

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places Registration Form****1. Name of Property**

Historic Name: Bernhard Electric Building
Other name/site number: Virginia Callan Welder Performance Annex
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 103-109 E. Goodwin Avenue
City or town: Victoria State: Texas County: Victoria
Not for publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐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
☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets 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 ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:

☐ national ☐ statewide ☒ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D



State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

12/13/23

Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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

Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: COMMERCE/Trade: Specialty Store

Current Functions: VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification: OTHER: One-Part Commercial Block; No Style

Principal Exterior Materials: Concrete, Brick

Narrative Description (see pages 7-10)

Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Criteria Considerations: NA

Areas of Significance: Commerce (local)

Period of Significance: 1930-1974

Significant Dates: 1930 (original construction), ca. 1940 (construction of addition)

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked): NA

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked): NA

Architect/Builder: Wagner, Ed (Building Contractor)

Narrative Statement of Significance (see pages 11-17)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see pages 18-20)

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 #

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other -- Specify Repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Less than one acre (Approximately 0.203 acres)

Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 28.800477°N Longitude: -97.004754°W

Verbal Boundary Description: VICTORIA TIF 71880 EXEMPT PT OF LOT 4 BLOCK 129 (Property ID: 63273), Victoria, Victoria County, Texas. Victoria Central Appraisal District data accessed January 25, 2023 (Map 4).

Boundary Justification: The boundary follows the current legal parcel and contains the area historically associated with the Bernhard Electric property.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Emily Payne, Senior Architectural Historian; Erin Tyson, GIS Specialist
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Date: June 2023

Additional Documentation

Maps (see pages 21-25)

Additional items (see pages 26-36)

Photographs (see pages 5-6, 37-55)

This project was funded in part through a grant from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, as administered by the Texas Historical Commission. The contents and opinions, however, do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior. This program receives Federal funds from the National Park Service. Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in departmental Federally Assisted Programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or handicap. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility operated by a recipient of Federal assistance should write to: Director, Equal Opportunity Program, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127.

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 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Photo Log

Name of Property: Bernhard Electric Building
City or Vicinity: Victoria
County: Victoria County
State: Texas
Photographer: Angela Gomez (Victoria College)
Date: October 13, 2023

All photographs accurately depict property conditions. No changes nor significant deterioration has occurred since the photos were taken in October 2023.

Photo 1 (TX_VictoriaCounty_BernhardElectric_0001)
Oblique view of the Bernhard Electric Building, camera facing southwest.

Photo 2 (TX_VictoriaCounty_BernhardElectric_0002)
East elevation, camera facing west.

Photo 3 (TX_VictoriaCounty_BernhardElectric_0003)
View of new canopy between Bernhard Electric Building and adjacent Welder Center for the Performing Arts.

Photo 4 (TX_VictoriaCounty_BernhardElectric_0004)
View of north elevation, camera facing southwest.

Photo 5 (TX_VictoriaCounty_BernhardElectric_0005)
View of the north elevation under the canopy, camera facing south.

Photo 6 (TX_VictoriaCounty_BernhardElectric_0006)
View of the north elevation, camera facing south.

Photo 7 (TX_VictoriaCounty_BernhardElectric_0007)
Oblique view of the south elevation, camera facing northwest.

Photo 8 (TX_VictoriaCounty_BernhardElectric_0008)
View of the west elevation, camera facing northeast.

Photo 9 (TX_VictoriaCounty_BernhardElectric_0009)
Interior view of the westernmost space within 109 E. Goodwin Avenue (the original 1930 portion of the building), camera facing north.

Photo 10 (TX_VictoriaCounty_BernhardElectric_0010)
Interior view of the middle space within 109 E. Goodwin Avenue, camera facing northwest.

Photo 11 (TX_VictoriaCounty_BernhardElectric_0011)
Interior view of the easternmost space within 109 E. Goodwin Avenue, camera facing north.

Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Photo 12 (TX_VictoriaCounty_BernhardElectric_0012)

Interior view of the easternmost space within 109 E. Goodwin Avenue, camera facing southeast.

Photo 13 (TX_VictoriaCounty_BernhardElectric_0013)

Interior view of the westernmost space within 109 E. Goodwin Avenue, camera facing south.

Photo 14 (TX_VictoriaCounty_BernhardElectric_0014)

Interior view of the non-original storage room within the middle space within 109 E. Goodwin Avenue, camera facing southwest.

Photo 15 (TX_VictoriaCounty_BernhardElectric_0015)

Interior view of middle space within 109 E. Goodwin Avenue, camera facing east.

Photo 16 (TX_VictoriaCounty_BernhardElectric_0016)

Interior view of the office space off of the easternmost space within 109 E. Goodwin Avenue, camera facing southeast.

Photo 17 (TX_VictoriaCounty_BernhardElectric_0017)

Interior view of the office vestibule within 105-107 E. Goodwin Avenue (the ca. 1940 addition), camera facing north.

Photo 18 (TX_VictoriaCounty_BernhardElectric_0018)

Interior view of the open garage space within 105-107 E. Goodwin Avenue, camera facing north.

Photo 19 (TX_VictoriaCounty_BernhardElectric_0019)

Interior view of the open garage space within 105-107 E. Goodwin Avenue, camera facing northwest.

Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Narrative Description

This project was funded through an Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund grant from the National Park Service that addresses damage inflicted by Hurricane Harvey. In January 2021, NPS staff concurred that the property is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Bernhard Electric Building was built in 1930 at 103-109 E. Goodwin Avenue in downtown Victoria, Texas, with a side addition built around 1940.¹ The Bernhard Electric Company specialized in sales and repair of mechanized equipment for automobiles and boats, and the selection of a corner lot and the design of the building responded to the business's functional needs. The one-story building's flat roof and rectangular footprint create a box-like form. At the corner of E. Goodwin Avenue and N. Liberty Street, a series of brick piers create an open-air canopy recessed under the corner portion of the main roof form, facilitating vehicular access. The building has a hollow-clay-tile structure with a stucco veneer and minimal architectural detailing, consistent with its utilitarian function. The overall exterior appearance of the building remains generally intact today. Although new overhead doors have been added to enclose two of the once-open bays fronting E. Goodwin Street, this alteration is reversible and resulted in minimal damage to the adjacent historic fabric. The building's form remains consistent with the period of significance (1930-1974), and most of the historic-age exterior wall materials, windows, and doors remain intact, as does the metal canopy along the N. Liberty Street façade. The brick piers supporting the recessed canopy have lost their original Art Deco detailing, but the piers themselves remain intact. Repair work to address water damage that resulted from Hurricane Harvey in 2017 began in July 2022 with approval from the Texas Historical Commission and is being carried out in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Overall, the building retains sufficient historic integrity.

Setting (Maps 1-5)

Victoria County is located in southeast Texas on the coastal prairies. Matagorda Bay adjoins the county's eastern corner. The Guadalupe River flows through the center of Victoria County, joining the San Antonio River and emptying into the San Antonio Bay just southeast of the county line. The city of Victoria serves as the county seat, located in the center of Victoria County, along the eastern banks of the Guadalupe River.² An orthogonal street grid organizes Victoria's downtown, centered around the courthouse and courthouse square. The lot encompassing the Bernhard Electric Building sits on the block immediately northeast of the courthouse square, within the downtown's core (Maps 2-3). At the time of the building's original construction in 1930, the lot was located at the edge of downtown, bordered by commercial development to the south and west, residential development to the east, and a church to the north (Figure 1).³ Today, adjacent land uses are commercial and governmental, including a theater to the west, shops and offices to the south and east, and a public library to the north. Immediately adjacent buildings are one or two stories in height and built out close to the lot line, except for the library, which is set back to allow a strip of grass and a line of oak trees near the sidewalk. A block further west, Main Street includes taller downtown development, including the 12-story Wells Fargo tower at the intersection of Goodwin Avenue and Main Street. A block further east, the area transitions to single-family residential development, landscaped with front lawns, trees, and decorative plantings.

¹ "Bernhard will Move Into New Quarters Beginning Friday," *Victoria Advocate*, Jun. 20, 1930, p. 1; The address is listed as 107 E. Goodwin in the Victoria Central Appraisal District, accessed June 14, 2023, https://propaccess.trueautomation.com/clientdb/Property.aspx?cid=13&prop_id=63273.

² Craig H. Roell, "Victoria County," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed October 11, 2022, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/victoria-county>.

³ *Victoria, Tex.* [map], (Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1928), sheet 3, from the University of Texas at Austin (UT), https://maps.lib.utexas.edu/maps/sanborn/txu-sanborn-victoria_1928-03.jpg.

Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Construction Chronology

The parcel of land encompassing the building originally was developed as a small one-story frame building with a two-story adjacent tower, as shown on Sanborn maps from 1885.⁴ Sanborn maps from 1896, however, show the earlier building demolished and commercial development encroaching into the formerly residential area.⁵ Sanborn maps from 1907 through 1917 illustrate a wood-frame Blacksmith shop with a dirt floor; an auxiliary wood warehouse to the rear also appears by 1912.⁶ By 1928 Sanborn maps show the lot vacant again.⁷ An aerial photo from 1930 illustrates the original portion of the Bernhard Electric Building occupying the corner lot at 109 E. Goodwin Avenue (Figure 1). The 1930 aerial shows the one-story building with a square footprint and flat roof; the open-air bays along the northern façade are intact, but the western half of the building has not yet been constructed. A side addition was constructed around 1940.⁸ By 1949, Sanborn maps depict this approximate 1940 expansion of the building westward to also include the lots at 105 and 107 E. Goodwin Avenue (Figure 2). The new addition also had a square footprint and flat roof. Sanborn notations indicate that both the original building and the addition were constructed using hollow clay tile. The large bays on the addition indicate that it was designed to accommodate sales and service for large vehicles like automobiles or boats.

Architectural Character

Exterior

The design of the Bernhard Electric Building is simple and utilitarian – one story in height with a flat roof and a rectangular footprint. The original portion of the building is oriented both north (E. Goodwin Avenue) and the east (N. Liberty Street). As noted above, the building was constructed in two phases: the original portion to the east was constructed in 1930, and a side addition to the west was constructed around 1940.

The original north elevation was three bays wide, with brick piers supporting the flat roof and forming an inset canopy for cars to drive through (Photo 6). The exterior walls of the original portion of the north and east elevations are veneered with stucco. Historically, the name “Bernhard Electric Co.” was stenciled onto the stucco along the canopy’s north-facing roofline, and cast concrete Art Deco ornamentation topped the corner piers (replaced with “Virginia Callan Welder Performance Annex”; compare Figure 3 with Photo 6). The wide roof span of the canopy was supported by a series of simple flat trusses constructed with standard two-inch-by-four-inch lumber (Photo 5). Under the canopy, each bay of the three bays on the north elevation features a separate entry flanked by windows. The easternmost bay features a single-door entrance, while the other two bays both feature double-door entrances. All doors are wood with a three-by-four grid of lites, topped by wood transoms (Figure 3, Photos 5-6). All windows are fixed in wood frames with concrete sills. The east elevation of the original building includes the inset canopy on the northern side (Photo 2). The southern portion of the eastern elevation has a central single-door entrance. The east-facing door is wood with a wood transom. The windows on the east elevation are fixed in wood frames, with a fenestration pattern using a single window in the southernmost bay but paired windows in all other bays. An original flat metal canopy shelters the east-facing windows and doors, suspended using metal tie rods anchored to the east elevation. The south (rear) elevation features a painted stucco veneer wall surface. Prior to the recent rehabilitation, the concrete frame structure and hollow clay tile walls were distinguishable on the eastern/original portion of the south elevation but are now concealed (Photo 7). Fenestration on the original portion of the south elevation is limited to small horizontal windows set about six feet above the floor to limit visibility.

⁴ *Victoria, Tex.*, (Sanborn, 1885), sheet 2, from UT, <https://maps.lib.utexas.edu/maps/sanborn/txu-sanborn-victoria-1885-2.jpg>. Note that “E. Goodwin Ave.” was labelled as “E. Common” on Sanborn maps until 1928.

⁵ *Victoria, Tex.*, (Sanborn, 1896), sheet 3, from UT, <https://maps.lib.utexas.edu/maps/sanborn/txu-sanborn-victoria-1896-3.jpg>.

⁶ *Victoria, Tex.*, (Sanborn, 1885-1917), various sheets, from UT, <https://maps.lib.utexas.edu/maps/sanborn/v.html>.

⁷ *Victoria, Tex.*, (Sanborn, 1928), sheet 3, from UT, https://maps.lib.utexas.edu/maps/sanborn/txu-sanborn-victoria_1928-03.jpg.

⁸ Inferred based on analysis of Sanborn maps (shown by 1949) and tenant occupancy records (with a new tenant present by 1943).

Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

The 1940 addition is oriented toward the north (E. Goodwin Street) only. The addition is three bays wide, supported by concrete piers. All exterior wall surfaces on the addition are veneered with stucco. Historic photographs from 1942 show that the two eastern bays were open-air and accessible to vehicles via E. Goodwin Street (today enclosed with new compatible metal overhead rolling doors; compare Figure 3 with Photo 6). The westernmost bay of the addition is not visible in historic photos, but presumably, it was enclosed with a storefront, similar to the configuration seen today (Photos 1, 4, 6). The historic-age concrete sidewalk adjacent to this bay does not feature a curb cut, which suggests that the space was never intended for vehicular access. The storefront in the westernmost bay is symmetrically composed with a central single-door entrance, filled by a new compatible replacement door, topped by a metal-framed transom. Trios of fixed windows in metal frames flank the door on either side. The west elevation has a large storefront window near the front/north side, along with a series of two small windows and two single-width doors toward the rear (Photos 3, 8). A small metal canopy was added to provide access to the Welder Center for the Performing Arts. The south (rear) elevation of the addition is veneered with stucco. Composed of seven bays, the third bay from the west includes a garage door opening with a new compatible metal overhead rolling garage door (Photo 7). The other rear-facing bays of the addition have a combination of narrow window openings and single-width door openings.

Interior

The interior of the Bernhard Electric Building includes distinct spaces associated with the 1930 original building (to the east) and the 1940 addition (to the west) (Figure 5). The original 1930 portion is subdivided into three parallel commercial spaces, all opening onto the canopy-covered façade fronting E. Goodwin Street (Photos 9, 10, and 11). The easternmost space also includes a side entrance from N. Liberty Street (Photo 12). All three of these spaces likely were open and unsubdivided, but only the westernmost space remains unsubdivided today (Photos 9, 13). The middle space contains an open store space remaining at the front, a storage room at the middle, an additional room, and open space that once held the restrooms and a kitchenette at the rear (Photos 14-15).⁹ The easternmost space includes a half-wall subdividing an office space at its western end (Photo 16). Few character-defining finishes or fixtures remain within the original 1930 spaces today. Original wood door and window surrounds remain, and original 1930 walls retain their plaster finishes. However, original flooring is missing, and ceilings appear to have been dropped to accommodate vents and electrical conduits for ceiling lighting.

The adjoining 1940 addition was designed as an open L-shaped garage space, which surrounded an office or vestibule occupying the building's northwest corner. The office/vestibule features a single entrance and storefront windows facing E. Goodwin Avenue (Photo 17). The L-shaped garage space includes new overhead garage doors opening both to the north elevation and to the south (rear) (Photos 18-19). Non-original interior subdivisions appear to have been removed in the recent rehabilitation.¹⁰ The garage interior is largely unfinished, revealing the original concrete columns, wood-trussed roof structure, and hollow clay tile exterior walls (Photos 18-19). The interior finishes in the front office/vestibule include original linoleum tile, plaster walls, and plaster ceilings (partially missing due to water damage).

The water damage to the building largely resulted from Hurricane Harvey in 2017. The hurricane destroyed the roof, caused runoff from the parking lot that seeped into the building, and led to ground swelling that cracked the plaster and damaged plumbing. The resulting water infiltration damaged interior finishes as well as mechanical and plumbing systems – including a break in the main plumbing line that runs under the building. Repair work funded by the Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund grant from the National Park Service began on July 27, 2022 and is ongoing.

⁹ Non-original restrooms and kitchenette were removed in the recent rehabilitation.

¹⁰ These non-original subdivisions included former costume room, catering kitchen, and restrooms.

Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Work that has been completed thus far included the roof replacement, repainting and repairing original windows and doors, replacing deteriorated windows and doors in-kind, replacing clay parapet caps, replacing the non-historic overhead doors with new compatible doors, repairing the damaged canopy on the east elevation, and improving drainage and waterproofing the south (rear) elevation with stucco veneer added to rear of the 1930 portion. A small metal canopy was added along the west elevation to provide coverage for access to the adjacent Welder Center for the Performing Arts. Non-original window coverings were removed from several of the windows. A few non-original subdivisions have been removed on the interior. Repair work on plaster walls, floor and ceiling materials, and plumbing remains ongoing as of December 2023.¹¹

Integrity

Overall, the exterior appearance of the building remains generally intact today. The building retains its integrity of location and setting, and its form and massing have changed little since the period of significance. Although the Art Deco ornamentation is missing from the exterior columns, the one-story box-like form reflects the building's original utilitarian design. Although there has been some loss over time, and most recently with Hurricane Harvey, integrity of materials and workmanship is visible in the intact hollow-clay-tile structure, stucco veneer and brick exterior, most windows and doors that remain in place, and the canopy along the N. Liberty Street elevation. While new overhead doors have been added to enclose two of the once-open bays fronting onto E. Goodwin Street, it is possible that overhead rolling doors were present during the period of significance given the building's use, and this alteration is reversible and resulted in minimal damage to the adjacent historic fabric. The inset canopy and garage interior remain accessible to vehicles, helping to maintain the integrity of association with the building's auto-oriented historic context. Although some non-original partitions remain, the original three-unit configuration remains intact in the original 1930 portion of the building, and open garage space and office vestibule remain intact in the 1940 addition constituting a largely intact floor plan. Some original plaster wall finishes also remain. Together, these aspects contribute to the feeling of an early-to-mid 20th century Electric Company that specialized in sales and repair of mechanized equipment for automobiles and boats.

¹¹ Other sources of funding for some of the work included insurance, FEMA, and the owner.

Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Statement of Significance

The Bernhard Electric Building is located at 103-109 E. Goodwin Avenue in downtown Victoria, Texas. The property was built in 1930 by building contractor Ed Wagner and it operated until 1986, specializing in the sales and repair of engines and batteries for boats and automobiles. During the 1940s, the building was expanded to provide a separate leased space occupied by compatible auto-related tenants – Granberry Motor Sales (1943-1951), Patek Motor Company (from around 1951 to approximately 1960), and the Yellow & Checkered Cab Company (from around 1965 to 1986). The building is a rare surviving example of early-to-mid-20th century auto-oriented commercial development and the combined auto-and-marine business model appears to have been unique in Victoria during the period of significance. The construction of the building and success of the business is also associated with the rise of motorized outdoor recreation and tourism that gained popularity in the area in the same period. The property is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Commerce at the local level of significance. The period of significance dates from its initial construction in 1930 through 1974, the NPS 50 year cutoff.

Brief Historic Context

Local Development Patterns

The town of Victoria was established in 1824 but remained small until about 1910 (Figure 6). The early economy depended on ranching and meatpacking, as well as small-scale commerce.¹² As the seat of Victoria County, the first courthouse was constructed in 1849, located on an open public square known as De Leon Plaza.¹³ A second public square, known as Market Square, was located a few blocks further south, and the town's commercial core formed around these two squares. Prior to the arrival of the railroad, people and goods arrived in Victoria primarily by water via Port Lavaca and Indianola. Commercial development also extended along E. Commercial Street and E. Common Street (later E. Goodwin Avenue), which led to these nearby port towns.¹⁴ The San Antonio and Mexican Gulf Railroad arrived in Victoria in 1861, but the Civil War led to destruction of the line, and the rebuilt successor—the Gulf, Western Texas and Pacific Railway—did not resume operation until 1871. A map from 1874 shows the rebuilt rail line crossing diagonally through the town's grid (Figure 7). The railroad brought additional commercial activity and new urban development, including “a new courthouse built in 1892, a jail built in 1884, a small city hall, and a fire station.”¹⁵ Between 1906 and 1910, riverboats briefly provided transportation from the Gulf of Mexico to Victoria via the Guadalupe River, but auto transportation ultimately provided the biggest boost to the town's economy.¹⁶

After 1910, the town of Victoria experienced rapid population growth (Figure 6). The urban fabric of the town grew concurrently, and by 1917 Sanborn maps start to show auto-oriented buildings, like garages, auto shops, and auto dealerships lining Main Street, Bridge Street, and the cross-streets between.¹⁷ City streets were paved from 1917 through 1918, further facilitating automobile travel.¹⁸ Early highway maps of Texas show State Highway 12/12 B

¹² Robert W. Shook, “Victoria, TX (Victoria County),” *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed October 11, 2022, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/victoria-tx-victoria-county>.

¹³ HHM, “The Historic Resources of Victoria,” National Register Multiple Property Submission Cover Document. Texas Historical Commission, 1986.

¹⁴ HHM, “The Historic Resources of Victoria,” National Register Multiple Property Submission Cover Document. Texas Historical Commission, 1986.

¹⁵ Robert W. Shook, “Victoria, TX (Victoria County),” *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed October 11, 2022, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/victoria-tx-victoria-county>.

¹⁶ Booth Mooney, *History of Victoria: Including 75 Years in Victoria* (Victoria, Texas: Victoria Public Schools, 1959), 22-27

¹⁷ *Victoria, Tex.* [Map] (Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1917), sheets 2-3, from UT Austin, <https://maps.lib.utexas.edu/maps/sanborn/v.html>.

¹⁸ Mooney, *History of Victoria*, 33; Shook, “Victoria, TX.”

Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

running through Victoria from the northeast to the southwest (roughly along the alignment of present-day U.S. Highways 59 and 77), as well as State Highway 29 traveling from the northwest to the southeast (roughly aligned with present-day U.S. 87).¹⁹ In the 1910s and 1920s, improved auto transportation and irrigation encouraged growth and diversification of the agricultural economy in the surrounding county. By 1930, “Victoria County held more cattle than any other county in Texas.”²⁰ Cotton, rice, fruit crops, and poultry supplemented cattle ranching. Industries also emerged in Victoria, including the “cotton oil industry, railroad shops, creameries, poultry dressing plants, planning mills, large power plant, sand and gravel industry.”²¹ Amid this economic growth, Victoria County passed its first bond for paving county highways in 1927, implemented by 1932.²²

The rising popularity of the automobile led to increased oil exploration, with the first productive oil wells in Victoria County discovered in 1930.²³ Oil production in Victoria County grew exponentially in the 1930s, from under 60,000 barrels in 1932 to 4.8 million barrels in 1938.²⁴ Wealth in the county rapidly increased and “spurred a boomtown atmosphere as development in every sector was seen, including home building, retail store development, and road improvements.”²⁵ Industry grew, with Victoria’s 14 industrial plants employing 105 workers by 1939.²⁶ Newfound disposable income allowed Victoria’s residents to purchase luxury goods of all kinds – especially automobiles and other mechanized tools and vehicles. Between 1930 and 1940, automobile registrations in Victoria County increased from 4,987 to 7,271 (48 percent).²⁷

The military build-up prior to World War II brought continued development to Victoria. The federal government invested in highways associated with the defense system. The state highways running through Victoria benefited from this investment. By 1940 highway maps showed two “Federal Aid” highways traveling through downtown Victoria: U.S. Highway 87 running from northwest to southeast (partially along Goodwin Avenue), as well as U.S. Highway 59 running from southwest to northeast.²⁸ In 1941, Foster Army Air Field opened six miles northeast of Victoria along U.S. Highway 59.²⁹ Throughout World War II, the U.S. Army used the field for aerial gunnery instruction. The arrival of airmen from across the nation energized Victoria’s social scene, as documented by *LIFE Magazine* in 1942 (Figures 3-4).³⁰

After World War II, the military continued to play an important role in Victoria, with Foster Field used for single-engine jet training during the Korean War (renamed Foster Air Force Base in 1954).³¹ The military presence,

¹⁹ *Highway Map of Texas* (Texas State Highway Department, 1919), from TSLAC, <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/apps/arc/maps/maplookup/06183>.

²⁰ Roell, “Victoria County.”

²¹ *Texas Almanac, 1939* (Dallas: Dallas Morning News, 1939), 364, from the Portal to Texas History crediting the Texas State Historical Association, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph117160/m1/364>.

²² Mooney, *History of Victoria*, 33.

²³ Roell, “Victoria County.”

²⁴ Mooney, *History of Victoria*, 35.

²⁵ Terry Hammonds, *Historic Victoria: An Illustrated History* (San Antonio: Historical Publishing Network, 1999), 55.

²⁶ *Texas Almanac, 1949-1950* (Dallas: Dallas Morning News, 1949), 306, from the Portal to Texas History crediting the Texas State Historical Association, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph117167/m1/308/>.

²⁷ *Texas Almanac, 1931* (Dallas: Dallas Morning News, 1931), 199, from the Portal to Texas History crediting the Texas State Historical Association, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph117160>; *Texas Almanac, 1941-1942* (Dallas: Dallas Morning News, 1942), 272, from the Portal to Texas History crediting the Texas State Historical Association, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph117164>.

²⁸ General Highway Map, Victoria County, Texas [Map] (Texas Highway Department, 1936-1940), from TSLAC, <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/apps/arc/maps/maplookup/05015>. Note that the map marks both of these highways with “FA” for “Federal Aid.”

²⁹ Craig H. Roell, “Foster Army Air Field,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed October 20, 2022, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/foster-army-air-field>.

³⁰ Apart from those included in the nomination, no other historic photographs of Bernard Electric Company or other tenants that occupied the building during the period of significance were found.

³¹ Craig H. Roell, “Foster Army Air Field,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed October 20, 2022, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/foster-army-air-field>. The field’s closure was announced in 1957 and finalized in 1968, and the property became an airport in 1976.

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improved federal highway system, and availability of energy combined to spur continued commercial and industrial growth. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from 1949 show auto-oriented businesses lining E. Goodwin Avenue between Moody Street and N. De Leon Street (Figure 2).³² By 1950, Victoria boasted 17 industrial plants and 229 employees.³³ Major industrial employers included the 1950 Alcoa Aluminum smelter located 35 miles southeast of town, the 1951 Dupont nylon intermediates plant, and the 1951 Union Carbide plant in Seadrift.³⁴ The region's industrial growth necessitated increased development of nearby ports and waterways, and by 1970 the Victoria Chamber of Commerce advertised the city's proximity to the Matagorda Ship Channel and connection to the Gulf Intercoastal Waterway via the Victoria Barge Canal.³⁵

Waterway development also encouraged recreational fishing and boating coinciding with the rise of tourism. Recreational tourism became an increasingly significant part of Victoria's economy – as did businesses catering to recreational tourists, like the Bernhard Electric Company. Across the nation in the mid-twentieth century, the availability of automobiles led to a boom in the popularity of outdoor recreation, and state and national park facilities expanded to meet growing demand. In Texas, new state parks were strategically located along new highways to bolster outdoor tourism. This trend became especially popular in the 1930s, and the Works Progress Administration and Civilian Conservation Corps contributed to construction and improvement of a vast network of highways and adjoining state and national parks.³⁶ Several of the earliest state parks were located near Victoria. Goose Island State Park was acquired beginning in 1931, offering public boat access to Aransas Bay just 57 miles south of Victoria.³⁷ Goliad State Park, located 27 miles southwest of Victoria, was established in 1933 and improved by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Located on the San Antonio River, the park boasted historic sites, as well as camping, fishing, and boating.³⁸ After World War II, new technologies like fiberglass and more efficient engines made commercial motorboats more affordable, and the post-war economic boom placed motor boats within reach for more families and small-scale commercial fishermen. The State of Texas continued to expand and improve water-based recreational sites in the area in the late twentieth century, constructing the Copano Bay State Fishing Pier in 1967, then acquiring all Mustang Island slightly further south in 1972.³⁹

Evolution of Owners and Occupants

The parcel of land encompassing the Bernhard Electric Company first experienced permanent development around 1903, with the construction of a blacksmith and wheelwright's shop.⁴⁰ Sanborn maps document the demolition of the blacksmith's shop around 1928. In 1929, J.R. Gervais purchased the empty parcel of land. Gervais worked as an insurance agent and never developed the land.⁴¹ By 1930, Paul Bernhard purchased the property and constructed the original portion of the Bernhard Electrical Company building. Paul Bernhard was born in New Braunfels in 1884 to

³² *Victoria, Tex.* [Map] (Sanborn, 1928-1949), various sheets, from ProQuest via Austin Public Libraries.

³³ *Texas Almanac, 1949-1950* (Dallas: Dallas Morning News, 1949), 306, from the Portal to Texas History crediting the Texas State Historical Association, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht117167/m1/308/>.

³⁴ Terry Hammonds, *Historic Victoria: An Illustrated History* (San Antonio: Historical Publishing Network, 1999), 55, 71-81.

³⁵ *Texas Almanac, 1970-1971* (Dallas: Dallas Morning News, 1970), 344-345, from the Portal to Texas History crediting the Texas State Historical Association, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht113810/m1/349>.

³⁶ HHM, "The Development of Highways in Texas: A Historic Context of the Bankhead Highway and Other Named Historic Highways," prepared for TxDOT and the Texas Historical Commission, 2014, from the Texas Historical Commission, <https://www.thc.texas.gov/public/upload/preserve/survey/highway/Section%20I.%20Statewide%20Historic%20Context.pdf>.

³⁷ Christopher Long, "Goose Island State Park," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 19, 2023, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/goose-island-state-park>.

³⁸ David D. Turner, "Goliad State Historical Park," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 19, 2023, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/goliad-state-historical-park>.

³⁹ John G. Johnson, "Copano Bay State Fishing Pier," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 19, 2023, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/copano-bay-state-fishing-pier>; Christopher Long, "Mustang Island State Park," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 19, 2023, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/mustang-island-state-park>.

⁴⁰ NRHP, Determination of Eligibility, Bernhard Electric Company, June 12, 2020.

⁴¹ 1920 Census, Victoria County, District 0151, from Ancestry, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/108158869:6061>.

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German immigrant parents.⁴² His father worked as a blacksmith, and Paul worked as a farm laborer by age 16.⁴³ In 1908, Paul married his first wife, Mary Leana “Maime” McKay, in Guadalupe County.⁴⁴ Maime died in childbirth in 1909, leaving Paul a widower with a young son by age 25.⁴⁵ The 1910 census enumerates Paul Bernhard living alone in Guadalupe County and working as a blacksmith in his own shop, while his young son lived with his maternal grandfather in Clear Spring, Guadalupe County.⁴⁶ Paul moved to Refugio County slightly thereafter, where he married Bertha Schultze Bernhard in 1914.⁴⁷ Together, the couple moved to Shiner, Texas, in Lavaca County. Paul’s 1918 World War I draft registration card documents him living in Shiner and working as a mechanic at the Shiner Oil Mill.⁴⁸ The 1920 census lists Paul Bernhard still living in Shiner, with wife Bertha and their new son Wallace, working as a machinist at a garage.⁴⁹ The family moved to Victoria in the 1920s. In Victoria, Paul entered into a partnership with local electrician Charles Abshier. Advertisements for the “Abshier & Bernhard Electric Co.” appeared in the Victoria paper beginning in 1924.⁵⁰ One advertisement from 1926 described Abshier & Bernhard as “Located in the Hahn building on South Liberty Street. The company has everything electrical for the auto and home and does all kinds of electrical wiring and repairing.”⁵¹ Bernhard purchased Abshier’s interest in the electric company in 1926, operating the “Bernhard Electric Company” out of the Hahn building.⁵² The 1930 census recorded the Bernhard household at 107 W. San Antonio Street including Paul, Bertha, and son Wallace, with Paul’s employment listed as an electrician.⁵³ That same year, in 1930, Paul Bernhard relocated his business to a new building at 109 E. Goodwin Avenue – the original portion of the present-day Bernhard Electric Company building.⁵⁴ From the outset, advertisements noted that the Bernhard Electric Company catered to boats and sportsmen as well as automobiles, advertising “A complete line of fishing, tackle, boats and motors,” as well as “Everything for the hunger...including Peters, Remington and Winchester shells.”⁵⁵ Paul Bernhard himself gained local renown as a boating enthusiast and boat race champion, giving credence to his expertise in boat mechanics (Figures 8-9, 11).

The combined auto-and-marine business model appears to have been unique in Victoria during the period of significance. A search of the *Victoria Advocate* newspaper during the period of significance reveals other auto parts and service businesses, as well as other marine parts and service businesses – but no other business serving both markets. For example, Bernie’s Boats-Motors at 2102 N. Navarro Street (extant) claimed in their advertisements to be “Victoria’s Oldest And Largest Marine Dealer – Since 1950.”⁵⁶ However, Bernie’s did not offer auto parts and service, and the business moved out of downtown by 1978.⁵⁷ From around 1960 to 1965, newspaper advertisements

⁴² “Paul Bernhard,” Certificate of Death, from Ancestry <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/22342193:2272>.

⁴³ 1900 Census, Guadalupe County, Justice Precinct 04, from Ancestry, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/61620720:7602>.

⁴⁴ “Paul Bernhard,” Texas Marriage Records, from Ancestry, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/40390420:9168>.

⁴⁵ “Mary Leana Bernhard,” Find a Grave Index, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/96117432:60525>.

⁴⁶ 1910 Census, Guadalupe County, Texas, Justice Precinct 4, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/28103532:7884>; “Lee Mac Bernhard,” World War II Draft Card, from Ancestry, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/19456755:2238>; 1910 and 1920 Census, Guadalupe County, Texas, Justice Precinct 3, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/85613970:6061>, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/28105320:7884>.

⁴⁷ “Paul P. Bernhard,” Texas County Marriage Index, from Ancestry, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/2515517:60183>.

⁴⁸ “Paul Bernhard,” World War I Draft Registration Card, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/16932392:6482>.

⁴⁹ 1920 Census, Lavaca County, Shiner, District 0119, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/36775477:6061>.

⁵⁰ [Ad], *Victoria Advocate*, Dec. 24, 1924, p. 4.

⁵¹ “Victoria 50 and 25 Years Ago,” *Victoria Advocate*, Oct. 2, 1951, p. 4.

⁵² “Victoria 50 and 25 Years Ago,” *Victoria Advocate*, Oct. 2, 1951, p. 4. Note that some advertisements continue to use the name “Abshier Electric Co.” through 1929.

⁵³ 1930 Census, Victoria County, Victoria, District 0002, from Ancestry, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/60523294:6224>.

⁵⁴ Various articles, *Victoria Advocate*.

⁵⁵ [Ad], *Victoria Advocate*, May 29, 1932, pg. 4, from Newspapers.com; [Ad], *Victoria Advocate*, Oct. 2, 1932, p. 6, from Newspapers.com.

⁵⁶ “Bernie’s Boats-Motors 11th Annual Boat Show [ad],” *Victoria Advocate*, Mar. 6, 1969, p. 20, from Newspapers.com. Note that Bernie’s Boats was managed by Terry Sattler, and research to date found no relationship to Paul Bernhard.

⁵⁷ “Congratulations to Bernie’s Boats & Motors on the Grand Opening of your new location: 5001 Hallettsville Hwy. [ad],” *Victoria Advocate*, Jan. 20, 1978, p. 28, from Newspapers.com.

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also show Victoria Marine Supply at 508 E. Rio Grande Street (extant) competing with Bernhard Electric to provide parts and service for boats – but they did not provide auto parts and services either.⁵⁸

Around 1940, Paul Bernhard expanded his building, constructing the portion addressed as 105-07 E. Goodwin Avenue (Figure 2). By 1943, Bernhard began leasing out this portion of the building, while continuing to operate the Bernhard Electric Company in the original portion of the building (109 E. Goodwin Avenue). City directories from 1943 list Granberry Motor Sales occupying 107 E. Goodwin Avenue.⁵⁹ Advertisements in the *Victoria Advocate* indicate that Granberry Motor sold a variety of new and used vehicles during the years that it occupied 107 E. Goodwin Avenue (1943-1951), ranging from Packard, Ford, and Buick sedans to Harley Davidson motorcycles.⁶⁰ Granberry Motors also frequently sought skilled auto mechanics in the *Victoria Advocate*, suggesting that auto repairs and maintenance constituted a significant portion of their business.

Around 1951, the Patek Motor Company became the new tenant in the space, remaining until around 1960. Raymond Patek was born in Gonzales, Texas, in 1902. He and his wife Betty Cleo Patek moved to Victoria in 1935.⁶¹ With the military build-up in the early 1940s, Ray Patek became “one of the first civilians to be hired at Foster [Field],” and then went on to work as a service manager for the Goad Motor Company.⁶² The 1950 census lists Patek living on Guadalupe Street in Victoria and working as a Service Manager at a Motor Company.⁶³ His own firm, the Patek Motor Company, began to advertise general auto repair from their location at 107 E. Goodwin Avenue beginning in 1951.⁶⁴ The Patek Motor Company routinely advertised “General Auto Repair” during the years that the business occupied 107 E. Goodwin Avenue (1951-1960), also occasionally advertising sales of used vehicles.⁶⁵

Paul Bernhard and Ray Patek worked alongside one another in the Bernhard Electric Building until about 1958, when Bernhard died at age 74 of heart disease.⁶⁶ Paul Bernhard’s son Wallace continued to operate his business from 109 E. Goodwin Avenue until 1986.⁶⁷ Around 1960, though, documentation about the Patek Motor Company dwindles, and the 105-107 E. Goodwin Avenue space was documented as vacant by 1962.⁶⁸ It appears that Patek continued to work as a mechanic in the Victoria area and remained an active member of the National Guard into the 1970s (Figure 10).⁶⁹ Meanwhile, during the mid-1960s, the Victoria Yellow & Checker Cab Company began leasing the northern portion of the building (105-107 E. Goodwin Avenue). The Yellow & Checker Cab Company continued to operate out of the property until 1986.

With the departure of both the Bernhard Electric Company and the Yellow & Checker Cab Company in 1986, the building fell into vacancy. A series of businesses leased the building for brief periods between 1986 and 2003, but none remained active for long. In 2004, the Victoria Performing Arts Center opened the Leo J. Welder Center for

⁵⁸ [Various ads], *Victoria Advocate*, 1960-1965, from Newspapers.com.

⁵⁹ NRHP, Determination of Eligibility, Bernhard Electric Company, June 12, 2020. Note that newspapers alternately mention Granberry Motor Sales at 106 E. Goodwin Avenue, but Sanborn maps show that location as a dwelling. “English Auto Here Tuesday,” *Victoria Advocate*, Oct. 11, 1949, p. 2, from Newspapers.com.

⁶⁰ [Various ads], *Victoria Advocate*, 1943-1951, from Newspapers.com.

⁶¹ “Raymond Edward Patek,” World War II Draft Cards, from Ancestry, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/20403068:2238>.

⁶² “Raymond Patek” [Obituary], *Victoria Advocate*, Sep. 3, 1989, p. 12, from Newspapers.com.

⁶³ 1950 Census, Victoria, Victoria County, from Ancestry, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/193271370:62308>.

⁶⁴ Various ads, *Victoria Advocate*.

⁶⁵ [Various ads], *Victoria Advocate*, 1951-1960, from Newspapers.com.

⁶⁶ “Paul Bernhard,” Certificate of Death, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/22342193:2272>.

⁶⁷ “Paul Bernhard,” Certificate of Death, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/22342193:2272>.

⁶⁸ NRHP, Determination of Eligibility, Bernhard Electric Company, June 12, 2020.

⁶⁹ Henry Wolff, Jr., “Project Target,” *Victoria Advocate*, Jul. 11, 1971, p. 3, from Newspapers.com. Raymond Patek died in 1989 in Victoria at age 89.

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the Performing Arts on the property at 214 N. Main Street (formerly an abandoned department store).⁷⁰ The Victoria Performing Arts Center then acquired the Bernhard Electric property at 103-109 E. Goodwin Avenue for use as an annex – storing props and costumes and serving as a workshop. Victoria College acquired both 214 N. Main Street and 103-109 E. Goodwin Avenue in 2012, continuing to use the properties as a performing arts center and annex. In 2017, Hurricane Harvey destroyed the roof and caused extensive water damage (as described in Section 7), leading again to vacancy. Rehabilitation work began in 2022, funded in part by a grant from the National Park Service.⁷¹

Criterion A: Commerce

Bernhard Electric Company

The Bernhard Electric Company provides a rare and significant illustration of Victoria's auto-oriented development in the early-to-mid-twentieth century. The building's original construction in 1930 dovetails with the discovery of oil in Victoria County and the resulting increase in auto sales and maintenance. In the 1920s and 1930s, the increased availability of gasoline and automobiles led to auto-oriented redevelopment of downtowns nationwide, especially along state and federal highway routes. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps show that, historically, downtown Victoria included several other filling stations, auto dealerships, and auto parts stores along E. Goodwin Avenue, N. Bridge Street, and W. Forrest Street (Figure 2). Today, few historic buildings associated with Victoria's auto-oriented commercial development from that period remain. Among the many auto-oriented buildings that lined Goodwin Avenue on the 1949 Sanborn map, only two remain – the Bernhard Electric Building and an altered gas station at 301 Goodwin Avenue. The 1986 National Register Multiple Property Submission for Victoria listed a 1920 Magnolia Filling Station at 108 S. William Street, but that building is no longer extant. The 1926 Atzenhoffer Chevrolet dealership in the 100 block of West Constitution Street was demolished also, replaced by a bank tower in the 1980s.⁷² Historic newspapers advertise new and used cars from Great Western Auto Sales located at 104-106 W. Goodwin Avenue from around 1951 through 1955, but it's now a parking garage.⁷³ Only two known historic auto-related commercial buildings survive in downtown Victoria – the 1925 Texas Company Filling Station at 102 S. William Street, and building at 108 N. Liberty Street occupied by Western Auto from 1958 through around 1984.⁷⁴ However, the Texas Company Filling Station example documents a different era in Victoria's history, prior to the discovery of oil and the industrial boom. The building at 108 N. Liberty Street predates the Western Auto occupancy, as indicated by its presence on the 1949 Sanborn and its circa-1930 Streamlined Moderne style.⁷⁵ In addition, the building at 108 N. Liberty Street displays numerous incompatible alterations, including stone veneer covering parts of the historic stucco exterior and concrete enclosure of window openings on the side façade. The Bernhard Electric Company building represents the most intact example of purpose-designed auto sales and service building in downtown Victoria. An advertisement announcing the opening of the building on June 20, 1930, explicitly connected the building to the spirit of modernism and local boosterism alive in Victoria at the time, stating:

⁷⁰ "About Us," Leo J. Welder Center for the Performing Arts, accessed Nov. 29, 2022, <https://www.weldercenter.org/about-us>.

⁷¹ NRHP, Determination of Eligibility, Bernhard Electric Company, June 12, 2020.

⁷² Hammonds, *Historic Victoria*, 60.

⁷³ *Victoria Advocate*, various dates, from Newspapers.com. Additional addresses with auto-oriented businesses on the 1949 Sanborn include 202-204 N. Bridge Street, 116-120 W. Forrest Street, and 108 N. Liberty Street. However, historic newspapers only document non-auto businesses at these addresses. Additional information regarding these addresses may be obtained through future research using hard copies of the Polk's City Directory in the Local History Area at the Victoria Public Library (digital copies not available online currently).

⁷⁴ "Magnolia Service Station No. 122," National Register Inventory/Nomination Form, Austin, Texas Historical Commission, 1986, from the THC Atlas, <https://atlas.thc.state.tx.us/Details/2086003844>; "Texas Company Filling Station," National Register Inventory/Nomination Form, Austin, Texas Historical Commission, 1986, from the THC Atlas, <https://atlas.thc.state.tx.us/Details/2086002595>; "Western Auto Returns to City With New Store, New Strategy," *Victoria Advocate*, Oct. 22, 1989, p. 33, from Newspapers.com.

⁷⁵ "Grand Opening at Our New Location: 108 N. Liberty [ad]," *Victoria Advocate*, Jun. 18, 1958, p. 5. Note that name of the prior occupant of this address was not found in research to date.

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Embodying practically all modern ideas for display, office and working space, the building which will house the well known electric company is one of the most up-to-date in South Texas. It is located at the corner of Goodwin Avenue and Liberty Street, fronting on both. The building is of hollow tile construction and was erected by Ed Wagner, building contractor.⁷⁶

The connection between industry and outdoor recreation also lends the property a unique local flavor. Throughout its 56-year operation, the Bernhard Electric Company routinely advertised not only mechanical equipment but also an understanding of local fishermen and sportsmen (Figure 11). Together, the associations with Victoria's auto-related commercial historic context and the trend of recreational development yield significance under National Register Criterion A in the area of Commerce at the local level. The period of significance spans from 1930-1974.

⁷⁶ "Bernard [sic] will Move into New Quarters Beginning Friday," *Victoria Advocate*, Jun. 20, 1930, p. 1.

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Additional Documentation

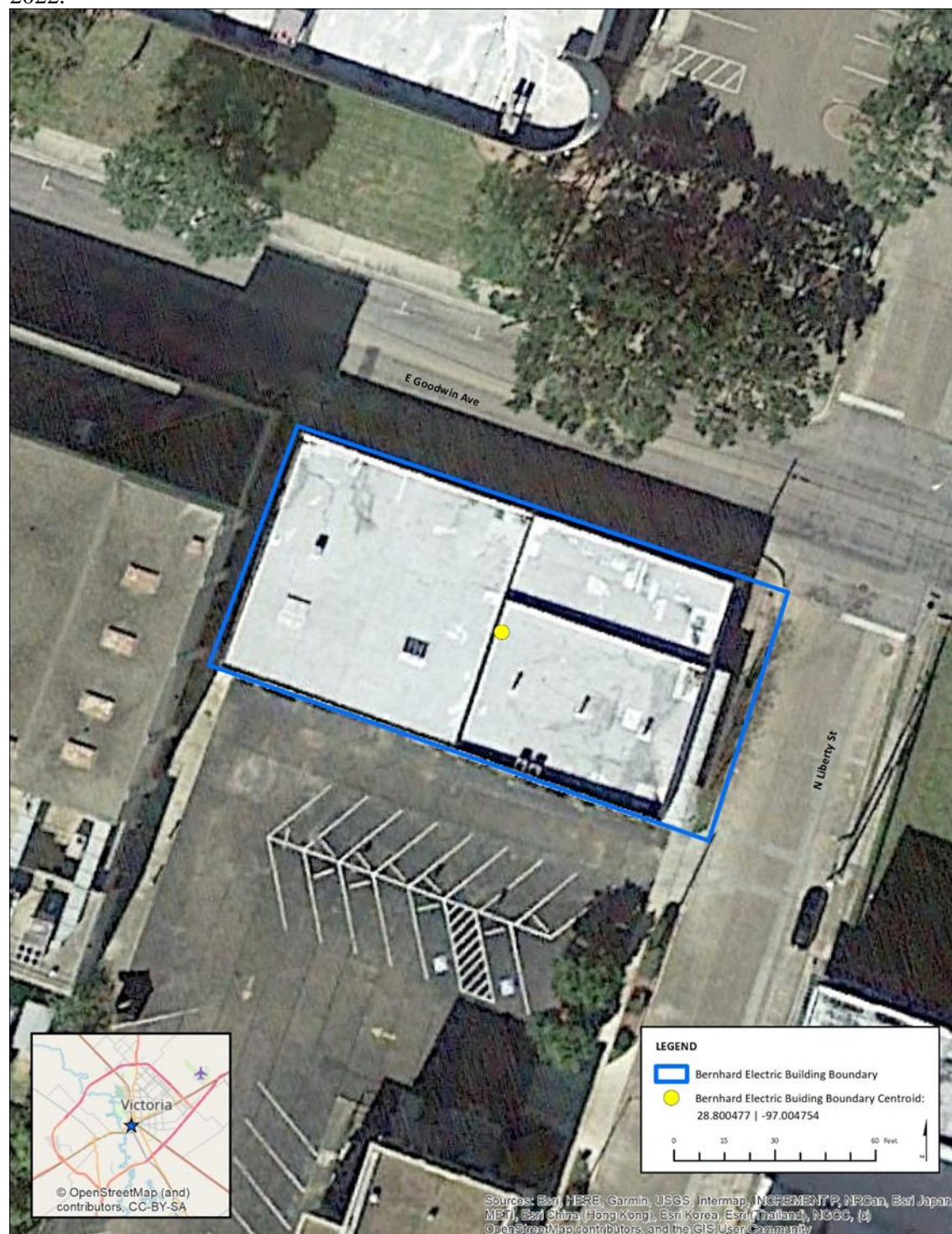
Maps

Map 1. Victoria County, Texas.



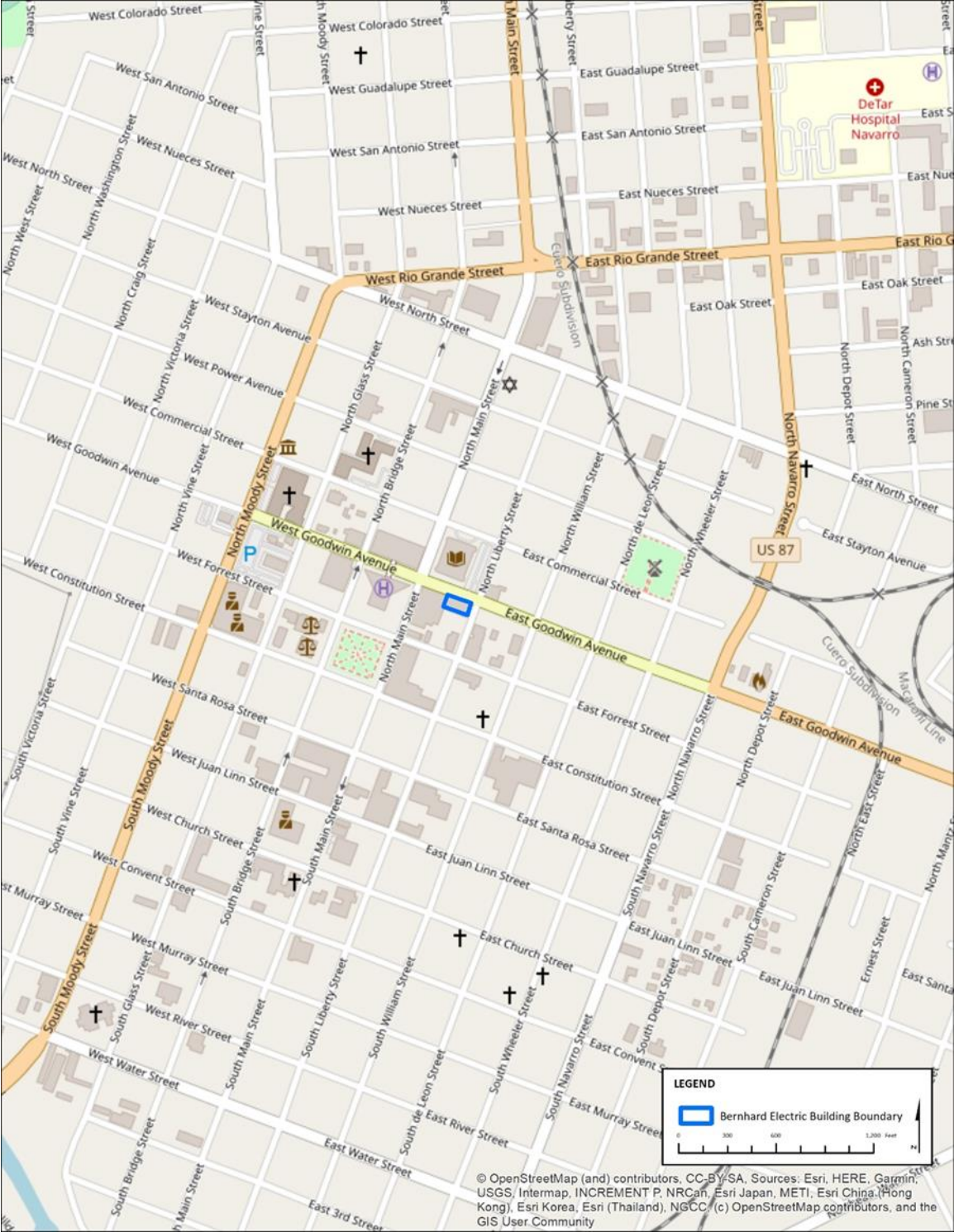
Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Map 2. Aerial view of the Bernhard Electric Building showing the boundary. Source: HHM & Associates, Inc., 2022.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Map 3. Vicinity of the Bernhard Electric Building. Source: HHM & Associates, Inc., 2022.



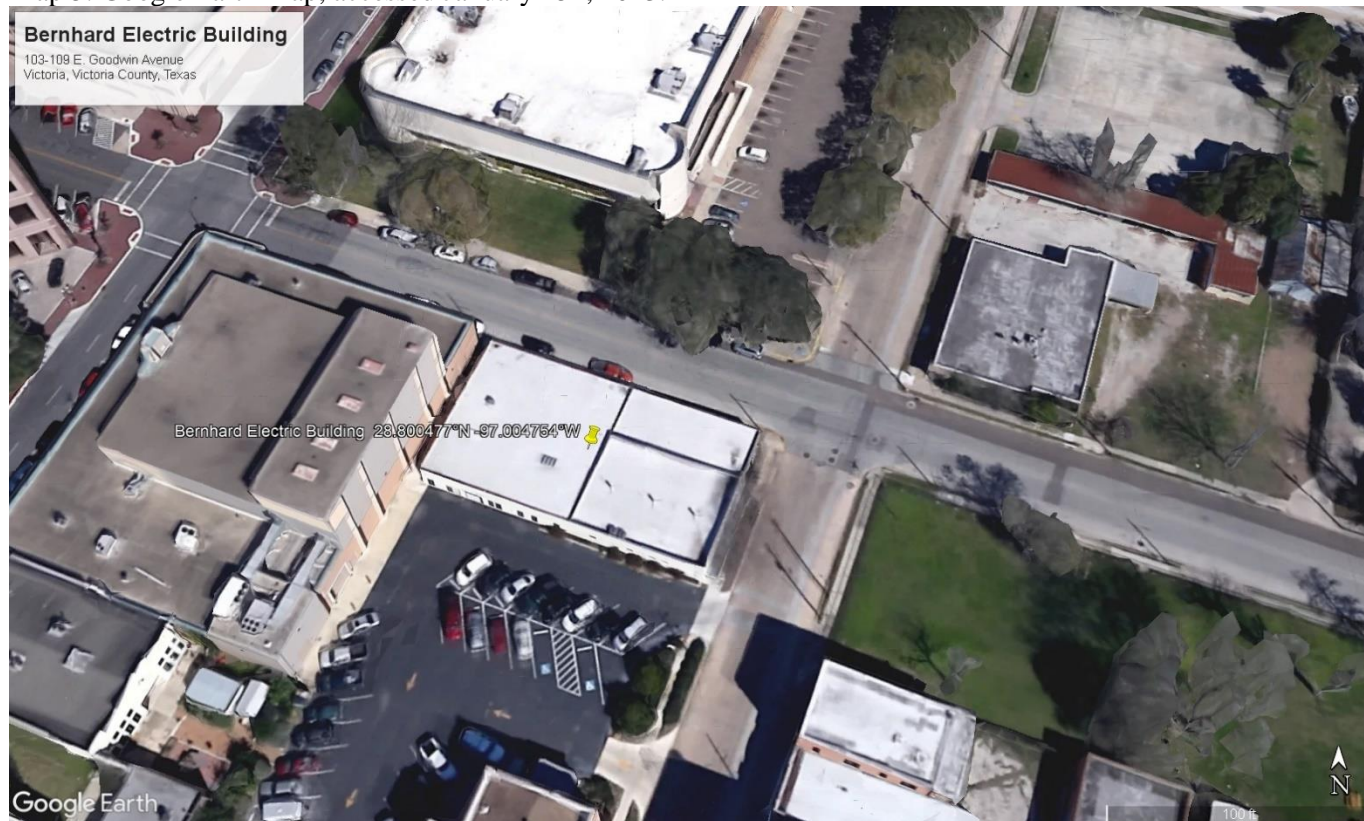
Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Map 4. VICTORIA TIF 71880 EXEMPT PT OF LOT 4 BLOCK 129 (Property ID: 63273), Victoria, Victoria County, Texas. Victoria Central Appraisal District data accessed January 25, 2023. The boundary follows the current legal parcel and contains the area historically associated with the Bernhard Electric property.



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Map 5. Google Earth Map, accessed January 25th, 2023.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

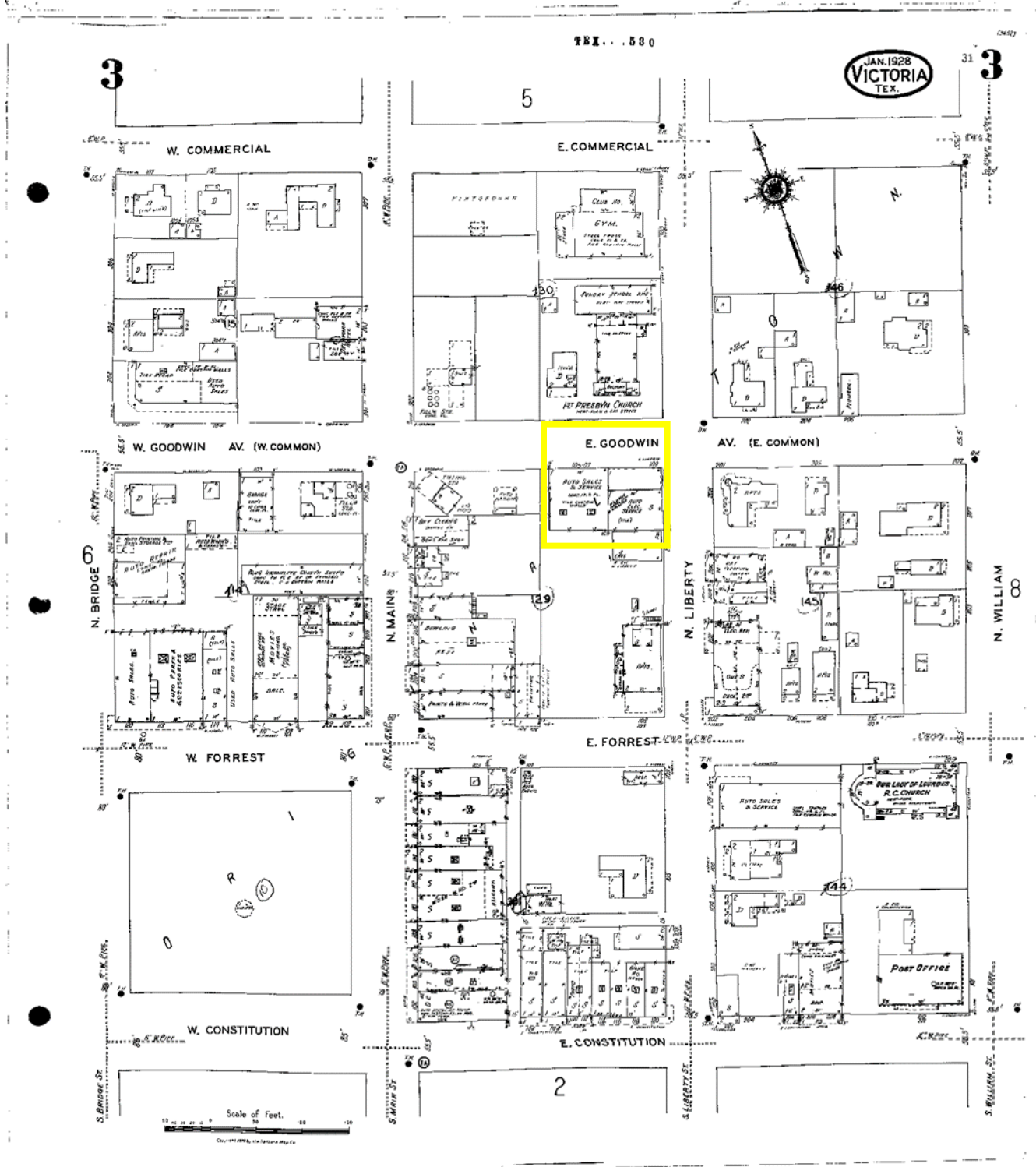
Figures

Figure 1. Aerial photo of downtown Victoria in 1930, facing southwest with the railroad line in the background. The Bernhard Electric Building lies in the right-hand foreground. Source: Victoria: A Journey Through Time, vol. I (Victoria: Victoria Advocate Publishing Co., 2007).



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Figure 2. Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map showing 105-109 E. Goodwin Street (outlined in yellow) and the surrounding blocks in 1949. Source: *Victoria, Tex.* [Map] (Sanborn, 1928-1949), sheet 3, from ProQuest via Austin Public Libraries.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Figure 3. Photo of the Bernhard Electric Company Building in 1942, camera facing southwest. Source: Dmitri Kessel [photographer], *LIFE Magazine*, 1942.



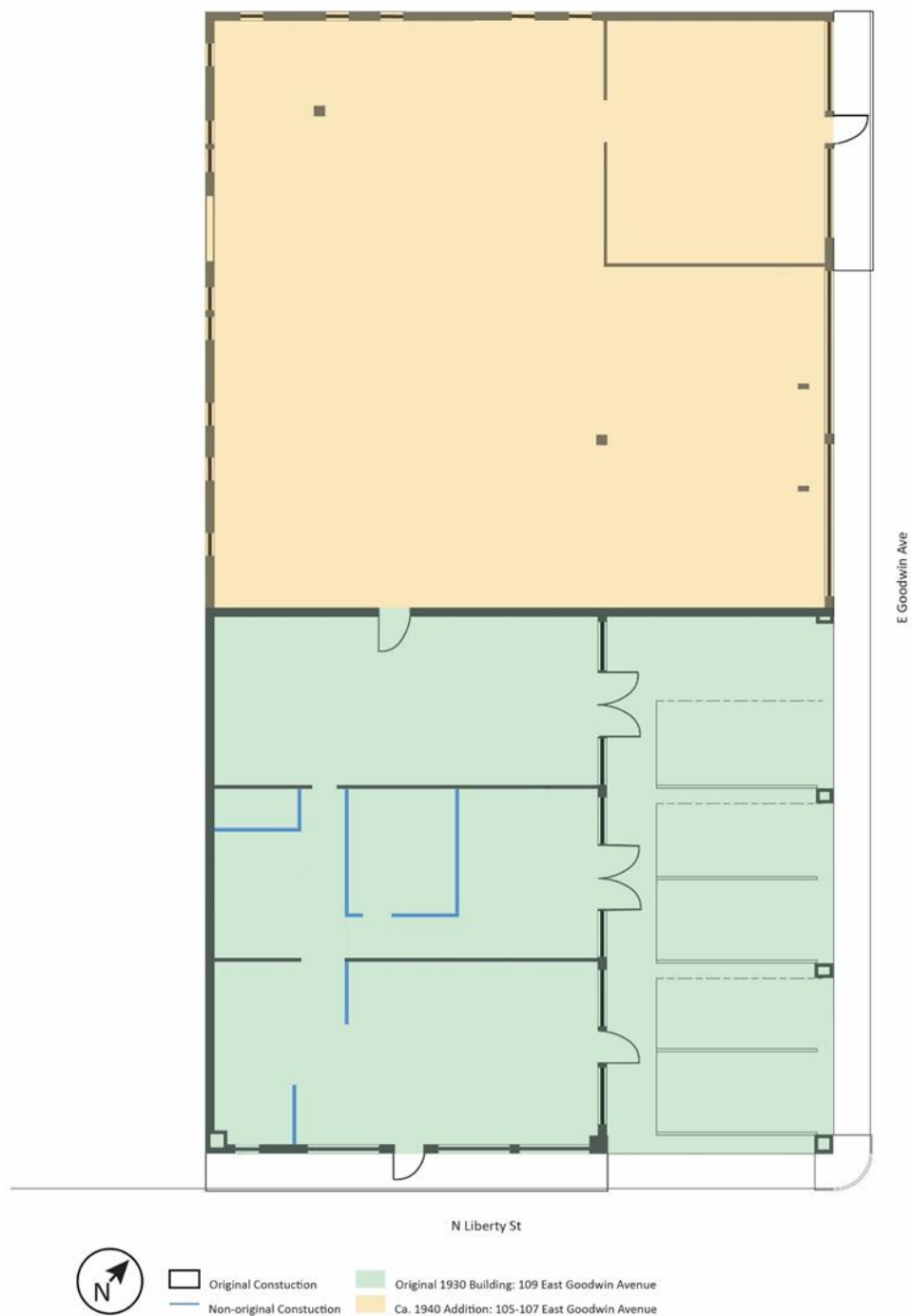
Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Figure 4. Photo showing the Bernhard Electric Company Building in the background 1942, camera facing southwest. Source: Dmitri Kessel [photographer], *LIFE Magazine*, 1942.



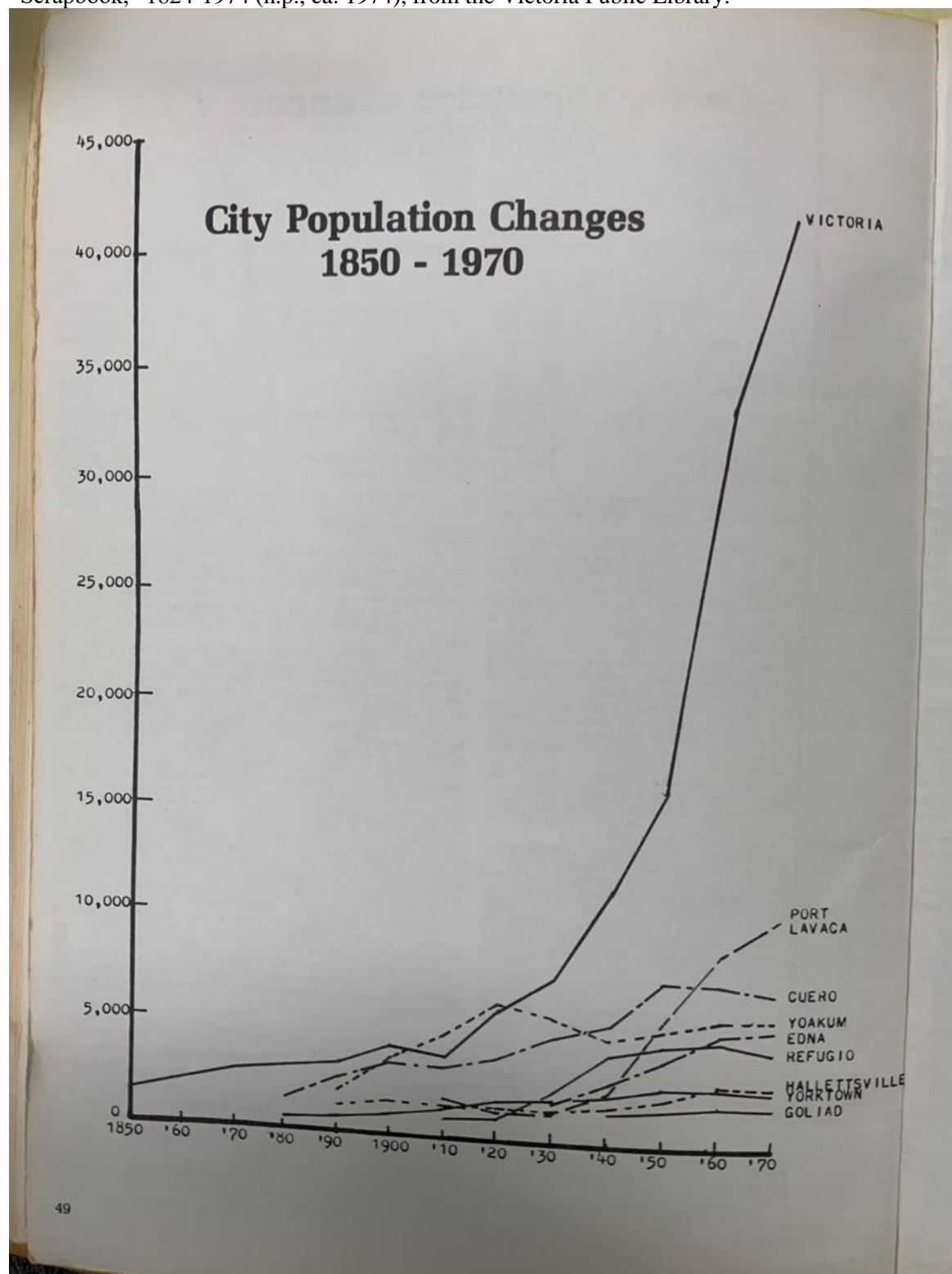
Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Figure 5. Sketch of the current floorplan of the Bernhard Electric Building. Sources: Proposed “Leo J. Welder Annex Renovation” drawings, RMA Architects & Interior Designers, 11/20/2018, adapted by HHM and THC to show current conditions.



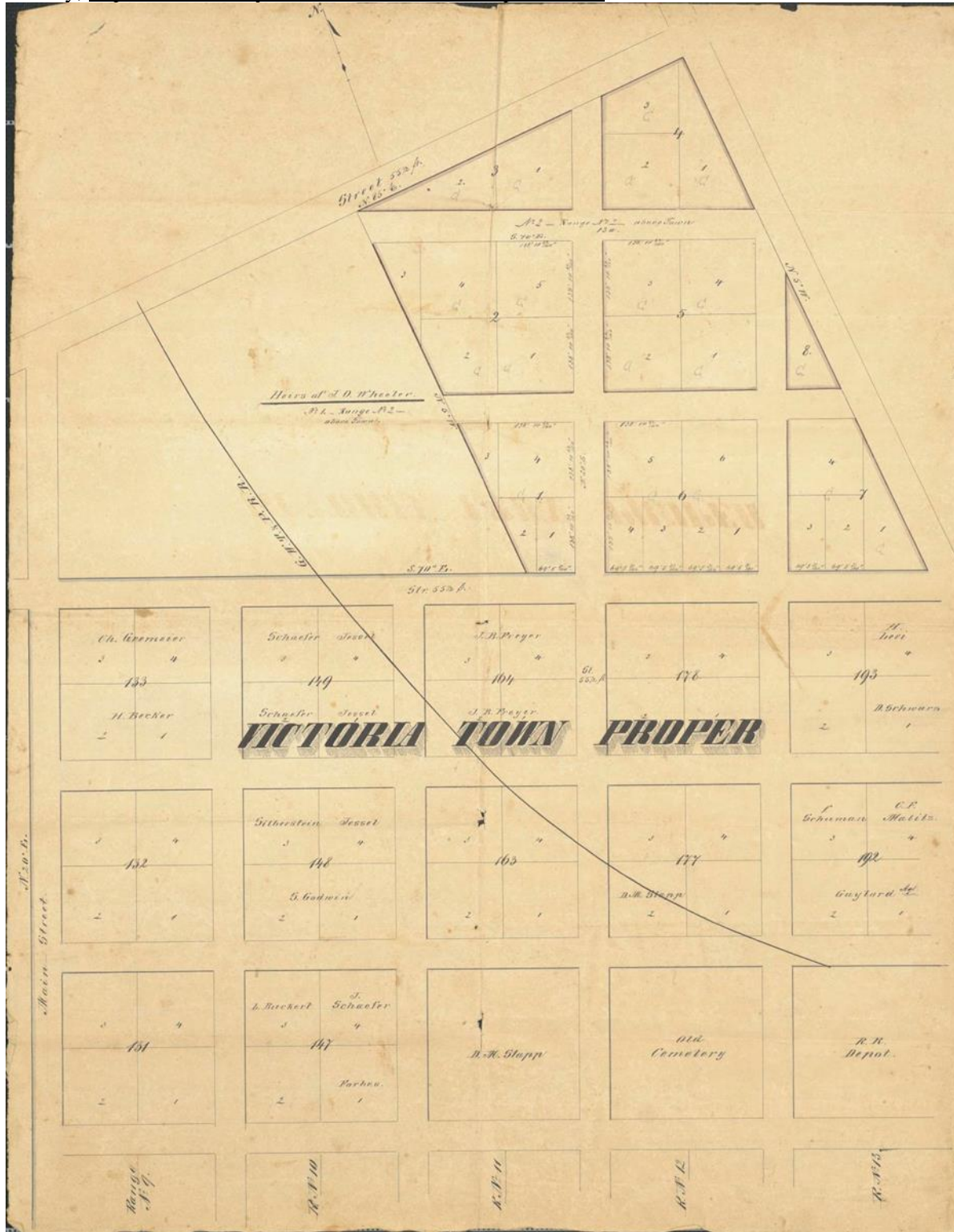
Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Figure 6. Graph depicting the growth of Victoria's population. Source: The Victoria Sesquicentennial, "Scrapbook," 1824-1974 (n.p., ca. 1974), from the Victoria Public Library.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Figure 7. Map showing the town plat of Victoria in 1872, traversed diagonally by the railroad. Source: *Victoria [Texas] town proper [map]* (n.p., 1872-1883), from the Portal crediting the University of Texas at Arlington Library, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph190471>.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Figure 8. Advertisement for the Bernhard Electric Company from 1931. Source: [Ad], *Victoria Advocate*, Apr. 5, 1931, p. 5.



**Certainty
and Ease
of
Automobile
Starting**

JOHNSON
release charger

WHAT a joy for women and children—this valiant Sea Horse. How full of joy and summer pleasures their vacations. For now outboard motoring becomes a true ally of their care-free days.

Before they were dependent on help in starting an outboard motor. The Johnson Release Charger gives the Sea Horses certainty and ease of automobile starting. A tug of the starting rope—that's all.

We will gladly give you more details of the many improvements in the Sea Horses. They are priced from \$115 to \$325 f.o.b. Waukegan, Ill. Easy payments.

**No
Exhaust
Noise
No Exhaust
Fumes**

Bernhard Electric Co.
PHONE 91

Johnson
Outboard Motors

Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Figure 9. Photo of Paul Bernhard in 1956. Source: "Victoria in Review," Victoria Advocate, Feb. 21, 1956, p. 22



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Figure 10. Photo of Raymond Patek in 1971. Source: Henry Wolff, Jr, "Project Target," *Victoria Advocate*, Jul. 11, 1971, p. 3, from Newspapers.com.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Figure 11. Advertisement for the Bernhard Electric Company from 1935. Source: [Ad], *Victoria Advocate*, Dec. 12, 1935, p. 4.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Photos

Photo 1. Oblique view of the Bernhard Electric Building, camera facing southwest.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Photo 2. East elevation, camera facing west.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Photo 3. View of new canopy between Bernhard Electric Building and adjacent Welder Center for the Performing Arts.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Photo 4. View of north elevation, camera facing southwest.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Photo 5. View of the north elevation under the canopy, camera facing south.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Photo 6. View of the north elevation, camera facing south.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Photo 7. Oblique view of the south elevation, camera facing northwest.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Photo 8. View of the west elevation, camera facing northeast.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Photo 9. Interior view of the westernmost space within 109 E. Goodwin Avenue (the original 1930 portion of the building), camera facing north.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Photo 10. Interior view of the middle space within 109 E. Goodwin Avenue, camera facing northwest.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Photo 11. Interior view of the easternmost space within 109 E. Goodwin Avenue, camera facing north.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Photo 12. Interior view of the easternmost space within 109 E. Goodwin Avenue, camera facing southeast.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Photo 13. Interior view of the westernmost space within 109 E. Goodwin Avenue, camera facing south.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Photo 14. Interior view of the non-original storage room within the middle space within 109 E. Goodwin Avenue, camera facing east.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Photo 15. Interior view of middle space within 109 E. Goodwin Avenue, camera facing east.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Photo 16. Interior view of the office space off of the easternmost space within 109 E. Goodwin Avenue, camera facing southeast.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Photo 17. Interior view of the office/vestibule within 105-107 E. Goodwin Avenue (the ca. 1940 addition), camera facing north.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Photo 18. Interior view of the open garage space within 105-107 E. Goodwin Avenue, camera facing north.



Bernhard Electric Building, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

Photo 19. Interior view of the open garage space within 105-107 E. Goodwin Avenue, camera facing northwest.

