

NOLA BOX SUPPLY COMPANY
8301 Fig Street

Landmark Designation Report

March 10, 1998

W. O. Smith

Architectural Rating: Blue
Construction Date: 1911-12
Architect: Unknown

Site Description

Square 453, Lot A-3 - Lot Size: 300'6" X 180'10" X 220'5" X 95'X 208'
7th Municipal District, 15th Assessment District
Zoning: LI, Light Industrial
Owner: Nerhus Realty Company
P.O. Box 13711
New Orleans, LA 70185

Nomination Information

Date Nominated: February 10, 1987

The nomination of this property was based upon its architectural significance. Each of the four areas of criteria used in determining whether a property is worthy of or meets the qualifications for landmark status, as outlined in City Ordinance #5992 M.C.S., will be examined.

History of Property

On September 1, 1911, a building permit was reported issued to the American Chiclé Company for a building at Dante and Colapissa. The American Chiclé Company, a chewing gum manufacturer, was located at that time at 425 Decatur Street. But in 1912, the city directory lists them at Dante and Fig Streets. And the assessment on the property goes from \$4,000 in 1911 to \$33,000 in 1912, further supporting the construction date of 1911-12. A recent article in *New Orleans Magazine* explained that the new gum factory location proved inadequate due to its proximity to the nearby canal. The climate there was too humid and the gum would not cure properly. Thus, on April 16, 1918, the American Chiclé Company sold the property to James Long Wright for \$60,000. Mr. Wright immediately sold it to the Marine Paint and Varnish Company, who located their business there. In 1957, Marine Paint and Varnish was in liquidation and sold the property to Butlern, Inc. They held the property until 1962, when it was acquired by the current owners, Nerhus Realty.

Architectural Significance

This is a three story masonry industrial building in the Renaissance Revival style. Its most noticeable feature is the presence of four square towers, one at each corner, that extend above the roofline. The building is five bays wide on each side with a tower at each end. It is executed in red brick with a low hipped, terra cotta tile roof - the peak of each tower is crowned by a finial. As is typical of this style, the ground floor is more prominent, featuring large arched window openings with decorative circular brickwork between them. The first floor is separated from the second by a cast stone band. The arches contain three 1/1 windows, topped by arched transoms - the center window is flanked by two smaller windows. These large arched openings have cast stone sills. The second and third floor windows are also 1/1 and are in the same configuration - a center window flanked by two smaller ones and topped by a three section transom - but these are set in rectangular openings.

For an industrial site, the building has wonderful decorative details and is a well executed example of its style. Under the projecting eave of the roof is a wide, denticulated, cast iron cornice with large cast iron brackets. The tower at the entrance is the only one that protrudes from the plane of the building, and it is also larger than the others. It has six brackets per side, where the other towers have only four, and the entrance tower brackets are of a slightly different design than those on the rest of the building. The second and third floor windows are three separate, narrow 1/1 windows. Those on the third floor have a single cast stone sill and are set into a slight recess in the shape of a segmental arch. The ground floor has two open archways, one on each side, that lead to two, arched, recessed entry doors. Each archway has a set of concrete steps. Inside this entryway, egg and dart molding runs along the juncture of the wall and ceiling. These archways are framed on the exterior by cast stone ornament and a cast stone frieze. Inscribed on the frieze is the name "A. C. Suhren Corp" in script lettering. In either side of the frieze runs a molded rectangular piece that terminates in an ornate pendant.

The tower on the east side of the building has a 1/1 window topped by a rectangular transom on the second and third floors - both sides of the tower are identical. The ground floor has one small arched window on each side. These windows have cast stone sills. Two rows of brick corbeling reach from the eave of the tower down to the top of the third floor window. These rows terminate in a cast stone ornament. There are also two red terra cotta relief ornaments on the tower, one between the second and third floor windows and one just below the cast stone course that separates the first floor from the second.

The tower on the north side has less decoration. Although all three of the windows, (one on each floor), have cast stone sills, the band that runs continuously around the building separating the first floor from the second, does not occur here.

The tower on the rear (west) side is unlike the others in that it is actually within the building and not on the plane of the exterior walls. As such, it is merely a protrusion on the roof, and the only detail visible is the cornice, brackets and tower roof. This tower was obviously included only to ensure the symmetrical nature of the building design. The windows on the corner of the building are placed just as if the tower was there. The reason for this tower's removal is so that a rear

loading dock could be inserted. This is a single story piece at the back of the building, executed in the same red brick as the main building. It has a hipped roof, clad in asphalt shingles. Three large arches with simple cast stone bands sit on a raised foundation. Recessed behind these, in the rear wall of the main building, is a large rear entrance door. It is at this point, at the end of these three arches, that the historic building is connected to newer commercial construction. For purposes of landmark designation, this is where the building ends.

With the exception of the aforementioned addition, the building has suffered little alteration. Many of the windows have been covered or boarded over, but they appear to remain underneath the protective sheathing. The brickwork, very fine when it was built, appears to still be in excellent condition. In addition, the building doesn't seem to be missing any of its decorative ornamentation.

Architect

No information on the architect was discovered.

Historic Personages

None

Cultural, Political, Economic and Social History

None

Staff Recommendation

The staff recommends that this property be designated as a landmark based on its architectural significance.

End Notes

Daily Picayune, September 1, 1911, section 3, p.11.

New Orleans City Directories, 1910-1914