

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information.

New Submission Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Railroad-Related Industrial and Commercial Buildings on the Lafitte Greenway Corridor, 1900-1969

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

- I. Evolution of Railroad Transportation in Orleans Parish, 1830-1969
- II. History of the Southern Railway System in Orleans Parish, 1900-1969

C. Form Prepared by:

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D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

 Signature of certifying official Title Date

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

 Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

Railroad-Related Industrial and Commercial Buildings
on the Lafitte Greenway Corridor, 1900-1969

New Orleans, Louisiana

Name of Multiple Property Listing

State

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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 250 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Structures on the Lafitte Greenway Corridor,
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E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Introduction

The “Railroad-Related Industrial and Commercial Buildings on the Lafitte Greenway Corridor, 1900-1969” multiple property listing represents a distinctive body of property types located along the Southern Railway System’s main line into downtown New Orleans that developed over the course of the 20th century. The Southern Railway (SR) was among the most prominent trunk lines that entered the city and played a significant role in port-related commerce and local industrial/commercial enterprises. The listing includes two historic contexts:

- I. Evolution of Railroad Transportation in Orleans Parish, 1830-1969
- II. History of the Southern Railway System in Orleans Parish, 1900-1969

These two historic contexts possess a local level of significance, and individual properties may be significant at the national, state, or local level.

“Evolution of Railroad Transportation in Orleans Parish, 1830-1969”: The beginning date of 1830 marks the construction of the Pontchartrain Railroad, the first railroad in New Orleans. The end date of 1969 marks the current 50-year cut-off. Railroad service began to change both locally and nationwide after the 1960s, as companies consolidated and railroads faced increasing competition from automobile and air transportation.

“History of the Southern Railway System in Orleans Parish, 1900-1969”: The beginning date of 1900 marks the approximate year that Southern Railway entered New Orleans, and the end date marks the current 50-year cut-off. The 50-year cut-off was chosen because railroads, including Southern Railway, changed in fundamental ways in the 1970s and 1980s, and because Southern Railway’s departure from the Lafitte Greenway Corridor occurred gradually, as opposed to one specific year, during the last quarter of the 20th century.

The buildings that are potentially eligible for individual listing under this multiple property listing were identified as part of research efforts conducted by MacRostie Historic Advisors in relation to the individual nominations of two buildings associated with this historic context, 1601 Lafitte Avenue and 1621 Lafitte Avenue. The buildings identified as part of this research are located along the Lafitte Greenway Corridor, a 21st-century name for one of the city’s primary historic transportation corridors, which extends from Basin Street lakeward toward Bayou St. John. In 2015, the City-owned Lafitte Greenway opened as a linear park and bicycle/pedestrian trail connecting Armstrong Park to City Park, with a trailhead at N. Alexander Street.¹ This multiple property listing further defines the geographic area of the Lafitte Greenway Corridor as extending northwesterly from Basin Street approximately 2.6 miles to City Park Avenue, where the land bordering the former railroad clearly transitions from industrial to residential in use; east-west boundaries extend from the downriver side of Bienville Avenue to the upriver side of St. Peter Street. This area was once home to approximately 150 railroad-related industrial and commercial buildings, only a fraction of which have survived into the present day.

¹ <https://www.lafittegreenway.org/greenway>

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Throughout the 20th century, according to archival zoning maps, the area within the above-described boundaries was zoned primarily for industrial use, with limited pockets of multi-family residential, and was dominated by dozens of small- to large-scale industrial buildings that either relied directly on SR’s main line or were attracted to the corridor as an industrial hub.² Although these buildings are located within a clearly defined geographical area, a contiguous National Register district is not feasible due to modern intrusions and demolitions. Adjacent National Register Historic Districts include the Mid-City Historic District (POS c. 1860-1961) to the southwest and the Parkview Historic District (POS 1830-1944) to the northeast.³ Some of the industrial and commercial buildings associated with the Lafitte Greenway Corridor are located within the boundaries of and classified as contributing to one of these two districts; such buildings are not included in the list of potentially eligible buildings associated with this multiple property listing.

This document identifies one associated property type, Industrial Facilities and Commercial Distribution Buildings, and two associated property subtypes—Industrial Manufacturing Facilities and Warehouses and Commercial Warehouses—that are significantly associated with the multiple property listing. The property type and sub-types are derived from the Data Categories for Functions and Uses provided in National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form. The discussion of property types includes a description of physical characteristics, an evaluation of significance, and registration requirements for the property type and subtypes. Buildings that have been identified as potentially eligible under this multiple property listing are listed in Table 1. However, this list is not intended to be exhaustive and additional identified resources should be evaluated according to the registration criteria as defined in Section F of this document.

In addition to industrial and commercial buildings, the subject area also historically contained a number of transportation-related buildings associated with SR’s day-to-day operations, such as motor freight stations, freight houses, and railroad offices. Today, the only known remaining transportation-related building within the corridor is the Southern Railway Freight Office, 1201 St. Louis Street, which was individually listed in 2004. Due to the demolition of these buildings and the individual listing of the last known remaining associated resource, this property type is not included in this multiple property listing.

Given the importance of railroads to New Orleans’s economic history, it would seem logical to expand this multiple property listing to include all railroad-related industrial/commercial and transportation-related buildings associated with all of the rail lines that played a significant role in Orleans Parish. However, such an undertaking well exceeds the resources of the project team. Instead, each major rail line and its associated built resources should be evaluated for potential significance according to their own specific historic contexts.

I. Evolution of Railroad Transportation in Orleans Parish, 1830-1969

(This historic context summarizes and builds upon information provided in the 2002 New Orleans

² Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, July 1930; and Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, March 1957. Louisiana Division/City Archives & Special Collections, New Orleans Public Library.

³ A third adjacent district, the Esplanade Ridge Historic District (POS 1830-1930), does not abut the corridor and includes no railroad-related industrial or commercial buildings.

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Public Library exhibition entitled "Crescent City Choo-Choo: A Short History of Railroad Transportation in New Orleans."⁴ Additional sources are individually cited.)

Railroads in New Orleans, 1830-1900

The Port of New Orleans has been a critical part of the city's economy since its earliest days. In her nomination of the International Trade Mart (2014), architectural historian Karen Kingsley describes its early dominance:

Situated where the Mississippi River reaches deep water, New Orleans' strategic location made it the gateway between the nation's interior and the world. Commerce between the Caribbean, Africa, and Europe was established within a decade after the city was founded in 1718. Soon products from the nation's interior were being shipped to markets overseas through the port of New Orleans. By the mid-nineteenth century, New Orleans was the second largest port in the nation and the fourth largest in the world.⁵

During the 19th century, the bustling port was supported by manmade urban waterways, namely the Carondelet (Old Basin) Canal, which ran through the Creole part of the city from 1794 through the 1920s, and the New Basin Canal, which operated in the American section from the 1830s until the 1940s. These canals served as valuable transportation corridors that connected downtown New Orleans to inland regions via Lake Pontchartrain.⁶

The port's strategic location on the Mississippi River and its centuries of success as a deep-water oceanic port meant that the city did not prioritize the construction of railroads until much later than cities of similar commercial stature. New Orleans's first railroad, the 5-mile Pontchartrain Railroad connecting the river to the lake, opened in 1831 as one of the first railroads in the United States. Four years later, the 7-mile New Orleans & Carrollton Rail-Road opened to connect downtown to the then-suburb of Carrollton (its route eventually became the St. Charles Avenue streetcar line).⁷ But these early efforts soon petered out, as the city remained focused on its waterways despite growing competition from other cities and their burgeoning railroad systems. In the decades leading up to the Civil War, the State of Louisiana and a few private promoters made some attempts to establish more railroads, including the New Orleans and Nashville Railroad (1835); the New Orleans Jackson, and Great Northern (1850s); and the New Orleans, Opelousas and Great Western (1850s). However, by 1860, they still had little to show for their work. According to historian Merl E. Reed, "[a]lthough the state and its people spent about \$14,504,104 in thirty years [1830-60], building and equipping railroads, Louisiana's economy and New Orleans' commercial empire remained basically on the water where it was in 1830."⁸

⁴ Louisiana Division, New Orleans Public Library, "Crescent City Choo-Choo: A Short History of Railroad Transportation in New Orleans," July 2002. <http://nutrias.org/exhibits/choochoo/choochoo.htm>

⁵ Karen Kingsley, "International Trade Mart," National Register of Historic Places, June 2014.

⁶ Richard Campanella, *Bienville's Dilemma: A Historical Geography of New Orleans* (Lafayette, LA: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2008), 208-09.

⁷ Mark Reutter and J. Parker Lamb, "Crescent City Bound," *Railroad History*, no. 193 (2005): 10.

⁸ Merl E. Reed, *New Orleans and the Railroads* (1966), p. 130, via "Crescent City Choo-Choo: A Short History of Railroad Transportation in New Orleans."

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Finally, in the last third of the 19th century, both the City and State began to more actively encourage railroad development by offering land grants to emerging companies, and New Orleans's rail system steadily grew. In 1869, wharf-side parcels were granted to the New Orleans, Mobile, and Chattanooga Railroad (chartered in 1866). In 1876, the New Orleans Pacific Railway Company built lines between New Orleans and the north of the state, and by 1882 they extended to El Paso, Texas. The Louisville and Nashville Railroad reached New Orleans by 1880. The Illinois Central Railroad, which had had a limited presence in New Orleans since 1858, established a continuous all-rail service between New Orleans and Chicago by 1883. That same year, the New Orleans & Northeastern Railroad opened, greatly improving connections to Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Georgia.⁹ The fledgling New Orleans, Opelousas and Great Western of the 1850s grew into the Southern Pacific system, which connected the city to destinations west of the Mississippi River. According to railroad historians Mark Reutter and J. Parker Lamb, after so many years of halting progress and reluctance to modernize, this period of

railroad building and consolidation had opened the floodgates of commerce, putting New Orleans in touch with more territory than any other American city. By 1899, rails pointed in all directions, and 5 trunk systems...connected the city with 19,086 miles' worth of new markets and raw materials. The whims of the river and its upstream tributaries no longer ruled the fortunes of the city.¹⁰

Railroads in New Orleans, 1900-1945

The momentum of railroad development in the late 19th century propelled New Orleans into the next century and forever redefined its commerce and industry. Instead of providing ancillary support to the port, the city's railroads had become an integral mode of transportation for freight and passengers alike. By 1910, rail lines had transformed the cityscape, crisscrossing streets, spurring inland industrial development, and modernizing how New Orleanians worked and traveled. By the turn of the century, railroad tonnage at the port had increased by 691 percent.¹¹

Day-to-day operations of the Port of New Orleans fundamentally changed with the creation in 1908 of the publicly owned, non-profit New Orleans Public Belt Railroad (NOPB), which was established to "provide uniform rail service to the entire area adjacent to the Port and...handle traffic moving via all of the trunk lines reaching the city."¹² Trunk lines included Illinois Central, Southern Pacific, and Southern Railway, among others, and were provided equal access via the NOPB to over 100 miles of riverfront trackage. Some lines also acquired and operated their own private wharves; for example, Southern Railway owned and operated Port Chalmette just downriver in St. Bernard Parish, and Illinois Central had Stuyvesant Docks in Uptown New Orleans. In addition, the railroads made it possible for industrial activity, including warehousing and light manufacturing, to move away from the river, where available property was scarce, to underdeveloped inland areas deeper into the metropolitan area (e.g., Mid-City). In terms of passenger service, five new stations were constructed during this period: Illinois Central's Union Station, 1892, designed by architect Louis Sullivan; Louisville & Nashville Station,

⁹ Reutter and Lamb, "Crescent City Bound," 14-15.

¹⁰ Reutter and Lamb, 16.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² New Orleans Public Belt Railroad, "History," <https://www.railnola.com/info/history#1900>.

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1902; Southern Railway Terminal, 1908, designed by architect Daniel Burnham; Texas Pacific-Missouri Pacific Station, 1916; and the Louisiana and Arkansas-Kansas City Southern Station, 1923.

According to a 1927 railroad transportation planning study, New Orleans had finally grown into a modern, forward-thinking metropolis with boundless potential for growth:

New Orleans is not only a city of extraordinary historical interest and association but is intensely modern in its present day attainments and future prospects. While it contains within its borders picturesque settlements that have not changed in character for a century, it also houses over 1200 active industries which supply practically every necessity and most of the luxuries of living. The extraordinary vitality of this city is due to its intimate contact with all parts of the United States and the principal foreign countries; a contact that is maintained by 40 steamship lines, and 6 trunk line railroads, composed of 13 systems....Almost 100 varieties of essential raw materials are available, the labor supply is excellent, all year work is the rule and industrial sites are plentiful and cheap. The city is remarkably well situated for manufacturing and distribution. The people are unobtrusively progressive, and adept at mingling business with the amenities of life. It would appear that New Orleans is destined to grow even faster in the immediate future than it has in the past and is therefore an eminently fitting time to establish definite lines along which expansion shall take place most logically....¹³

The study recommended several municipally led or supported improvements that would maximize railroad growth in the future, including increasing the capacity of main-line tracks and eliminating grade crossings, supporting the enlargements and/or relocations of main rail and interior local yards, simplifying track interchanges, and expanding freight stations and warehouses to accommodate the substantial demand for storage facilities.¹⁴ Such a study demonstrates the City's strong interest in supporting the health and vitality of its railroads as it looked toward the mid-20th century. One the most significant examples of this commitment was the construction of the Huey P. Long Bridge, which was built by the NOPB in partnership with Southern Pacific. After several years of planning and delays, the bridge opened in 1935 as not only the city's first Mississippi River rail crossing but also "the longest and highest combined railway-highway span in the world."¹⁵

This period of immense change also marked the obsolescence of the Carondelet (Old Basin) and New Basin Canals, which had been competing with adjacent rail service since the turn of the 20th century; both were incrementally filled in between the 1920s and 1940s.¹⁶ Carondelet Walk, the street bordering the Carondelet Canal, was renamed Lafitte Street/Avenue in 1924. Further hastening the canals' demise was the creation in 1918 of the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal (aka "Industrial Canal") in the Ninth Ward, which provided a new deep-water wharf space and connection between river and lake.¹⁷

¹³ Bartholomew & Associates, "Railroad Transportation Report for New Orleans, Louisiana" (New Orleans: City Planning and Zoning Commission, August 1927), 1-2.

¹⁴ Bartholomew & Associates, 81-83.

¹⁵ Reutter and Lamb, 20. Prior to the construction of the bridge, freight carriers were forced to rely on ferries to cross the river.

¹⁶ Campanella, *Bienville's Dilemma*, 46-47. The filled-in bed of the New Basin Canal also later served as a right-of-way for the Pontchartrain Expressway.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

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Railroads in New Orleans after World War II, 1945-1969

After World War II, improvements to passenger and freight rail service continued with a renewed sense of optimism. In 1954, the City opened a new, modern passenger terminal that consolidated the 5 independent stations that were spread throughout downtown, which had been causing significant traffic congestion at grade crossings. The New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal at 1001 Loyola Avenue, the first such facility to be built with air conditioning and the last major urban railroad passenger station constructed in the United States, was the crown jewel in a broader city-wide effort to eliminate grade crossings in favor of rerouted lines and new grade separation infrastructure.¹⁸

In addition to these major projects, local freight business was booming after the war. According to a 1948 article published in *The Times-Picayune*, “[i]n an average day, 58 passenger trains and 64 freight trains serve the city and port of New Orleans. And today only New York exceeds the port of New Orleans in carloadings of import, export and coastwise freight and in railroad car-storage capacity....New Orleans now is the terminus of [the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company] and other systems that make up a network of almost 50,000 miles of rails.”¹⁹ An article published in 1954 described the city’s railroad system as the “life blood” of the port, handling the vast majority of more than 10 million tons of cargo annually.²⁰ By 1962, New Orleans was the leading port nationally in unloaded railroad cargo, according to the Association of American Railroads.²¹

In addition to the port’s import/export activity, rail-supported industrial activity in postwar New Orleans and throughout the South was increasing significantly, with one and a half new big industries opening each day in the region.²² In Louisiana, much of this major industrial development occurred outside of New Orleans proper and was dominated by the petrochemical, forestry, and agricultural industries.²³ However, smaller-scale industrial activity, including light manufacturing and warehousing, as well as commercial businesses were also growing along the city’s railroad corridors, where companies could gain access to rail spurs for the transport of goods and materials. For instance, the Lafitte corridor of the Southern Railway System (SR) made significant gains in industrial and commercial activity between 1945 and 1970 as evidenced by the number of facilities constructed in the postwar period. According to a 1954 article published in SR’s magazine, *Ties*, this local activity was an important component of the company’s operations: “the Southern...handles a large volume of business originating and terminating in New Orleans in addition to its share of the vital export and import trade constantly flowing through this busy Gulf port.”²⁴

The end of the 1960s marked an important turning point in railroad service nationwide. In the 1970s and 1980s, the majority of the major railroad companies serving New Orleans and elsewhere underwent multiple rounds of mergers, which led to changes in names and service. Passenger service steadily declined locally and elsewhere as air and automobile travel became more affordable, and the

¹⁸ Reutter and Lamb, 22.

¹⁹ “New Orleans Leads South in Carloadings,” *The Times-Picayune*, July 5, 1948.

²⁰ “Life Blood of Port Is Dependent on Railroads,” *The Times-Picayune*, May 1, 1954.

²¹ This information was taken from “Southern Railway Freight Office,” National Register of Historic Places, 2004.

²² “Gains in South Noted on Tour,” *The Times-Picayune*, October 1, 1959.

²³ “State’s Industry, Resources Get Multi-Million-\$ Boost,” *The Times-Picayune*, January 31, 1954.

²⁴ Southern Railway System, “Better Southern Service,” *Ties*, 1954.

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interstate highway system made auto travel more attractive. Freight service continued to be an important component of port activity, but most local industry moved outside of the urban core to larger facilities in suburban areas, and throughout the city trackage was gradually abandoned where it was no longer needed.

II. History of the Southern Railway System in New Orleans, 1900-1969

Inaugurated in 1894, the Southern Railway System (SR) consolidated nearly 150 railroad lines throughout its history to create a vast network that stretched from New Orleans to New York.²⁵ By 1916, it controlled over 8,000 miles of tracks across 13 states and, eventually, it became one of the most prosperous railroad companies in the nation.²⁶ On a local level, SR was among the leading railroad companies in freight and passenger service for much of the 20th century, and its extensive, long-lasting presence forever altered the cityscape.

SR first arrived in New Orleans at the turn of the 20th century via a complex assortment of acquisitions and deals with other railroad companies. Early acquisitions included the Cincinnati-bound Queen & Crescent (and its many affiliated lines) in 1895; the New Orleans Belt and Terminal Company (aka "New Orleans Terminal Co."), which owned the valuable Port Chalmette in downriver St. Bernard Parish as well as a "back" belt line that ran at the rear of the city from the Chalmette docks through Orleans and into Jefferson Parish, in 1902; the Mobile and Ohio in 1902; the Alabama and Vicksburg Railway in 1903; the Vicksburg, Shreveport and Pacific Railway in 1903; and the New Orleans and Northeastern in 1916 (although SR had held an ownership interest in the company since 1895).²⁷ In addition to these acquisitions, SR also successfully negotiated lease agreements, joint proprietorships, and favorable traffic arrangements with other rail lines to achieve premier riverfront access as well as connections to its many other lines throughout the region.

The 1902 purchase of Port Chalmette (aka "Chalmette Terminals") and SR's negotiated access to adjacent rail lines was considered a particularly notable coup; one local newspaper covering the negotiations declared that "[w]ith Port Chalmette an entrance to this City, the Southern would be on an equal footing with any line entering New Orleans. With the close traffic arrangement existing between the Southern and the Louisville and Nashville, the great system of which Samuel Spencer is head [SR] would practically control Eastern business into and out of New Orleans, and would figure prominently in the export situation."²⁸

In 1904, SR constructed a 3-story brick freight office at Basin and St. Louis Streets, which was individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2004 as "a very rare surviving resource to represent the vital role of railroad support for the functioning of the deep-water oceanic Port of New Orleans."²⁹ Shortly thereafter, the company hired leading Chicago architect Daniel Burnham to design a new passenger station, which was completed in 1908 on the neutral ground at Canal and Basin Streets. (The station was demolished in 1956 following the completion of the New Orleans United

²⁵ Burke Davis, *The Southern Railway: Road of the Innovators* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), vii.

²⁶ "A trip to the past on 'Southern Railway,'" *The Times-Picayune*, July 21, 1985.

²⁷ "Southern Railway Secures the Chalmette Terminals," *Daily Picayune*, September 16, 1902; "The Southern Railway Has Purchased the Northeastern," *Daily Picayune*, February 12, 1903; and "Southern Railway Freight Office," National Register of Historic Places, 2004.

²⁸ "Southern Railway Secures the Chalmette Terminals," *Daily Picayune*, September 16, 1902.

²⁹ "Southern Railway Freight Office," National Register of Historic Places, 2004.

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Passenger Terminal.) Both of these landmark buildings were proximate to the Carondelet (Old Basin) Canal/Lafitte Greenway corridor, which, by 1910, had been widened to accommodate trackage that would serve as SR’s main line and primary access point to the heart of the city. This main line connected to New Orleans Terminal Co.’s back belt line near City Park, where it traveled into Jefferson Parish to the west and toward Port Chalmette/St. Bernard Parish to the east.

According to Sanborn Fire-Insurance Maps, the rail lines adjacent to the old canal were laid between 1896 and 1908. In 1905, SR constructed (under the New Orleans Terminal Co. name) several large brick freight houses and support structures that stretched northward from Basin Street approximately one-half mile to N. Prieur Street.³⁰ Sanborn maps show that in these early years, the city blocks bordering the tracks to the southwest and northeast consisted primarily of low-rise housing interspersed with some light-industrial buildings. The maps also indicate that some of these latter buildings, which included lumber companies, cooperages, and warehouses, were located along the corridor to gain access to the old canal, which provided limited transportation for goods and materials. However, several more did not appear until after the tracks were laid, demonstrating that the railroad was attracting new industry and commerce to the area.

North of Bayou St. John, residential and industrial development was sparse, but SR’s tracks ran through it to connect to its east-west back belt line, and soon the vacant land filled in, with industrial activity clustered along the corridor. In the 1910s, SR constructed a main rail yard, Bernadotte Yard & Shops, just north of the bayou, which spurred extensive industrial development in the surrounding area, including the expansive American Can Company at the corner of N. Cortez and Toulouse Streets (1922-29). Once the City’s first comprehensive zoning ordinance was issued in 1927, the SR’s main-line corridor from Basin Street to City Park was officially zoned industrial, creating one of several industrial hubs in the heart of New Orleans.³¹

In the 1930s and 1940s, industrial activity along the corridor varied widely in type and scale and included lumber/building materials warehouses and sheds; millwork companies; automobile-related storage, parts, and repair; wholesale commercial warehouses for a diverse array of businesses, such as drugs, furniture, and scrap iron; sign manufacturers and painters; and small- to mid-size factories that manufactured products such as ice cream, venetian blinds, molasses, mattresses, bottled drinks/liquors, chairs, steel containers, seeds, burlap bags, sheet metal, life preservers, farm equipment, fans, and sporting goods.³² These facilities were typically constructed of brick, concrete block, and/or steel and rarely exceeded 2 stories.

Following World War II, industrial activity continued to increase with the addition of several new facilities, most of which were 1 or 2 stories in height, highly utilitarian in design and constructed with modern, non-combustible materials such as concrete block, steel, and corrugated asbestos. Their uses were similar to those from the interwar years, i.e., wholesale industrial/commercial warehousing, auto-related businesses, and a range of manufacturers.

³⁰ “Terminal Company’s Campaign,” *Daily Picayune*, September 1, 1905.

³¹ “Eighth Zoned Area Includes Heart of City,” *The Times-Picayune*, November 18, 1927; and New Orleans City Planning & Zoning Commission, *Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance*, 1927.

³² Sanborn Fire-Insurance Maps, 1937-51 series

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In addition to its developments along the Lafitte corridor, SR connected via its back belt line to the New Orleans & Northeastern Railroad (NO&NE) at Florida and Almonaster Avenues. As owner of the NO & NE, SR had full access to these tracks, which ran southward along Press Street to the Mississippi River, where they connected with the NOPB. SR maintained a rail yard at Press and N. Galvez Streets under the NO & NE banner, which it extensively renovated in 1954 and renamed Oliver Yard.³³ (The renovation coincided with the abandonment of the 1910s Bernadotte Yard near Bayou St. John.) Industrial activity along the tracks between the Lafitte corridor and the Oliver Yard was very limited, picking up again where the NO & NE tracks crossed N. Claiborne Avenue on their 1-mile stretch to the river. From there, the tracks turned northward again to cross the Industrial Canal on its way to Port Chalmette, where SR’s facilities provided more than 600,000 feet of berthing space for cargo handling and storage.³⁴

In the last quarter of the 20th century, SR’s role in New Orleans changed for the same reasons that affected other railroad companies, including mergers, the increased affordability of automobile and air travel, and the relocation of industry outside of cities. However, today SR’s legacy lives on in the Norfolk Southern, which has operated as a freight carrier within the metropolitan area since the 1983 merger of Southern Railway and Norfolk & Western.³⁵ The SR tracks along the Lafitte corridor were largely abandoned and most removed by the turn of the 21st century. A few of the buildings that line the corridor continue to serve an industrial or commercial use, some are vacant, and some have been repurposed for new uses. With the opening of the City-owned Lafitte Greenway Corridor pedestrian/bike trail and linear park in 2015, which celebrates the area’s important history of transportation, these modest built resources are ripe for historic rehabilitation. Taken together, they are historically significant for their association with the history of the Southern Railway and its main line through the heart of New Orleans, which was forever altered in the 20th century by its railroads and related industries.

Table 1. Potentially Eligible Industrial Buildings on the Lafitte Greenway Corridor

Table 1 lists potentially eligible industrial and commercial buildings on the Lafitte Greenway Corridor that were identified as part of the research for this multiple property listing. These surviving resources are scattered along the roughly 2.6-mile-long corridor, which was once home to approximately 150 industrial and commercial buildings, the majority of which have been lost to demolition and long-term disinvestment. The list is not exhaustive, and additional identified resources not included herein should be evaluated against the registration criteria as defined in Section F of this document. The information included in the table is sourced from the 1929-40, 1937-51, and 1968 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map series, Google maps, period newspapers, and city directories. In the majority of cases, these buildings are considered potentially eligible based on their exterior appearance due to limited interior access.

³³ “Oliver Yard Constructed by Southern,” *The Times-Picayune*, May 1, 1954.

³⁴ Southern Railway System, *New Orleans: City of Old Romance and New Opportunity*, (Southern Railway System, 1920), 25.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

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No.	Address	Construction date	Property sub-type	Known historic use(s)
1	1401 Lafitte Avenue	c. 1950s	Commercial warehouse	Auto glass
2	1413 Lafitte Avenue	c. 1950s	Commercial warehouse	Auto repair
3	1417-29 Lafitte Avenue	1963-65	Commercial warehouse	Battery shop
4	1601 Lafitte Avenue	1950-51	Commercial warehouse	Building materials/lumber warehouse; auto repair
5	1621 Lafitte Avenue	1940s-1960s	Industrial manufacturing facility and warehouse	Ice cream/ice factory; cold storage/meat cutting & storage
6	1728 St. Louis Street	c. 1960s	Commercial warehouse	Auto storage
7	313 N. Claiborne Avenue	c. 1960s	Commercial warehouse	Auto sales & service
8	1938 St. Louis Street	c. 1960s	Industrial manufacturing facility and warehouse	Iron works
9	334 N. Galvez Street	c. 1960s	Commercial warehouse	Auto repair/paint & body shop
10	315-35 N. Galvez Street	1950/1965	Commercial warehouse	Auto repair/paint & body shop
11	407 N. Broad Street	1926/c. 1960s	Commercial warehouse	Tire warehouse and repair
12	2725 Lafitte Avenue	c. 1940s/1960s	Commercial warehouse	Lumber shed/contractors warehouse
13	2836 Conti Street	1957	Industrial manufacturing facility and warehouse	Venetian blinds factory
14	2915 Bienville Avenue	1954	Commercial warehouse	Contractors warehouse
15	2832 Lafitte Avenue	1959	Industrial manufacturing facility and warehouse	City of New Orleans Dept of Streets sign finishing & warehouse

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16	2901 Lafitte Avenue	1940s?	Industrial manufacturing facility and warehouse	Millwork shop; hardware & lumber
17	2809 Lafitte Avenue	c. 1950s	Commercial warehouse	Wholesale liquor
18	2811 Toulouse Street	c. 1950s	Commercial warehouse	Wholesale liquor
19	2939 Toulouse Street	1962-67	Commercial warehouse	Contractors warehouse
20	3301 Lafitte Avenue	c. 1950s	Commercial warehouse	Roofing warehouse
21	3733 Conti Street	c. 1950s	Commercial warehouse	Appliances/electric supplies & warehouse
22	501-09 N. Cortez Street	c. 1940s	Industrial manufacturing facility and warehouse	Scrap iron salvage works
23	3909 Bienville Avenue	1950	Commercial warehouse	Drug/rubber products warehouse
24	3530 Toulouse Street	c. 1950s	Commercial warehouse	Furniture warehouse
25	501 N. Genois Street	c. 1940s	Commercial warehouse	Furniture warehouse
26	3610 Toulouse Street	c. 1940s	Industrial manufacturing facility and warehouse	Carnival float manufacturing/warehouse; aluminum products manufacturing
27	3622 Toulouse Street	c. 1940s	Industrial manufacturing facility and warehouse	Tile factory; wholesale candy warehouse; wholesale electronics supplies
28	605 N. Cortez Street	1967	Industrial manufacturing facility and warehouse	American Can Company factory warehouse
29	4157 St. Louis Street	c. 1950s	Commercial warehouse	Automobile storage and repair
30	501-11 N. Hennessey Street	1956-57	Commercial warehouse	Wholesale candy
31	503-13 N. St. Patrick Street	1930s-40s	Industrial manufacturing facility and warehouse	Window fans manufacturing

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32	500 N. Bernadotte Street	c. 1950s	Commercial warehouse	Commercial storage
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F. Associated Property Types³⁶

Associated property types for “Railroad-Related Industrial and Commercial Buildings on the Lafitte Greenway Corridor, 1900-1969” are based on associative qualities and physical characteristics relating to the buildings’ historic uses or functions. This document identifies one associated property type, Industrial Facilities and Commercial Distribution Buildings, and two associated property subtypes, A) Industrial Manufacturing Facilities and Warehouses and B) Commercial Warehouses.

I. Property Type: Industrial Facilities and Commercial Distribution Buildings

General Description

This property type encompasses the industrial fabricating and the commercial wholesale distribution/storage businesses that comprise the resources associated with this multiple property listing. The majority of these resources were constructed between the 1920s and the 1960s and are overwhelmingly low-rise in scale, rarely exceeding two stories, simple in form and massing, and utilitarian in design. Most are rectangular or square in plan, with a handful that are trapezoidal due to proximity to rail spurs. A few exhibit restrained decorative treatments, but all would qualify as having no architectural style. Their materials typically reflect the latest fireproof construction for their period; earlier buildings are constructed of brick and/or steel, and post-World War II examples are concrete block and/or steel. Some later buildings are clad in metal or asbestos wall and/or roofing panels. Many of the buildings, particularly earlier ones, feature larger windows (usually steel) to capture daylight. Most of the buildings include one or more garage openings for truck and equipment access; some also have loading docks. Pre-war roofs are generally gabled, and post-war roofs are typically flat or have a shallow gable. On the interior, floors are typically concrete slab, roof framing and wall structure are often exposed, and any finishes are minimal. Floor plans reflect the historic use and may be divided into spaces dedicated to manufacturing/processing, office, and storage. In several of the buildings, the office is either a clearly differentiated, pedestrian-friendly section of the building (i.e., an obvious change in exterior cladding material, scale of openings, etc.) or simply a built-out interior area. In a few cases, the office was housed in a separate building. The offices usually have a dedicated front entrance, but otherwise these buildings rarely have a prominent main point of access.

There are three alterations that are most common to this property type. The first is alterations to window and door openings, which may include the replacement of doors and windows or filling in of openings as interior uses changed. The second is replacement of exterior cladding, most frequently asbestos wall and roofing panels with non-hazardous materials. The third is modifications to floor plans to accommodate new or updated uses, equipment, and operational procedures. This assessment is based on observations in the field for the purposes of this document as well as the author’s professional knowledge of how this property type typically changed over time within a local context.

The two sub-types associated with this property type are:

³⁶ This section is closely modeled on a similar multiple property listing entitled “Railroad Related Historic Commercial and Industrial Resources in Kansas City, Missouri,” November 2000, amended 2010: <https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/nps-nr/64500308.pdf>.

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A. Industrial Manufacturing Facilities and Warehouses

This property sub-type is based on associations with the original industrial manufacturing use of the building or structure and typically incorporate space in their plans for manufacturing and processing, offices, and storage. Typical physical characteristics reflect those described above in the general description of the property type. The most common examples along the Lafitte Greenway Corridor include factory buildings and detached warehouses associated with factory operations.

B. Commercial Warehouses

This property sub-type encompasses warehouses associated with small- to mid-sized commercial enterprises of various types and is defined by its physical characteristics and historic uses. Typical physical characteristics reflect those described above in the general description of the property type. In addition, these buildings typically consist of open floor plans to maximize storage capacity with a limited amount of partitioned space for support activities such as office and restrooms. The most common examples along the Lafitte Greenway Corridor include storage facilities for wholesale commercial businesses and automobile-related repair and storage facilities. While the latter category does not uniformly qualify as a commercial warehouse in terms of use, these buildings share essential physical characteristics with other warehouses and were purposely located within the corridor as an industrial hub.

Significance

The significance of this property type and sub-types is their association with the history of the Lafitte Greenway Corridor as the main line of the Southern Railway System into New Orleans. The introduction of SR's main line along the near-obsolete Carondelet Canal at the turn of the century created an industrial hub in the heart of the city that persisted well into the post-World War II period. As such, the property type and sub-types reflect SR's important role in the evolution of railroad-related manufacturing, wholesale distribution, and warehousing businesses in New Orleans and the expansion of these types of business into the "back-of-town" area, where such development had been thwarted by the limited capacity of the canal. They have direct associations with the historic contexts "The Evolution of Railroad Transportation in Orleans Parish, 1830-1969" and "History of the Southern Railway System in Orleans Parish, 1900-1969." All date from the period of significance, 1900-1969. The property sub-types are eligible under Criterion A in the areas of Industry and/or Commerce as important surviving examples of industrial and commercial development of the Lafitte Greenway Corridor.

Registration Requirements

To qualify for individual listing under Criterion A, the property must be at least 50 years old and retain a strong degree of integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. The resource must be located in the area defined in this document as the Lafitte Greenway Corridor and have a clearly demonstrated historic use as either an industrial manufacturing facility/warehouse or a commercial warehouse as defined above.

In addition, the resource must possess sufficient integrity of design, materials, and workmanship to be recognizable as its property type. Because of multiple uses over time and the utilitarian nature of these resources, some alterations, such as replacement windows and doors, modified floor plans, and

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replacement cladding, are to be expected and should be weighed against the resource's overall integrity. At least 3 of the following historic features should be extant for a resource to be considered eligible:

1. Arrangement of façade elements
2. Fenestration pattern/rhythm of openings
3. Use of fireproof construction materials, e.g., concrete block, steel, brick and/or asbestos or metal cladding
4. Exterior expression of construction materials
5. Utilitarian design and lack of overt architectural style
6. Form and massing (typically very simple) reflecting the resource's function
7. Interior spatial arrangement that expresses its industrial or commercial use
8. Expression of structural elements on the interior, e.g., roof framing/trusses, columns, exposed wall materials

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G. Geographical Data

The geographical boundaries of this multiple property submission are Basin Street to the southeast, Bienville Avenue to the southwest, City Park Avenue to the northwest, and St. Peter Street to the northeast. These boundaries incorporate Lafitte Greenway but extend further north to City Park Avenue, where the land bordering the former railroad clearly transitions from industrial to residential in use. The boundaries extend southwest to the downriver side of Bienville Avenue and northeast to the upriver side of St. Peter Street to encompass the industrial and commercial buildings that contributed to the corridor as railroad-related industrial hub.

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H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

This multiple property listing is based on comprehensive research efforts conducted by MacRostie Historic Advisors to investigate the potential historic significance of two of associated properties, 1601 Lafitte Avenue and 1621 Lafitte Avenue. For major bibliographical references consulted as part of this research, please see Section I of this document.

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