

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT HISTORIC DISTRICT LANDMARKS COMMISSION

THE HIBERNIA NATIONAL BANK BUILDING
313 Carondelet Street

Architectural Rating: Blue
Construction Date: 1920-21
Architect: Favrot & Livaudais, Architects, George A. Fuller Co., Contractors

Nomination Information

Date: May 25, 1978
Nominated by: Diane Manget
Seconded by: Michael Duplantier, Imre Hegedus
Recommended by: Staff

Site Description: Square #228, Lot # Undesignated
1st M.D., 4th A.D.
Zoning: CBD- Lot Size: 176' 1" 5'11" x 110' 7" 3'11" x 93' 10" 7'11" x 9'5" x 92' 10" 5'11" x
106' 9" 7'11"

Current Use: Banking offices & professional offices

History of Property

Current Owner: Hibernia Building Corporation

Date of Acquisition: June 30, 1966

Purchase Price: \$6,750,000.00

The nomination of this property was based upon its architectural significance and the fact that it was designed by a noted architectural firm. Each of the four areas of criteria used in determining landmark qualification, and outlined in City Ordinance No. 6699 M.C.S., will be examined on an individual basis in order to provide information upon which a final decision will be made on whether or not to designate the property.

Architectural Significance

According to records in the Office of Conveyance, the land on which this building stands was acquired by Hibernia Bank and Trust Company in six separate transactions from 1902 to 1919. It is obvious that the officers of the Bank had been planning a new main office prior to the complete acquisition of the site, for they entered into a contract with the architectural firm of Favrot & Livaudais on November 21, 1918 for the design of the new building. On February 28, 1920 the Bank signed a contract with George A. Fuller Co., Contractors, for the construction of the present structure. The building was estimated to cost \$3,000,000.00, the largest private construction contract signed in New Orleans as of that time. The steel frame of the building was completed on January 17, 1921 and the new bank offices were officially opened on October 17, 1921. The building stands 23 stories tall and measures 355 feet from the ground to the top of the lantern tower.

New Orleans' only major high-rise building erected between 1910 and 1925, the Hibernia National Bank Building is of considerable architectural value to the city. Skycraper design of this period in the U.S. tended to emphasize the use of Renaissance or Classical details, despite the fact that structures of this height did not exist at the time of the Renaissance. The exterior detailing of the Hibernia National Bank reflects this classical design philosophy. The ground floor of the building, which houses the high-ceilinged banking hall, is dominated on the exterior by a continuous line of corinthian pilasters which support a substantial entablature. The three center bays of the Carondelet Street facade, the primary entry according to the architects' plans, are defined by four engaged Corinthian columns. The door frames and solid doors of this entrance are of bronze, as are the low railings which span the gaps between the pilaster bases. The workmanship and detailing of the main entrance doors and door frame is of exceptional quality. The bases of the pilasters and columns are granite, while the rest of the building, with the exception of the lantern, is faced with Indiana limestone. The interior of the ground floor is lit by the tall round arched window openings set between the pilasters of the facade. The second floor adds to the scale of the base of the building, and includes the large stone panel in which the bank's name is carved.

From the second floor up the mass of the building changes, becoming a U shaped tower, which rises to the 14 story level. The exterior of the 3rd through 11th floors is very austere with no decorative detailing. The 12th, 13th and 14th floors are framed by giant order Corinthian pilasters and topped by a substantial entablature and parapet. It should be noted that the plaster treatment of these three floors is not used on the set-back section of the office tower. At the 14th floor level only the recessed central section of the building continues to rise. The 15th through 19th floors are contained within the next stage of the structure. The Corinthian plaster treatment previously described appears again at the 16th, 17th and 18th floors. The limestone faced portion of the structure is set back once again to form the 20th floor, the base on which the lantern sits. The lantern which crowns the building is faced with white enameled terra-cotta. Cylindrical in form, this lantern is the most classical detail found on the building, derived from Ancient Greek and Italian Renaissance prototypes. The free standing Corinthian colonade which decorates the lantern supports an entablature which is topped by a cresting of anthemias, or stylized honeysuckle blossoms, a device associated with the architecture of Ancient Greece. The powerful electric beacon light atop the lantern was officially considered a navigation beacon for ships on the Mississippi River.

Architects

The architectural firm of Favrot and Livaudais, headed by Charles A. Favrot and Louis Livaudais, were one of the most important architectural offices in New Orleans in the first quarter of this century. The firm's work in the CBD includes the Mayer Israel & Co. store at 714 Canal, the original building for the Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital at Tulane Avenue and South Saratoga Street, and the former New Orleans Cotton Exchange at 237 Carondelet. The firm also designed several fine residences, among them the Marks Isaacs house at 5120 St. Charles Avenue, now Latter Memorial Library, and the great Richardsonian Romanesque house for W. P. Brown at 4715 St. Charles Avenue.

Historic Personages

None

Cultural, Political, Economic and Social History

Chartered in 1870, the Hibernia Bank and Trust Company merged in 1902 with Southern Trust and Banking Company. The bank built the 13 story office building at 226 Carondelet, erected in 1904 from the designs of D. H. Burnham & Co. of Chicago. The Hibernia Bank and Trust Company was liquidated in 1937 and was re-organized as the Hibernia National Bank.