# United States Department of the Interior National Park Service 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: <u>Stewart Building</u>
Other names/site number: <u>N/A</u>
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:110 Veterans Memorial Boulevard
City or town: <u>Metairie</u> State: <u>LA</u> County: <u>Jefferson</u>
Not For Publication: Vicinity:
3. State/Federal Agency Certification
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this <u>X</u> nomination <u>request for determination of eligibility meets</u> 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 _X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
nationalstatewide _X_local Applicable National Register Criteria:
$\underline{A} \underline{B} \underline{X} C \underline{D}$
Signature of certifying official/Title: Carrie Broussard, SHPODate
Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, & Tourism
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Stewart Building	Jefferson Parish, LA
Name of Property	County and State
In my opinion, the property meets criteria.	_ does not meet the National Register
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:) \_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

# 5. Classification

# **Ownership of Property**

(Check as many	boxes as	apply	'.)
Private:			

Public – Local

Public – State

Public – Federal

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# **Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	х	
District		
Site		

Stewart Building	
Name of Property	
Structure	
Object	

# Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
2	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

# 6. Function or Use Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.) <u>COMMERCE/TRADE: business: office building</u> <u>COMMERCE/TRADE: professional: engineering office</u> <u>COMMERCE/TRADE: organizational: professional organization</u> HEALTH CARE: medical business/office: medical office

# **Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.) <u>COMMERCE/TRADE: business: office building</u> <u>COMMERCE/TRADE: organizational: professional organization</u> <u>COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant: cafe</u> <u>HEALTH CARE: medical business/office: medical office</u> <u>WORK IN PROGRESS</u> Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

Stewart Building Name of Property Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

#### 7. Description

# Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.) MODERN MOVEMENT: New Formalism

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.) Principal exterior materials of the property: STONE: granite, marble, METAL: steel, aluminum, STUCCO, CONCRETE, GLASS.

#### **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**

Frank Stewart Jr., namesake of the Stewart Building, commissioned its construction at 110 Veterans Memorial Boulevard in 1973 to serve as head offices for his cemetery and funeral service company. The architect, Jules K. de la Vergne, designed several other modern buildings in the greater New Orleans area, with the most recognized today being the Union Passenger Terminal in downtown New Orleans. International Stone Erectors, a subsidiary of Stewart's family business, completed the construction, with the use of natural stones and granites playing a prominent visual role in the building's image. It is significant under Criterion C for its use of New Formalism, a Modernist style that references classical architecture using monumental scale and classical elements, while incorporating contemporary materials such as glass, metal and cement. The building has been in continuous use since its construction as an office space, and retains historic integrity in both its interior and exterior architectural features.

#### **Narrative Description**

#### Setting

The Stewart Building and its surface parking lot occupy the entirety of Jefferson Parish Square 68, bounded by Paris Avenue to the south, Lake Avenue to the West, Veterans Memorial Boulevard to the north and the 17th Street Canal to the east. The five-acre parcel is located at the eastern-most edge of Jefferson Parish, where Metairie meets New Orleans' West End neighborhood. The building looks over the embankments of 17th Street Canal, a waterway which meets the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain a mile north. This site and setting were of great importance to Stewart and his investors. The convenience of proximity to metropolitan New Orleans, combined with the ample parking and safety of the suburbs, spoke to a generation of business owners ready to embrace the post-urban renewal, car-centric era of the 1970s. The earliest advertisements for the building emphasize the convenience of the location, as well as the appeal of an office located within a community of other business owners, like a high-rise Main Street for the modern era.<sup>1</sup>

## Exterior Physical Description

The 127,264 square foot building consists of a 113,000 square foot, five-floor tower, constructed 1973-1974, and a wing to the south, annexed in 1990. (Figures 1, 2 and 3). The building is constructed on a sloped elevation, creating the effect of monumentality as it is elevated above grade. The entirety of the original portion of the building is surrounded with a dramatic façade of vertically oriented, forty-foot-tall cast stone fins. Where the fins meet the flat overhanging roof, they are joined by a gentle arch between each one. Behind the fins, the body of the building is encased with tinted gray-blue glass windows with narrow, bronzed aluminum frames, in an alternating pattern with Norwegian pearl blue granite panels, creating a dark surface at contrast with the stark white façade. This pattern continues on each elevation. As the sun shifts, shadows rotate around the fins, having a different effect on each side of the building. On the main building, a ledge which wraps around the entire building behind the façade is accessible from the second floor. This flat ledge has built-in drains and is finished with marine paint. On each

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Times-Picayune, February 24, 1974: 50, Times-Picayune, January 24, 1988: 108.

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

side of the building is well established landscaping, with palms, trees, bushes and white painted stucco planters which are visually related to the building itself. Upon its completion, a newspaper article commented, "As with its mausoleum, Stewart Enterprises also bathes the Stewart Building with floodlights, setting it apart from the Veterans landscape."<sup>2</sup> This is an example of the striking, monumental impact of the New Formalism style. This setting, with the adjacent canal, surrounding landscaping, and expansive surface parking, has retained its integrity along with the building itself.

# North Elevation (Photo 2)

The primary entrance lobby is accessed from the north elevation. A short flight of six steps leads to second story entrance, a set of double glass doors slightly inset underneath the cast cement façade, and anchored between two pearl blue granite panels. The lobby interior is finished in polished Cordova shell limestone, a stone finish with naturally occurring imperfections and fossils. and white marble, in contrast to the dark glass and dark granite surrounding the entry way. The entrance stairs are set within the base or plinth, which varies in height and depth according to the surrounding sloping landscape of the site. The walls of the third, fourth, and fifth stories above are formed from a modular grid of dark tinted plate glass windows, each story being separate from the next by a series of granite panels. The north facing door opens to a parking lot, with Veterans Memorial Boulevard just beyond.

# *East Elevation* (Photo 16)

The east elevation has no entrances, but rather a series of fourteen single paned windows. These windows overlook a single row of parking spaces, a narrow drive, and then the grassy embankment leading up to the levee and the 17th Street Canal beyond.

# South Elevation (Photo 13)

The south elevation meets the sloping site at its lowest point so that both the first and second stories may be accessed. A broad *porte cochere* shields the first story entrance. The *porte cochere* is of cast cement, with a flat, rectangular roof and sturdy rectangular columns supporting

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Times-Picayune, February 20, 1983: 115.

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

 Name of Property
 County and State

 it. Upon entering, there is a two-story atrium with a staircase leading to the second story

 entrance. This semi-enclosed entrance hall is entirely finished with Cordova limestone. In

 contrast to this naturalistic material, the stairs themselves are steel.

# South Annex (Photo 11)

The south elevation looks over the building's large surface parking lot, which extends to the end of the parcel. The two-story annex is attached to the second story on the main building's south elevation by a walkway, which provides a covered parking area below. The east elevation, which adjoins the parking lot, has an entrance of a single glass door on the first story. To the right of the door are two sets of 5 picture windows, and one set of three picture windows. To the entry's left is another set of five, and then three. On the second story, windows are grouped in sets of three, with a granite panel placed between each set. The annex building has a flat, membrane roof, which overhangs the face. The first story is finished with stucco, and angles out dramatically where it meets grade, referencing the main building's monumental shape. The tinted glass and pearl blue granite also tie it to the main building visually.

Another entrance to the annex is located on its south-facing wall. Here, the single glass entrance door is sheltered by a portico consisting of a flat roof overhang, and projecting wall panels on either side of the entrance. Combined with the tapered base of the building, flat overhanging roof, and smooth stuccoed walls this elevation of the annex appears referential to a monument or mausoleum, keeping the annex congruent with the original mass of the main building.

# West Elevation (Photo 7)

There is a modest side entrance on the west elevation, a set of double glass doors flanked by two picture windows and a transom. The remainder of the first story elevation is occupied by sets of five picture windows, each set recessed into the sloped face of the stucco façade. The second story here, as on the east elevation, reads as a narrow band of dark windows. The third, fourth, and fifth stories above are shielded behind the cement fins of the façade. On the west facing side of the south annex, the pattern established on the east side is continued, with the first story

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

Name of Property County and State windows recessed into the building's base, and the second story windows appearing in groups, punctuated by panels of pearl blue granite.

# Interior Physical Description

The first story is accessed from the south facing entrance, behind the stairwell. It is not accessible from the north facing entrance due to the change in grade. Here, the walls are finished with Cordova stone and the floors are wood. (Photo 24) The main security and administrative offices for the building are located on this floor, as are the mailboxes for the building. The suites on this story are modest in size. The Center for Dental Reconstruction is located on this story.

The most formal public space within the building is the main lobby on the second story, which is accessed via the north facing entrance, or from a hallway which is accessed from the south facing semi-enclosed stairwell. The lobby is entirely finished with natural stone, and has no other openings or adornments besides the north and south facing doorways. (Photo 18) Historic photos show that originally the wall was finished with the Cordova limestone, which has since been replaced with a white and tan marble. The replacement stone is a similar material, panel size, and colorway to the original stone and therefore has no adverse effect on integrity. The floor is finished with wood. The adjacent hallway leads to the second story suites and the two elevators. This hallway is finished on the walls and floor with Cordova stone. The second story suites are carpeted and have drop ceilings with acoustical tiles. Exterior walls display both white and Norwegian pearl blue marble panels, and several interior spaces feature matching Norwegian pearl blue panels. (Photo 23) The second story suites are currently unoccupied, having recently been vacated by anchor tenant Eustis Mortgage.

The third story currently has the most occupied suites. These offices also appear to have the longest-standing tenants, as several occupants have renovated and personalized their office spaces with new carpet, wallpaper, improved lighting, and other features. Suites 360 and 370, for example, have installed distinctive wooden doors with asymmetrical sidelights. Pond & Co in the third story has an open-floor office plan which brings in a lot of natural light and changes the

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

Name of Property County and St tone of the space greatly. (Photo 27) Tenants on the third story currently include Hep Cat, Thunderbird, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and the Bienvenu Group.

The fourth and fifth stories have the largest suites. These are the offices that were originally occupied by Stewart Enterprises and their subsidiaries. In one case, in Suite 430, the current occupant Fleur de Lis has subdivided the large space to suit their current needs. J. Holmes Title, who occupies a large suite on the fifth story, installed wooden Pilasters, decorative trim, wainscotting, luxury wallpaper, and new carpets in their space.

While some office interiors have been personalized to a large degree, the common areas in the hallways and surrounding the elevators have retained their historic materials on all floors. Other historic details observed in the interior of the building include louvered wooden doors, stone drinking fountains, and metal signage.

#### Assessment of Integrity

Location: The property retains its original location.

*Design:* The property retains its original design. It has retained its historic function since its construction, and this is reflected in the fact that no major floor plan changes have been made. While the interiors of individual offices have been remodeled and refurbished over the years, the function and character of the building's design has remained the same. No ornamentation or other embellishments have been added to the stark Modernist façade. The addition of the annex was made with a matching style and matching materials to the original, and did not have a negative impact upon it.

*Setting:* Stewart Development Properties also constructed the Heritage Plaza building across the street at 111 Veterans Boulevard from 1982, making the most major change to the Stewart Building's setting.<sup>3</sup> The 245 foot tall building was at the time the tallest building in Jefferson Parish, dubbed "Jefferson's Plaza Tower" by a 1983 article.<sup>4</sup> While more towering and less

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Times-Picayune*, May 31, 1981: 139.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Times-Picayune February 20, 1983: 115.

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

# Name of Property County and State formal in its design, the strong vertical lines of the Stewart Building are reflected to some extent in its façade. The building's exterior architectural and lighting features were designed to mirror those of the Stewart Building.<sup>5</sup> The building's relationship to each other from across Veterans

Memorial Boulevard does not detract from the Stewart Building's setting. The distinctive topographic features of the 17th Street Canal, it's grass embankment and levee wall, are important to the building's setting and remain intact. The sloping grad of the landscape, and the shrubbery and other landscaping plants are also intact.

*Materials:* The varied use of cement products is important to the identity of this building. The cast stone fins which form the façade are intact, and the cement stucco finish on the first story of both the main building and the annex are also intact. The Norwegian pearl blue granite is intact on both the exterior and interior applications. The building retains its original blue-gray tinted window glass. The off-white Cordova limestone is intact in the south facing stairwell (Photo 15), and the main hallway and elevator lobby on the second story. In the north facing the main lobby, an off-white granite has replaced the original stone. While not a perfect match, it is similar enough in tone and character to not disrupt the feel of this space. Many of the upper stories have intact Cordova limestone in the hallway walls, floors and elevator lobbies.

*Workmanship:* The intact stone throughout the building is important to the character and the history of the building because a subsidiary of Frank Stewart Jr.'s company, Stewart Enterprises, provided the stone. They also supplied the Cordova limestone for One Shell Square. It speaks to the history of workmanship within that company, and that workmanship is visible where the stones are fitted together within the interior spaces. Other features, such as stone drinking fountains, are visible throughout the building.

*Feeling:* It evokes ideas about monumentality and permanence, as its design references both temples and mausoleums in its scale and proportion and in its materials.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> *Times-Picayune*, May 27, 1981: 24.

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

Name of Property County and State Association: The building expresses the aesthetic of a particular time, namely an era of suburban expansion in New Orleans and the desire for modernity. The building represented a sleek, timeless style and exciting new convenience. It's associated with an era in which many businesses saw the downtown of New Orleans as congested and old fashioned, and wanted the convenience and cleanliness of the suburbs.

Stewart Building Name of Property

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Jefferson Parish, LA 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.

#### **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
- 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

Stewart Building Name of Property

> Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.) <u>ARCHITECTURE</u>

Period of Significance

**Significant Dates** 

## **Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

## Architect/Builder

Architect: de la Vergne, Jules K. Builder: International Stone Erectors Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

**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 Stewart Building is eligible for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places at the local level. It is significant under Criterion C, architecture, as it is an excellent example of the New Formalism style. It retains integrity of its materials, workmanship, setting, feeling and association. Exterior integrity is seen in its New Formalism details, particularly the dramatic vertical fins which form a colonnade-like pattern surrounding the building's face, which is clad in glass and dark marble. The period of significance is defined as 1973, the year of the building's construction.

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

#### Construction and Use History of the Stewart Building

Frank B. Stewart, Jr., of Stewart Enterprises, commissioned the \$4 million construction of the building, and was also one of the first tenants. <sup>6</sup> Designed by Jules K. de la Vergne, construction began in 1973 and was completed in 1974. (Figure 4, 5 and 6). It was familiarly called the Stewart Building in the 1990s. Frank Stewart Jr. was the third generation operator of Stewart Enterprises, Inc., "a closely held, private company which prefers to maintain a low profile."<sup>7</sup> The company was founded in 1910 by Albert Stewart, then owner of Acme Realty company, when he acquired and renovated the three St. Vincent de Paul Cemeteries and the St. Vincent de Paul Marble Shop in New Orleans. In 1931, his sons Frank Sr. and Charles re-incorporated the businesses as Acme Marble & Granite Co., and diversified into mausoleum construction, vaults and crypts. In 1949, they established Lake Lawn Park Cemetery and constructed a community mausoleum there with more than 31,000 crypts. In 1969, under the leadership of Frank Jr., Albert's grandson, the company purchased the adjoining Metairie Cemetery, one of the city's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> New Orleans States-Item, November 16, 1974: 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> *Times-Picayune*, February 20, 1983: 115.

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

grandest. <sup>8</sup> Through the 1970s and 1980s Frank Jr. expanded the business into other states, and by the mid-1990s they operated funeral and cemetery services in 30 US states and 12 countries. They also operated a mining concern in Italy, selling the stone to a variety of users including office buildings and cemeteries. They provided the Napoleon red granite for the Pan American Life Center, as well as providing stone for One Shell Square, and the Amoco Building.<sup>9</sup> Stewart subsidiaries provided all the cast stone work for the Superdome.<sup>10</sup> Stuart provided stone for the First International Plaza building in Houston, and the Pillsbury Center in Minneapolis, and operate marble and mausoleum companies locally and internationally through their subsidiary Stuart International Corp.

Stewart's real estate maxim "the three most important considerations in real estate are location, location and location."<sup>11</sup> Great emphasis was placed on the building's convenient location, with early ads claiming "convenience minus congestion," a "strategic location free from traffic," in the "magnificent new Stewart building."<sup>12</sup> For those still based in New Orleans, the building proprietors offered free shuttle services for tenants and clients to and from New Orleans' Central Business District. (Figures 7, 8 and 9).

The original 113,000 square foot five-story tower was officially dedicated on November 15, 1974.<sup>13</sup> Construction was carried out by International Stone Erectors, which was founded in 1971 by Frank B Stewart, and had just completed all of the stone work on One Shell Square, utilizing the same type of Cordova stone that is so prominent in the Stewart Building.<sup>14</sup> It was lauded as, "Modern in design and surrounded by Tasteful landscaping, the striking edifice enhances the beauty of its Metairie location on Veterans Memorial Boulevard." The building attained a 98% occupancy in only nine months of its construction, <sup>15</sup>proving the success of its location and design. Stewart Enterprises initially occupied two floors of the five-story building at

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> International Directory of Company Histories, Vol. 20. St. James Press, 1998.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Times-Picayune, February 20, 1983: 115.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Times-Picayune, January 17, 1973: 81.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Times-Picayune, February 20, 1983: 115.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> *Times-Picayune*, February 24, 1974: 50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Times-Picayune, November 12, 1974: 8, Times-Picayune, January 17, 1973: 81.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> International Stone & Erectors, Inc. in New Orleans LA - Company Profile

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> New Orleans States-Item, November 14, 1974: 69.

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

Name of Property County and State 110 Veterans, with main offices for its nine subsidiary companies. These companies eventually included Architectural Stone Co., International stone & Erectors, Inc., Acme Marble & Granite Co., and Acme Mausoleum Corporation. The building also served as headquarters for the Stewart cemetery properties.

Some of the building's earliest tenants were the John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Co., occupant in 1974,<sup>16</sup> Pacific Fruit Inc., and Two "R" Drilling Company, and the F. W. Dodge Co.'s plan room. Stewart Enterprises moved their headquarters to Jefferson, Louisiana in the 1980s, but retained some functions at the Stewart Building.

In 2000, Stewart Building Enterprise sold the building to Rault Resources Inc. of New Orleans for \$9.2 million.<sup>17</sup> (Figure 10). Houston-based funeral home conglomerate Service Corporation International acquired the company in 2013 for \$1.4 billion.<sup>18</sup> Frank Stewart Jr. had been the chairman for 54 years at time of sale. The Stewart Enterprises office in Jefferson still employees over 5,000 employees. Stewart Enterprises, then the world's third-largest funeral firm, kept its corporate headquarters at the building after the sale. They retained a five-year lease for 25,000 square feet on the building's fifth floor, and vacated their 18,000 square feet of offices on the fourth floor, moving staff from that floor to an office in Jefferson. Later tenants included mortgage and insurance brokers, chiropractors, neurologists, diving tour companies, aestheticians, law firms and architecture firms.

## New formalism

The stark and minimalist International Style of modernism came to dominate western Europe and the United States in the 1950s. In the decades that followed, various other Modern styles emerged that rejected the severity of the style, while still utilizing the general principles of Modernism in their interest in functional design over ornamentation. Also called "Neo Palladianism," Neo Formalism emerged in the late 1950s as one of these styles that attempted to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> *Times-Picayune*, May 12, 1974: 118.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Thomas, Greg. *Times-Picayune*, August 2, 2003: 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Stewart Enterprises - Wikipedia

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

Name of Property County and State temper the rigidity of the International Style by wedding it with styles from antiquity. Neo Formalist buildings typically embraced Classical approaches to building proportion and scale, classical columns, entablatures, and colonnades, while utilizing new advancements in concrete to create creative forms. The New Formalism movement reached its peak in the 1960s, with its most prominent architects including Edward Durell, Philip Johnson, and Minoru Yamasaki. The

style has most often been applied to educational and civic institutional buildings.

According to the Washington Division of Historic Preservation "Buildings designed in the New Formalism style have a carefully organized hierarchy of space and an emphasis is placed on the structural grid of the building. A single volume structure is preferred, and the buildings are often separated from nature by being set on a raised podium or base (plinth)....exterior wall surfaces of cast stone, brick and marble. Decorative screens are also common. New Formalist civic buildings are designed on a larger urban scale and achieve a monumental presence by emphasizing symmetry and the axis orientation of the building."<sup>19</sup> 110 Veterans is a prime example of a symmetrical, single-volume, urban monumental building that references Classical architectural in its massing, placement on the site, and in its formal details.

# The Stewart Building as an example of New Formalism

The Stewart Building exhibits New Formalism in the way its design reinterprets elements found within classical architecture. One of the most dramatic ways it does this is through its placement on its site, where it is elevated above street level as if on a pedestal or podium, a placement reminiscent of ancient classical temples and government buildings. The monumental effect is amplified by the building's wide, tapered base, planted on the sloped landscape. The effect is grandiose, as if to elevate the business conducted within to epic proportions. Knowledge of the building commissioners background in mausoleum construction and cemetery maintenance, it seems beyond coincidence that this monumental form, and stark materials, are often utilized in funerary architecture. (Figure 11).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> New Formalism | Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP)

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

Name of Property County and State In 1973 contemporary architecture was in the midst of its "blank box" and "blank box with a hole cut in it" phases, as identified by Arthur Drexler in "Transformations in Modern Architecture." While the Stewart Building's essential form is the quintessential modern "blank box," it is effectively transformed into a temple form by its placement on its earthen pedestal and by addition of the cast stone fins. These fins are reminiscent of a classical colonnade, but expressed in cast stone in an almost whimsical form which is only made possible through midcentury technological advancements made in cast cement and cast stone. With clarity and simplicity of design, the building imitates the scale and perfect symmetry of a classical temple, as well as referencing classical details such as the colonnades. It remains rooted in Modernism through its aggrandization of modern materials, in particular the tinted blue glass with subtle, almost camouflaged frames, and the display of the myriads of ways cement and stucco can be utilized both as a structural and a decorative material.

Other de la Vergne designs, including the Nora Navra Library and the Union Passenger Terminal, display his propensity for symmetry, and his interest in incorporating both natural and manmade materials. On the Stewart Building, natural and manmade materials are mixed together on all exterior elevations, with the placement of the tinted blue glass adjacent to the Norwegian pearl blue granite. Dark colored granite panels and light natural stone panels are repeated in the interior of the building lobbies and hallways, and another view of the immense cast stone fins are also perceived from within.

In the south facing a semi-enclosed two-story stairwell, minimalist metal handrails wrap around the rectangular stairwell in imitation of the dramatic vertically oriented fins wrapping around the exterior of the building. Around this semi-exterior space another variety of natural textured stone is introduced with cement terrazzo tiles. Integrated planter under the stairwell is of the same terrazzo-type cast cement.

While there are a handful of examples of New Formalist public buildings in the local area, the Stewart Building has a few features which are not common to this type of building. First, it is not a skyscraper, as the others in this style all are. It is only five stories, but still impresses the viewer

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

with its scale and proportion. Secondly, it retains both interior and exterior integrity, aided by the fact that it has been continuously occupied with the same use patterns since its construction. The building's design reflects the Mid-Century Modern aesthetics including the use of large pieces of plate glass alternating with aluminum and rubbed concrete panels to create distinct vertical elements on its elevations.

## Comparative Analysis

The Louisiana & Southern Life Building at 225 Baronne Street, in New Orleans is a 28-story National Register nominated building in the New Formalism style. At 28 stories it stands much taller than the Stewart Building. It is located in New Orleans' dense commercial district just off Canal Street. While the building's exterior has remained intact, the interior has been heavily modified, yet it still retains its National Register eligibility. It has four nearly identical elevations. 225 Baronne exhibits the New Formalism style by emulating a pedestal through a recessed ground floor along the street faces. This recess is supported by columns and has a glass wall base. The smooth white ceramic brick and contrasting granite trim are also typical of the style. Like the Stewart Building it has decorative grilles, although in this case they are aluminum, where the Stewart Building used monumental cast concrete fins.

The Rault Center is a 16-story structure located at 1111 Gravier Street in New Orleans' Central Business District. Built by Robert Lee Hall & Associates in 1972, it has exterior walls of plate glass separated by concrete spandrels and uprights. It's exterior character defining features included a combination of aluminum and concrete panels, stucco, grey tinted plate glass, marble veneer, and porcelain enamel. The large pieces of plate glass alternate with aluminum and concrete panels to create distinct vertical elements on its elevations. On November 29, 1972, a fire claimed six lives and changed Louisiana fire prevention laws, requiring automatic sprinklers in all high-rise buildings.<sup>20</sup> Renovations after the fire removed much of the original material. This building displays the New Formalism style in its symmetry, clean vertical lines, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Rault Center National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. <u>98301384-02d8-4f51-a8a0-</u> <u>c2a3995c0dbe.pdf</u>

# Jefferson Parish, LA

Name of Property County and State monumental aspect, but it does not clearly reference Classical orders in the bold way that the Stewart Building does with its use of the concrete fin façade.

In Jefferson Parish, the most apt comparison in the New Formalism style is the building located directly across Veterans Memorial Boulevard from the Stewart Building: The Heritage Plaza tower at 111 Veterans Memorial Boulevard is an 18 story office tower. It was developed by Frank Stewart, of the Stewart Building, in 1982. The building has a more post-modern silhouette, its exterior primarily clad in glass. A façade adhered to the east and west elevations is a repetition of the one that defines the Stewart Building: six cast cement fins which extend vertically up the entire elevation. This ornament references the New Formalism style.

While the three previously mentioned examples all exhibit the New Formalism style adequately, they are rendered on a quite different scale than the Stewart Building, all being at least 16 stories tall. This massive scale places these buildings within the visual context of a modern office tower, with the New Formalism style applied to the typical office tower form. The Stewart Building, at only five stories, creates a different visual impact with its heavy façade extending out horizontally. The mass of the building is easily relatable to a Classical temple in its proportions, making the style integrated into its inherent form as well as the applied ornament.

#### Conclusion

The Stewart Building is significant under Criterion C, as it displays a pattern of features and traits that exhibit New Formalism, an architectural movement within Modernism, and is an important example in the greater New Orleans area. Defining features of the style include strictly symmetrical elevations, smooth surfaced walls, a range of materials both natural and manmade, and ornamental screens or grills of metal, cast stone or concrete. The Stewart Building distinctly displays all of these traits, with its symmetrical elevations, smooth walls of glass and marble, and cast stone fins. A mix of materials natural and man-made including glass, Steel, concrete, marble and stone are used throughout the interior and exterior of the building. It has intact historic interior details including wooden louvered doors in hallways, Cordova stone in hallway floors and walls and a stone water fountain in the second story hallway. In some areas, newer materials

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

have replaced the original stone. In some areas, though, it is entirely still intact, such as on the third floor around the elevator bays. Other features such as suite signage and mail boxes on the ground floor, also are intact to the building's historic period of significance. Comparison with New Formalist buildings in both Jefferson and nearby Orleans Parish shows that it is an excellent example of the style on a local level.

## **Additional Historical Context**

# Architect Jules K. de la Vergne (Figure 12, 13 and 14)

Constructed in 1973, the Stewart Building at 110 Veterans Memorial Boulevard was to be one of architect Jules de la Vergne's last designs. Saint Priest-Ligoure Joaquin Jules Kristian de la Vergne was born 1911 in Covington, Louisiana.<sup>21</sup> He graduated from University of Notre Dame in 1933 and Harvard in 1934, and in 1936 married Betty Parham Felder of New Orleans. He worked as a draftsman for Weiss, Drefous & Seiferth, then became a partner at Wogan, Bernard & de la Vergne.<sup>22</sup> De la Vergne served in the U. S. Navy from 1943-1945 and is commemorated in the World War II Museum's Louisiana Memorial Pavilion.<sup>23</sup>

In 1947 la Vergne worked with architects Wogan, Bernard and De La Vergne and August Perez to design the Lake Vista Community Center in New Orleans. The lake Vista neighborhood had just been created the previous decade by infilling portions of Lake Pontchartrain's south shore line. Originally a shopping center, this is one of only two buildings, the other being the Union Passenger Terminal, designed 1949 in the Art Deco style by the team and constructed 1954.<sup>24</sup> In 1948 he began practicing at 413 Pere Marquette Building under the firm name Jules K. de la Vergne & Associates, and gained his license in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.<sup>25</sup> In 1949 he designed Saint Mary of the Angels School in New Orleans in a modular modernist style.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Find a Grave Saint Priest-Ligoure Joaquin Jules Kristian de la Vergne (1911-1975) - Find a Grave Memorial

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> 1956 American Architects Directory - AIA Historical Directory of American Architects - Confluence.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Memorial Plaque for Lt. Julies K. de la Vergne, USN. The National WWII Museum, New Orleans.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Lakeview Board Meeting Minutes <u>547\_July 27 2023 FULL BOARD Minutes-Approved SEPT2023.pdf</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Mississippi Board of Architects Directory Archive Search Details

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Photographs and Plan of Saint Mary of the Angels School, New Orleans, LA by Jules K. de La Vergne, A.I.A.: (1954) Art&nbsp;/&nbsp;Print&nbsp;/&nbsp;PoSuiter | Wittenborn Art Books

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

He designed the original building to house the Nora Navra Library in New Orleans in 1953. Initially called simply "Branch 9," the library was constructed to serve African-Americans during the segregation period. The building was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina, and has since been replaced with a different building.<sup>27</sup> De la Vergne's library displays many of the design formalities that are seen, albeit on a much larger scale, at 110 Veterans. The library has two partially overlapping flat, overhanging roofs, each supported by a series of parallel brick walls which intersect the roof at slightly oblique angels, creating a pleasing vertical rhythm.

The Union Passenger Terminal may be de la Vergne's work which is still most impactful today on downtown New Orlean's appearance. The idea of the terminal building was conceived in order to consolidate several passenger terminals around the city. It ultimately replaced five depots deemed "antiquated" by mayor Delesseps Morrison's modernization campaign, including the Louis Sullivan-designed one.<sup>28</sup>

Jules K de la Vergne worked with Wogan, Bernard, and August Perez on the project. Located at Howard and Loyola Avenues, the train terminal still serves passenger trains arriving in New Orleans. When the terminal opened in 1954 it was lauded as a model of modernist architecture with its cool sleek façade of stone, marble, terrazzo, metal and glass. It was the first fully airconditioned passenger train station in the country. One of the terminal's most prominent features are the interior fresco murals by LSU professor and artist Conrad Albrizio, which depict a social commentary on the history of Louisiana as depicted in four different time periods.<sup>29</sup> De la Vergne's drawings, which are archived at Tulane University, indicate stone and granite panels even on general exterior plans, marking the importance of these materials to this design.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> CreoleGenWeb. "A Library for the 7th Ward: Nora Navra Branch." Published 2018. Accessed 2024. <u>A Library for the 7th Ward - Nora Navra Branch (1946-2005) - CreoleGen</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Goodstein, Ethel S. "A Tale of Two Civic Centers: A New City Hall for New Orleans, A New Urbanism for "Dixie." 84TH ACSA ANNUAL MEETING HISTORY, 1996.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Kingsley, Karen. "Civic Center." SAH Archipedia. Civic Center | SAH ARCHIPEDIA

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

Name of Property County and State Other principal works by Jules K. de la Vergne include the Horticultural Building at LSU, Baton Rouge, 1948; Manresa House of Retreats, Convent, 1949; St. Mary of the Angels Elementary School, New Orleans, 1949; Sears & Roebuck Building, Laurel, MS, 1954; South East Louisiana State Hospital, Jackson, LA, 1955, partnership with Nolan, Norman & Nolan. He also worked as a design critic for Tulane University. The AIA Directory Listed his office at 413 Pere Marquette building in New Orleans from 1953 until his death in 1975, just over a year after the completion of the Stewart Building.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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- 225 Baronne Street Building National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. <u>National</u> <u>Register of Historic Places Database</u>
- AIA Historical Directory <u>ahd1010559 AIA Historical Directory of American Architects -</u> <u>Confluence</u>
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- Find a Grave <u>Saint Priest-Ligoure Joaquin Jules Kristian de la Vergne (1911-1975) Find a</u> <u>Grave Memorial</u>

Stewart Building Name of Property Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

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Jefferson Parish Public Library Archives

JULES K. DE LA VERGNE LT. U.S.N. | The National WWII Museum | New Orleans

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- Louisiana Office of Cultural Development, Historic Preservation Cultural Resources GIS Map <u>HP Cultural Resources Map</u>
- Mississippi Board of Architects Directory Archive Search Details

National Park Service National Register Brief 15 <u>NRB-15\_web508.pdf</u> "New Formalism 1955-1975." State of Washington, Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. Accessed January 10, 2025. <u>New Formalism | Washington State</u> <u>Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP)</u>

Rapides Parish Library National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form.

Rault Center National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. <u>98301384-02d8-4f51-a8a0-</u> <u>c2a3995c0dbe.pdf</u>

South Eastern Architectural Archives at Tulane University. Toledano SEAA-049, Folder 178, Union Passenger Terminal, 1949.

Stewart Building Name of Property Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

#### 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): \_\_\_\_\_\_

#### **10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property <u>3.02 acres</u>

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: 29.999778	Longitude:	-90.123820
2. Latitude: 29.997751	Longitude:	-90.123975
3. Latitude: 29.998069	Longitude:	-90.124351
4. Latitude: 29.998149	Longitude:	-90.124727
5. Latitude: 29.999799	Longitude:	-90.124587

Stewart Building Name of Property Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

## Or UTM References Datum (indicated on USGS map):



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

The property bounds are defined as the entire property contained within parcel 820034255 as identified by the Jefferson Parish Assessor's Office including the surface parking lot that surrounds the building. This parcel is also identified as Lot 63C, in the Metairieville Subdivision of Metairie, bounded by Veterans Memorial Boulevard to the north, Lake Avenue to the west, Paris Avenue to the south, and the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Canal to the east.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The property bounds are congruous with how they were when the building was constructed, and when the contributing annex building were constructed. The setting, in proximity to the 17th Street Canal and levee, is important to the building's integrity, as is the landscaping and the parking lots.

# **11. Form Prepared By**

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

## **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.)

#### **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: Stewart Building/110 Veterans Memorial Boulevard City or Vicinity: Metairie County: Jefferson State: LA Photographer: Southkick Rolf Historic Preservation Works LLC: Nora Goddard, Michelle Duhon, James Rolf, Juliette Hotard

Date Photographed: December 5, 2024

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

## **110 Veterans National Register Nomination Photographs**

Photo Key 1: Second level (ground level) main building, exterior and interior

- 1: North-east corner detail. Camera facing south.
- 2: North elevation, detail of entryway. Camera facing south.
- 3: North elevation, exterior walkway. Camera facing southwest.

- Name of Property
- 4: North elevation, exterior walkway. Camera facing southwest.
- 5: North-west perspective. Camera facing southeast.
- 6: North-west corner detail. Camera facing east.
- 7: West elevation. Camera facing east.
- 8: West elevation, hyphen to annex. Camera facing east.

(Photos 9 to 13: see Photo Key 2)

- 14: Exterior walkway, camera facing southwest. Camera facing southwest.
- 15: Exterior stairwell on south elevation. Camera facing north.
- 16: South-east perspective. Camera facing northwest.
- 17: Second level, Suite 200, north-facing office. Camera facing north.
- 18: Second level, north lobby. Camera facing south.
- 19: Second level, Suite 210, conference room. Camera facing west.
- 20: Second level, Suite 210, southwest corner office. Camera facing west.
- 21: Second level, north-south hallway. Camera facing north.
- 22: Second level, exterior stairwell on south elevation. Camera facing south.
- 23: Second level, Suite 200, northeast corner office. Camera facing northeast.

Photo Key 2: First level (ground level) annex building, exterior

9: West elevation, annex. Camera facing east.

- 10: West elevation, hyphen. Camera facing east.
- 11: South-west perspective. Camera facing northeast.
- 12: South-east perspective, annex. Camera facing north.
- 13: South-east perspective. Camera facing northwest.

Photo Key 3: First level (basement level) main building, interior

24: First level, elevator bay. Camera facing north.

25: First level, Suite 110, reception. Camera facing west.

26: First level, mail lobby. Camera facing south.

Photo Key 4: Third level, main building, interior

27: Third level, Suite 347. Camera facing southeast.

28: Third level, Suite 300, south office. Camera facing south.

29: Third level, south hallway. Camera facing west.

30: Third level, elevator bay. Camera facing north.

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

#### Stewart Building

Name of Property

# **Figures:**



Figure 1- Detail, 1966, revised 1989 New Orleans East topographical map with the original building's footprint outlined in pink. Historical Topo Map Explorer.

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State





Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

Figure 2- Detail, 1992 New Orleans East topographical map, with the building and annex outlined in black. Historical Topo Map Explorer.



Jefferson Parish, LA County and State



**3- 2024** aerial photograph of the site, with the annex addition highlighted in pink. Jefferson Parish Assessor.

#### Stewart Building

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Jefferson Parish, LA
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County and State



Figure 4- Times-Picayune article dated January 17, 1973, page 81.



Figure 5- States-Item article dated November 14, 1974.

#### Stewart Building



Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

Figure 6- States-Item article dated November 16, 1974, page 9.



110 Veterans Boulevard

Figure 7- Times-Picayune article dated January 24, 1988, page 108.



Jefferson Parish, LA County and State



Figure 8- Times-Picayune article dated February 24, 1974, page 50.



Figure 9- Times-Picayune article dated January 24, 1988, page 108.

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State
Stewart Building Name of Property

# Rault cuts deal for Stewart Building

Funeral company to keep beadquarters at site

> By Greg Thomas Real estate writer

The 27-year-old Stewart Building at 110 Veterans Memorial Blvd. will be sold to Rault Resources Inc. of New Orleans in a deal slated to close July 7.

The seller is Stewart Building Enterprise, an affiliate of Stewart Capital, the investment company of Frank Stewart Jr., who is also chairman of Stewart Enterprises Inc. Stewart Enterprises, the world's third-largest funeral firm, will keep its corporate headquarters in the building after the sale.

Stewart Enterprises has a five-year lease for 25,000 square feet on the building's fifth floor; said John McNamara, chief executive officer of Stewart Capital. The funeral firm will vacate the 18,000 square feet of space it occupies on the fourth floor of the building, moving staff on that floor to the Stewart Enterprises Services Center at 1333 Clearview Parkway. Other tenants in the building will not be moved.

Figure 10- Times-Picayune dated August 2, 2003, page 1.

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

### Stewart Building

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State



Figure 11- Photograph of the north elevation, published in the 1975 edition of Jefferson Parish Review, page 1.

Stewart Building Name of Property



Figure 12- Portrait of Jules K. de la Vergne, undated. Family Search.



Figure 13- Nora Navra Library, 1954. CreoleGen.

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

#### Stewart Building



Figure 14- Plans for the Union Passenger Terminal, 1949. South Eastern Architectural Archives at Tulane University. Toledano SEAA-049, Folder 178

Stewart Building

Name of Property

Jefferson Parish, LA County and State

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations 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.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement**: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 - 60-100 hours Tier 2 - 120 hours Tier 3 - 230 hours Tier 4 - 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.



Jefferson Parish, Louisiana



100ft

PRESERVATION WORKS

Northeast corner: 29.99977854152511, -90.12382079217556 Southeast corner: 29.997751377040103, -90.12397584748433 South center: 29.99806901191786, -90.12435155842495 Southwest corner: 29.998149066075793, -90.12472726936342 Northwest corner: 29.999799200310175, -90.12458712321909 Stewart Building, 110 Veterans Memorial Boulevard, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana



USGS Topographical map, 1983, New Orleans, ESRI



Latitude: 29.999204699312653

Longitude: -90.12421445655123

Map Scale: 1:100,000

PhotoKey\_110VeteransMemorialBlvd\_Metairie\_LA

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## 110 VETERANS MEMORIAL BLVD METAIRIE, LA 70005

UPDATED: 08-06-24



LAKE AVE.



UPDATED: 08-06-24

110 VETERANS MEMORIAL BLVD METAIRIE, LA 70005











































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