on the increased foot traffic but a building made for that specific place and time.

Reflecting the demand for variety as well as shifts in the population, the Corona Building had both retail and residential rental spaces that could be reconfigured as needed. During its period of historic significance, 1925 to 1940, the building's tenants (who changed regularly) were primarily small retail businesses, many operated by Italians (see below), offering products and services that were needed by nearby residents at prices they could afford. These included cafes with inexpensive food, furniture sold on credit, home appliances, fresh produce and other groceries, and a variety of dry goods (clothing, shoes, sewing supplies and so on).

After original owner Luca Corona lost the building as a result of the Depression (see below), the facility continued in service to its surrounding community. At least two other businesses leased or rented it; the Big Bear Store, a general merchandise store, opened in 1936, and Hébert-Guerin, a hardware store, in 1937. By 1938 it was functioning as Olinde's Furniture Store. The Olinde's added to the original building and expanded its footprint but essentially wrapped their changes around the original 1925 building, leaving it largely intact.

Beginning about 1940 and especially after World War II, the North Street Area changed from mixed business-residential to primarily business and light industrial as most of the early twentieth century, small-scale stores and residences on North Street were replaced with much bigger, more industrial buildings. These included large-volume automobile dealerships, furniture stores, warehouses and specialized garages for automobile services. The landscape changed again in the late twentieth century when the exodus from the city's older core accelerated. Many buildings along the North Street corridor were demolished and no new construction replaced them. Throughout all of the changes to the neighborhood, the former Corona Building continued to function as a commercial center for the area. Today, only the Corona and two other buildings remain to represent the once thriving commercial node of the North Street Area streetcar suburb.

Note:

As mentioned above, there are two other pre-World War II buildings in the historic North Street commercial area, both connected to the Tobias-Gass store, a much-loved Baton Rouge institution that opened in 1901 and closed in 1977. The main Tobias-Gass store at 1967 North Street, was built in 1917 and was renowned for its extensive merchandise, including farm implements, groceries, home furnishings, pottery, bicycles, toys, roofing materials, harnesses, saddles, gardening supplies, guns, even baby chicks. The building was specifically constructed for the idiosyncratic inventory of the Tobias-Gass business as a two-story, unadorned brick corner building. The wrap-around canopy has been removed and windows bricked up but the building has not undergone any major alterations. Across the street at 1952 North Street, is the Tobias Building, a modern broad-front brick building dating from the 1920s. The lower facade has been obscured by wood paneling but the second story's multi-paned continuous, oversize transom windows, intact name plate ("Tobias Building"), cornice and other detailing have remained intact. Both of these buildings would be important additions to the National Register, further documenting the early 20th century history of the North Street commercial corridor.

Corona Building
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish,
Louisiana
County and State

Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage/European

The building at 1854 North Street was commissioned in 1925 by two Italian immigrant brothers, Luca Corona (1878-1967) and Agostino Corona (1881-1929). The Coronas rose from penniless field workers in rural Louisiana in the 1890s to business owners and entrepreneurs in Baton Rouge in the 1910s and 1920s. They chose to make their success visible with a modern commercial building at the center of their neighborhood. From about 1900 through World War II, "the North and Dufrocq area" was a major center of Baton Rouge's Italian American community. Three blocks of North Street, from St. Gabriel (now North 18th Street) to Duggan (now North 22nd Street) were thickly populated by Italian immigrant families and by businesses owned or operated by Italians. Although East Baton Rouge Parish did not have the same heavy influx of Italian immigrants as nearby rural parishes, the city of Baton Rouge had a substantial, identifiable Italian population by the early twentieth century. As with most immigrant communities, the Baton Rouge Italians tended to live in close proximity to one another and developed family-based networks to negotiate with the larger world. The Corona brothers, led by the older, more experienced Luca, were in many ways typical of the estimated 106,000 Italians who came to Louisiana between 1880 and 1924. They were Sicilians, as were 90 percent of all Louisiana Italians, who came to work in the sugarcane fields. Luca, who came first, in 1890, was guided by cousins who were already established in Louisiana. As a farm laborer, he saved his money, reunited with his mother and brother when they came to America, bought agricultural land as soon as he could, and eventually parlayed his holdings into property in Baton Rouge. Luca and his brother Agostino married two sisters, also Sicilian immigrants. The Coronas embraced American life, learning English, becoming citizens, urging their children to "be Americans," but retained their Italian identity which they did not see as a conflict with their Americanism. Their new building at North and Dufrocq (now North 19th) streets symbolized their material success and their blended identities.

North and Dufrocq Streets as an Italian Immigrant Node

The steady growth of Baton Rouge as a state capital and transportation center took a sharp upward turn in 1909 with the arrival of the Standard Oil Company. One of the United States' largest and most powerful corporations, Standard Oil established a major refinery in Baton Rouge that would become the city's primary economic engine. A year after Standard Oil's arrival in 1909, Baton Rouge's population jumped almost 37 percent, to 15,000. By 1925, the city had 43,000 residents, almost quadrupling its 1900 population. Baton Rouge's burgeoning population and increasingly diverse economy provided an auspicious opportunity for an energetic, ambitious young man such as Luca Corona. Unlike the Baton Rouge of earlier years, the city was no longer the exclusive province of an ingrown political-social oligarchy. There were too many new people and too much Standard Oil money pouring into Baton Rouge for the old Southern ways to remain untouched. Corona, a shrewd and restless man, chose North Street as the place to launch himself in Baton Rouge business.

Luca Corona had arrived on the fringes of Baton Rouge in 1894, age 16, having landed in New Orleans four years before aboard a ship from Palermo packed with his fellow Italians, almost all of them Sicilians and, again, almost all headed for work in Louisiana's "Sugar Parishes." He was born in 1878 and left his native village of Poggioreale, in Sicily, as a young teenager to make the voyage to the United States. In his handwritten memoir of 1957, Corona states he arrived in New Orleans in 1890 aboard the S.S. Montebello with both of his parents. (This is at odds with the records of the U.S. Customs office in New Orleans, which lists a young Luca Corona on the Montebello in 1892, traveling alone.) In his memoir, which was written in Italian in a strong, flowing hand, Corona recounts working on a plantation near LaPlace, then moving to Convent where he had cousins, and in 1894 moving on to "the city of Baton Rouge, the capital of Louisiana." Corona used "I" and "we" interchangeably in his story. Who was with him when he made these moves is rarely explained although he is careful to name the various Italian kinsmen and encouraging American businessmen who were helpful to him in his early years.

In 1900 Luca Corona married Vincenza (later anglicized to "Rachael") Ricca, 17, daughter of another Sicilian immigrant family. The U.S. Census of that year reported the Coronas living "east of Plank Road" (beyond the then city limits and well northeast of the place where he would later build his store) in East Baton Rouge Parish with a large household. Although Luca Corona was only 22, he was listed as the head of the household that included his wife's parents, Ignazio and Delia Ricca, their five younger children, and his brother, Agostino, 18. Luca, presumably aided by Agostino and his father-in-law, had some success as a cotton farmer but a catastrophic crop failure in 1903 left him

East Baton Rouge Parish,
Louisiana
County and State

Corona Building
Name of Property

deeply in debt. "I no longer wanted to stay in this type of business," Corona wrote ruefully in his memoir. "I did not want to fail."

Corona turned his back on agriculture and moved into the city, taking his extended family to live on Dufrocq Street. He rented the building on the southwest corner of Dufrocq and North streets, the site of the future Corona Building. Very little is known about the pre-1925 building. On the 1898 Sanborn map, the southwest North & Dufrocq corner shows only a small shotgun house to the west of the corner, the only building on that block. On the 1903 map, the whole side of the street is vacant, the house gone. The next map, 1908, shows a one-story building on the corner of North and Dufrocq. It was divided into at least three different spaces with one marked "Bakery." Despite having no known experience in the food industry, Luca Corona launched the Corona Brothers Bakery there around 1905. City directories of the time also record that Luca and Vincenza lived on Dufrocq Street, apparently in the same building as the bakery. Agostino married Vincenza's younger sister, Rosa Ricca, and they, too made their home in the bakery building. Rosa's and Vincenza's parents, Ignazio and Delia Ricca, lived within a block of the couples.

The extended Corona-Ricca family's move to the North Street area mirrored the trend of many Italians. The inexpensive land, cheap rent, public transportation and basic services made the North & Dufrocq area a good choice for Italian farm workers and other immigrants who wanted to move to town but had little money and few connections. The growing concentration of Italians in the North Street Area was quickly spotted by leaders of the Baton Rouge Catholic Church. In 1921 the pastor of St. Joseph's, the church then most favored by Italians, suggested that a mission be opened in the North and Main streets neighborhood, citing the influx of Italians to the area. The Sacred Heart of Jesus mission was established in 1924 with the stated goal of serving the Catholic families "in the vicinity of North, Main, Florida, and Convention Streets, near the Old Catholic Cemetery and the National and Magnolia cemeteries." In 1925 a modest frame building was moved to Main Street near Duggan Lane to house the church. It was located one block south and three blocks east of the Corona Building. In 1928 the mission was upgraded to a parish and in 1929 an elementary school was added. An Italian-born priest was assigned to Sacred Heart, a practice that was followed for many decades. Sacred Heart's population, or membership, grew to more than 3,000 in the 1930s. Although the Catholic parish had many non-Italian members, it was known as "the Italian church" in Baton Rouge, informally establishing the surrounding area as an Italian neighborhood.

Construction of the Corona Building and Effects of the Depression

In 1907 Luca and Agostino Corona bought Lot 9 of Square 3, the corner of North Street and Dufrocq, where their bakery was located. In 1914, the Coronas bought the adjoining Lot 10, and their father-in-law, Ignazio Ricca, purchased the lot to the west, Lot 11. Ricca operated separate businesses in his own buildings on Lot 11 (about the middle of the block, facing North Street). Having consolidated the North-Dufrocq properties, Luca Corona then became involved in businesses in West Baton Rouge Parish. In his memoir, he simply says, "... some countrymen of mine came from a plantation in West Baton Rouge and they said that there was a business place to sell and plantation to rent. So I went to this place and bought the business and rented the plantation." It seems from this time that Luca and his family lived in Port Allen although they are still listed as residents in some East Baton Rouge city directories. It may have been the success of his West Baton Rouge enterprises that enabled Luca Corona to contemplate putting up a new building at North and Dufrocq. He does not mention the building in his memoir but in January and February of 1925 a small paid notice appeared in several issues of the *Baton Rouge State Times*:

NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS.

Sealed bids will be received up to noon Saturday, February 28, 1925, for the erection of a brick commercial building, corner of Dufrocq and North streets for Mr. L. Corona, Port Allen, La.
Plans and specifications can be obtained from the architect.
CHAS. H. CHARLTON, Jr.
Singletary Building

Unfortunately, none of Charlton's papers have survived, nor does anyone in the Corona family know of any blueprints, drawings or paperwork related to the 1925 construction, leaving us without original documents about the Corona building. In March of 1925 Corona was issued a building permit for a "brick building." There were no reports or news stories in the

East Baton Rouge Parish,
Louisiana
County and State

Corona Building
Name of Property

Baton Rouge press about the new building's progress or its opening. Luca Corona, however, did not let this development go unheralded. In the spring of 1925 he took out regular advertisements in the daily newspapers ostensibly lining up renters for his new building but also, it could be said, to announce its arrival. The earliest advertisements were small classifieds:

Four stores, now in the process of erection, corner of North & Dufrocq. Will be ready about July 16. Will finish to suit tenants. Luca Corona, Port Allen. Phone 840-W.

Later, Corona upgraded to the more expensive display advertisements, taking out two-column wide boxes that read:

Stores for Rent or Lease
Corner of North & Dufrocq
New Buildin[sic]--Good Location
Phone 840-W
Luca Corona
Port Allen, La.

Over the next few years, Corona used this same format ad when there were vacancies in the building, making one change. Instead of "New Building" it was referred to as the "Corona Building" in all advertisements.

Without the Corona family records or architectural specifications, it is not clear how the Corona Building was configured. But consulting tenant listings in city directories, it appears that Corona would add or move partitions to accommodate his renters. The Lindsay Furniture business, for instance, seems to have used the entire North Street side of the building for their store through most of the late 1920s, taking up the space allotted for two shops. Frank Cefalu (another Sicilian immigrant) opened a cafe on the Dufrocq side in October of 1925, offering "Oyster Loaves, Sandwiches, Fruit and Soft Drinks." The cafe was a staple in the tenant mix, although the name and operator changed every few years. The tenants sometimes moved to larger quarters, sometimes bought their own building. While there was regular turnover among tenants, the building appears to have been fully rented most of the 1925-1930 years.

Although Luca Corona was occupied with his West Baton Rouge businesses, the North Street building was to all appearances a successful operation. By the late 1920s the North Street corridor was a robust commercial district with a wide range of businesses and services. Many were owned by Italians such as Crifasi's Produce, North Street Barbershop (Joe Micili), Marchiafava's Groceries, Sam Noto Shoe Repair, Joe Valle's Fancy Groceries, and Frank Cefalu's Lunch Counter & Confectionery. In addition, many of the shops and businesses employed Italians. Within the corridor's three blocks customers could buy: toys, automobiles, groceries, freshly churned ice cream, small appliances, shoes, dresses, suits, work clothes, lamps, chairs, china, flatware, bicycles, pots, pans, and perfume. Customers could also get a sandwich or a full meal, have their hair cut, get prescriptions filled, have their car repaired and rent an apartment.

At the beginning of 1929 Luca Corona was doing very well financially and living a comfortable middle class life with his wife and children. His West Baton Rouge businesses were profitable and the Corona Building was fully rented. However, he suffered an unexpected blow in late January when his brother Agostino died of a heart attack. His younger brother was only 48 years old and left behind a widow and seven children. In October the stock market crashed, bringing more unexpected adversity. Corona later wrote that he was not overly shaken by the financial downturn. He thought the economy would recover in about a year and he could weather a lean year. In that spirit, Corona continued to offer credit to customers and to borrow and lend money. But the Depression continued a downward spiral, confounding Corona's initial optimism. By 1933 his financial situation had become desperate. During that year his name (with hundreds of others) was published in Baton Rouge newspapers for unpaid taxes for the North Street building. Luca Corona later recalled this period as the worst time of his life, hinting that he even considered suicide.

In the year 1933-34 I lost all that I had ... this loss was very bad in money and in property. There were people who killed themselves, people who jumped from four or five stories, people who jumped into the river. I had children in school and children in college and I thought that if I destroyed myself they would all be left in the street. I thought: man makes money, but money does not make a man.

East Baton Rouge Parish,
Louisiana
County and State

Corona Building
Name of Property

Apparently, he was able to negotiate with his bank and in 1935 signed over the Corona Building to satisfy his debts. After this transaction, the name "Corona Building" disappeared from the record. It became a "vacant commercial building" at North and Dufrocq streets in newspaper mentions.

Within a few years of this low point, Luca Corona was able to start new businesses and rebuild his prosperity but he never invested in an East Baton Rouge property or business again. He rarely talked about his pre-Depression businesses, according to family members. Luca's grandchildren, now in their sixties and seventies, have fond memories of their grandfather as an affectionate, affable man beloved by everyone. Several of the grandchildren spent long stretches of time with Luca, even living with him and his wife in Port Allen. However, none of the surviving family members had any knowledge of his Baton Rouge properties and businesses until contacted in 2012 during the course of this research. All were familiar with "Olinde's Furniture Store" on North Street but were astonished to find out it had once been the Corona Building. While it is speculative at this far remove from the events of more than 80 years ago, it is not unreasonable to surmise that the twin losses of his only brother in 1929 and the humiliation of foreclosure on the building that carried his name were all but unbearable to him. One of the Corona grandsons recalled that his grandfather would grow melancholy over anything connected with the Depression. "It broke him," he said.

The process of change described above under the case for Community Planning and Development ensured that most vestiges of the North Street Area Italian community would eventually disappear from the neighborhood. As a result, this barely documented part of Baton Rouge's history has almost nothing left to represent it. Thus, the surviving Corona Building is a legitimate and important candidate for National Register listing.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

BOOKS, PUBLICATONS

Baton Rouge *Advocate*, November 18, 1938.

Baton Rouge *Daily State*, April 11, 1907.

Baton Rouge *Morning Advocate*, December 6, 1929, August 9, 1935, September 19, 1937, November 23, 1960.

Baton Rouge *State-Times*, November 17, 1921, November 24, 1923, September 11, 1924, February 16, 1925, March 12, 1925, July 1, 1925, August 14, 1925, October 12, 1925, October 13, 1925, September 13, 1933, May 4, 1936, February 14, 1938, September 30, 1938, April 11, 1967.

Baton Rouge *Sunday Advocate*, May 14, 1961.

Baton Rouge city directories, 1900-1940.

Biamonte, John V., Jr. "Community Life in the Italian Colonies of Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana, 1890-1950." *Louisiana History*, Autumn, 1989.

Brownell, Blaine A., and David R. Goldfield. *The City in Southern History: The Growth of Urban Civilization in the South*. Port Washington, New York: National University Publications, 1977.

Carleton, Mark T. *River Capital: An Illustrated History of Baton Rouge*. Woodland Hills, California: Windsor Publications, 1981.

Esperdy, Gabrielle. *Modernizing Main Street: Architecture and Consumer Culture in the New Deal*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Corona Building
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish,
Louisiana
County and State

Eggart, Mary Lee. *A Guide to the Art and Architecture of Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church, Baton Rouge, Louisiana*. Privately printed, 1998.

Geographic Information System. 2008. Baton Rouge Government Website. 5 May 2012 < <http://gis.brgov.com>>.

Goins, Charles Robert, and John Michael Caldwell. *Historical Atlas of Louisiana*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995.

Gottfried, Herbert and Jan Jennings. *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940*. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1988.

Hennick, Louis C. *Street Railways of Louisiana*. Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, 1979.

Margavio, A.V. and Jerome J. Salomone. *Bread and Respect: The Italians of Louisiana*. Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, 2002.

Shanabruch, Charles. "The Louisiana Immigration Movement, 1891-1907: An Analysis of Efforts, Attitudes, and Opportunities," *Louisiana History*, Spring, 1977.

Sternberg, Hans J. *We Were Merchants*. Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 2009.

Tobin, Sidney, "The Early New Deal in Baton Rouge as Viewed by the Daily Press," *Louisiana History*, Autumn, 1969.

MAPS

Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1885, 1891, 1898, 1903, 1908, 1911, 1916, 1923, 1939.

Wards of East Baton Rouge Parish, n.d.

INTERVIEWS

Achee, Carolyn, Austin, Texas, granddaughter of Luca Corona, telephone interviews with Harriet Swift and information by email, May 30, May 31, June 10, June 11, 2012.

Corona, Beverly, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, granddaughter of Agostino (Oscar) Corona, telephone interview with Harriet Swift, June 3, 2012.

Corona, David, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, grandson of Luca Corona, telephone interview with Harriet Swift, May 29, 2012

Demaiio, Nickie, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, founding member, Greater Baton Rouge American Italian Association, telephone interview with Harriet Swift, May 15, 2012.

LaVallee, Bill, Los Angeles, California, grandson of Luca Corona, telephone interviews and information by email, to Harriet Swift, May 31, June 4, June 11, 2012.

Morgan, Rachel Saia, River Ridge, Louisiana, granddaughter of Luca Corona, telephone interview with Harriet Swift, June 3, 2012.

Serio, Sal, Metairie, Louisiana, curator of Italian American Special Collections, Jefferson Parish Libraries, telephone interview with Harriet Swift, May 7, 2012.

East Baton Rouge Parish,
Louisiana
County and State

Corona Building
Name of Property

Simmons, Charles O. Jr., Baton Rouge, Louisiana, grandson of Luca Corona, telephone interview and information by email, with Harriet Swift, May 30, June 4, 2012.

PUBLIC RECORDS

U.S. Census, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930.

U.S. Immigration records, 1890-1900.

East Baton Rouge Parish Conveyance, Succession records, 1900-2010.

UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL

Corona, Luca, "This is the past of my life," 14-page handwritten memoir in Italian, March 21, 1957. English translation was added by Corona family members in later years.

Maygarden, Benjamin et al. *Historical Research and Archeological Survey of the Historic Portion of Southern University, Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana*. Submitted to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, 1999.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA

- 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 # _____ xxx _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____ xxx _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____ xxx _____
- Not Applicable

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

Returned

Corona Building
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish,
Louisiana
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than an acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.) NAD 1927

1	<u>15</u>	<u>675760</u>	<u>3370190</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

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

LOTS 9, 10, and 11 of SQUARE 3 OR 301, LEFEVER TOWN according to the official map of the City of Baton Rouge compiled by F.F. Pillet, C.E. and adopted by the Commission Council of said City of Baton Rouge on October 21, 1930.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Boundaries follow the property lines of the parcel upon which the candidate is located.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Erin Michelle Brush, Director of Preservation Services and Harriet Swift, Preservation Consultant
organization Foundation for Historical Louisiana date 6.25.2012
street & number 502 North Boulevard telephone 225-387-2464
city or town Baton Rouge state LA. zip code 70802
e-mail erinbrush@fhl.org; harrietswiftnola@gmail.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

East Baton Rouge Parish,
Louisiana
County and State

Corona Building
Name of Property

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

NOTE: The consultant has assured the SHPO that the numbers written on the back of the photos were written with archival quality pens.

Name of Property: CORONA BUILDING
City or Vicinity: BATON ROUGE
County: EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH State: LOUISIANA
Photographer: FRANK McMANS
Photo Location: LA SHPO Digital Archives
Date Photographed: JUNE 22, 2012
Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 0001: Exterior: View of Corona Building (focus original 1925 building and 1938 addition); camera facing southwest
- 0002: Exterior: View of Corona Building (focus original 1925 building); camera facing southwest
- 0003: Exterior: White glazed brick diamond detail, running bond pattern and missing cornice; camera facing west, southwest
- 0004: Exterior: White glazed brick pattern at fenestration, running bond, soldier courses, stacked bond; camera facing west
- 0005: Exterior: View of Corona Building (focus original 1925 building and 1962 addition); camera facing northwest
- 0006: Exterior: View of Corona Building (focus back of 1938 addition); camera facing northeast
- 0007: Interior: Original Corona Building
- 0008: Interior: Original Corona Building
- 0009: Interior: Original Corona Building
- 0010: Interior: Original Corona Building
- 0011: Interior: Detail of original column and beam connection with capital and tin ceiling
- 0012: Interior: Tin Ceiling Detail
- 0013: Interior: Freight Elevator Door
- 0014: Interior: View from 1938 addition into original Corona Building (notice brick repair around opening where the original building and addition were joined)
- 0015: Interior: View from 1938 addition into original Corona Building (notice original window [now bricked-in] of Corona Building before addition was added in 1938)

Corona Building
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish,
Louisiana
County and State

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name GULF COAST HOUSING PARTNERSHIP
street & number 1610A ORETHA CASTLE HALEY BLVD telephone 504-525-2505
city or town NEW ORLEANS state LA zip code 70113

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 18 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.

Returned



Gulf Coast Housing Partnership

November 6, 2012

Ms. Carol D. Shull, Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service 2280, 8th Floor
National Register of Historic Places
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20005



Dear Ms. Shull,

The decision of the National Park Service to return the nomination of East Baton Rouge Parish's Corona Building to the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office without listing the resource in the National Register was deeply disappointing to the team who worked on the nomination. The nomination was supported by the Louisiana SHPO and approved by the state review board in a unanimous vote with no opposition of any sort. We have all carefully read historian Jim Gabbert's evaluation in his recent letter. We have considered his thoughtful, reasoned arguments but feel that they are not sufficient to exclude the Corona Building from the National Register. We respectfully disagree with his conclusions and to that end, ask that you, as the Keeper of the National Register, review the nomination of the Corona Building (number 1200085).

The building was nominated under Criterion A, citing two areas of significance, (1) Community Planning and Development, and (2) Ethnic Heritage/European. Both are discussed below.

Community Planning and Development: The reviewer wrote that because the Corona Building "appears to follow a pattern of development" rather than shaping it, the Community Planning and Development category was not appropriate. We see this differently, that the Corona Building is a strong visual reminder of the unplatted streetcar suburb that developed along the North Street corridor. Baton Rouge eliminated its streetcars and all the tracks in the 1930s. The city development driven by streetcars underpins modern Baton Rouge but has

virtually been erased from the urban grid. We feel that the Corona Building provides an important landmark of the city's development and streetcar history.

Ethnic Heritage/European, Italian: This is the most crucial area of the Corona Building's importance. The Corona Building is significant in the area of ethnic heritage because it is a very rare survivor to represent the impact of the Italian immigrant community in Baton Rouge's history. The Italian presence in early twentieth century Baton Rouge was greater than percentage-of-population figures would reveal. Although the city's 1930 population of 30,729 included only 1,776 Italians and Italian Americans (about 5 percent of the total), they were the largest non-black ethnic group in the city. And very importantly, they were concentrated in certain neighborhoods; dominated the small grocery business; and were active in various religious, civic, political, and social organizations.

Today Baton Rouge's Italian heritage can be seen in the thousands of Italian surnames found in the telephone directory and other citywide compilations of surnames such as voter lists. The Greater Baton Rouge American Italian Association vigorously promotes Italian traditions and celebrates the successes of Italian descendants. But there is very little tangible evidence of the Italian American experience in Baton Rouge; there is practically nothing left in the historic building stock to directly represent this high-profile community.

In our view, this is what makes the Corona Building so important and such a worthy addition to the National Register. It was one of the anchors of the North Street corridor, once Baton Rouge's premier Italian American neighborhood. The North Street area provided Italian immigrants and their families with a virtually complete commercial-residential community, with stores that fulfilled most of their basic needs, offered employment and also housing, with apartments, boarding houses and small rental units. Sacred Heart Catholic Church, known as "the Italian church," and staffed with an Italian-speaking priest, was only two blocks away.

The reviewer states that "mere ownership or use of a commercial building by an ethnic group is not sufficient to embody importance to that group." This view radically underestimates the achievement and impact of the Corona Building to the North Street community. "Mere ownership" was a tremendous accomplishment for Luca and Agostino Corona, the two immigrant brothers. Their

building was not a hastily thrown up storefront but a carefully planned modern building designed by one of Baton Rouge's leading architects of the period. Their modern building was a visible symbol of Italian prosperity and even triumph. The reviewer is correct that the Corona Building was not limited to use by Italians. But this is comparable to saying that Sacred Heart Church, "the Italian church," was not a community symbol and touchstone because it was not limited to Italian Catholics. The Corona Building's emergence as a successful business enterprise marked an important shift. In the early years of the 1900s, most buildings in the North Street area were owned by non-Italians and rented or leased to Italian businesses or residents. In the next decade, Italians began buying the aging buildings from their landlords. The Corona Building, however, marked the first commercial building planned, built, and owned by Italian Americans in the North Street corridor. It was so successful that non-Italian businesses rented space there. Again, this contributed to the Corona Building's importance as an unmistakable, visible landmark of Italian accomplishment and full partnership in the community.

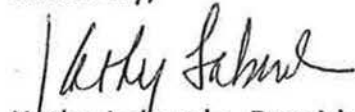
The North Street community was once a large, tightly packed area of homes and businesses but today it is a hollowed-out landscape of overgrown vacant lots and under-used industrial buildings. The Italian American community followed the traditional paths of second- and third-generation assimilation and dispersed into the larger community after World War II. The area then became part of a light industrial section that catered to the auto industry, with large-scale automobile dealerships, used car lots, and repair shops. Almost all of the residential units and most of the small shops disappeared in the post-World War II era. Any resident of the 1920s North Street corridor would not recognize the once close-grained neighborhood today except for the Corona Building (despite its additions). Only two other buildings remain from the North Street corridor's Italian period, both commercial buildings. In the next block, the c. 1922 Tobias Building, 1952 North Street, is largely intact, but the larger and more historically notable Tobias-Gass store building (1917), 1967 North Street, has been substantially altered. Other small, tightly-knit Italian nodes in pre-World War II Baton Rouge have also vanished, most without leaving behind any historic building stock. Today there are only a handful of historic buildings that directly represent Baton Rouge's Italian heritage. Sacred Heart Church, mentioned above, is one site that would be an important addition to the National Register, but other buildings have

undergone extensive alterations and many have been lost to neglect and deterioration.

The remarkable history and legacy of the estimated 106,000 Italians who poured into Louisiana between 1880 and 1920 has been largely ignored. Historians, communities, schools, and cultural groups are now belatedly beginning to delve into the Louisiana Italian story but there are huge gaps to fill. Although the Register recognizes European ethnicity as a legitimate reason for listing, we in Louisiana seem to have overlooked its potential as a powerful tool in reclaiming Italian history. Currently the state has only two Register listings connected to Italian American history and culture. It is important that Louisiana begin to fully use this tool before we lose any more of the historic building stock representing Italian heritage.

We feel that the Corona Building embodies many crucial aspects of the Italian experience in Baton Rouge and as one of the last extant buildings from the North Street corridor's Italian community is eminently worthy of the National Register. There are many buildings in Louisiana and other states in the Register because they are "a rare surviving example," "one of the few structures left to represent ...", or have "status as a rare survivor of a once common type ...". These phrases are used repeatedly in National Register nominations to explain why some otherwise unremarkable buildings and structures are included in the listings. The Corona Building deserves to be ranked with these other "rare survivors" in our national record. The first generation of Italians to live and work in Baton Rouge have left very few written records but the Corona brothers bequeathed a well-built, handsome commercial building to their community. It is one of the few structures left to bear witness to the once robust Italian American neighborhood. We earnestly ask for your help to ensure that their lives and their history will not be allowed to disappear with their neighborhood.

Sincerely,



Kathy Laborde, President
Gulf Coast Housing Partnership



Carolyn Bennett, Executive Director
The Foundation for Historical Louisiana

Reorientation

guide

- needs expanded context
into this aspect of Commerce

- Furniture / Appliances

How many?

How big?

where?