

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The boundaries of the Lower Central Business District encompass a total of 293 buildings. The district contains one certified historic district, Picayune Place, as well as a portion of the city-designated Canal Street Historic District, which has not been certified. Contributing elements within the district range in age from 1830 to 1941, and consist primarily of buildings which were erected to house commercial and office uses. The district has a noncontributing rate of only 11%, and most of the non-contributing buildings are in scale with their historic neighbors. As the name indicates, the district is only a portion of the New Orleans CBD. The rest of the CBD is visually separated by the almost corporately redeveloped four lane Poydras Avenue and was listed on the Register last year as the Upper CBD.

The Lower Central Business District occupies a portion of the tract of land which was owned by Don Bertrand Gravier and Madame Marie Gravier in the late eighteenth century. The Gravier property was subdivided into streets and blocks by the Spanish Royal Surveyor Carlos Trudeau in 1788. The land between Common and Iberville Streets was to remain city property, known as the City Commons, until 1810 when the city surveyor Jacques Tanesse prepared a plan which defined the location of Common, Canal and Iberville Streets. The extraordinary width of Canal Street was due to the fact that an extension of the Carondelet Canal was to be built down the center of the street, a venture which was never undertaken.

Development of the Lower Central Business District began in the late eighteenth century, but there are no surviving buildings from that period in the district today. With the entry of Louisiana into the United States in 1812, the flow of Anglo-American immigrants from the rest of the country increased rapidly, with most of these new arrivals moving into the section of the city upriver from the French Quarter. By 1820, according to no less a figure than the architect Benjamin Latrobe, the current Central Business District was the scene of a significant amount of new construction activity, including both residential and commercial buildings. The Lower Central Business District, with its proximity to Canal Street, became the focus of the business and commercial interests of New Orleans, and the overwhelming majority of the buildings built in this section, both before and after the Civil War, were intended for one of those uses. Improvements in building technology after the Civil War led to the construction of larger and taller commercial buildings, many of which replaced smaller antebellum commercial buildings. The first half of the twentieth century saw continued commercial building activity, with the use of steel frame structural systems leading to the erection of the city's first 20+ story office buildings, erected for some of the larger banks in the city.

As was the case with the Upper Central Business District, the character of the Lower Central Business District is formed by the concentration of common wall structures, all of masonry or steel frame construction. Contributing buildings in the district range in scale from two stories up to bank buildings in excess of twenty stories in height.

1830-1860 - 47%

This period of the district's development is most prominent in the area bounded by Tchoupitoulas, Common, Camp and Poydras Streets, where the majority of the antebellum buildings in the district stand. These buildings are of masonry construction, generally three or four stories in height, sharing common walls with their neighbors. The Greek Revival and Italianate styles are naturally dominant with respect to these early structures. The most important of these Greek Revival style commercial buildings is the structure located at 301 Magazine Street which was designed by the noted architect James Dakin in 1843 to serve as the offices of the New Orleans Canal and Banking Company. The entire facade of this building is clad in Quincy granite, as are the two identical but separate stores which were built for the company on Gravier Street. Immediately adjacent to the Dakin designed structure is a row of seven identical four story commercial buildings which were designed by the architect Lewis Reynolds in 1854, combining both Greek Revival and Italianate elements on their facades.

These early buildings have relatively small footprints, due to the limiting factors imposed by masonry bearing wall construction methods. As demand increased for larger structures, both their depth and height rose, as in the case of Factor's Row in the 800 block of Perdido Street, designed by Lewis Reynolds in 1858. Factor's Row could be considered as the prototypical professional office building group in New Orleans, as they were erected on a speculative basis for the occupancy of brokers and traders in the cotton trade, one of the mainstays of the city's antebellum economy.

There was only minimal residential construction in this area prior to the Civil War, for even in the 1830s the Lower Central Business District had become recognized as the center of the city's commercial activity. Within the district's boundaries there is only one surviving residential building, located at 824 Canal Street. Designed by the architect James Gallier, Sr., the house was built in 1844 for Dr. William Newton Mercer. Its survival is due to the fact that in 1884 it was acquired by a private men's club, the Boston Club, and has been used by that organization ever since.

1860-1900 - 12%

In spite of the rather low percentage of buildings in the Lower Central Business District built between 1860 and 1900, it would be incorrect to assume that this time period had little impact upon the district's architectural character. The continuing development of the port of New Orleans as well as the city's business sector led to the construction of several major new buildings, including the first true skyscraper in the city. The new commercial buildings of this period differ significantly from their antebellum counterparts with respect to their physical size as well as their architectural style.

The Italianate style, which had surfaced in the district just before the Civil War, continued in popularity after 1865, with an increase in exterior ornamentation. The group of commercial buildings at 624-634 Canal Street illustrate this more florid stage in the use of the Italianate style. The Produce Exchange designed by the architect James Freret in 1883, uses details which could be considered as Italianate in spirit, yet its overall appearance owes some debt to the architecture of the French Second Empire.

The appearance in the 1880s of more progressive styles in commercial buildings can be attributed to the arrival of the architect Thomas Sully. Sully, both by himself and in association with Albert Toledano, was responsible for many of the city's best commercial buildings. Within the Lower Central Business District, his extant works include the flamboyant New Orleans National Bank at 201 Camp Street built in 1884, and the ten story Hennen Building, built in 1894-95 at 203 Carondelet Street. The latter structure individually listed on the National Register, set the pattern for all future large scale office construction in the city, using a steel frame to support its weight, and occupying a large portion of a city block.

1900-1941 - 30%

The first forty years of the twentieth century saw significant new construction in the Lower Central Business District, both on a large and a small scale. The standard for the large office building that had been established at the end of the nineteenth century was taken to its more massive form in this period with the construction of four major high-rise towers for the city's most prominent banks, as well as other smaller scale office blocks. The Hennen Building was surpassed as the city's tallest structure in 1904 with the construction of the Hibernia Bank Building at 226 Carondelet Street. Designed by the nationally prominent architectural firm of D. H. Burnham & Company of Chicago, it rose to the height of thirteen floors. Its exterior is simply detailed, with the windows paired side by side to add vertical emphasis.

The 1920s were the boom years in terms of major high-rise construction in New Orleans, with virtually all of it taking place within the boundaries of the Lower Central Business District. In 1920, the Whitney National Bank built a twenty story addition to their 1909 structure, at 628 Common Street. In 1920-21, the Hibernia National Bank erected their new twenty-three story office tower at 301 Carondelet Street, designed by the New Orleans, architectural firm of Favrot & Livaudais. In 1926-27, the building at 210 Baronne Street, built for the Canal Bank and Trust Company and now the home of the First National Bank of Commerce, rose to a height of nineteen floors, and was designed by Emile Weil. This building followed the lead of the Hibernia in using classical forms on its exterior. The American Bank Building, located at 200 Carondelet was constructed in 1928-29 from designs by Moise Goldstein. Twenty-six stories tall, it broke new ground in that it departed from the classicism of all of the other bank towers, the bank electing to have their new building in the Moderne style instead.

Two other major 1920s office blocks, the Pere Marquette Building at 150 Baronne Street and the Masonic Temple at 333 St. Charles Avenue, built in 1925 and 1926, respectively, used vaguely Gothic elements on their exteriors.

The 1900-1941 period also saw the construction of some smaller scale buildings, most of which stand along Canal Street. Most of the buildings in the 700 block of Canal Street were constructed between 1905 and 1910 to house various retail establishments. The very fine classical headquarters of the Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks at 127 Elks Place was designed by the firm of Toledano, Wogan and Bernard and erected in 1917. Unusual in that it dates from the late 1930s and the depths of the Great Depression is the fine Moderne style drugstore building at 900 Canal Street, which was designed by the firm of Weiss, Dreyfous and Seiferth and built in 1938.

Intrusions - 11%

An intrusion (or non-contributing element) is defined as a resource less than fifty years old or an historic resource that has lost its integrity. An 11% intrusion rate is remarkably low for a major urban CBD. (Most Register districts in Louisiana have a 20-30% intrusion rate.) With but one exception the modern skyscrapers in the district are on the edge along Canal Street. They exist side by side with significant historic buildings, and to have cut them out would have created boundaries that look gerrymandered. Most of the intrusions are much more modest and in scale with their historic neighbors.

Note: Many of the modern skyscrapers visible in the photos are outside the district boundaries.

Significant dates	1830-1941
Architect/Builder	various (see text)
Criterion C	

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Lower Central Business District is of statewide significance in the area of architecture because it and the recently listed Upper Central Business District are Louisiana's finest collections of historic commercial buildings. The Lower CBD achieves this distinction due to several factors, including an early building stock, the quality of its commercial Italianate architecture, its unparalleled collection of skyscrapers, and the large number of landmarks (often architect designed) from various periods. The period of significance ranges from 1830 to 1941 (the fifty year cutoff). The Lower CBD, like other New Orleans districts, should be regarded as a toute ensemble of many styles and periods as well as building types. While it is true that certain elements, as explained below, make the greatest contribution to its architectural character and quality, every fifty year old building that retains integrity should be considered contributing.

Given the incredible developmental pressure in downtown New Orleans, it is quite remarkable that almost half of the buildings in the district date from before the Civil War. The typical central business district in the state, whether it be in a large city or a small town, is almost completely twentieth century. The small percentage of earlier buildings that exist are, generally speaking, have nineteenth century watered down Italianate commercial buildings. In terms of antebellum commercial architecture, only three significant collections exist, and all are located in New Orleans. In addition to the buildings found in the Lower Central Business District, important collections can be found in the Vieux Carre National Historic Landmark district and in the Upper Central Business District listed on the Register last year. It should also be noted that a significant number of the antebellum commercial buildings in the district are in the Greek Revival style. While Louisiana is justly famous for its Greek Revival domestic architecture, it is rare to find even a single surviving commercial example, let alone an entire collection. In fact, the only place in the state with concentrations of Greek Revival commercial buildings are the Upper CBD, the Lower CBD, and the Vieux Carre.

The Lower CBD and the adjacent Vieux Carre contain Louisiana's finest Italianate commercial buildings. Very little "full-blown" commercial Italianate architecture exists outside these two districts. The typical Italianate commercial building in Louisiana is a very much watered down (and usually late) manifestation of the style, featuring perhaps segmentally arched windows and a corbelled cornice. By contrast, examples found in the Lower CBD are characterized by free-standing columns, oculus windows, brackets several feet high, round head windows, elaborate tablets, paneled friezes with double modillions, spandrel panels, etc. One even has a full pedimented

pavilion. The isolated full-blown examples of the style that exist here and there in other towns in the state pale in comparison to -the district's flamboyant Italianate landmarks .

The district is also significant for its unrivaled collection of skyscrapers. The skyscraper is of paramount importance, being one of very few building types one can point to as an American invention. While about half a dozen towns in Louisiana have one, two or three historic skyscrapers, the Lower C.BD is the only place where one could say there was a concentration, yielding the standard urban America skyline . The district contains numerous examples, ranging from the Chicago School to the Modernistic style. The district's skyscrapers also are the state's largest, both in terms of height and footprint. Two even have striking rooftop pavilions visible from across the city, a feature found nowhere else in the state.

Finally, the district derives significance from the high percentage of landmark buildings from various periods, many of which are architect designed. Many of these stellar properties are either already on the Register individually or would be eligible for such a designation. Numerous others, while district material in New Orleans, would be clearly individually eligible if they were located anywhere else in the state.

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NEW ORLEANS LOWER CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT UPDATE AND BOUNDARY EXPANSION, 2006

5. Number of Resources With Property

Boundary expansion adds 9 contributing buildings and 3 non-contributing bldgs.

Updating period of significance for existing district changes 4 buildings from non-contributing to contributing.

New contributing/non-contributing count for the district:

Contributing	259 buildings
Non-Contributing	31 buildings

15 buildings previously listed on Register (individual listings)

Part 7:

Architectural Classification: add International Style

New Orleans' Lower Central Business District was listed on the National Register in 1991, with the period of significance ending in 1941 (following the Register fifty year cutoff). This addendum will update the period of significance to 1956 (the present fifty year cutoff) and increase the boundaries to include twelve additional buildings, some of which are major expressions of 1950s architecture.

The staff of the Division of Historic Preservation had begun initial fieldwork for this project prior to Hurricane Katrina (August 29, 2005). The accompanying photos were taken in early November. Katrina caused wind-related damage to some of the Lower CBD's historic buildings, but all-in-all it was relatively minor. Any damage to the buildings covered in this update will be detailed below. (There are also a few instances of shopfronts that remain boarded over.)

The boundary expansion occurs in three places at the northern end of the district. It adds 9 contributing buildings and 3 non-contributing. Updating the period of significance for the existing district changes 4 buildings from non-contributing to contributing status.

Boundary Expansion:

For the most part, the buildings below were not included in the original boundaries because they were not considered historic at the time. However, #s1-3 below were clearly historic at the time of the 1991 listing. Why they were overlooked is unknown.

- 1) 231 North Rampart, contributing, circa 1850. Three story brick, party wall, Greek Revival double townhouse with galleried rear service wing. Details include a heavy denticular entablature, granite lintels, gabled parapets, and six-over-nine sliphead windows at the second story façade that originally stepped out onto balconies. Ground level conversion to commercial space is most likely an alteration. Upriver gabled parapet damaged during Hurricane Katrina. Rehabilitation in progress.
- 2) 215 North Rampart, contributing. Early twentieth century, four story, stucco-over-brick commercial building. Classically derived (albeit low-key) details include three round head windows and an entablature with ornamental ventilators set within it. Retains almost all its original windows on the upper stories. Shopfront converted to provide for a garage (but columns retained).
- 3) 201 North Rampart, contributing. Early twentieth century, three story, stucco-over brick commercial building with pronounced Baroque-style terra-cotta detailing at the center of the first and second stories. Round head windows span the third story façade. Shopfront level replaced.
- 4) 141 South Rampart, non-contributing, modern skyscraper with a beige brick facing. (This building is between the existing district and the northwestern-most boundary expansion. It had to be taken to include four major historic 1950s buildings.)
- 5) 1111 Tulane Avenue, contributing. According to the book *New Orleans in the Fifties*, this eight-story commercial building was remodeled to its present appearance in 1950. However, it does not appear to be a remodeling job; its appearance is entirely in the late International Style. The 1954-55 city directory lists 1111 Tulane as the California Company Building. It is conservative in that the design is symmetrical. The main elevation, on Tulane Avenue, has a centrally placed entrance marked by deep red polished granite and a striking angular brushed aluminum frame around a system of glass doors. The aluminum windows are paired and set in bands of dark (gray) brick on each story. These are contrasted by bands of lighter brick (reddish brown) set between the stories. Each of the three exposed elevations is set off by a smooth limestone frame that encompasses the outermost "columns" of windows. The interior edge of the frames is marked by a subtle limestone coping. The building is free of ornament, being a study in rectilinearity and contrasting colors.

- 6) 212 Loyola, contributing, 1956, Herbert A. Benson, George J. Riehl, architects. The Saratoga Building is a fourteen story steel and concrete skyscraper faced in smooth beige brick with windows set in golden hued aluminum bands. The main elevation derives interest from a broad angle turn following a jog on Loyola Avenue, onto which the building fronts. There is a pronounced two-story base surmounted by a more slender twelve-story tower. The second story of the base is raised on piers and appears to float above the ground in the tradition of the International Style. The tower is raised above the base on similar piers. The piers themselves are faced in rose tinted polished granite. Windows in the upper story of the base are set off in a striking beige colored stone coping. When it was built, De Lesseps "Chep" Morrison (Mayor of New Orleans from 1946 to 1961) hailed the Saratoga Building as a "bright new symbol of what we are accomplishing – and that is new life, new growth and new service and beauty for the heart of New Orleans."
- 7) 219 Loyola, New Orleans Public Library, 1956-58, contributing, Curtis and Davis, Architects, with Goldstein, Parham and Labouisse, and Favrot, Reed, Mathes and Bergman. The entry for this building in *Buildings of Louisiana*, published by the Society of Architectural Historians, reads in part: "The three story library is a steel frame structure ...with two basement levels with foundations of reinforced concrete. With the exception of the west façade, the walls are entirely of glass, covered by an aluminum screen to shield the interior from glare but permit light to enter." The aluminum screen, the defining exterior feature, is black, with the walls below a grayish white. The design won an award from *Progressive Architecture Magazine* in 1956. The library is part of a larger civic center complex constructed between 1956 and 1961. This included a new City Hall and other governmental buildings set around an irregularly shaped park. While the City Hall is 50 years old (1956), the buildings between it and the library are not. Thus, only the library has been included in this particular submission.
- 8) 1315 Gravier, contributing, The Warwick (now Ramada Inn and Suites). *New Orleans in the Fifties* references this building as being "completed in the early 50s." A 1956 aerial photograph shows the building in place. Located on the same block as the above referenced library, the building formerly known as The Warwick is a twelve story crisply unadorned symmetrical building faced in brick. The windows at the center of the façade are grouped in three strong vertical "columns." Windows at the corners are set off in broad horizontal bands. (The overall effect is that of ribbon windows that turn the corner.) Originally, the windows were set off by sections of unpainted brick, which contrasted with the rest of the exterior, which was painted a light color. Today the previously unpainted brick sections accenting the windows have been painted, but it is in a contrasting color (so the design intent remains). The building is capped by a slightly raised parapet. The ground level has been remodeled for the present use (Ramada Inn and Suites).
- 9) 210 O'Keefe, contributing, 1956, presently Quality Inn & Suites. A photograph dated July 29, 1957 shows this building as a completed work. Thus its design and construction must date from at least 1956. It is a nine-story office building located on a corner; hence there are two styled elevations. Its massing is what has been termed a "vertical slab." The design features a system of windows and aqua coated glass panels set in, and set off by, a brushed aluminum grid frame. The building has the sleek appearance much prized by high style mid-twentieth century architects. Exposed beams at the rooftop level form a distinctive open-work sculptural element. 210 O'Keefe sustained some wind damage during Hurricane Katrina (August 29, 2005). A few windows and aqua panels (mainly on the narrower Common St. elevation) were broken. Rehabilitation work is in progress.
- 10) Non-contributing parking garage that wraps around #9 above.
- 11) 925 Common, Shell Building, contributing, 1952, August Perez and Associates, architects. The Shell Building, individually listed on the Register, is a reinforced concrete fourteen story skyscraper faced in smooth limestone. Its footprint forms a "v" at the sharp intersection of

Common Street and University Place. The abstract rectilinear design makes use of brushed aluminum ribbon windows and a system of stone ledges and vertical fins that are designed to shade the windows as the sun makes its way from the eastern sky to the southern sky into the western sky. The Common Street elevation first story is capped by a long limestone planter with a slanted front. This Wrightian touch is not within the International Style tradition, but it achieves concinnity with the overall design.

- 12) 155 Baronne, non-contributing. This modern six story building with a large footprint had to be taken to connect the district with two major 1950s landmarks, #s 9 and 11 above.

Buildings within existing boundaries that are now 50 years old (changing status from non-contributing to contributing) – see 2 attached detail maps for locations:

Dailey's, 1010 Canal. This is evidently an older three story building remodeled to its present façade appearance circa 1950. The location of two large windows on the second and third stories is still detectable in the present plain stucco facade. The design incorporates a striking one-and-a-half story streamlined neon sign proclaiming Dailey's and the address. This is set opposite two minimalist square windows.

Joy Theater, 1200 Canal, 1946, Favrot and Reed, architects. Occupying a corner on Canal, the Joy Theater makes a quite pronounced statement. Beige brick walls contrast with boldly formed white stuccoed elements at each corner and a white outward thrusting sign at the center. The wide pier-like elements at each corner are scored vertically and rise above the main parapet by a few inches. The strongest vertical thrust is the central sign. The sign has a sweeping curve at the top and rises a few feet above the parapet. Painted white, its shape is outlined and re-enforced with a dark red trim. The "Joy" letters are also painted red and the beige brick walls are set off by a red band. The original marquee was damaged during Hurricane Katrina. The sign received a small amount of damage. (The Joy, vacant for some time, presently bears a "for sale" sign.)

818 Gravier. Three story masonry building that received its present updated façade c.1950. Shopfront is of polished granite. Second and third stories fitted with beige textured panels with a metallic sheen. Windows on second and third stories are aluminum with four horizontal panels. A rectangle in a contrasting color outlines and sets off the system of window openings.

821 Gravier. Annex to National Bank of Commerce, 1956, Nolan, Norman & Nolan, architects. This mixed use skyscraper housed a "motor bank" on the lower level, four stories of parking garage, and twelve stories of office space. While built for the National Bank of Commerce, the office tower was leased by various entities (mainly petro-chemical and insurance companies). Subsequent to construction the fifth floor was converted from office to parking. Floors 6-10 were sensitively converted to parking in a 2003 rehabilitation project for re-use of the building as a Hilton Garden Inn. The building has a sleek modern exterior consisting of clear glass windows and blue aluminum panels set within, and set off by, a contrasting system of brushed aluminum vertical ribs.

Part 8:

New period of significance: 1830-1956

Statement of Significance

The buildings from the period 1942 to 1956 in the expanded and updated Lower Central Business District Historic District make a significant contribution to the district's patrimony. Indeed, collectively they are of state significance in the area of architecture. They represent Louisiana's only collection of cultural resources exemplifying an important American architectural phenomenon of the 1940s and 50s -- the triumph of European Modernism on the corporate/ institutional/ urban scene. Other larger downtowns in the state simply do not have significant or concentrated architectural resources that date from this period. Generally speaking, the buildings in these other central

business districts either represent the pre-World War II era or the immediate recent past (1970s and later).

Probably the overriding American urban architectural trend of the post-World War II era, through the 1950s, was the triumph of European Modernism. It was a boom that, on the whole, relaxed some of the rigors of Modernist ideology but embraced its architectural vocabulary. The European International Style, which had only a fledgling hold in this country before the war, emerged as the standard American way to be modern. Indeed, the International Style, in its various permutations, reshaped major downtowns and created a new image of the American city that would have international reach.

The 1950s American building boom was fueled by post-war recovery, prosperity and the resulting need for new buildings of all kinds. And, for a variety of reasons, it came to be dominated by the abstractions of what we now term the late International Style. Some have noted the influence of Walter Gropius, who became Dean of Harvard's Graduate School of Design in 1937. His many graduates of the 1930s and 40s read like a *Who's Who* of American architectural practice from the 1950s and beyond. Similarly, Ludwig Mies Van Der Rohe became director of the architecture program of the Armour Institute in Chicago (later the Illinois Institute of Technology) in 1938 and had his own stream of dedicated graduates as well as a wide circle of professional influence. Others have noted widespread corporate patronage. Then, too, there were the efforts of the *Union Internationale des Architects*, dubbed "one of the most influential propagators of modern architecture after the Second World War."

But in a larger sense, from reviewing the history of the post-war period, one can also infer that by 1950 the old Art Deco mode was fading from fashion. The International Style was relatively new on the greater American scene, had a strong quasi-moral philosophy behind it (as Art Deco did not) and for a long time had no serious competition (at least not for large and/or tall buildings).

Aesthetes and critics of the day hailed the style's emergence. In 1958, *Look*'s architectural editor John Peter noted: "There is now a general body of theory and practice that constitutes a Modern style which is rapidly becoming as clearly defined as the Greek style or the Gothic style. . . . In almost every type of building - office, factory, bridge, dam, school, hospital - modern architecture. . . works. Only in the private family dwelling, where human needs are scaled to modest and even obsolete handicraft building methods, does modern architecture lag behind." "Architecture has now scraped itself clean of the encrustations of the past. It has advanced new purposes and new forms." In the same vein, Wolf von Eckardt offered in 1961, "Even those who still prefer 'traditional' at home accept 'modern' as the appropriate architecture for the schools of their children, their places of business, and - a little more reluctantly - for their churches and temples." The triumphal emergence was complete.

In a poetical sense, to a later generation Modernist post-war buildings came to symbolize their era, a period of growing corporate wealth and power and of American ascendancy. Writing in 1992, architectural historian Alan Gowans asserted that "Modern coincided with and came in great part to express the nation's rise to imperial superpower." Be that as it may, American Modernism surely did inspire imitation in other countries. In the decade or so after the 1950s, the gleaming curtain-wall downtown office block in cities like Chicago and New York inspired tall building project developments across the world in cities ranging from London to Singapore. For these projects, American downtowns projected to the world "the image of the modern city," as the Taschen guide to the International Style has noted so succinctly.

The New Orleans Context

The emergence of the American "modern city" in the New Orleans Central Business District was the centerpiece of a larger post-war building boom. One local commentator recounts that during these years "there was so much construction going on all around us." Indeed, 1952 has been

hailed as the “second largest construction year in the city’s history.” A mid-1950s source refers to “the unprecedented demand in New Orleans for first-class office space.” All this was fueled by a strong and expanding post-war economy. There was the prosperity of the petro-chemical industry, as symbolized by the construction, in 1952, of the Shell (Oil Company) Building on Common Street (NR). Surpassing oil was the meteoric rise of the city’s port. In 1952, *Newsweek* declared, “The Port of New Orleans, in sixteenth place after the first world war, has moved into second place among the nation’s shipping centers (after New York).” The following year another article noted eighty-nine public wharves with seven million feet of covered storage and berthing for two hundred deep-water vessels. By 1956 the value of commerce through the port had risen to over \$1.6 billion. During these years population rose as well -- up by 15% between 1940 and 1950. The much-ballyhooed goal of a million residents by 1960 was never realized.

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