

THE ISRAEL-GINDI BUILDING  
714 Canal Street

Architectural Rating: Red  
 Construction Date: 1909  
 Architect: Favrot & Livaudais, Architects, George J. Glover & Co., Contractors

Nomination Information

Date: August 1, 1978  
 Nominated by: Diane Manget  
 Seconded by: Frederick Guice, Michael Duplantier  
 Recommended by: Staff

Site Description: Square #225, Lot # Undesignated  
 1st M.D., 5th A.D.  
 Zoning: CBD-3 Lot Size: 36' 2" 6" x 150' 4" 3" x 20' 6" x 9' 6" x 15' 8" 6" x  
 159' 10" 3"

Current Use: Bookstore

History of Property

Current Owners: Mr. & Mrs. Julius Gindi, Mr. Michael M. Gindi

Date of Acquisition: December 26, 1978

Purchase Price: \$500,000.00

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 Mayer Israel on March 17, 1909. Israel was the owner of Mayer Israel & Co., a retail clothing store which was then located at 703-709 Canal Street. Israel evidently acquired the property in question for the expansion of his business, for The Times-Democrat of September 1, 1909 noted that the new building for Mayer Israel & Co. was under construction on Canal between St. Charles and Carondelet, and would soon be occupied. The building cost \$80,000.00 according to the Times-Democrat. According to an advertisement for the Atlantic Terra Cotta Company in the August 1910 issue of the locally published periodical, Architectural Art and its Allies, the prominent New Orleans firm of Favrot & Livaudais were the architects for the structure.

The five story building was faced with white enameled terra cotta supplied by the Atlantic Terra Cotta Company of New York, the largest manufacturer of this important building material in the U.S. at the time. The ground floor of the building was originally sheltered by a metal canopy hung from the facade. This detail was removed by the mid 20th century renovation which produced the existing travertine faced ground floor. With the exception of a false balcony of terra-cotta at the third floor level, all of the detailing of the upper four floors survives intact. The lost detailing was carefully removed and the area recovered in terra-cotta so as to maintain a uniform finish on the building.

The terra-cotta detailing which embellishes the building is of Italian Renaissance inspiration. It is quite likely that the specific details were taken directly from the engraved plates of Paul Letarouilly's massive work, Edifices de Rome Moderne, published in 1868-74. This book was widely used by American architects designing in the Renaissance style, and it is highly probable that Favrot & Livaudais had a copy in their office. The second

Floor introduces the three bay system which divides the upper stories. An elliptical arch spans the width of the second floor, which is enframed by an elaborate band of molding which starts and stops beneath the windows, ending in a pair of lions heads. The four lions heads originally held the ends of the chains which supported the canopy above the store entrance. The rectangular panels between the lions heads feature an urn and vine motif.

The third, fourth and fifth floors are unified by the round arches which span each of the three bays of the facade, and by the four giant order pilasters which create the three bay divisions. These pilasters are paneled and feature a continuously curling vine motif of Renaissance derivation.

The spandrel panels between the third, fourth and fifth floors are also decorated with a stylized plant design. The pilasters support a richly decorated entablature, with a space set aside in the frieze for the store's name. The cornice features modillion brackets and is surmounted by an elaborate parapet.

#### Architects

The architectural firm responsible for the design of this structure, Favrot and Livaudais, were among this city's most important architects during the first quarter of this century. The firm's work in the CBD includes the original building of the Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital at South Saratoga and Tulane, the former New Orleans Cotton Exchange at 237 Carondelet, as well as their largest work, the Hibernia National Bank Building at 313 Carondelet. The firm also designed numerous houses, among the best known are the Marks Isaacs house at 5120 St. Charles Avenue, not the latter Memorial Library, and the colossal Richardsonian Romanesque house for W.P. Brown at 4715 St. Charles Avenue.

#### Historic Personages

None

#### Cultural, Political, Economic and Social History

None