

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name: Commerce Street Warehouse Historic DistrictOther names/site number: NAName of related multiple property listing: N/A**2. Location**Street & number: Roughly bounded by Crawford Street on the northwest, Ruiz Street on the northeast, the rear property lines along Chenevert Street on the southeast, and Franklin Street on the southwestCity or town: Houston State: Texas County: HarrisNot 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 x 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 x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

x A B x C D

	Chief Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer	<u>5/8/2024</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:		Date
<u>Texas Historical Commission</u>		
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		

Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District
Name of Property

Harris County, Texas
County and State

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

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

- Private: ☒
- Public – Local ☐
- Public – State ☐
- Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

- Building(s) ☐
- District ☒
- Site ☐
- Structure ☐
- Object ☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

COMMERCE/TRADE: Business, Warehouse, Specialty shop

Current Functions

COMMERCE/TRADE: Business, Restaurant

DOMESTIC: Multiple Dwelling

TRANSPORTATION: Road-related (vehicular)

7. Description

Architectural Classification

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style

NO STYLE

Materials:

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK, CONCRETE, GLASS, METAL, ASPHALT

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Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District is located on the northeast side of downtown Houston, Texas between the south bank of Buffalo Bayou, and the former location of Houston's Union Station and railyards. The district is roughly bounded by Crawford Street on the northwest, Ruiz Street on the northeast, the rear property lines along Chenevert Street on the southeast, and Franklin Street on the southwest. The district is approximately 2.83 acres in size and includes seven resources (six contributing buildings—one previously listed in the NRHP—and one noncontributing structure), constructed within the period of significance (1910-1976), that collectively occupy portions of three city blocks. The historic resources include four warehouse and factory buildings constructed between 1910-ca. 1937, a ca. 1910 commercial laundry, a ca. 1950 machine shop, and a 1969 parking garage (noncontributing). The resources vary from one to six stories in height and mostly feature brick construction, except for the machine shop and parking garage. Many of the historic buildings within the once larger warehouse and industrial district have been lost to redevelopment, but the nominated resources are in good condition. While some resources in the district have experienced changes, such as window and door replacements and painting of exterior brick, they retain sufficient integrity to convey the historical and architectural significance of the district.

Previously Listed National Register Properties in the Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District

National Biscuit Company Building, 15 Chenevert, #98000141 (Total resources = 1)

Setting and District Overview¹

The Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District is located on the northeast side of downtown Houston, Texas, and on the south side of Buffalo Bayou (aka "SSBB", an abbreviation commonly used in legal property descriptions). The district is roughly bounded by Crawford Street on the northwest, Ruiz Street on the northeast, the rear property lines along Chenevert Street on the southeast, and Franklin Street on the southwest. The boundary is drawn to include the highest concentration of remaining historic properties with integrity on the south side of Buffalo Bayou within the once larger warehouse and industrial area of Houston.² Commerce Street historically was a major roadway in Houston and served as the city's primary commercial thoroughfare, seconded by Market Street. Commerce Street terminates to the northwest at the Milam Street bridge over Buffalo Bayou, and to the southeast at Milby Street, which marks the dividing line between the early Houston town plat grid and East Downtown, also known as the Second Ward (an early city political subdivision). The Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District is located two blocks northwest of IH-69; formerly US-59, originally constructed through Houston in 1958-1962 and is elevated in this part of town (Maps 1-3). IH-69 follows the

¹ Note: The three-block section of Chenevert Street north of Daikin Park (formerly Minute Maid baseball stadium/Union Station and railyards) is sometimes known as North Chenevert Street, to account for the interruption of that roadway. This nomination uses the street name without that directional modifier.

² Properties outside the boundary lack integrity, are less than 50 years old, or are parking lots.

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historical alignment of the International & Great Northern (I&GN) Railroad and bisects Commerce Street near the street's east-west midpoint (Map 4). Multiple railroad tracks ran along this section of Commerce Street between 1890-1969, moving goods between these warehouses and factories and the I&GN, and a spur from the Commerce Street tracks extended to the National Biscuit Company loading docks at 15 Chenevert Street (Map 5-7, Figures 6-7). No evidence of these railroad tracks remain within the historic district. The only remaining design features previously associated with both rail and truck transport are the extant loading docks on 101 Crawford Street (Resource 1, Figure 9, Photo 5), 100 Jackson Street (Resource 2, Figure 10, Photo 13), and 1701 Commerce Street (Resource 3, Figures 12-13, Photos 18, 20).

The Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District is 1 block northeast of the Houston Astros' baseball stadium. Now known as Daikin Park, it was built as Enron Field in 2000, and was later renamed Minute Maid Park by 2002; the site originally housed Houston's Union Station and associated railyards.

The Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District represents the last intact remnant of Houston's historic railyard and shipping district, constructed in response to the rapid economic expansion that occurred in Houston within the period of significance, 1910-1976. It documents the progression of Houston's warehouse construction technology during the first half of the 20th century: from brick load-bearing walls with heavy timber frames and segmentally arched window openings, to exposed reinforced-concrete frames with brick infill and large multipaned industrial windows. The buildings are in good condition. They retain integrity and are representative of early to mid-twentieth century warehouse, manufacturing, and commercial buildings. The oldest buildings were constructed between 1910-1930, and the most recent contributing building was constructed ca. 1950. Five (approximately 72%) resources in the district were constructed prior to World War II, and the other two (28%) were constructed in the post-war period. The six contributing buildings and one noncontributing structure are located on portions of three separate blocks: 106, 113, and 167 (Maps 1-3, Photos 1-4).

Block 106, bounded by Jackson, Crawford, Commerce, and Franklin Streets, is the westernmost block in the district and contains two contributing buildings (Map 2). The 1911 Eller Wagon Works Building (Resource 1, Photo 5), including its 1920 Pittsburgh Plate Glass addition (Photo 8) and 1929 Pittsburgh Plate Glass addition (Photo 6), are collectively addressed as 101 Crawford Street. The 1915 Western Electric Company Building (Resource 2, Photo 13) and its ca. 1937 Grocery Supply Company addition (Photo 16) are located at 100 Jackson Street.

Located diagonally across the Jackson and Commerce Streets intersection, Block 113 contains two contributing buildings and one noncontributing structure (Map 2). This block, at the center of the district, is bounded by Jackson, Commerce, Chenevert, and Ruiz Streets. The 1910 National Biscuit Company Building at 15 Chenevert (NRHP 1998, Resource 5, Photo 27) is the largest, tallest, and most architecturally elaborate building in the district; it visually dominates and continues to serve as an anchor for the district. The National Biscuit Company at one point occupied all of Block 113; its original office building at the corner of Commerce and Jackson Streets was demolished and replaced by new construction, which is excluded from the boundaries of this historic district. A 1969 warehouse addition to the National Biscuit Company Building was substantially altered ca. 2009 rendering it a noncontributing parking garage

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(Resource 4 at 1702 Ruiz Street; Photo 23).³ The 1927 warehouse at 1701 Commerce (Resource 3, Photo 18) occupies the southwestern corner of the block.

Block 167 is southeast of Block 113 and is bounded by Chenevert Street to the northwest, Ruiz Street to the northeast, North Hamilton Street to the southeast, and Commerce Street to the southwest (Map 2). Ca. 1910 Gould's Wet Wash Laundry (Resource 6, 22 Chenevert) and the ca. 1950 Jennings Machine Shop (Resource 7, 20 Chenevert), both contributing (Photo 29), are located along Chenevert Street on the northwestern corner of the block, directly across from the National Biscuit Company Building.

Inventory Table – Resource ID numbers correspond with Maps 1 & 2.

ID#	Address	Resource Name	Constr. Date	Block	Lot(s)	Contributing Status
1	101 Crawford	Eller Wagon Works Building/Pittsburgh Plate Glass Addition and 1929 Addition	1911/1920/1929	106	Lots 8-11 and part of 12	Contributing Building
2	100 Jackson	Western Electric Company Building/Grocery Supply Company Addition	1915/ca. 1937	106	Lots 3-5	Contributing Building
3	1701 Commerce	J. L. Jones Warehouse	1927	113	Lots 6-7	Contributing Building
4	1702 Ruiz	City Lofts Parking Garage	1969/ca. 2009	113	Lots 8-10	Noncontributing Structure
5	15 Chenevert	National Biscuit Company Building	1910	113	Lots 4-5	Contributing Building
6	22 Chenevert	Gould's Wet Wash Laundry	Ca. 1910/ca. 1940	167	Lot 10	Contributing Building
7	20 Chenevert	Jennings Machine Shop	Ca. 1950	167	Lot 8B (north half of Lot 8) and Lot 9	Contributing Building

INDIVIDUAL RESOURCE DESCRIPTIONS⁴

Resource 1 - 101 Crawford (Contributing Building)

101 Crawford Street, at the corner of Commerce and Crawford Streets, today consists of an original building and two additions that collectively rest on an elevated concrete portion of the northernmost corner of Block 106. The initial Commercial-style commercial/industrial building was completed in 1911 for Eller Wagon Works. A 1920 addition across the entire southwestern elevation, providing additional space for offices, sales showrooms, and warehousing, was constructed for the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company. In 1929, a one-story addition containing a

³ Ca. 2009, the exterior walls of the warehouse were removed, along with the connection to the 1910 building, and the warehouse was converted to a parking garage.

⁴ Research did not yield any additional historic photographs dating to the period of significance.

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loading dock and glass-finishing rooms was built at the southeast side of the original building and 1920 addition (Maps 1-2). The expanded building served as a distribution, manufacturing, and office building for the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company until 1955.

Eller Wagon Works Building

1911, C. C. Wenzel, contractor

The 1911 Eller Wagon Works building is a three-story, symmetrically organized red brick warehouse building in the Commercial style (Figures 6-9, Photo 5). The building has a flat roof with low parapet and retains the historic concrete loading dock on its northeast (Commerce Street) elevation. The northwest elevation (Crawford Street) (Photo 7) is bounded by a concrete sidewalk, surrounded by a grassy curb lawn, with a concrete retaining wall at the edge of the street. A decorative black metal fence lines the street on both sides. Concrete steps with metal handrails are built into both ends of the loading dock, on the northeast elevation. A fire escape stair spans most of the northwest elevation. Window openings appear to retain some (if not most) original sashes on the second and third floors. A 1991 photograph (Figure 8) shows that most window openings were infilled at that time, but the material used is not known.⁵ In all windows on this building, glazing is somewhat reflective and therefore likely modern; recent advertisements for loft apartments in this building promote “operable windows.”⁶

Engaged columns of brick separate the five bays on the primary (northeast) elevation facing Commerce Street and the four bays on the side elevations. Each of the second- and third-floor bays contains three segmentally arched window openings, which are filled with recessed rectangular wood-framed two-over-two windows. On the northeast elevation and the north and south bays on the northwest elevation, the first-floor arched window openings are elongated to accommodate both rectangular two-over-two windows and rectangular single-pane transoms. The center two ground-level bays on the northwest elevation were originally vehicle doors but were infilled at an unknown date to create rectangular window openings (Figures 6-7). Each of these contain a ribbon of 10 small square transom windows over a ribbon of four single-pane rectangular windows, none of which are historic. The concrete sills and infilled brick below these two newer windows match the other first-floor openings.

The northeast elevation contains two nonhistoric entry doors, with surrounds constructed of black painted wood and/or metal (Photo 5). The easternmost bay contains a large rectangular opening, while a segmentally arched opening is found in the second bay from the west, serving as the main entrance. All doors, wood surrounds, and transom windows are nonhistoric and appropriately fill the historic openings. An empty metal frame for a blade sign, of indeterminate date, is attached to the wall above the arched doorway. Near the other door, a heavy girder projects across nearly the entire depth of the loading dock, with the remnants of a sign holder affixed to its lower surface; this was original to the building (Figures 7, 9). A small nonhistoric black steel sign protrudes at an obtuse angle from the northwest corner of the building. Above the cornice on three elevations, the modest parapet features painted “Eller Wagon Works” signs, with off-white serif block letters on a field of black. The northwest elevation’s three inner pilasters are also covered with painted signs, featuring an off-white border and vertical letters advertising various Eller Wagon Works products: Tank Wagons, Laundry Wagons, and Heavy

⁵ Barrie Scardino and Bruce Jensen, “Resource No. 27, Eller Wagon Works Building,” inventory, *Manufacturing and Wholesale Distribution in Industrial Houston, 1876-1945*, multiple property documentation form for the National Register of Historic Places, 1992.

⁶ “Features,” Wagon Works Lofts website, <https://www.wagonworkslofts.com/Features.aspx>.

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Trucks. The signage appears in historic photographs, indicating it was original to the building but has been repainted in recent years (Figure 6).

On the southeast (Jackson Street) elevation, the second and third floors are visible above the 1929 addition (Photos 9-10). This elevation is also divided by pilasters into four bays. The northernmost bay matches the three-window configuration found on the northeast and northwest elevations. Continuing south, the next bay is blank with no openings, and the bay adjacent to that contains the three-window configuration. The southernmost bay is bisected by a square brick chimney with concrete mud and chimney caps, flanked by the same windows found throughout this building. The 1920 addition completely covers the entire southwest elevation, and the southeast elevation's first floor is obscured by the 1929 addition (Map 2).

Pittsburgh Plate Glass Addition

1920, Alfred C. Finn, architect

The 1920 addition is a three-story rectangular office/warehouse with a brick curtain wall over an exposed concrete frame (Photo 8). It was designed as an addition to accommodate the rapid growth of the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company and was historically internally connected to the original 1911 building. The primary (northwest/Crawford Street) façade is dark brown brick with a light mortar, visually differentiating the addition from the older original building. The other two elevations are executed in a pale red brick (Photo 9). The southeast and northwest elevations are three bays wide, while the southwest elevation contains five bays; on all visible elevations, the bays are divided by the concrete frame, which is flush with the brick on the secondary elevations but slightly recessed on the primary. The 1924 Sanborn Fire Insurance map (Map 5) indicates that the original southeast elevation was a continuous plane aligned with the southeast wall of the Eller Wagon Works building. By 1950, the Sanborn map (Map 6) reflected the current condition: the northern half of the southeastern elevation continues to be in line with the adjacent building's wall, while the southern half is recessed several feet. The precise date when that change occurred is unknown.

The flat roof is surrounded by a parapet, which is modestly stepped on the primary (northwest) elevation (Photo 8). This elevation is symmetrically organized into three bays facing Crawford Street, divided by plain concrete columns and topped by a concrete lintel above the third-floor windows. Two stylized Neoclassical cartouches adorn the stepped parapet over the center bay. The concrete frame includes a slightly projecting narrow band on the outer edge of the vertical columns and the top edge of the frame flanking the cartouches. Concrete caps the top of this façade, with fields of brick in running bond between the cap and lintel, as well as to the outside of the columns. Between the second- and third-floor ribbon windows in each bay, the same brick is laid in common bond.

The first-floor bays on the Crawford Street elevation contain a wood-framed storefront, painted black, with three-light transom windows over single-pane display windows equal in width to the windows on the upper floors. Painted vertical siding surrounds the windows and an offset metal-framed double door. A hanging steel-framed corrugated-metal canopy below the transom windows is suspended with metal rods anchored at star wall plates.

Each of the second and third floor bays contains original windows, separated by wide painted wood muntins, on all three floors. The third-floor windows are one-over-one wood-framed

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sashes, while the second-floor windows are fixed wood frames with six-over-one upper sashes containing three square panes over three tall rectangular panes.

The southwest (Franklin Street) elevation has an irregular fenestration (Photo 9). On the third floor, four out of five bays contain a single window opening, infilled with brick; these repairs used different colors of brick and were executed in different ways, indicating that they were likely completed at different times. On the second floor, seven larger and two smaller rectangular two-over-two wood-framed windows are distributed asymmetrically. The first floor includes a single two-over-two window in the first and fourth bays, while the central bay contains a full-glass metal-framed double door. The windows and doors on this elevation appear to be modern.

The southeast (Jackson Street) elevation is partially obscured by the 1929 addition, which covers half of the first floor (Photo 9). The fenestration pattern is regular with replacement windows within historic openings.

Pittsburgh Plate Glass & Loading Dock Addition

1929, Maurice J. Sullivan, architect

The 1929 loading dock/glass finishing addition is a one-story rectangular brick addition with a concrete floor (Map 2, Photo 6).⁷ Topped by a flat roof, this addition is contiguous to the southeast elevation of the 1911 Eller Wagon Works Building (Resource 1) and the northwest elevation of the neighboring Western Electric Company Building (Resource 2). The 1929 addition extends past the end of both of those buildings to cover about half of those buildings' later additions (Photo 9). The 1929 addition's two visible elevations are of equal width but are organized differently; the northeast (Commerce Street) elevation is three bays wide, while the southwest (Franklin Street) elevation is four bays wide. The northeast elevation's loading dock itself is deeply inset, with access to the interior of this addition through a pedestrian door and two central roll-up doors. A two-over-two window is also present in the sheltered northeast wall. The southwest elevation's four bays contain a single metal door, a large rectangular opening infilled with glass block, and four additional infilled openings (Photo 10). It is likely that the windows and doors on this addition are not original, but they may have been present during the period of significance.

Resource 2 - 100 Jackson (Contributing Building)

The Western Electric Company Building, built in 1915, is located at 100 Jackson Street at the corner of Commerce and Jackson Streets (Map 2). A one-story addition was constructed across the southwest (rear) elevation ca. 1937 by Grocery Supply Company. The building is immediately adjacent to Jackson Street on the southeast elevation and Commerce Street on the northeast elevation. The southwest elevation faces Franklin Street.

Western Electric Company Building

1915, Central Construction Company, contractor

The 1915 Western Electric Company Building is a three-story rectangular warehouse building constructed with a reinforced concrete frame clad with brick veneer (Figures 10-11, Photo 13). A

⁷ This addition was also designed to accommodate the rapid growth of the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company and was historically internally connected to the original 1911 building.

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small elevator penthouse with a false side wall at the front façade provides access to a flat roof with clay tile coping across low parapets. The two primary (northeast and southeast) elevations feature a corbelled cornice below the third-floor windows (Photos 13-14). The building is bounded on the northeast and southeast sides by a wide concrete loading dock, with steps down at each corner. A decorative metal fence lines the edge of the dock platform. The original awnings over the loading dock are no longer extant (Figures 10-11).

The full northeast and southeast elevations are visible (Photos 14-15), while the first-floor portions of the original southwest and northwest elevations are obscured by the 1929 Pittsburgh Plate Glass addition and the ca. 1937 Grocery Supply Company addition (Photo 16). Each elevation of the original building contains seven bays, most of which contain a large rectangular multipaned window with various configurations of lights and mullions. Some of these are hopper windows appear to be original. All doors on this building are replacements. At the first floor, two double full-glass replacement doors with single-pane transoms are located on both the northeast and southeast elevations. The primary (northeast) elevation is asymmetrical, as an elevator and staircase are present behind the center bay and adjacent bay (Photo 13). One double replacement door, is present in the second bay from east, while the other entryway (in the second bay from west) is inset with a full-height modern glass door and window wall. The center bay contains a wide freight elevator door on the first floor and a single blank window at each of the upper floors; the bay to the east contains small two-over-two windows to illuminate the stairwell at each floor. The southwest (rear) elevation's visible upper floors contain the same large multipaned windows in each of its seven bays (Photos 16-17), while the northwest elevation is blank.

The original building and addition at 100 Jackson received a full renovation when sold to its current owner, Caspian Enterprises Inc., in 2004. According to the owner, the hardwood floors, freight elevator, structural wood beams, and columns were the only features fully untouched. The building's defining features—including masonry walls, the structural expression of the concrete floors and columns, and some of the steel windows—are extant, although the glazing in all windows appears to be modern. The exterior masonry walls were painted dark green in 2004, with white paint employed for the cornice.

Grocery Supply Company Addition

Ca. 1937, architect/builder unknown

This one-story addition is contiguous with the entire southwest elevation of the 1915 Western Electric Company Building (Map 2, Photos 15-17). It is constructed of brick laid in running bond with three visible elevations. The northwest elevation is blank; the southwest (rear) elevation contains six small non-original sliding windows, high in the wall (Photo 17). The primary (southeast, Jackson Street) elevation contains a double full-glass replacement door with single-pane transom, matching those on the original building, flanked by a (likely nonhistoric) square door of corrugated metal that appears to be covering a freight-type opening. The awning historically covering the southeast elevation (Figure 11) is no longer extant. The addition expanded the footprint and was historically internally connected to the original 1915 building.

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Resource 3 - 1701 Commerce Street (Contributing Building)

J. L. Jones Warehouse

1927, J. W. Northrop Jr., architect

The warehouse at 1701 Commerce Street is a three-story square building located at the southwest corner of Commerce and Jackson Streets; it faces southwest across Commerce Street (Map 3, Figures 12-14, Photos 18-21). Rehabilitation work approved by the Texas Historical Commission and the National Park Service began in 2025 and was carried out in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.⁸ Exterior work included retouching of existing painted signage, installation of new blade signage, repointing and repair of brick masonry (removal of non-historic stucco parging at front dock entrance), installation of new compatible roll-up and glazed doors in original loading dock openings facing Commerce Street, installation of compatible loading dock railing and metal bumper at dock edge, and minor alteration of windows and window openings on the southeast elevation (Chenevert Street). The exterior work was completed in summer 2025. The interior work is complete as of April 2026.

It is a concrete-frame building with brick and clay tile backup, concrete floors, and a flat roof; walls are clad with red and black brick laid in mostly running bond with every fifth course in Flemish bond (Photos 18-21). Straight soldier courses top and extend past each window opening by one unit; sills are comprised of rowlock bricks and similarly extend beyond each opening. Between the first- and second-floor windows across the entire front (southwest/Commerce Street) elevation, the brick has been painted to create a large nonhistoric sign reading "THE PURSE BUILDING • THE PURSE BUILDING" in block letters (Photo 18). Historic painted signage read "PURSE & COMPANY" on both elevations (Figures 12-13). A small nonhistoric sign is mounted to the south corner of the building at the second floor. A historic concrete loading dock, accessed by stairs on the southeast and northwest ends, spans the entire front of the building. A nonhistoric metal railing is positioned on the loading dock.

The building's primary (southwest and northwest) elevations each contain five bays of windows and doors (Photo 20). A small stair penthouse at the front façade pops up at the roof, where terracotta coping sits atop low parapets. Several large skylights illuminate third-floor spaces on the southeast side of the building (Photo 19).

Windows on this building appear to be original frames with modern glazing. While the fenestration in the front (southwest) façade is asymmetrical overall, the second- and third-floor openings in each bay are identical. Large multipaned windows are comprised of ribbons of three nine-pane units separated by narrow muntins. The bay just west of center contains a window that is similar but only contains two units. Moving east, the narrow window consists of a two-over-two hopper window above two fixed panes. The center bay contains the same narrow window at the second and third floors (on the west side of the bay). Two of these windows are present in the penthouse. On the second and third floors, the east side of the center bay contains a fixed nine-pane window unit identical to the larger ribbon windows.

On the first floor, a nonhistoric metal canopy extends across the front façade and is supported by metal rods connected to small square plates. Below the canopy, the two outer bays contain large three-unit ribbon windows, identical to those on upper floors. The middle three bays

⁸ Part 1 Federal Historic Tax Credit application approved by NPS September 3, 2024, (Project #48286).

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feature four nonhistoric doors and two windows; the doors were added during the 2025 rehabilitation.

The northwest (Jackson Street) elevation is partially obscured by two large trees (Photo 20). The same "THE PURSE BUILDING" nonhistoric sign may have been intended between the second and third floor windows, matching the primary elevation. A painted "NG" is present at the west corner, but the remaining space retains an older ghost sign reading "PURSE & COMPANY" (Figure 13), a tenant in the 1980s. Residual eye hooks from a former canopy's support rods, along with a scarred concrete foundation and vestigial metal-pipe handrails, are the only elements remaining from a previous loading dock on the northwest (Jackson Street) elevation, extant as late as 1991 (Figure 13). The same large three-unit ribbon windows are present on this elevation in all bays and levels except for the first-floor center bay, which previously contained a large loading-dock door. That opening was infilled with brick at an unknown date (after 1991), but the brick header and lower metal frame remain. At some point, a portion of the brick wall in this location was painted, probably to cover graffiti.

The southeast elevation (Photo 19) contains only a few smaller windows of various configurations on the second and third floors. This elevation historically faced a rail spur from Commerce Street to the rear loading dock of the National Biscuit Company building at 15 Chenevert (Map 5-7). This elevation also supports a modern fire escape with fire-door access on each floor, as well as all utilities. All doors on this elevation were added since 1991 (Figure 14). The northeast (rear) elevation is entirely covered by a modern concrete-block wall (Photo 24) that separates the warehouse from the City View Lofts Parking Garage (Resource 4).

Resource 4 - 1702 Ruiz Street (Noncontributing Structure)

City View Lofts Parking Garage

1969, builder unknown

The City View Lofts Parking Garage, located at 1702 Ruiz Street, is a two-story rectangular open-air garage on the north corner of the block at Ruiz and N. Jackson Streets (Map 2, Photos 22-25). The garage, a former metal-clad warehouse constructed by Purse & Company (Figure 15), is constructed with a slender steel-beam frame supporting a corrugated metal roof. Corrugated sheet-metal walls were removed ca. 2009. The concrete decks, stairs, and concrete masonry unit (CMU) infill are not original. A steel fence atop CMU wall surrounds the structure, impeding unauthorized access. Pedestrian doors of the same design and material provide access on its northeast and northwest elevations. Vehicles enter from the southeast via a driveway from Chenevert Street (Photo 28), along the southeast elevation of National Biscuit Company Building (Resource 5).

Resource 5 - 15 Chenevert Street (Contributing Building)

National Biscuit Company

1910, Albert G. Zimmerman, Nabisco's staff architect

The 1910 National Biscuit Company (aka N.B.C. or Nabisco) Building (NRHP 1998) is located at 15 Chenevert Street, at the corner of Chenevert and Ruiz Streets (Map 2, Photos 25-27).⁹ An anchor in the district, it is constructed with a steel frame and columns clad with tile fireproofing;

⁹ This architectural description is partially adapted from Margaret Swett Henson, et al., National Register nomination for the National Biscuit Company Building, Houston, Harris County, Texas, 1997, available online at <https://atlas.thc.state.tx.us/NR/pdfs/98000141/98000141.pdf>.

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the exterior is clad with brick laid in running bond with terracotta banding. It is the most architecturally elaborate building within the historic district boundary. The exteriors of all N.B.C. bakeries were clad with red brick, with the windowsills, lintels, band courses, cornices, and ornamental features in dull enameled light-buff terra-cotta. White brick accents the vertical lines on the corner tower.

The building is five stories in height on the southeast (primary/Chenevert Street) side and rises to a sixth floor on the northwest side. The sixth floor covers slightly more than half of the building and faces northeast over Ruiz Street and southwest to Commerce Street. Both sides of the roof are flat; the lower (southeast) side is surrounded by a parapet. The building is topped by a substantial cornice, several feet below which appears a modest cornice at the top of the fifth-floor windows. Another substantial cornice appears at the lower edge of the second-floor windows. The field of brick immediately below the upper cornice was historically painted with the company name. A ghost sign reading "PURSE & CO. Wholesale Furniture" is still present on the northeast elevation (Figures 15-16, 25).

The building's southeast façade faces Chenevert Street and is divided into seven bays, including a prominent tower at the east corner of the building. The bays are divided and flanked by unadorned columns of brick, stretching to the ground, between which recessed fields of brick in running bond separate large multipaned windows in all but the southernmost bay. These rectangular windows consist of two four-over-four sashes flanking a six-over-six sashed unit. Lintels over these windows are plain bands of terracotta. The southernmost bay contains a stairwell, which is illuminated by vertically staggered six-over-six and two-over-two windows. A single steel egress door is present at the bottom of the stairwell. At sidewalk level, this elevation includes four wide clerestory windows that illuminate the basement. The freight elevators and staircases were placed along exterior walls to preserve open interior spaces for the baking process.

The corner tower contains a steel fire-escape staircase and rises to a rooftop penthouse, still topped by a pyramidal metal frame that originally supported a flagpole (no longer extant) which flew an N.B.C. banner from 1910-1947. The penthouse originally contained two steel pressure water tanks supplying automatic sprinkler systems and one wooden tank that supplied water for showers, restrooms, and manufacturing use. The tower features terracotta coping along the low parapet and the same cornices found on the northeast and southeast elevations. On each of the tower's primary elevations, a vertical, rectangular, mitered and beveled frame of off-white brick is slightly recessed within the brick wall plane. The wall within the frame on the northeast elevation is blank, while the frame on the southeast side surrounds inset balconies on each floor with rectangular openings at the same level and height as the windows on the second through fifth floors. Near the top of the tower, three one-over-one sash windows are present at the top of the frame. At ground level, the tower encloses the primary entrance: a nonhistoric double full-glass entry doors set into the original arched ornamental (fanned) metal grille (Figure 27), flanked by Gothic windows (one of which was historic and restored). A short flight of concrete steps leads up to the door.

The northeast (Ruiz Street) elevation (Figures 16, 25, Photo 25) is similarly organized within five bays (excluding the tower). The bay adjacent to the tower contains, on all floors, two narrow two-over-two windows. On the first floor in that bay, the easternmost window has been removed and infilled with brick. Other first-floor bays contain stacked floor-to-ceiling windows in a similar configuration to those on upper floors. The southwest elevation is similar, with five bays of

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windows plus a blank wall at the south corner; fire egress stairs and exit doors are also present. An additional entrance, with a nonhistoric double door, is accessed via a set of concrete stairs. The northwest elevation previously contained many fewer windows than the other elevations; a 1991 photo (Figure 15, Photo 25) shows single narrow windows in the middle three bays. The rehabilitation of this building to residential lofts in 2004 added large multi-part window/door units that fill entire bays and include modern metal balconies, suspended from the brick walls.

A small one-story extension at the west end of the northeast façade contains two narrower bays with upper paired two-over-two windows over a blank wall and a double door (Photo 26). This extension has a flat roof with a parapet over a doorway on the northwest elevation; the door currently provides access to the parking garage, but it would have served as an entrance to the earlier parking lot/equipment yard.¹⁰ A loading dock for a spur from the Commerce Street rail lines was originally located on the northwest side of the building but is no longer extant (Maps 5-7).

Inside the building, floors originally measured fourteen feet in height, except on the baking floor (combined fourth and fifth levels) which had a height of 28 feet and originally contained five huge ovens. All dividing walls are brick, and all openings had fireproof doors. When the building was sensitively rehabilitated in 2004 and converted to residential use, the wrought iron gates at the front entrance were replaced with metal-glass double doors, a flagpole was removed, and additional egress doors were added. The historic windows (sashes and glazing) appear to have been preserved.

Resource 6 - 22 Chenevert Street (Contributing Building)

Gould's Wet Wash Laundry

Ca. 1910, architect/builder unknown

This small brick commercial building, now known as Irma's Original Restaurant, is located on the north corner of Block 167, at the intersection of Chenevert and Ruiz Streets (Map 2, Figures 17-18, Photos 29-31). It faces Chenevert Street with a very small setback from the sidewalk. A metal fence lines the northeast side and the rear of the property. Single entry pedestrian gates are present at the front (northwest) façade, between this building and 20 Chenevert (Resource 7), and on Ruiz at the one-story addition's kitchen entrance.

The two-story building is constructed of brick, laid in a running bond pattern, with a ca. 1940 stucco one-story addition in the rear, both painted pale red. All doors, windows, and balconies are covered with decorative metal security bars. On the ground floor, the double-door primary entrance is centered on the front façade facing Chenevert Street. The entry doors are each framed by wood around a single vertical glass pane. Bay windows flank the entrance and a black fabric canopy bearing the name "Irma's" spans the ground-floor windows and doors. On the second floor of the front façade, two nonhistoric balconies align with the ground-floor windows and also feature black fabric canopies. The balconies appear to be non-functional, but each can be accessed via slightly inset double doors that replaced historic windows (Figure 17).¹¹ A neon sign above the balconies spells "Irma's Original" in script atop a projecting brick belt course painted navy blue, which wraps the northwest and northeast elevations. The building

¹⁰ A 1969 warehouse addition to the National Biscuit Company Building was substantially altered ca. 2009 rendering it a separate noncontributing parking garage.

¹¹ The second-floor window openings appear to be original, or at least historic-age.

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has a flat roof with a modest parapet. A modern metal sign, with hours of operation, projects diagonally from the north corner of the front façade and is supported by a vertical pole.

On the northeast (Ruiz Street) elevation, the ground floor contains a canopied window, and to the left, a wooden awning that leads to a side door (Photo 31). There are also two unfilled transom windows with projective brick sills. On the second floor, above the ground-floor canopied window, a nonhistoric nine-over-six window is slightly inset with a brick windowsill. A nonhistoric balcony centered on the second floor is like those on the front façade. This appears to be a historic window opening (Figure 18). Along the one-story addition is a central entrance with a red wooden door with six raised vertical panels.

The rear (southeast) elevation of the one-story addition is not visible from the street. The two-story rear elevation is partially visible, with three windows of varying sizes on the second floor. The roof of the one-story addition is flat. An iron fire escape on the southwest elevation leads to a canopied second-floor entrance. The view of this elevation is partially obstructed by the building at 20 Chenevert (Resource 7). The restaurant occupies the entire first floor, with a very small kitchen, restrooms, and a small bar at the back (southeast) of the room. A hyphen connecting the building to 20 Chenevert is located at the rear.¹²

Resource 7 - 20 Chenevert Street (Contributing Building)

Jennings Machine Shop

Ca. 1950, builder unknown

The metal building at 20 Chenevert Street is owned and occupied by Irma's Original Restaurant (Map 2, Figure 19, Photo 29-30, 32). Although it was originally constructed as a freestanding building and functioned separately in the historic period, today 20 Chenevert is connected by a hyphen to 22 Chenevert. This former industrial building is one-story, metal-framed, and clad with corrugated sheet metal, with a front-facing gabled roof. It faces northwest across Chenevert Street. A nonhistoric double door is present on the far-right side of the front façade; the majority of this elevation is covered with a painted mural. An original sliding garage door can be closed to cover the front double doors (Figure 19). The side and rear elevations are not painted. The southwest elevation is partially obscured by a fence and vegetation, but an opening leads to the restaurant's outdoor seating. Nonhistoric openings on the southwest elevation are a mix of fixed French doors and single-pane clerestory windows on the upper wall. Despite some changes, the building retains its original appearance reflected in the intact design and materials.

Alterations

The setting has been altered by the loss of many former commercial and industrial buildings that once occupied the immediate vicinity, and the subsequent redevelopment of those lots either with nonhistoric buildings or parking lots. Common alterations to the resources in the district include rear and side additions, replacement of windows and doors, painting of some exterior brick and metal, addition of nonhistoric signage and balconies, infilled openings and the creation of new openings, as well as the removal of some canopies and the loading dock on the northwest elevation of 1701 Commerce (Resource 3).

¹² The properties were constructed separately and were only connected by a hyphen after 2000. They did not share a historic functional relationship during the period of significance.

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Integrity

The buildings and additions within the Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District retain sufficient integrity to convey their architectural and historical significance.

Location. The buildings in this district remain in their original locations, centered around Commerce Street, Houston's primary commercial and trade thoroughfare.

Setting. Integrity of setting has been severely compromised. Industrial buildings that previously occupied blocks surrounding this historic district have been demolished, those city blocks were redeveloped, and the railyards immediately to the south have been removed. Even so, the presence of Buffalo Bayou to the north, IH-69 to the east, along the former alignment of the International & Great Northern Railroad, and the retained entry hall to the former Union Station (now incorporated into a baseball stadium) continue to convey some of the historic commercial and industrial character of this part of Houston.

Design & Workmanship. The exterior brick design and general rectangular form of the buildings is intact reflecting historic appearances. The most common alteration is the replacement of doors and doorway surrounds. In the late 1970s-1990s, most of the buildings were vacant and windows were boarded up, and it is likely that glass panes were broken. As a result, the glazing in many windows was replaced, although the window frames and sashes appear to be mostly original. Despite these changes, the original fenestration patterns remain as do some of the original loading platforms. Although the buildings are utilitarian in nature, they retain the minimal architectural detailing present at the time of their construction. Three of the primary buildings and one addition were designed by well-known architects. The National Biscuit Company Building (Resource 5), designed by Nabisco's staff architect Albert G. Zimmerman, retains the main entry door surrounded by a half-round arch of brick, as well as off-white terracotta and brick accents. The 1920 Pittsburgh Plate Glass addition (Resource 1), by Alfred C. Finn, retains the parapet with Neoclassical cartouches that were a trademark of his practice. While interior spaces have been adapted for new uses, high ceilings and structural support columns remain; other remnants of these buildings' former industrial uses are present in some locations.

Materials. Concrete floors and columns, brick and hollow clay tile walls, and steel windows remain intact in these industrial buildings and additions. Jennings Machine Shop (Resource 7) retains its corrugated metal siding and original form allowing it to convey its historic function.

Feeling & Association. Despite loss and redevelopment in this part of downtown Houston, the buildings in the proposed historic district have been or are being repurposed for new uses, they continue to clearly read as industrial buildings. The intact collection of historic resources that make up the historic district retain the feeling of an early-to-mid 20th century commercial and industrial area connected to vital transportation routes within a major downtown. The district remains associated with the expansion of Houston's commercial and industrial development through the mid-1970s.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

COMMERCE (local level of significance)

ARCHITECTURE (local level of significance)

Period of Significance

1910-1976

Significant Dates

1910

Significant Person

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Finn, Albert C.

Northrop Jr., J.W.

Sullivan, Maurice, J.

Zimmerman, Albert G.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District is located on the northeast side of downtown Houston between the south bank of Buffalo Bayou and the former location of Houston's Union Station and railyards. The early 20th century discovery of oil and the expansion of the Port of Houston supported the growth of Houston's economy, as well as the broader development of the warehouse and industrial district. Railroad connectivity and proximity to the Houston Ship Channel allowed for the rise and evolution of commercial and industrial facilities concentrated on the north and south banks of Buffalo Bayou. The Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Commerce for its important role in the commercial and industrial development and expansion of Houston through the mid-to-late 20th century. The rare intact buildings that make up the historic district serve as the last remaining concentration of the once-numerous warehouses and manufacturing facilities and related businesses that historically lined the south side of Buffalo Bayou. Over the years, the buildings housed the production and manufacturing of wagons, glass, paint and varnish, farm equipment, and paper, as well as grocery storage and appliance sales. The only food production company, the National Biscuit Company's (N.B.C. or Nabisco)'s southwest regional headquarters, served as an important anchor for the area. The commercial laundry and the machine shop reflected the diverse small businesses that supported Houston manufacturing. Initially serviced by boat and rail and later by trucking, the companies produced, stored, and distributed products to local and regional markets through the mid-1970s, when the district began to decline. The historic district is also nominated to the National Register under Criterion C in the area of Architecture for its intact collection of early 20th century brick commercial and industrial buildings, representing the evolution of industrial architecture and the influence of popular styles. Prominent architects designed buildings in the district including Albert Zimmerman, Alfred Finn, J.W. Northrop Jr., and Maurice Sullivan. The period of significance begins in 1910 with the construction of the earliest intact resource, and ends in 1976, in recognition of the district's continued commercial and industrial significance to the 50-year point.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Project Background

The Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District is located on the northeast side of downtown Houston, Texas, and on the south side of Buffalo Bayou (aka "SSBB", as commonly used in legal property descriptions). Commerce Street was a major roadway in Houston, terminating to the northwest at a bridge over Buffalo Bayou, and to the southeast at Milby Street, which marks the dividing line between the early Houston town plat grid and East Downtown, also known as the Second Ward (an early city political subdivision).

The warehouse district in and adjacent to downtown Houston has been of interest to architectural historians and historic preservationists since the late 1980s. The earliest inventory located to date was architectural historian Stephen Fox's "architectural tour of the warehouse district" article, published in the Spring 1987 issue of *Cite* magazine. The annotated list of 45 items covered an area roughly bounded by IH-10, Franklin Street, Navigation Boulevard,

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Runnels Street, and Louisiana Street (Map 8).¹³ Fox noted that “(w)hat is surprising about the warehouse district is how much still remains of its industrial vernacular buildings, rail trackage, and brick-paved streets.”¹⁴ A wide variety of resources were included in the tour: three bridges, one underpass, two cafés, a church, eight blocks of shotgun worker housing, a railroad freight depot, a rail freight office building, three municipal infrastructure buildings (a water pumping station, incinerator, and electric power plant), a service station, and a block of Elysian Street beneath an elevated highway. Also included was the 1930 Merchants and Manufacturers Building at 1 North Main (NRHP 1980). That building, perhaps the largest extant historic industrial building in Houston—does not appear inside any other proposed warehouse historic district boundaries, then or now. The remaining 30 items on the tour were warehouses and manufacturing buildings.¹⁵ Since 1987, 17 of the 45 items on this list have been demolished, including 12 industrial buildings, all of the houses, the service station, the railroad depot and the rail freight office building, and the electric power plant building.

In 1991, preservation consultant Barrie Scardino completed a historic resources survey of the industrial buildings in downtown Houston. The survey area contained 182 buildings and structures, including 127 warehouses; 59 were considered at that time to be eligible or potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the period of significance for which ended in 1940. Most of those warehouses were one or two stories tall, with flat roofs, and often occupied an entire city block. Their designs were described as “predominant(ly) Chicago School-influenced commercial style.” Historic-age warehouses were constructed of brick and/or reinforced concrete in order to reduce the risk of fire.¹⁶ The survey further identified an additional 68 warehouses built after 1940.¹⁷

Scardino and Bruce Jensen (then with the Texas Historical Commission), subsequently developed a draft Multiple Property Listing titled “Historic Industrial Facilities in Central Houston, Texas” based on the results of the survey which included a historic context spanning from 1876-1945. While most of the buildings in the “warehouse district” were used for storage and distribution purposes, a few also contained manufacturing or processing facilities; these included the National Biscuit Company Building at 15 Chenevert (Resource 5) and the Eller Wagon Works Building at 101 Crawford (Resource 1). The 1992 documentation also noted that the Katy Café building (Resource 6, also known as Gould’s Wet Wash Laundry) was “one of a few remaining service-type buildings that are significant in the warehouse district for the integral role they played in the history of the area. Restaurants and some hotels were scattered among the warehouses of the area from the early days, but few remain in continuous operation because so many warehouses are vacant today.”¹⁸ Jensen prepared a draft “Warehouse Historic District” nomination to the National Register that contained 116 resources: 63 contributing buildings, 2 contributing structures (highway bridges), 50 noncontributing buildings, and 1 noncontributing structure (also a highway bridge). The proposed historic district as well as

¹³ The portion of the warehouse district north of IH-10, identified in later surveys, was not included in this initial group.

¹⁴ No railroad tracks or brick-paved streets are extant today.

¹⁵ Stephen Fox, “The Warehouse District: An Architectural Tour,” *Cite: The Architecture and Design Review of Houston* (Houston: Rice Design Alliance, Rice University), 17: Spring 1987, 14-15.
<https://hdl.handle.net/1911/117270>.

¹⁶ Scardino and Jensen, *Manufacturing and Wholesale Distribution in Industrial Houston*, 7. Bruce Jensen, “Houston Warehouse District,” National Register of Historic Places registration form, based on research by Barrie Scardino for the City of Houston, June 1992, 5.

¹⁷ Scardino and Jensen, *Manufacturing and Wholesale Distribution in Industrial Houston*, 2-4.

¹⁸ Jensen, “Houston Warehouse District,” 8; Most of the remaining resources are located on the north side of the bayou.

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some individual buildings under consideration for NR listing were evaluated under the historic context included in the draft Multiple Property Listing.¹⁹ However, more than 50% of property owners formally objected to the proposed nomination, and the historic resources were never listed in the National Register. Of the 116 resources within the 1992 draft district nomination, 68 (more than 58%) have been demolished.²⁰

A *2016 Re-Survey of the Warehouse Historic District* was prepared for the Harris County Flood Control District by SWCA Environmental Consultants. By 2016, much of the larger commercial and industrial area under consideration for NR listing in 1992 had been demolished, with only intact pockets remaining. SWCA's 2016 report identified two intact potential National Register historic districts: a Houston Warehouse Historic District, on the north side of Buffalo Bayou with discontinuous sections both north and south of IH-10, and a Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District (subject historic district) on the south side of the Buffalo Bayou (Maps 5-7, 9; Figures 1-5). Due to demolitions and redevelopment between 1992 and 2016, the number of resources decreased from 182 to 133, of which only 73 were of historic age. Thirty-one of those were determined to be individually eligible for the National Register. This included the Eller Wagon Works building (Resource 1).²¹

The Texas Historical Commission concurred with SWCA's 2016 findings that both a "Houston Warehouse District" on the north side of Buffalo Bayou and a "Commerce Street Warehouse District" on the south side of the bayou were eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for Commerce/Industry and Criterion C for Architecture.²² The boundaries of the Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District proposed in 2016 included all buildings in this nomination, as well as the three buildings that occupied Block 107, across Commerce Street from the Eller Wagon Works Building (Resource 1). Block 107 contained the Houston Gas & Fuel Company Warehouse at 1601 Commerce; the 1940 Grocer Supply Company Warehouse at 11-19 N. Jackson; and the Grocer Supply Company garage at 1600 Ruiz (Compare Maps 9-10 to Maps 1-2).²³ All three buildings were demolished ca. 2018 in preparation for the site's redevelopment as a full-block apartment complex. As a result, the resources included in this nomination comprise all the remaining historic warehouse, manufacturing, and service buildings in this area.

Despite the unsuccessful attempts in the past and significant loss and redevelopment, this nomination represents local efforts to preserve the remaining concentration of historic fabric in the Commerce Street Warehouse District area. The Part 1 Federal Tax Credit application for 1701 Commerce Street (Resource 3) was approved by NPS in 2024, confirming its eligibility within the current iteration of the Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District.²⁴

¹⁹ Jensen, "Houston Warehouse District," 2-5; Scardino and Jensen, *Manufacturing and Wholesale Distribution in Industrial Houston*, 2-4.

²⁰ Seventeen were removed for highway expansion (mostly IH-69). Twenty-two of the properties are now surface parking lots, nine are vacant lots, and 11 have been redeveloped with new multi-family housing (condominiums or apartments).

²¹ Anna Mod, et al., *2016 Re-Survey of the Warehouse Historic District*, prepared for the Harris County Flood Control District by SWCA Environmental Consultants, Houston, Texas, 2016, 24-25, 30-31.

²² Sources cited in those reports are included in the bibliography for this nomination; In July 2025, the authors completed a reconnaissance survey of the 39 buildings recommended in 2016 in the boundaries of the "Houston Warehouse District" on the north side of Buffalo Bayou. This area includes most of the surviving resources previously identified in the 1992 nomination, and it appears only 5 contributing buildings were lost. This area may have been relatively well-preserved because the buildings were generally smaller and further removed from the downtown core.

²³ Mod, et al., *2016 Re-Survey of the Warehouse Historic District*, 27.

²⁴ Steph McDougal et al., "Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District," Part 1 Historic Tax Credit application,

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Commerce in Houston (1900-1976)

The city of Houston was founded at the confluence of Buffalo Bayou and White Oak Bayou, where the waterway was relatively wide and shallow, creating a natural turning basin for ships traveling from the Gulf of Mexico through Galveston Bay. The Houston town site was platted in a grid, oriented to the south side of Buffalo Bayou, with eleven streets running from northwest-to-southeast and five cross streets running northeast-to-southwest. The city quickly expanded to the south and east, as well as north of the bayou.²⁵ Buffalo Bayou, which stretched 50 miles inland, initially served as Texas' primary means of shipping and trade, with steamboats carrying passengers and cargo between Houston and Galveston, through the shallow waters of Galveston Bay. Houston subsequently developed as a trading center, with goods shipping from or destined for growing Texas communities passing through its port.²⁶ In the early 1900s, the dredging of shipping channels within Buffalo Bayou and Galveston Bay enabled larger ships to bypass Galveston altogether.²⁷

Houston also was the terminus for multiple railroads that stretched across Texas and became the hub of a regional transportation network that connected southeast Texas with markets in the eastern half of the United States. While the production of cotton, sugar, lumber, and cattle drove the Texas economy and utilized this transportation network, Houston's economy was also sustained by the railroads, banks, warehouses, and shipping companies required to support the distribution of those products.²⁸ The presence of readily available transport further encouraged the development of industrial and manufacturing sectors in Houston.²⁹

After the "Great Storm of 1900" hurricane devastated Galveston, Houston was left unrivaled as the primary shipping center in southeast Texas. In 1901, the discovery of oil at Spindletop, Texas, near Beaumont, further fueled the rapid growth of Houston's population and its economy. Many newly chartered oil companies chose to make Houston their headquarters, and the influx of oil money into the city enabled the Port of Houston to continue its expansion.³⁰ However, the ship channel into Buffalo Bayou remained fairly shallow until it was dredged to a depth of 25 feet in 1914, which enabled oceangoing cargo vessels to reach within five miles of downtown Houston. The infrastructure established by the deep-water port enabled Houston's previous success as a center for the cotton trade to similarly support the export of oil. As the demand for petroleum increased in the early twentieth century, refineries for petroleum products were established along the banks of the Ship Channel, and the area was transformed into a major industrial and distribution center for these and many other products. For example, factories for Armour Fertilizer and Texas Portland Cement were built along the Ship Channel in 1914 and 1916, respectively. During the 1920s, more than 50 new businesses located there, including American Made Flour (1922), the Carnegie Steel Warehouse (1926), and the Texas Chemical Company (manufacturers of fertilizer and sulfuric acid). The Port Terminal Railroad

Evaluation of Significance, approved by NPS September 3, 2024.

²⁵ Mod, et al., *2016 Re-Survey of the Warehouse Historic District*, 3.

²⁶ Mod, et al., *2016 Re-Survey of the Warehouse Historic District*, 3.

²⁷ Mod, et al., *2016 Re-Survey of the Warehouse Historic District*, 4.

²⁸ Mod, et al., *2016 Re-Survey of the Warehouse Historic District*, 5.

²⁹ Barrie Scardino and Bruce Jensen, *Manufacturing and Wholesale Distribution in Industrial Houston, 1876-1945*, 5.

³⁰ Mod, et al., *2016 Re-Survey of the Warehouse Historic District*, 5-6.

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Association, created in 1924, provided rail car services to channel-adjacent industries. In addition, cotton continued to be shipped through Houston in tremendous quantities.³¹

During World War II, Houston shipyards retooled to meet the country's defense needs. The U.S. Congress subsequently authorized federal funding to expand the Houston Ship Channel to a depth of 36 feet and a width of 400 feet across Galveston Bay, a project completed in 1952. These developments, along with the construction of the interstate highway system through and around Houston and an aggressive campaign of annexation, continued to drive the city's growth through the 1950s and 1960s. Highway construction through established neighborhoods also significantly impacted the warehouse district on the north side of Buffalo Bayou; IH-10 bisected the area during the 1960s.³² The right-of-way for US-59 was cleared along the route of the International & Great Northern Railroad alignment in 1950 and the roadway constructed between 1953-1955.³³ The Eastex Freeway was expanded in the 1990s.³⁴ US-59 is now co-signed with IH-69.

The resulting sprawl of residential and commercial areas around Houston's historic core also included the migration of industrial functions out of the downtown area. In some cases, this was encouraged or forced by city officials: for example, in 1956, the City of Houston passed an ordinance prohibiting any new construction of meatpacking facilities within the city limits.³⁵ However, the relocation of industrial facilities was likely primarily driven by changes in the transportation of goods during the mid-20th century. The trucking industry became regulated by the federal government in the 1930s when the purview of the Interstate Commerce Commission was expanded beyond railroads to include all common carriers, weakening the railroad monopolies and bolstering independent trucking.³⁶ The U.S. Interstate Highway System was developed starting in the 1950s, which directly affected Houston as described above. Finally, the evolution of eighteen-wheeled tractor trailers (aka "semi trucks") after World War II and the development of more powerful truck engines permitted the hauling of larger trailers, which created the need for large open spaces for loading and unloading trailers. Such sites could only be found outside the downtown area.

The Houston Warehouse District, North and South of Buffalo Bayou (1900-1976)

The City of Houston established political subdivisions, called wards, in the mid-1800s. The north side of Buffalo Bayou, east of its confluence with White Oak Bayou, was part of the Fifth Ward. It was the first area where a concentration of warehouses and industrial facilities was constructed, and by 1900, it also was known as "the factory district." Second Ward, on the south side of Buffalo Bayou, was known as "the wholesale district" at that time, but those distinctions soon blurred.³⁷ Brick and concrete industrial and warehouse buildings sprawled along both banks of Buffalo Bayou between Main Street to the west, Burnett Street and the Southern Pacific railyards to the north, and Commerce Street to the south, continuing east to Jensen

³¹ Mod, et al., *2016 Re-Survey of the Warehouse Historic District*, 6.

³² Mod, et al., *2016 Re-Survey of the Warehouse Historic District*, 7.

³³ "Record of State Control Numbers, Sections, and Jobs," US Highway 59, Harris County, Control No. 177, Section 11, Sheet 1 of 3, provided by the Texas Department of Transportation Environmental Affairs Division.

³⁴ Erik Slotboom, *Houston Freeways: A Historical and Visual Journey* (self-published, 2003), 231.

³⁵ "Slaughter Rule Easing Backed by Councilmen," *Houston Chronicle*, May 17, 1956, 11. "City Abattoir Zoning Law Before Council," *Houston Chronicle*, January 23, 1957, 12.

³⁶ "Interstate Commerce Commission," United States Federal Register website, <https://www.federalregister.gov/agencies/interstate-commerce-commission>.

³⁷ Mod, et al., *2016 Re-Survey of the Warehouse Historic District*, 9.

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Drive.³⁸ The completion of a bridge over Buffalo Bayou at San Jacinto Street, in 1914, further connected the two sides of the district.³⁹ Before World War I, commercial and residential properties occupied about half of the warehouse district, but a post-war building boom resulted in the area's redevelopment with primarily storage and distribution-related buildings. During the 1920s, as many warehouses were constructed in a ten-year period as had been built during the previous three decades.⁴⁰

The evolution of transportation networks continued to redefine the warehouse district. The movement of goods to and from Buffalo Bayou and the Port of Houston, as well as the growing railyards on both sides of the bayou, supported the development of a local trucking industry and the construction of warehouses with large concrete loading docks. As early as 1890 and as late as 1969, Commerce Street accommodated horse-drawn vehicles or automobiles as well as rail service.⁴¹ According to an 1890 map of rail lines in Houston, the Houston and Magnolia Park Railroad line (later the short-lived Magnolia Park & Belt Railroad) ran the length of Commerce Street before crossing Buffalo Bayou, just past the turning basin at its confluence with White Oak Bayou, to reach the Grand Terminal Depot (Map 4). By 1907, the International & Great Northern Railroad had taken over that alignment and was operating two tracks, as well as spurs and sidings, along Commerce Street in this area; the street itself was graveled (Figure 6). In 1924, a third track was added, traveling west from Jackson Street (Map 5). The railroad tracks were still present on Commerce Street in 1969. Just a few blocks to the east, additional rail lines for the International & Great Northern Railroad, Houston & West Texas Railroad, San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railroad, and Texas & Western Railroad traveled south through Houston along what is now the alignment of IH-69. After interstate highways IH-10 and IH-69 were constructed to the north and east, respectively, new warehouse and industrial buildings were constructed farther east along Buffalo Bayou. A small rail switching yard is still present on Commerce Street well to the east of this historic district, but most of the other Commerce Street railroad tracks have been removed (Map 3).

Early manufacturers in the larger warehouse district (north and south side of Buffalo Bayou) predominantly produced iron and steel equipment, parts, hardware, and tools, wooden products and equipment, food products, chemicals and related supplies, printing and supplies, and specialty products.⁴²

- Iron and steel equipment, parts, hardware, and tools:
 - Peden Iron & Steel Co., multiple buildings, 600-800 blocks San Jacinto Street
 - Erie City Iron Works Warehouse, 1302 Nance
 - Oil Tool Manufacturing Co., 1318 Nance
 - Gulf Coast Implement Co., 1021 N. San Jacinto
 - Garrett Brass & Machine Co., 1114 Wood

³⁸ Mod, et al., *2016 Re-Survey of the Warehouse Historic District*, 6.

³⁹ Scardino and Jensen, *Manufacturing and Wholesale Distribution in Industrial Houston*, 23.

⁴⁰ Scardino and Jensen, *Manufacturing and Wholesale Distribution in Industrial Houston*, 5.

⁴¹ Mod, et al., *2016 Re-Survey of the Warehouse Historic District*, 4.

⁴² Jensen, "Houston Warehouse District," 6-33; This list includes the names of historic businesses that once existed to provide broader commercial context for the historic warehouse district, both north and south of Buffalo Bayou. Nominated resources within the district are identified by resource number and address below, but the historic names differ depending on commercial or industrial use at different times during the period of significance. The historic use of each building by various companies over the years is described in greater detail later in this section.

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- Wooden products and equipment:
 - **Eller Wagon Works, 101 Crawford (Resource 1)**
 - Houston Sash & Door Co., 801 McKee and 813 McKee
 - South Texas Implement and Vehicle Co., 902 Wood
- Food products:
 - **National Biscuit Co., 15 Chenevert (Resource 5)** and 1719 Commerce
 - International Coffee Co., 1019 Commerce
 - Star Bottling Co., 1016 N. San Jacinto
- Chemicals and related supplies:
 - Chain Battery System, batteries and chemical supplies, 2019 Franklin
 - Germalene Chemical Co., 1010 N. San Jacinto
 - James Bute Paint Co., 701 William
- Printing and supplies:
 - Howard Flint Ink Company, suppliers to printers, newspapers, etc., 1819 Commerce
 - **Wilson Printing Company/J. L. Jones Warehouse, cardboard boxes, 1701 Commerce (Resource 3)**
 - Graham Paper Co., printing and paper products, 1401 Sterrett
- Specialty products:
 - **Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co., 101 Crawford (Resource 1)**
 - N. O. Nelson Manufacturing Co., plumbing and heating supplies, 1701 Franklin
 - Tennison Manufacturing Co., sheet metal products, 1910 Franklin
 - Gribble Stamp & Stencil, 121 St. Emanuel

Storage and distribution facilities within the larger warehouse district included wholesale grocers, wholesale meatpackers, electrical supply wholesale/retail, furniture, and general warehousing and shipping.⁴³

- Wholesale grocers:
 - Gordon Sewall & Co., 1118 Commerce
 - Grocers Supply Co; 11 N. Jackson
 - Desel-Boettcher Co./Henke & Pillot, 907 San Jacinto and 800 block San Jacinto
- Wholesale meat packers:
 - Texas Packing Co., 1119 Commerce
 - Main Packing Co., 1601 Commerce
- Electrical supply wholesale/retail:
 - Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Co., 1510 Commerce and 1903 Ruiz
 - Graybar Electric Co., 2005 Commerce
 - **Western Electric Co., 100 Jackson (Resource 2)**
- Furniture:
 - S.A.M. Office Furniture, 1901 Commerce

⁴³ Jensen, "Houston Warehouse District," 6-33.

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- **Purse & Company, 15 Chenevert (Resource 5), 1701 Commerce (Resource 3)**
- T. E. Swann Furniture Co., 1101 Wood
- General warehousing and shipping:
 - Central Warehouse & Forwarding Co., 1201-1207 Commerce
 - Eula Moore Co., three warehouses on Walnut Street
 - Missouri Kansas & Texas freight terminal, 1811 Ruiz
 - Union Transfer Co. Warehouse, 1113 Vine
 - Patrick Transfer Co. Warehouse, 802 Walnut

Some companies had offices with attached warehouses, and the district also included a few businesses that directly served warehouse district workers.⁴⁴

- Offices:
 - Houston Oil and Fuel Company (United Gas Corp.) offices with attached warehouse, 1517 Commerce
 - Covington Distributing Co., electrical appliances, 34 N. Hamilton
- Businesses directly serving warehouse district workers (restaurants, grocers, barbers, service stations)⁴⁵
 - Magnolia Café, 719-721 Franklin
 - **Katy Café, 22 Chenevert (Resource 6)**
 - Henke's, 1200 N. Rothwell
 - Tony's Barber Shop, 1204 Nance
 - Shell Petroleum Service Station, 1619 Franklin
 - Hefflin Rubber Co. Service Station, 1001 N. San Jacinto⁴⁶

The warehouse district on both sides of Buffalo Bayou was active until the mid-1970s. Research did not reveal a specific reason for the warehouse district's decline. However, Houston's highway system—including Interstate Highway 10, the Katy Freeway, Gulf Freeway/IH-45, US-59 (now IH-69), and the "inner loop" (IH-610)—were built starting in the late 1950s and substantially completed by the early 1970s. In many places, these roadways paralleled and/or replaced former railroad alignments.⁴⁷ It seems the expansion of the highway system, reliance on trucking, and relocation of commercial and industrial facilities to outlying areas likely caused a decline in both rail traffic in downtown Houston and the warehouse district overall by the mid-1970s.

Trends in American Industrial Architecture, 1900-1950s⁴⁸

Fire prevention was a primary concern in factory and warehouse design and construction in the United States during the nineteenth century. This led to the construction of factories and

⁴⁴ Jensen, "Houston Warehouse District," 6-33.

⁴⁵ In the early days, some homes were also scattered throughout the otherwise industrial area.

⁴⁶ Jensen, "Houston Warehouse District," 6-33.

⁴⁷ James Glassman, "How to Spot the Remnants of Houston's Rails," *Houstonia*, August 13, 2024, <https://www.houstoniamag.com/news-and-city-life/2024/08/houston-railroad-remnants>. Erik Slotboom, "I-10 West Katy Freeway," *Houston Freeways: A Historical and Visual Journey*, 2003, <https://www.texasfreeway.com/houston/i10west/>.

⁴⁸ These dates correspond to the build dates of resources within the district. The last building was built in circa 1950.

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warehouses in the eastern part of the country with relatively noncombustible materials and methods such as cast iron or wrought iron structural members with stone or brick arched walls and heavy timber flooring. This experimentation in design resulted in varying degrees of success.⁴⁹

During the early twentieth century, the development of new kinds of steel and alloys—as well as Portland cement, lightweight aggregates, and reinforced concrete—made possible sweeping changes in the construction of large buildings with open interior spaces.⁵⁰ The innovation of structural steel “skeleton” framing with exterior cladding was pioneered in Chicago, making possible the construction of skyscrapers or high rises whose heights would not have been possible with load-bearing masonry walls. Aside from their height, these buildings were defined by their organization into multiple floors and designs that optimized the space available and illumination by natural or artificial light. Large windows were often comprised of multiple units assembled into a single opening: e.g., a large, fixed center window flanked by two smaller, operable units. Building heights required the installation of passenger and freight elevators, as well as fireproof or resistant materials and egress.⁵¹ These technologies led to the development of specialized building contractors who applied their goods and services to less-tall buildings as well. For example, the National Fireproofing Company of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was engaged to install their products in the National Biscuit Company at 15 Chenevert Street (Resource 5), and mass-produced “Chicago style” tripartite windows (albeit with hinged center “hopper” sections, rather than fixed panes) were employed in many of the buildings in this historic district.

The use of reinforced concrete had an even greater impact on industrial buildings during the early twentieth century. In both factory and warehouse construction, reinforced concrete framing with brick and tile curtain walls benefited from the increasing availability of standardized building materials. Concrete was fireproof and easy to produce on-site from locally available raw materials. It was also more durable than wood for flooring and better at dampening vibrations. While earlier buildings constructed with reinforced concrete utilized prefabricated beams and girders, supported by iron or steel columns, by 1920 the preferred method involved pouring full concrete slabs in place, which served as both ceiling and floor. These slabs were supported by concrete columns with flared “mushroom” capitals. Industrial buildings constructed in this fashion were generally rectangular, with the concrete frames exposed at the exterior walls, repeating bays with large windows, and minimal (if any) ornamentation. The full-slab construction enabled these buildings to maintain open (and thus, flexible) interior spaces with high ceilings.⁵² Before the late 1950s, the use of concrete in exterior walls was reserved, however, for “only ... the most utilitarian buildings.”⁵³ Exposed concrete frames infilled with brick

⁴⁹ Sara R. Wermiel, “America’s 19th-Century British-Style Fireproof Factories,” *IA. The Journal of the Society of Industrial Archeology* 27, 2 (2001), 23-36.; I. Wouters & M. Mollaert, “Assessing 19th century ‘fireproof’ buildings,” Department of Architecture, Free University of Brussels (V. U.B.), Belgium, *WIT Transactions on the Built Environment* 55, 2001, online at <https://witpress.com/Secure/elibrary/papers/STR01/STR01022FU.pdf>;

⁵⁰ Michael Tomlan, “Building Modern America,” *Twentieth-Century Building Materials: History and Conservation*, Thomas C. Jester, ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Company, 1995), 36-37.

⁵¹ Rosemarie Hall Bletter, “The Invention of the Skyscraper: Notes on Its Diverse Histories,” *Assemblage* 2, February 1987, 110-117; Jane Bonshek, “The Skyscraper: A Catalyst of Change in the Chicago Construction Industries, 1882-1892,” *Construction History* 4, 1988, 53-74.

⁵² Amy E. Slaton, *Reinforced Concrete and the Modernization of American Building, 1900-1930* (Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 134-37, quoted from Randy Pace, et. al, “Cheek-Neal Coffee Company Building, Houston, Texas” nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 2015.

⁵³ Amy E. Slaton et. al, “Reinforced Concrete,” *Twentieth-Century Building Materials: History and Conservation*, Thomas C. Jester, ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Company, 1995), 97.

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walls, therefore, are character-defining features of industrial buildings seen in the Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District.

The Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District illustrates the evolution of industrial architecture and the progression of Houston's warehouse construction technology during the first half of the 20th century. According to the 1991 historic resource survey, the warehouse district at that time contained three distinct construction types:

- Brick load-bearing walls with heavy timber frames and segmentally arched windows, such as the 1911 Eller Wagon Works Building (Resource 1)
- Reinforced concrete frames (often exposed) with brick infill and large industrial windows, such as the 1910 National Biscuit Co. Building (Resource 5); the 1920 Pittsburgh Plate Glass addition to the former Eller Wagon Works building (Resource 1); and the two nearly identical warehouses at 1701 Commerce (1927; Resource 3) and 100 Jackson (1915; Resource 2)
- Poured concrete or hollow tile construction, covered in plaster or brick and sometimes detailed with raised banding

Other character defining features seen in the commercial and warehouse buildings within the nominated boundary also reflect typical early 20th century warehouse design. These include one to six stories in height, red brick, multi-pane windows, largely utilitarian designs, concrete loading docks, and freight openings. Ornamentation was sparse but visible on a few of the buildings. The National Biscuit Company (Resource 5; Figures 25, 27), designed by Nabisco's staff architect Albert G. Zimmerman, features a main entry door surrounded by a half-round arch of brick, as well as off-white terracotta, and brick accents. The 1920 Pittsburgh Plate Glass addition (Resource 1), by Alfred C. Finn, features a parapet with Neoclassical cartouches (Photo 8). The 1929 Pittsburgh Plate Glass addition (Resource 1) and the ca. 1937 Grocery Supply Company addition to the Western Electric Co. Building (Resource 2) are both one-story brick additions (Photos 6, 16-17). Their low heights and simple designs reflect the economic downturn suffered by American industry during the Great Depression. Since they were additions, they featured an even more utilitarian design than the adjacent original construction.

The Gould's Wet Wash Laundry at 22 Chenevert (Resource 6) was designed as a two-part commercial block building typically found in a downtown (Photo 29). Jennings Machine Shop at 20 Chenevert is a small-scale metal building, also a fairly typical example of mid-20th century machine shop design used for light industrial purposes.

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The Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District, as proposed in 2016, was bounded by Ruiz Street to the northeast and Crawford Street to the northwest; the north-facing blockface between Crawford and Jackson, then Commerce Street to the southwest, with the addition of 20 and 22 Chenevert (Map 10). The current proposed historic district retains these boundaries, except for the removal of the new City Lofts building at 21 Chenevert and the new large apartment building constructed at the corner of Jackson and Commerce (Maps 1-2, 5-7, Figures 1-5). The historic-age buildings represent the previously numerous warehouses and manufacturing facilities that once lined the south side of Buffalo Bayou. The buildings along Commerce Street, with their large character-defining loading docks, remain oriented toward the rail line that historically ran east west along Commerce Street before the city's industries

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relocated to the north and east, beyond the downtown area (Maps 4-7, Figure 6). Businesses in this district primarily served local customers, except for Eller Wagon Works, which also sold wagons in the eastern United States, and National Biscuit Company building, which manufactured baked goods for a regional market.

Historical information on the businesses within the historic district boundary is included below.

Resource 1 – Eller Wagon Works Building, 101 Crawford Street, 1911⁵⁴

Frank Eller and his son Homer were blacksmiths who also built carriages and wagons, doing business as the Frank Eller Company at 501-503 Preston Avenue, near Buffalo Bayou west of the turning basin at White Oak Bayou. In 1909, the Houston City Directory listed the Eller Wagon Works Company as one of 11 carriagemakers in the city. The business manufactured horse-drawn carriages, buggies, and wagons, and repaired automobiles. Eller also built the tank wagons used by the Texas Company (Texaco) for their oil distribution and deliveries. The company purchased Lots 9-10 in Block 106 of the Houston townsite in 1910. That spring, Eller hired contractor C. C. Wenzel to construct a large, three-story factory building, measuring 100 feet square, at the corner of Commerce and Crawford Streets. The building was completed in 1911 and included a wagon shop, blacksmith shops, paint rooms, and other mechanical departments (Figure 6). According to advertisements of the time, Eller Wagon Works was the “largest wagon manufacturers in the South” (Figure 30) and did not just serve local markets but also shipped custom “business wagons” to customers in the eastern United States (Figure 31). Eller only occupied the building for a few years, however; by 1913, Frank Eller & Son had relocated to 810-812 Walnut Street (no longer extant), on the north side of the bayou, and sold the 101 Crawford property to Texas Wagon Works.

According to a 1913 promotional publication, *Pen and Sunlight Sketches of Greater Houston: The Most Progressive Metropolis in the South*, Texas Wagon Works manufactured “high-grade business wagons, medium delivery wagons, laundry and parcel wagons, grain wagons, trucks, and trimmings of all kinds. They also have a complete automobile repair department and do all kinds of carriage painting.” The booklet included an illustration of the Texas Wagon Works building (Figure 7), showing the name of the business painted on the Commerce and Crawford elevations which would have covered the previous Eller Wagon Works name. Commerce Street is shown with multiple railroad tracks and trains. In the illustration, the main entrance is at the east end of the Commerce Street elevation, while the Crawford Street elevation includes two large vehicle doorways.

By 1919, Texas Wagon Works moved its business to 4514-4516 Harrisburg Boulevard (no longer extant) in Second Ward. In August 1919, the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company purchased 101 Crawford from Texas Wagon Works for \$45,562. A display advertisement in the 1919 Houston City Directory noted it had been located at 1719 Commerce (corner of Commerce and Chenevert Streets). The Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company was founded in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1883 and quickly became the nation’s leader in the manufacture of high-quality thick flat “plate” glass. By 1900, the company had established distribution warehouses in major cities across the eastern half of the United States and purchased the Patton Paint Company. It continued to expand geographically as well as into different lines of business, including paints,

⁵⁴ Adapted from “Eller Wagon Works Building,” City of Houston Landmark Designation Report, 2008.

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varnishes, paint brushes, and chemicals. By 1920, the company was also making window glass, structural glass, and automotive glass (Figure 32).

In October 1919, the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company also purchased Lot 8 on Block 106, immediately adjacent to 101 Crawford, from W. J. Howard. Alfred C. Finn, a Houston architect noted for his many commercial projects in Houston, designed an addition across the entire south elevation of the existing building. The 1920 addition contained offices and sales showrooms facing the street, with additional warehouse space toward the rear (east); both functional areas were internally connected to the original building. This addition features ornamental cartouches, which appear on many of the building's designed by Finn's firm and might be attributed to Finn's associate, H. Jordan Mackenzie.

The Pittsburgh Plate Glass company purchased the lot next to 101 Crawford, facing Commerce Street, in 1925. In 1929, a one-story addition was built across the southeast elevation. Designed by architect Maurice J. Sullivan and built by contractor Don Hall, the addition measured 125 feet by 52 feet and was constructed of reinforced concrete. The front of this addition contained a small loading dock and "delivery department." Most of this addition served as a glass beveling shop, with a small "silvering room" for mirrors in the southwest (rear) corner of that space.

This addition served as a distribution, manufacturing, and office building for the Pittsburgh Plate Glass until the 1950s. In 1955, Pittsburgh Plate Glass constructed a new one-story facility at 5520 Armour Drive (still extant), with more convenient access to IH-10.⁵⁵ By 1956, ownership had transferred to the Crumpacker Building Corporation, a wholesale appliance sales and service business that owned the property until 1996, when it was sold to Lee Roy Murray III. In 2004, the building was purchased by the current owner, Caspian Enterprises (Figures 8-9).

Resource 2 – Western Electric Company Building, 100 Jackson Street, 1915

John M. Dorrance was a cotton exporter, banker, and civic leader who had previously constructed a ca. 1906 cotton warehouse at 411 Fannin Street (the Mafrige Building) for his own business, the Dorrance Company. In 1912, he sold a half-interest in Lot 5 and parts of Lots 3 and 4 to James A. Baker, with whom Dorrance was engaged on a number of civic projects, buildings, and boards of directors. The Dorrance-Baker property on Block 106 contained small houses prior to 1914, when the Western Electric Company purchased Lots 3, 4, and 5. Western Electric had previously occupied 4,000 square feet of space in the Schuhmacher Building, and the new building was expected to enable the business to expand significantly. Central Construction Company was initially contracted to build a two-story, 30,000-square-foot fireproof office and warehouse building, but the final version as completed in 1915 measured 100 feet square, rose to three stories in height, and covered 37,000 square feet, including a basement. The building site was selected to enable both sales to local businesses and shipping to customers outside Houston.

Western Electric relocated to a new location in 1926, and the building was occupied by International Harvester, a manufacturer of farm tractors and implements. In 1936, Grocery Supply Company purchased the building and expanded it ca. 1937 with an addition to the south side of the building (Figure 33). Subsequent owners included the Peaslee Gaulbert Paint and Varnish Company (1942), which apparently also supplied Emerson Radios to dealers (Figure

⁵⁵ Stephen Fox, *Houston Architectural Guide* (Houston: American Institute of Architects, 1990), 171.

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34); the Keith Refrigeration Company (1947, Figure 35); and at some later date, the Graham Realty Company. In 1974, the building was purchased by Arling D. Smith and Edith J. Smith, who operated a series of businesses from that location, including DSI Strand Products, Adsco Line Products, and Steller Business Services (Figures 10-11). Lee Roy Murray III purchased the property in 1998 and sold it to Caspian Enterprises in 2004, along with the adjacent building at 101 Crawford Street.

Resource 3 –J. L. Jones Warehouse, 1701 Commerce Street, 1927

The warehouse at 1701 Commerce was designed by architect J. W. Northrop Jr. and constructed in 1927 by the E. G. Maclay Company for the J. L. Jones Construction Company.⁵⁶ John Louis Jones (1881-1946) was a cotton exporter turned real estate developer/investor for whom Northrop designed a number of warehouse buildings.⁵⁷ The warehouse at 1701 Commerce was immediately leased to the O. B. Andrews Company, a paper mill/box manufacturing firm headquartered in Chattanooga, Tennessee.⁵⁸ By then, Commerce was a major thoroughfare, becoming a multi-lane roadway with overpasses by the 1920s.⁵⁹ 1701 Commerce was also served by the International & Great Northern Railroad lines. Andrews explained the benefits of the building's location:

In the manufacture of our test board, we use almost exclusively Scandinavian pulp, as we find it makes a very superior grade of paper. Someday there will be an economic demand for a paper mill in Texas, and as our business continues to grow, that time is not far off. The logical location for a great board mill would be in Houston where ships could be docked direct from Scandinavian countries.⁶⁰

The O. B. Andrews Company soon outgrew 1701 Commerce, however, and by 1930 had moved into a new larger building (leased from Mrs. Mellie Esperson Stewart) on Navigation Boulevard, near Greenwood.⁶¹ The National Biscuit Company then purchased 1701 Commerce in March 1930, at which point Nabisco owned the entire block.⁶² It appears that Nabisco periodically leased the building to tenants and continued to own the property through at least 1950. At that time, 1701 Commerce was referred to as the "Jones Building" in the deed records index.⁶³

Over the years, various companies operated at 1701 Commerce, including:⁶⁴

- 1928-1930 - O. B. Andrews Company of Texas
- 1932-1935 - Sproles Motor Freight, Red Ball Motor Freight Co., and Lines Inc.
- 1940: San Jacinto Bonded Warehouse, Strickland Miles Co. (marine supplies), and Perez & Helton manufacturers agents

⁵⁶ "E. G. Maclay Company to Construct \$50,000 Concrete Warehouse," *Houston Chronicle*, March 20, 1927, 49.

⁵⁷ J. L. Jones death certificate, file number 2438, January 28, 1946.

⁵⁸ "Houston may get paper box firm," *Houston Chronicle*, September 9, 1927, 1.

⁵⁹ Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps.

⁶⁰ "Chattanooga man wires that plant will be started soon; other developments planned by company," *Houston Chronicle*, September 13, 1927, 1-2.

⁶¹ "\$80,000 plant for box firm is contracted," *Houston Chronicle*, February 9, 1930, 49.

⁶² "Biscuit factory obtains tract for expansion," *Houston Chronicle*, March 23, 1930, 61.

⁶³ Ordinance No. 5281, Harris County Clerk Property Records, Vol. 2135, page 387.

⁶⁴ All information from Houston City Directories; Ownership did not necessarily relate to function. For example, Nabisco appears to have rented out the building before briefly using it for company operations 1943-1944.

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- 1943-44 - National Biscuit Company shipping department
- 1953-1975 - Wilson Stationery and Printing Company
- 1980-1986 - Purse & Company furniture warehouse (Figure 12-13)
- 1995-2000 - Various artist studios
- 2004-2017 - Lola Savannah Coffee Roasters

The occupant with the longest tenure in this location was the Wilson Stationery and Printing Company, from 1953-1975. In 1932, the company had been located at 1018 Prairie Avenue (at Fannin) in a 1932 building designed by architect William Ward Watkin. Wilson Stationery owned 1701 Commerce until 1975, when it sold the building to Bennetta Carter Purse, the wife of James Anderson Purse, Sr., CEO of the Purse Whole Furniture & Flooring Covering Company. Mrs. Purse, like the company, was based in Dallas. The occupants of the building between 1976 and 1980 are not known. The building was used as a Purse & Company warehouse for six years, 1980-1986. Mrs. Purse sold 1701 Commerce to Jack and Stephanie Stenner in 1996. Stenner leased studio space to fellow artists through at least 2000, when he sold the property to Lucy Reed Hibberd. After her death, it was transferred to Holton L. Burns in 2016. It was occupied by the Lola Savannah Coffee Company roasting facility, 2004–2017, and other tenants. After 2017, the building was vacant until being purchased by the current owners.

Resource 4 –Parking Garage at 1702 Ruiz Street, 1969

In 1928, the National Biscuit Company (Resource 5), purchased Lots 6-12 on Block 113 which at the time was occupied by small houses. By 1950, this property contained an assortment of various small buildings and structures associated with the adjacent Nabisco factory; these were replaced in 1969 by a warehouse after Nabisco sold the property to the Purse & Company Furniture. The warehouse was converted to a parking garage ca. 2009 after the removal of metal wall panels (noncontributing structure; Figure 15, Photo 23).

Resource 5 – National Biscuit Company, 15 Chenevert Street, 1910 (NRHP 1998)

The National Biscuit Company (aka N.B.C. or, after 1971, Nabisco) was formed in 1898 in Chicago, Illinois, as a successor to both the American Biscuit Company and the New York Biscuit Company. Its early bakery buildings appear to have been about two stories in height with relatively small footprints.⁶⁵ N.B.C. later embarked on a building campaign to construct bakeries around the United States that could pack and ship the company's products within regional markets. The design of these buildings reflected Progressive Era ideas about efficiency, uninterrupted production, and employee health and safety. According to a 1912 article in *The American Architect*, the company's goals for these buildings included efficient manufacturing, employee safety, "freedom from interruption of business," and optimal light, ventilation, and sanitation.⁶⁶ National Biscuit Company bakeries were known to be designed by company architect Albert G. Zimmerman (1866-1947) in this style, constructed between 1907-1920. Zimmerman, a native of Chicago who had relocated to New York, employed the Chicago style of late 19th and early 20th-century commercial architecture. Extant examples of Zimmerman's National Biscuit Company buildings include:

⁶⁵ Based on the author's review of extant N.B.C. buildings on various websites.

⁶⁶ W. F. Wilmoth, "The Buildings of the National Biscuit Company," *The American Architect* 101, no. 1904, June 19, 1912, 270-278, cited in Margaret Swett Henson and Janet Wagner, "National Biscuit Company Building, Houston, Texas," nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 1998.

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- 69-75 Ninth Avenue (aka 401-407 W. 15th Street), New York, New York (1907, NRHP 2007), (Figure 20)⁶⁷
- 1000 W. Washington Street, Chicago, Illinois (1910), (Figure 22)
- 2121 Central Street, Kansas City, Missouri (1911), (Figure 24)
- 120 18th Street South, Birmingham, Alabama (1913)
- 899 West Baltimore Street, Detroit, Michigan (1920)

These bakeries utilized red brick, with white brick accents on the buildings' towers and dull enameled light buff terracotta windowsills, lintels, band courses, cornices, and ornamental features (Figures 20-27). Each building was constructed with 14 feet between lower floors, increasing to 22 feet on the upper baking floors. The buildings were framed with steel columns, which were covered with a special fireproofing tile that contained air gaps; plaster was applied over the tile for a smooth finished appearance. For additional fireproofing, dividing walls were constructed of brick, and all openings were filled with fire doors. In case of fire, workers could exit the building through "smokeproof" fire escape towers and well-lit interior steel staircases. The towers contained rooftop water tanks for fire control and building water supply.⁶⁸ All of these components are present at 15 Chenevert Street.⁶⁹ Zimmerman's 1910 building was one of the first industrial buildings in Houston to utilize structural steel framing (columns and trusses), rather than heavy timber framing, in a multi-story brick building. Fireproofing materials included clay tiles installed around the steel columns, by the National Fireproofing Company.

The National Biscuit Company (N.B.C. or Nabisco) was originally regionally headquartered in Galveston, but relocated to Houston following the devastating hurricane known as the Great Storm of 1900, which damaged its Galveston factory (destroyed two weeks later by a fire). The site at 15 Chenevert Street was attractive because it provided access to shipping via either water transportation on nearby Buffalo Bayou or railroads. The first Nabisco building on this property, completed in 1902 (demolished), was two stories in height.⁷⁰ The company quickly outgrew that space and constructed the current five-story building in 1910, with the earlier structure used for offices.

Nabisco subsequently purchased the warehouse at 1701 Commerce for use as its shipping department between 1943-1944. Nabisco occupied the 1902 office building and the 1910 factory building until ca. 1948, when it moved its operations to a new site on Almeda Road, where it could construct a one-story factory with sufficient parking for employees and easy access for distribution and delivery trucks. In 1950, the Purse & Company purchased both buildings, as well as the property that now contains the parking garage, to house its wholesale furniture warehouse. Purse & Company purchased the warehouse at 1701 Commerce in 1972, at which point it owned all of Block 113. Purse owned the 1902 office building and the 1910

⁶⁷ Kathy Howe, "Gansevoort Market Historic District, New York City, New York," nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 2007.

⁶⁸ Henson and Wagner, "National Biscuit Company Building, Houston, Texas.," Obituary, Albert G. Zimmerman, *Chicago Tribune*, February 22, 1947, 20.

⁶⁹ The National Biscuit Company employed or contracted with other architects in addition to Zimmerman, and their work is clearly differentiated from his. These included 1001 Cherry Street, Des Moines, Iowa (1906, NRHP 2004), by company architect William F. Wilmouth and 1850 Industrial Street, Los Angeles, California (1925) by architects Eckel & Aldrich, St. Joseph, Missouri (Figure 24).

⁷⁰ The 1902 building was demolished and a new multifamily building constructed in its place in 2024; the multifamily housing is excluded from the nominated boundary.

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factory until 1997 (Figures 25-27). The property changed hands several times before it was purchased by the current owners in 2013 and converted into residential lofts.

Resource 6 – Gould's Wet Wash Laundry, 22 Chenevert Street, ca. 1910

In 1900, Houston had 18 laundries located in the downtown area; by 1910, the Houston City Directory enumerated 48 "clothing cleaners and pressers," as well as an additional 12 "laundries" in downtown and suburban areas; and by 1925, "174 commercial laundries service(ed) all corners of the city." At the industry's peak in 1930, Houston contained 268 laundry businesses, but after World War II, the development of automatic home washing machines and clothes dryers put many commercial laundries out of business, but self-serve coin-operated laundromats sprang up in the 1950s to serve those without home appliances.⁷¹

The size and configuration of early 20th century commercial laundry buildings was determined by the type of laundry operation it housed. Prior to 1900, laundering was typically performed by women in their own homes or servants, in the homes of their employers. Commercial "power" laundry facilities used steam power and heat, as well as innovations in fabric cleaning methods and technologies, to improve and standardize the laundry process. Within that category, laundries might offer full-service (washing, drying, pressing, starching, mending, and sometimes dyeing) or more limited services; at a "wet wash" laundry, clothing was washed but not dried. Small laundry buildings were typically one or two stories in height. As small operations grew, they often moved to larger facilities, sometimes called "plants."⁷² That was the case for Gould's Wet Wash Laundry.⁷³ Architectural drawings for laundry buildings in the first decades of the 20th century, as well as photographs of former laundry buildings now converted for other uses, show that these buildings were typically built of wood or brick, with plenty of windows to allow natural light and with side service doors wide enough to permit loading and unloading delivery vehicles directly from the laundry floor. Inside, laundry buildings were open plan, with only small rooms for offices, restrooms, and employee changing rooms (Figures 28-29).⁷⁴

Resource 6 occupies Lot 10 at the northwest corner of Block 167. In 1907, the Sanborn Fire Insurance map of this area shows the property occupied by a large dwelling. William B. Sanders (1863-1924) purchased this property in 1910 when he moved to Houston from Wharton, Texas.⁷⁵ Gould's Wet Wash Laundry, which opened in the original two-story building in March 1921, was owned by W. M. Gould, who previously had owned a steam laundry service in Freeport (Figure 36). The relatively small original size of the building probably dictated its use as a wet-wash laundry, since equipment for drying, starching, and ironing would have occupied more space. That may be why, in 1922, Gould's was responsible for the building's first

⁷¹ Gabrielle Begue, "Hollyfield Laundry and Cleaners, Houston, Texas" nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 2021.

⁷² Begue, "Hollyfield Laundry and Cleaners."

⁷³ Customers ranged from hotels to single men in white collar jobs, while a "family" laundry focused on providing a weekly household laundry service. Laundry might be dropped off and retrieved by the customer or a servant or picked up and delivered by the business's drivers.

⁷⁴ "Loveland Steam Laundry," Downtown Loveland (Colorado) Historic District, NRHD 2015, at the same location since 1918. 1929 Colorado Steam Laundry Building in Colorado City, Texas, rehabbed as The Copper Press event center in 2014; photo by Dreanna L. Belden, August 7, 2005, Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>, and The Copper Press website, thecopperpress.com/. Laundry building floor plans by David S. Castle Co. Architects and Engineers (Abilene, Texas) for the Abilene Laundry Company (1928) and the Stamford Steam Laundry (Stamford, Texas, 1927), both from the *Portal to Texas History*; In 1928, Gould's constructed a 59-foot by 186-foot building at 2714 Canal Street.

⁷⁵ Harris County deed records, vol. 254, page 605, July 29, 1910.

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expansion: a 26-foot by 58-foot one-story extension, later demolished and reconstructed ca. 1940, which allowed the business to double its production capacity. Gould's relocated in 1925 about 10 blocks east to 2714 Canal Street.

The Overall Laundry Inc. replaced Gould's. In 1926, the Acme Laundry Company, organized by B. L. Rankin, G. A. Hacker, and T. S. Dies, took over the premises, although William B. Sanders' heirs continued to own it until 1927, when they sold the property to Greek immigrants Theodore Dameris (originally Theodoros Nicolaos Dameris, 1880-1949) and John Kostas (originally John Ainadjoglou, 1888-1964).⁷⁶ After only six years housing laundry companies, the building became a restaurant, a use that continues to the present day. Dameris and Kostas initially opened the Katy Café at 22 Chenevert. From 1935-1948, the restaurant was named the National Lunch Room.⁷⁷ In 1947, Dameris and Kostas sold the property to Mexican immigrant Wallace Munos (originally Guadalupe Muñoz, 1909-?) and his wife Louise Rigby Munos (1912-?).⁷⁸ After their deaths, their son Lavon N. Munos owned it until 1990.⁷⁹ The building housed the Savage Café in 1953 and the Panther Café in 1956 but was listed as "vacant" in the 1962 Houston City Directory. It was the Flying M Bar from 1968-1980 and Cabaret Voltaire (a punk rock music venue) from 1984-1986.⁸⁰ Irma Galvan purchased it in 1991.⁸¹

Irma Galvan had worked at the Purse & Company Furniture warehouse at 15 Chenevert for 20 years when her husband Louis was murdered in 1982. To support her young family, she started a small sandwich shop called Irma's across the street from the Purse & Company building, later opening a restaurant there in 1989. Galvan bought the property in 1991 (Figure 17). In an oral history interview, she reported that she installed the wrought iron security bars over the doors and windows after experiencing multiple burglaries during her early years in business. Irma's Original Restaurant won a James Beard Award in 2008 and remains in business today.⁸²

Resource 7 – Jennings Machine Shop, 20 Chenevert Street, ca. 1950

Resource 7 occupies a portion of the west side of Block 167, comprising Lot 9 and the northern half of Lot 8. The first commercial building on this site was constructed around 1900 for August (Gus) Warnecke Inc., an artesian well-drilling company that also manufactured and sold well-drilling equipment. Warnecke was a well-known well-driller prior to the establishment of a municipal water system in Houston; he sold 185 acres of land to help establish the Rice Institute. Gus Warnecke died in 1907 from anthrax poisoning; this property passed in equal parts to his wife Evelyn and brother Albert, both of whom died within a few years. and a resulting ownership dispute between family members was not resolved until 1913.

Albert's widow, Florence (née Goolsby, 1865-1959) was a native of Germany. She had a son, Max, born in 1889, from a previous marriage. She married Robert Lee Jennings in 1900 and he adopted Max, who took the name Jennings. Florence married Albert Warnecke in 1904; he died

⁷⁶ Harris County deed records, vol. 714, pages 541-542. John Kostas petition for U.S. naturalization no. 4011, July 10, 1934.

⁷⁷ Entries in various Houston City Directories.

⁷⁸ Harris County deed records, vol. 1721, page 730, November 20, 1947. Guadalupe Muñoz, petition for U.S. naturalization no. 8052-M, December 31, 1946.

⁷⁹ Harris County deed records, file number 195-65-1411, November 23, 1990.

⁸⁰ Entries in various Houston City Directories.

⁸¹ Harris County deed records, file no. 004-45-0551, October 14, 1991.

⁸² Sandra Davidson, "Food for the Body, Food for the Soul: Irma Galvan and Her Award-Winning Mexican Restaurant, Irma's," *Houston History* 9, no. 2, University of Houston Center for Public History, March 7, 2012, 15-18.

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in 1910. In 1992, Florence transferred this property to her daughter-in-law, Anne C. Jennings (Max's wife) and it passed through Jennings family members until Irma Galvan bought it in 2002. The property had been in the Warnecke/Jennings family for more than 100 years at that point. Because the property was still owned by the Jennings family when it was constructed ca. 1950 and it had multiple tenants, this nomination uses the name "Jennings Machine Shop."

The 1924 Sanborn Fire Insurance (Map 5) shows a one-story building marked "Electric Motors" next to the laundry building at 22 Chenevert. Duke's Repair Shop (machine shop) occupied that building between at least 1947-1950. However, in 1950, a replacement building was added with a slightly different footprint. The 1950 and 1969 Sanborn maps (Maps 6-7) show a clear space between 20 Chenevert and 22 Chenevert. Between 1986-2010, Allied Welding Service occupied the space and it was sold to Irma Galvan in 2002.

The machining/machine tool industry created tools used for making standardized parts and products. Machine tools in the early twentieth century were custom-built to individually create parts for mass production. Machine shops contained tools such as lathes, mills, drills, saws, and other cutting machines. Overexpansion during World War I led many firms to close, and prior to 1940, the machining industry in the United States consisted primarily of small, family-owned companies. The production of airplanes, tanks, weapons, and ordnance led to the growth of the machining industry during World War II.⁸³ After the war ended, machine shops continued to serve manufacturers. Because machining processes create sparks in "hot work areas," fire protection/prevention is critical. If walls, floors, partitions, ceilings or roofs are made of combustible materials, they must be protected from sparks using special blankets, curtains, or pads.⁸⁴ 20 Chenevert was constructed using concrete and metal and did not require as much (or, possibly any) of these additional fireproofing materials.

Architects

Albert G. Zimmerman (1866-1947)

Albert G. Zimmerman was born in La Salle and grew up in Peru, Illinois. His parents were German immigrants.⁸⁵ Zimmerman studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from 1893-1894.⁸⁶ He was hired by the National Biscuit Company in 1901 but first worked for them in Chicago, where he was also a member of the Chicago Architectural Sketch Club in the early 1900s. He later moved to New York City and worked at the National Biscuit Company building, which he had designed at 85 Ninth Avenue in New York City. He lived in Manhattan for many years. He apparently retired from or left N.B.C in 1920 and entered into private practice. After retiring, while still living in New York, he worked as a consulting engineer in the baking industry as late as 1940.⁸⁷ He died in 1947 in Chicago at the age of 81.⁸⁸ Zimmerman is best known for the building he designed for N.B.C. at Ninth and 15th Streets in New York City (Figure 20).

⁸³ Maury Klein, *Call to Arms: Mobilizing America for World War II* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 63-66.

⁸⁴ National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) Standard 51B, "Standard for Fire Prevention During Welding, Cutting, and Other Hot Work," 2019.

⁸⁵ Albert G. Zimmerman, passport renewal application, July 25, 1923.

⁸⁶ "News from the Classes," *The Technology Review* alumni magazine (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, April 1919), 236.

⁸⁷ 1940 US Federal Census, Manhattan, New York City, enumeration district 14, sheet 7A.

⁸⁸ Obituary, Albert G. Zimmerman, *Chicago Tribune*, February 22, 1947, 20.

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Alfred C. Finn (1883-1964)

Alfred C. Finn, a Texas native, began his architectural career at the firm of Sanguinet & Staats between 1904-1913. He opened his practice in 1913 and quickly began a lifelong association with Houston civic leader and real estate magnate Jesse H. Jones. Finn designed a wide variety of buildings, and by the early 1920s had become the city's most prominent designer of commercial buildings. In the 1930s, Finn was tapped to design many institutional buildings, as well as the 1939 San Jacinto Monument. After World War II, his firm went on to design many significant buildings in Houston. Finn suffered a stroke in 1953 and died in 1964.⁸⁹ Other warehouses and plants in Houston designed by Finn:

- Standard Sanitary Manufacturing Company, 2300 McKinney Street (1924), extant⁹⁰
- Crane Company, 2205 McKinney Street (1925), extant⁹¹
- Chevrolet Parts Depot and Houston Zone Office, Polk Street and Dowling (now Emancipation) Avenue (1928), demolished⁹²
- Coca-Cola Bottling Company Plant, 2600 Capitol Street (1929), extant⁹³

J. W. Northrop Jr. (1886-1968)

A native of Bridgeport, Connecticut, J. W. Northrop Jr. studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) before joining the Boston firm of Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson. Northrop was sent to Houston in 1911 as a "clerk of the works of construction" for the initial buildings at Rice Institute (now Rice University). He began his own architectural practice in Houston in 1914 but continued working for the firm through 1919, when he opened his own office. His portfolio of work included a number of warehouse and retail buildings for J. L. Jones, as well as other significant commercial buildings in the 1920s; he was particularly known for his residential work in some of Houston's most exclusive neighborhoods.⁹⁴ For example, Northrop designed the first private residence to be built in the Edgemont Addition for George W. Dorrance, son of John M. Dorrance, who built the Western Electric Company Building at 100 Jackson Street.⁹⁵ Other warehouses and plants in Houston designed by Northrop include:

- Magnolia Warehouse, Magnolia Avenue (now Ruiz Street) and Hamilton Street (1929), demolished⁹⁶
- J. L. Jones Warehouse (second location), 1901/1903 Ruiz (1930), initially occupied by Westinghouse Electrical Supply Company, demolished during the construction/expansion of IH-69

⁸⁹ Stephen Fox, "Alfred Charles Finn: A Legacy in Houston Architecture," *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, tshaonline.org.

⁹⁰ "Standard Sanitary Building Fast Going Up," *Houston Post*, November 18, 1923, 47.

⁹¹ "New Home of The Crane Company," *Houston Post-Dispatch*, November 22, 1925, 22.

⁹² "Houston Gets New \$80,000 Coca Cola Bottling Plant; Capitol and Rice Is Site," *Houston Post-Dispatch*, October 7, 1928, 19.

⁹³ "New Plant Is Now Occupied by Chevrolet," *Houston Chronicle*, June 10, 1928, 41.

⁹⁴ Stephen Fox, "Northrop, Joseph Walter Jr.," *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, tshaonline.org. "J. W. Northrop Jr.," display advertisement, *Houston Chronicle*, June 29, 1919, 3.

⁹⁵ "Dorrance Builds Home in Edgemont Addition," *Houston Chronicle*, February 10, 1924, 59. George Wright Dorrance death certificate, state file number 28464, Texas Department of Health and Bureau of Vital Statistics, June 18, 1954.

⁹⁶ "J. L. Jones Will Build Magnolia Warehouse," *Houston Post-Dispatch*, June 21, 1929, 24.

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- Hollyfield Laundry Plant, 1733 Westheimer Road (1930), extant⁹⁷
- Schlumberger Electrical Prospecting Company, 2708 Leeland Street (1935), demolished⁹⁸
- Frick-Reid Supply Company Warehouse Annex, 2210 Quitman Street (1937), demolished⁹⁹
- Water Cooling and Equipment Company Warehouse, 3426 North Shepherd Street (1953), demolished¹⁰⁰

Maurice J. Sullivan (1884-1961)

Maurice J. Sullivan was born in Michigan and studied civil engineering at Detroit College and the University of Michigan before relocating to Fort Worth, Texas, where he worked for several architectural firms. Sullivan relocated to Houston in 1912 and served as the city architect from 1912 until 1919, when he established his own architectural practice. Sullivan specialized in the design of churches, schools, convents, and hospitals for the Catholic Diocese of Galveston and Houston; he also designed secular hospitals, schools, and commercial buildings, including serving as the associate architect for the 1927 Petroleum Building (NRHP 2019). Sullivan died in 1961.¹⁰¹ Other warehouses and plants in Houston designed by Sullivan:

- Texas Carnegie Steel Company Warehouse, 9500 Clinton Drive (1927), partially extant¹⁰²
- C.J. Harter Machinery Building, Navigation Boulevard and Milby Street (1946), extant¹⁰³
- Raymond Pearson Ford Square, 1404 Leeland Street (1951), non-extant¹⁰⁴
- Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company Steel Shop, 6620 Liberty Road (1951), extant¹⁰⁵
- Jack Roach Ford Plant, 3200 Bissonnet Street (1953), demolished¹⁰⁶
- Southern Engine and Pump Company, 2401 McKinney Street (1954), extant¹⁰⁷

Conclusion

The Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Commerce and Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance. The period of significance is 1910-1976.

⁹⁷ "Hollyfield Plant for Laundry Will Cost Near \$65,000," *Houston Chronicle*, September 29, 1929, 43.

⁹⁸ "Building Will Be Built on Leeland," *Houston Chronicle*, August 25, 1935, 32; "\$167,955 New Construction Is Authorized," *Houston Chronicle*, September 15, 1935, 22.

⁹⁹ "Warehouse Annex Will Cost \$20,000," *Houston Post*, February 7, 1937, 47.

¹⁰⁰ "Warehouse Set," *Houston Post*, December 7, 1952, 56.

¹⁰¹ Stephen Fox, "Maurice Joseph Sullivan, Notable Architect of Houston," *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, tshaonline.org.

¹⁰² "Sullivan Will Draw Carnegie Company Plans," *Houston Post*, September 12, 1926, 45; "Houston Ship Channel scene," Benjamin C. Allin Papers Collection, Houston History Research Center, Houston Public Library, Houston, Texas, <https://cdm17006.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p17006coll35/id/13>.

¹⁰³ "C. J. Harter Machinery Building," *Houston Chronicle*, December 30, 1945, 10.

¹⁰⁴ "Pearson Announces His New Ford Plant," *Houston Post*, August 20, 1950, 26; "Ford Square Will Be Opened on Mar. 2," *Houston Chronicle*, February 25, 1951, 33.

¹⁰⁵ "Shop Contract Let," *Houston Post*, February 25, 1951, 42.

¹⁰⁶ "Jack Roach Plans Pushed," *Houston Post*, June 29, 1952, 45; "Jack Roach Ford Plant Designed to Get Service Work Done on Time," *Houston Chronicle*, March 8, 1954, 11.

¹⁰⁷ "Southern Pump Plans Building," *Houston Chronicle*, June 14, 1953, 72; "Don't Stand There - Man the Pumps," *Houston Chronicle*, August 26, 1956, 194.

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Ordinance No. 5281, Harris County Clerk Property Records, Vol. 2135, page 387.

Kostas, John. Petition for U.S. naturalization no. 4011, July 10, 1934.

Muñoz, Guadalupe. Petition for U.S. naturalization no. 8052-M, December 31, 1946.

Zimmerman, Albert G. Passport renewal application, July 25, 1923.

Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District
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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☒ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. *Part 1 approved on September 3, 2024 (Project #48286)*
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office (Texas Historical Commission)
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☒ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 2.83 acres

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| A. Latitude: 29.760560°N, | Longitude: -95.354379°W |
| B. Latitude: 29.760117°N, | Longitude: -95.353643°W |
| C. Latitude: 29.760236°N, | Longitude: -95.353555°W |
| D. Latitude: 29.760146°N, | Longitude: -95.353404°W |
| E. Latitude: 29.760782°N, | Longitude: -95.352895°W |
| F. Latitude: 29.760121°N, | Longitude: -95.351766°W |
| G. Latitude: 29.759959°N, | Longitude: -95.351894°W |
| H. Latitude: 29.760192°N, | Longitude: -95.352304°W |
| I. Latitude: 29.759967°N, | Longitude: -95.352494°W |
| J. Latitude: 29.760240°N, | Longitude: -95.352964°W |
| K. Latitude: 29.760001°N, | Longitude: -95.353150°W |
| L. Latitude: 29.760099°N, | Longitude: -95.353322°W |
| M. Latitude: 29.759940°N, | Longitude: -95.353440°W |
| N. Latitude: 29.760077°N, | Longitude: -95.353659°W |
| O. Latitude: 29.759737°N, | Longitude: -95.353927°W |
| P. Latitude: 29.759912°N, | Longitude: -95.354237°W |
| Q. Latitude: 29.759958°N, | Longitude: -95.354200°W |
| R. Latitude: 29.760033°N, | Longitude: -95.354330°W |
| S. Latitude: 29.759989°N, | Longitude: -95.354365°W |
| T. Latitude: 29.760181°N, | Longitude: -95.354688°W |

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Verbal Boundary Description

The Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District includes approximately 2.83 acres and is roughly bounded by Crawford Street on the northwest, Ruiz Street on the northeast, the rear property lines along Chenevert Street on the southeast, and Franklin Street on the southwest. The boundaries largely follow the legal parcels. The boundary of the district is shown as the red lines on Map 1 on page 47.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn to include the highest concentration of remaining historic properties with integrity on the south side of Buffalo Bayou within what was once the much larger warehouse and industrial district of Houston. Properties outside the boundary lack integrity, are less than 50 years old, or are parking lots.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Steph McDougal, senior consultant, with Anna Mod, Director; Amanda Coleman, senior consultant; and Marie Martinsen and Melanie Caddel, consultants
organization: Ryan LLC
street & number: 1233 West Loop South, Suite 1600
city or town: Houston state: Texas zip code: 77027
e-mail melanie.caddel@ryan.com
telephone: 346-741-6423
date: April 14, 2026

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheets MAP-47 through MAP-56)

Additional items (see continuation sheets FIGURE-57 through FIGURE-75)

Photographs (see continuation sheets PHOTO-76 through PHOTO-92)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

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

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

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

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Photo Log

Name of Property: Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District

City or Vicinity: Houston

County: Harris County

State: Texas

Photographer: Amanda Coleman, Melanie Caddel, Marie Martinsen, and Steph McDougal (Ryan LLC)

Date Photographed: April-December 2024, February-October 2025, April 2026

All photographs accurately depict property conditions. No significant changes nor deterioration has occurred since the photos were taken in 2024, 2025, and 2026.

- Photo 1. Streetscape, Commerce Street; view northwest
- Photo 2. Streetscape, Crawford Street; view northeast
- Photo 3. Streetscape, Ruiz Street; view south
- Photo 4. Streetscape, Chenevert Street; view north
- Photo 5. 101 Crawford, northeast (primary) elevation; view southwest
- Photo 6. 101 Crawford, northeast elevation and 1929 addition; view southwest
- Photo 7. 101 Crawford, northwest elevation of 1909 original building; view southeast
- Photo 8. 101 Crawford, northwest elevation of 1920 addition; view southeast
- Photo 9. 101 Crawford, oblique view of southwest (rear) and southeast elevations; view north
- Photo 10. 101 Crawford, southwest (rear) elevation of 1929 addition; view northeast
- Photo 11. 101 Crawford, oblique view of northwest and southwest (rear) elevations; view east
- Photo 12. 101 Crawford, southwest (rear) elevation; view northeast
- Photo 13. 100 Jackson, northeast (primary) elevation; view southwest
- Photo 14. 100 Jackson, oblique view of northeast (primary) and southeast elevations; view west
- Photo 15. 100 Jackson, southeast elevation; view northwest
- Photo 16. 100 Jackson, oblique view of southeast and southwest (rear) elevations; view north
- Photo 17. 100 Jackson, southwest (rear) elevation; view northeast
- Photo 18. 1701 Commerce, southwest (primary) elevation; view northeast
- Photo 19. 1701 Commerce, southeast elevation; view northwest
- Photo 20. 1701 Commerce, oblique view of northwest and southwest (primary) elevations; view east
- Photo 21. 1701 Commerce, northwest elevation; view east
- Photo 22. City Lofts Parking Garage (noncontributing structure), 1702 Ruiz, northwest elevation; view northeast
- Photo 23. City Lofts Parking Garage (noncontributing structure), 1702 Ruiz, northeast (primary) elevation; view southwest
- Photo 24. City Lofts Parking Garage (noncontributing structure), 1702 Ruiz, southwest (rear) wall, 1701 Commerce at right; view south
- Photo 25. 15 Chenevert, oblique view of northeast and northwest (rear) elevations; view south
- Photo 26. 15 Chenevert, northwest (rear) elevation historic hyphen; view south
- Photo 27. 15 Chenevert, oblique view of southeast (primary) and northeast elevations; view west
- Photo 28. 1702 Ruiz, southeast elevation parking garage entrance; view northwest
- Photo 29. 20 and 22 Chenevert, northwest (primary) elevations; view southeast
- Photo 30. 22 Chenevert, oblique view of northwest (primary) and northeast elevations; view south
- Photo 31. 22 Chenevert, northeast elevation; view southwest
- Photo 32. 20 Chenevert, northwest (primary) elevation; view east

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Map 1. Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District boundary map, Google Earth, accessed November 7, 2025.



Coordinates

- A. Latitude: 29.760560°N, Longitude: -95.354379°W
- B. Latitude: 29.760117°N, Longitude: -95.353643°W
- C. Latitude: 29.760236°N, Longitude: -95.353555°W
- D. Latitude: 29.760146°N, Longitude: -95.353404°W
- E. Latitude: 29.760782°N, Longitude: -95.352895°W
- F. Latitude: 29.760121°N, Longitude: -95.351766°W
- G. Latitude: 29.759959°N, Longitude: -95.351894°W
- H. Latitude: 29.760192°N, Longitude: -95.352304°W
- I. Latitude: 29.759967°N, Longitude: -95.352494°W
- J. Latitude: 29.760240°N, Longitude: -95.352964°W
- K. Latitude: 29.760001°N, Longitude: -95.353150°W
- L. Latitude: 29.760099°N, Longitude: -95.353322°W
- M. Latitude: 29.759940°N, Longitude: -95.353440°W
- N. Latitude: 29.760077°N, Longitude: -95.353659°W
- O. Latitude: 29.759737°N, Longitude: -95.353927°W
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- Q. Latitude: 29.759958°N, Longitude: -95.354200°W
- R. Latitude: 29.760033°N, Longitude: -95.354330°W
- S. Latitude: 29.759989°N, Longitude: -95.354365°W
- T. Latitude: 29.760181°N, Longitude: -95.354688°W

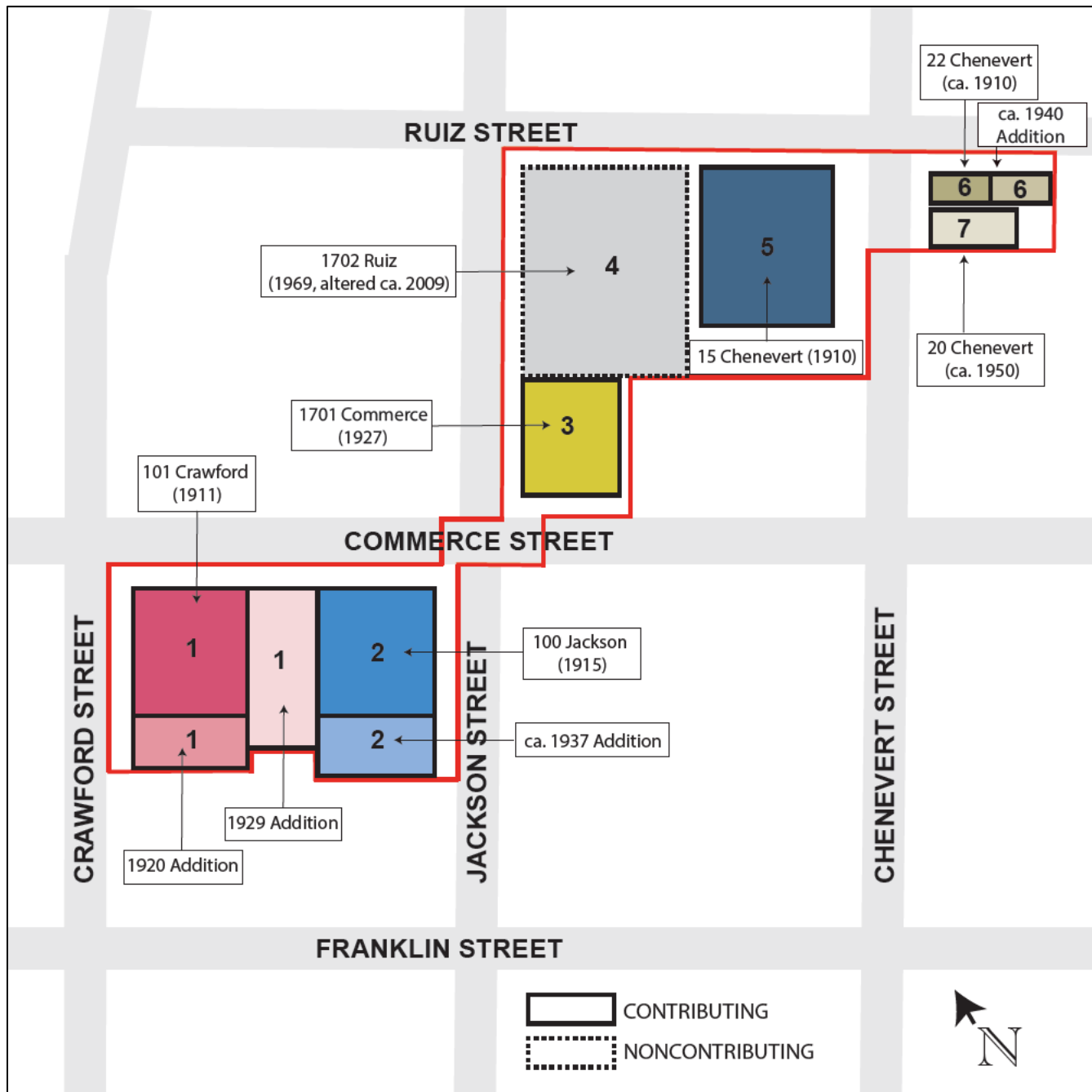
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Map 2. Map showing contributing and noncontributing resources (Ryan). Not to scale. Lighter shades on resources 1, 2, and 6 indicate the historic additions.



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Map 3. Location of Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District within the city of Houston (annotated by author)



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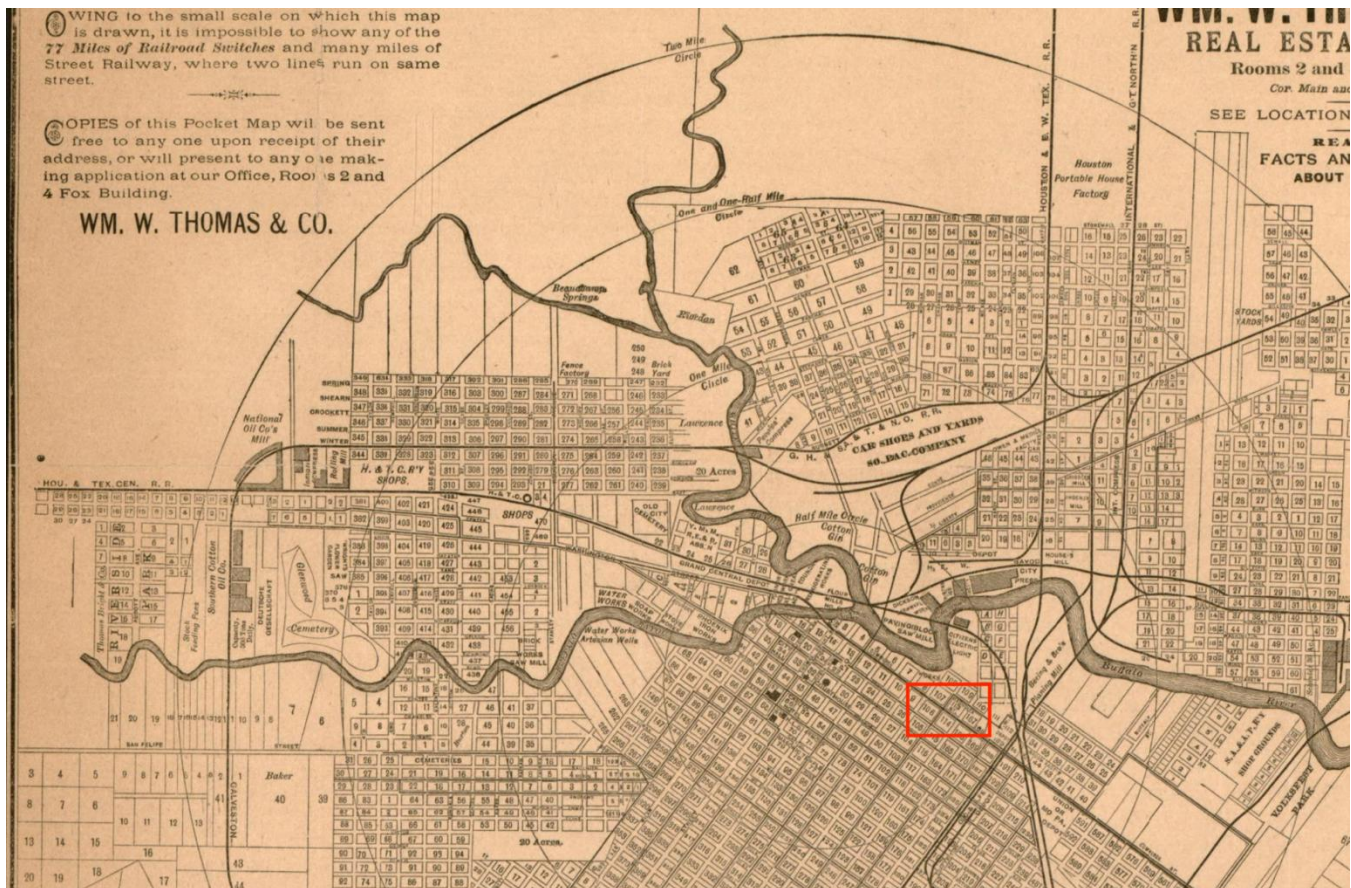
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Map 4. Location of Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District in relation to Buffalo Bayou and railroads in Houston, excerpt of "Pocket Map, showing the Railroads, Street Railways, Manufactories, Deep Water Connections, Blocks, and Subdivisions," 1890 (annotated by author)



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Map 5. 1924 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map (excerpt), annotated by author. District boundary in red.



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Map 6. 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map (excerpt), annotated by author. District boundary in red.



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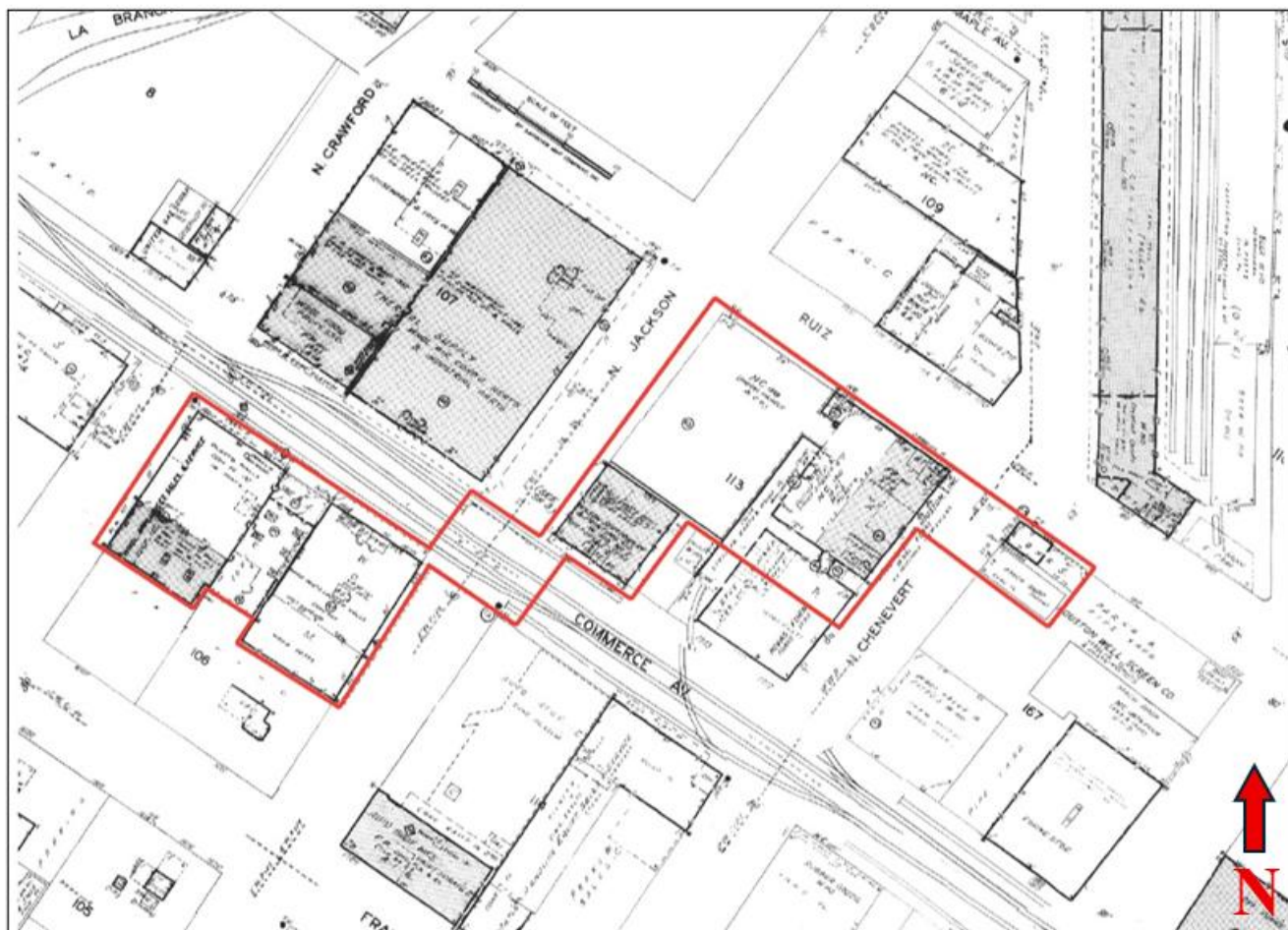
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Map 7. 1969 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map (excerpt), annotated by author. District boundary in red.



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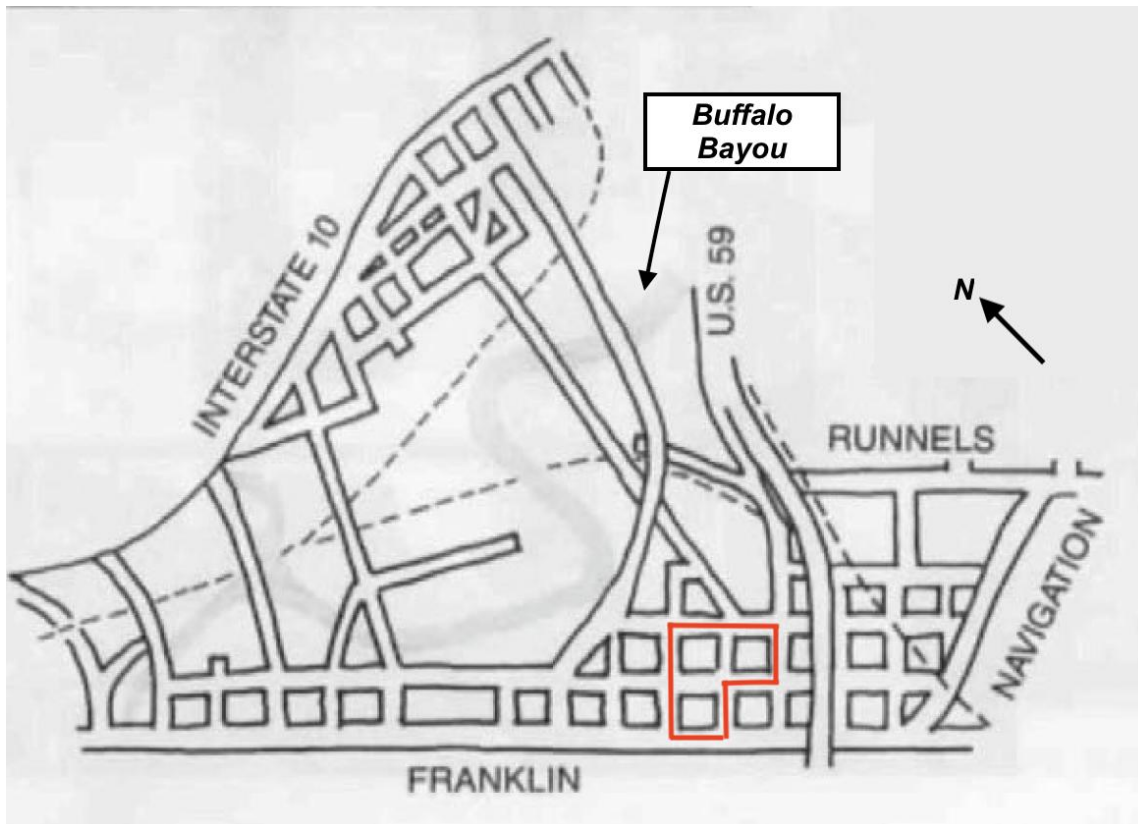
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Map 8. Warehouse District Architectural Tour map, *Cite* magazine, Vol. 17, Spring 1987; Buffalo Bayou is indicated in a light gray color in the original map (annotated by author: North arrow, Buffalo Bayou, and outline of Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District in red)



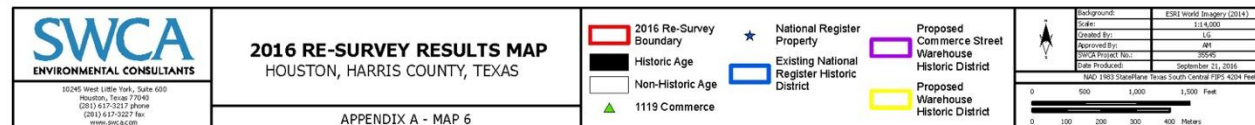
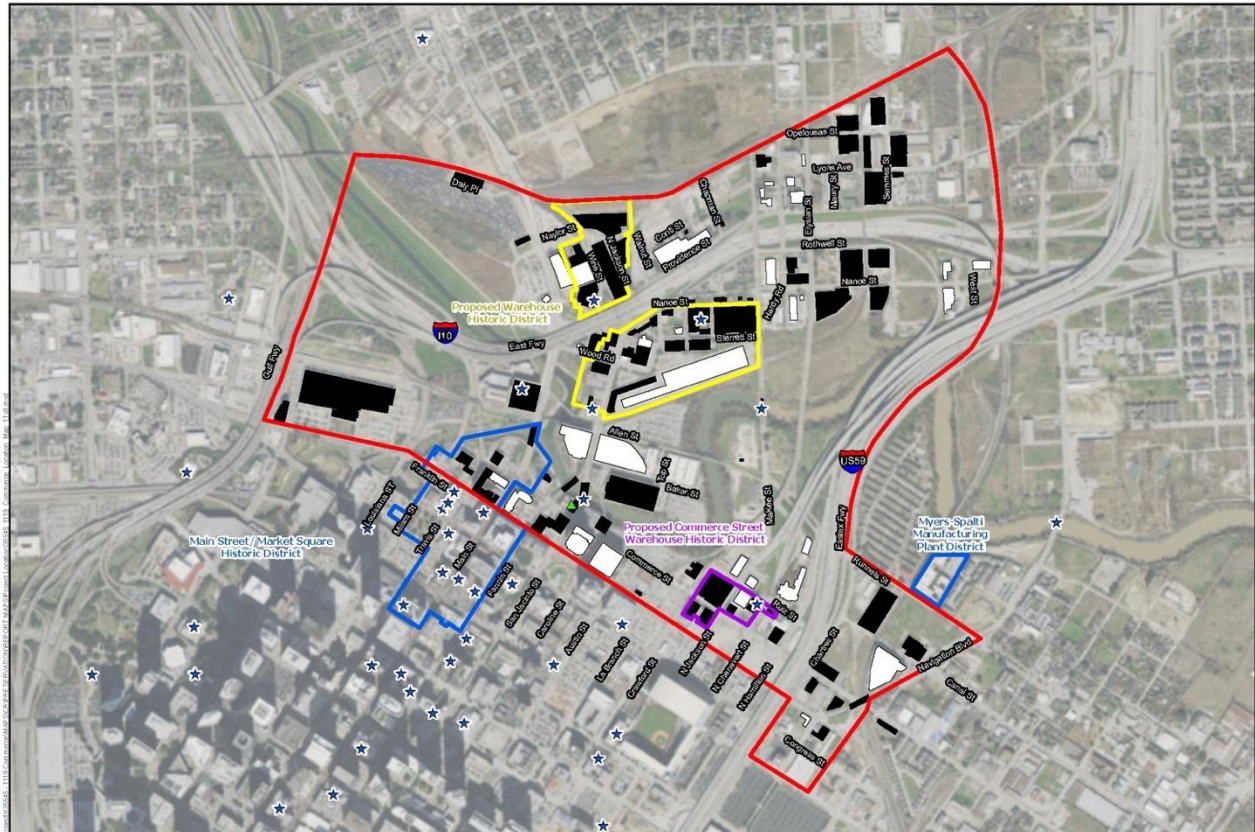
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Map 9. 2016 re-survey area in red with proposed Houston Warehouse District boundaries in yellow (north side of Buffalo Bayou) and proposed Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District boundaries in purple (SWCA).



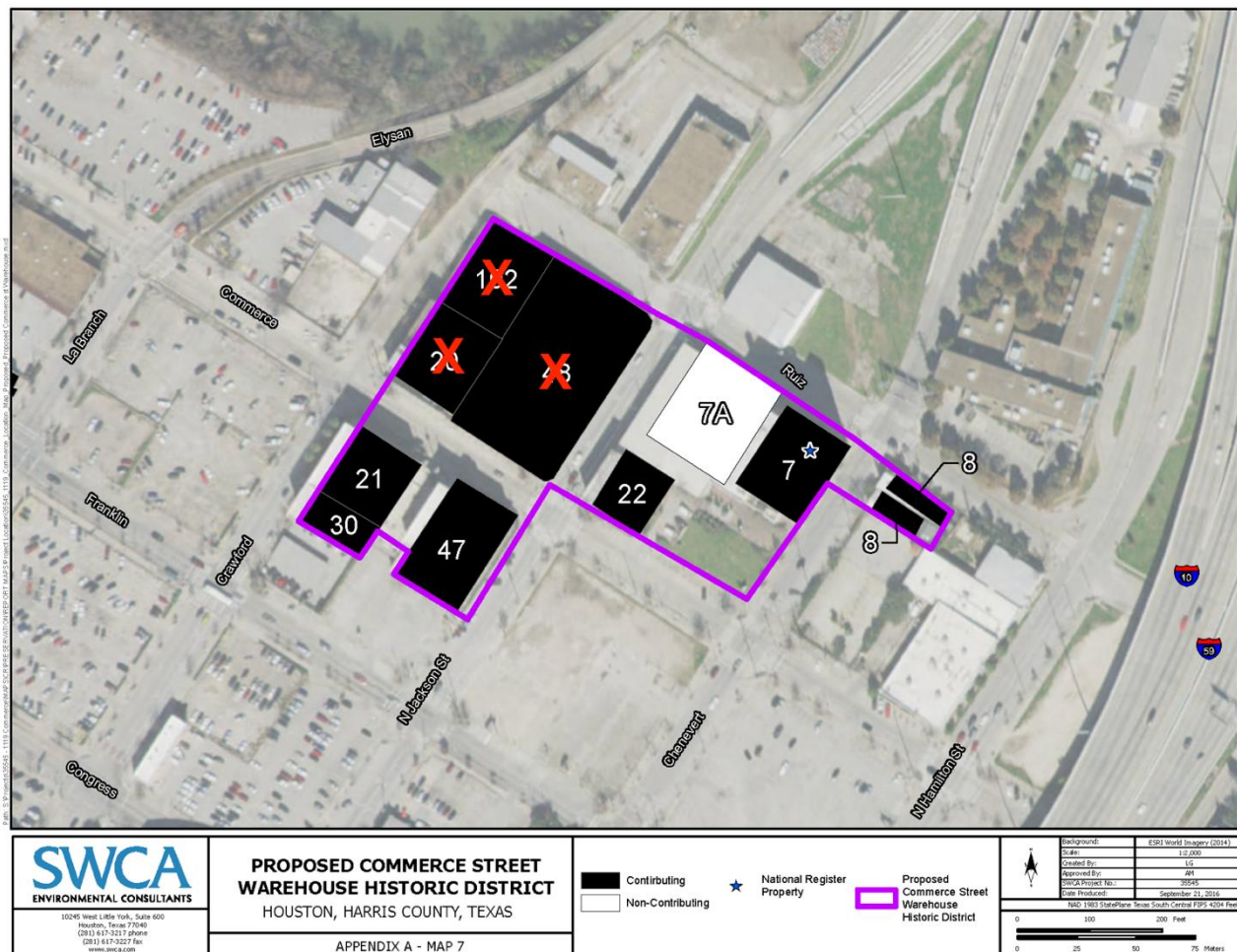
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Map 10. 2016 map showing recommended boundaries and contributing/noncontributing resources, Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District (SWCA); annotated by author in red to indicate buildings demolished since 2016. Compare to maps 1 and 2 for 2026 district boundary.



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Figures

Figure 1. 1938 aerial photograph (EDR, annotated by author). District boundary in yellow.



Figure 2. 1944 aerial photograph (EDR, annotated by author). District boundary in red.



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Figure 3. 1953 aerial photograph (EDR, annotated by author). District boundary in red.



Figure 4. 1966 aerial photograph (EDR, annotated by author). District boundary in red.



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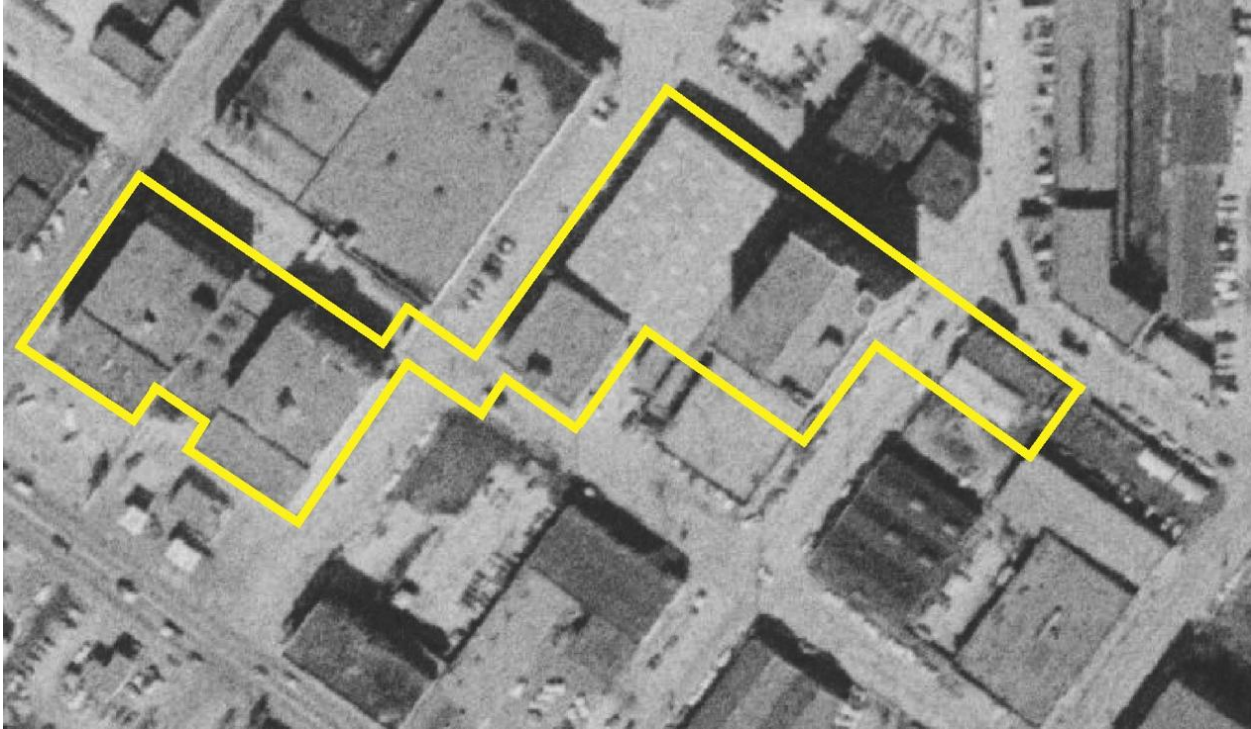
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Figure 5. 1973 aerial photograph (EDR, annotated by author). District boundary in yellow.



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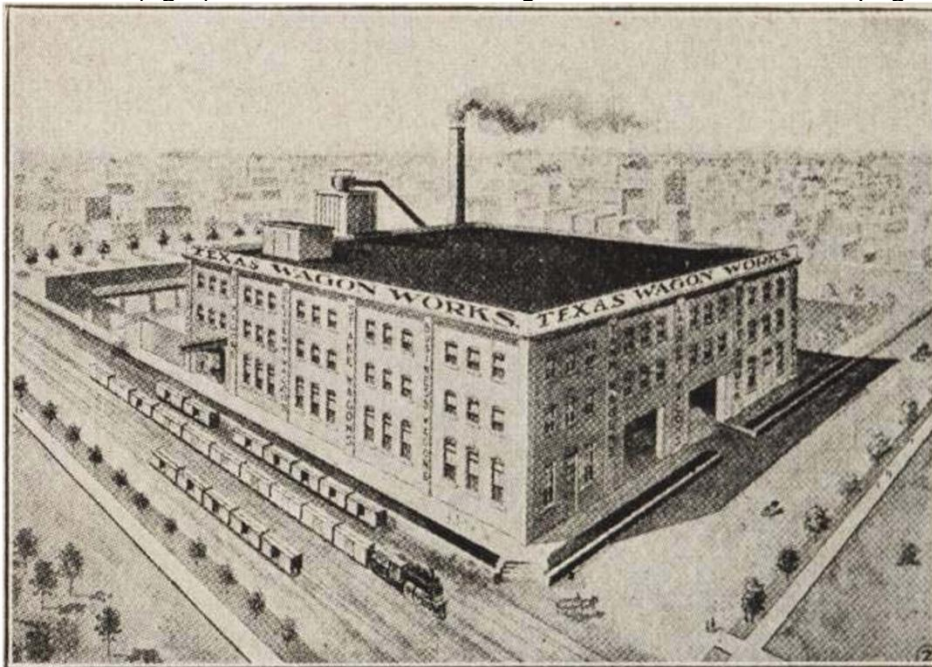
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Figure 6. Eller Wagon Works Building (Resource 1, 101 Crawford), oblique view of northeast (left) and northwest (right) elevations, as it appeared in 1911 (McKay Company Commercial Photography, *Houston Public Library*)



Figure 7. Texas Wagon Works Building (Resource 1, 101 Crawford), oblique view of northeast (left) and northwest (right) elevations, *Pen & Sunlight Sketches of Houston*, page 74



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Figure 8. Eller Wagon Works Building (Resource 1, 101 Crawford), oblique view of northeast (left) and northwest (right) elevations, as they appeared in 1991; note infilled windows and vehicle doors shown in Figure 7 (Barrie Scardino/Texas Historical Commission)



Figure 9. Eller Wagon Works Building (Resource 1, 101 Crawford), oblique view of northeast elevation, 1991 (Barrie Scardino).



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Figure 10. Western Electric Building (Resource 2, 100 Jackson), oblique view of southeast (left) and northeast (right) elevations, as they appeared in 1991 (Barrie Scardino/Texas Historical Commission)



Figure 11. Western Electric Building (background) and Grocery Supply addition (foreground), both Resource 2 at 100 Jackson, oblique view of southeast (left) and southwest (right) elevations, as they appeared in 1991 (Barrie Scardino/Texas Historical Commission)



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Figure 12. J. L. Jones Warehouse (Resource 3, 1701 Commerce), front/southwest elevation, as it appeared in 1991 (Barrie Scardino/Texas Historical Commission)



Figure 13. J. L. Jones Warehouse (Resource 3, 1701 Commerce), oblique view of northwest (left) and southwest (right) elevations, as they appeared in 1991 (Barrie Scardino/Texas Historical Commission)



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Figure 14. J. L. Jones Warehouse (Resource 3, 1701 Commerce), southwest (left) and southeast (right) elevations, as they appeared in 1991 (Barrie Scardino/Texas Historical Commission)



Figure 15. Purse & Company Warehouse (Resource 4, 1701 Ruiz Street, now City Lofts parking garage), oblique view of northeast (left) and part of northwest (right) elevations, with National Biscuit Company Building (Resource 5, 15 Chenevert) in background, as they appeared in 1991 (Barrie Scardino/Texas Historical Commission)



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Figure 16. National Biscuit Company Building (Resource 5, 15 Chenevert), oblique view of northeast (left) and southeast (right) elevations, as they appeared in 1991 (Barrie Scardino/Texas Historical Commission)



Figure 17. Gould's Wet Wash Laundry Building (Resource 6, 22 Chenevert), oblique view of northeast (left) and northwest (right) elevations, as they appeared in 1991 (Barrie Scardino/Texas Historical Commission)



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Figure 18. Gould's Wet Wash Laundry Building (Resource 6, 22 Chenevert), northeast elevation, as it appeared in 1991 (Barrie Scardino/Texas Historical Commission)



Figure 19. Jennings Machine Shop (Resource 7, 20 Chenevert), northwest elevation, as it appeared in 1991 (Barrie Scardino/Texas Historical Commission)



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Figure 20. 1907 National Biscuit Company Building, 15th Street and 10th Avenue, New York, New York, as it appeared in 1913 (Irving Underhill, photographer; courtesy of the *Library of Congress*)



Figure 21. National Biscuit Company complex, New York, New York with elevated trains (undated, Frederic Lewis, *Getty Images*)



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Figure 22. 1910 National Biscuit Company building, Chicago, Illinois (*Compass.com*)



Figure 23. National Biscuit Company building, Los Angeles, California, 1926 (University of Southern California, *Getty Images*)



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Figure 24. 1911 National Biscuit Company building, Kansas City, Missouri (*Steam Community*, 2024)



Figure 25. 15 Chenevert Street (Resource 5), oblique view southwest, as it appeared in 1997 (National Register nomination)



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Figure 26. 15 Chenevert Street (Resource 5), oblique view southeast, as it appeared in 1997 (National Register nomination)



Figure 27. 15 Chenevert Street (Resource 5), main entrance, view northwest, as it appeared in 1997 (National Register nomination)



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Figure 28. Abilene Laundry Company floor plan, 1928 (David S. Castle Co., *Portal to Texas History*, University of North Texas)

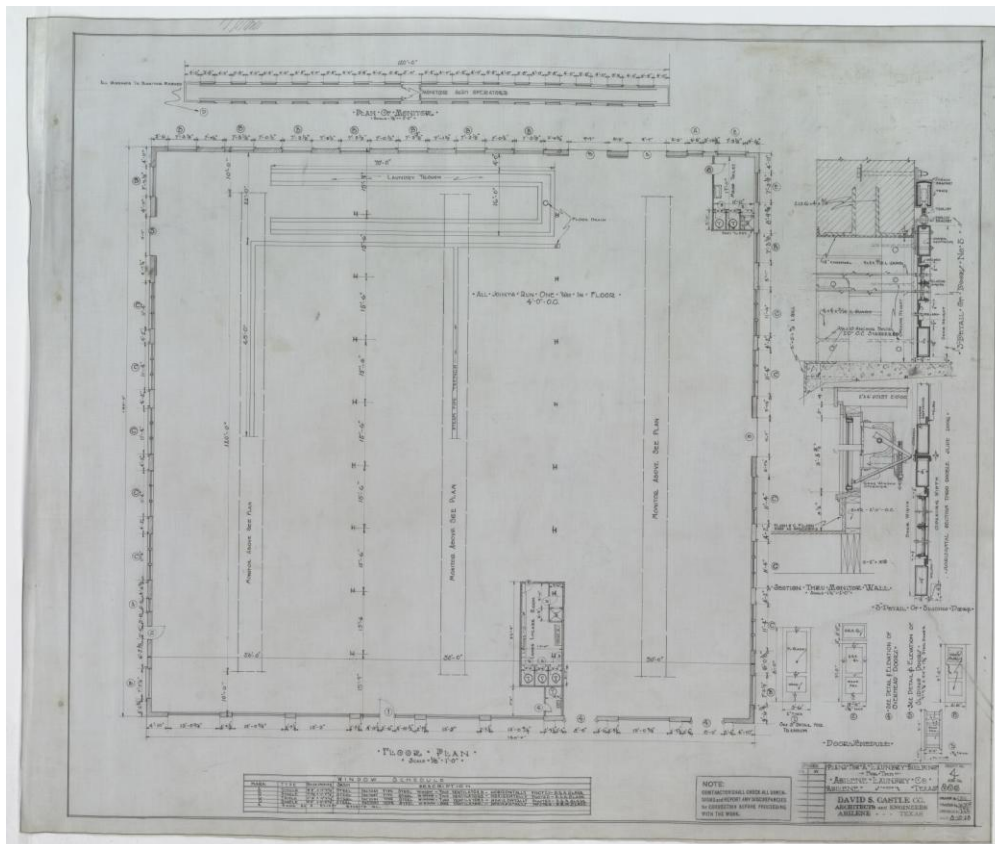


Figure 29. Interior, Abilene Laundry Company, 1939 (*Portal to Texas History*, University of North Texas)



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Figure 30. Advertisement, Eller Wagon Works, 101 Crawford Street, *Houston Post*, January 24, 1911, 14.

WAGONS! WAGONS! WAGONS!

ELLER WAGON WORKS

LARGEST WAGON MANUFACTURERS IN THE SOUTH

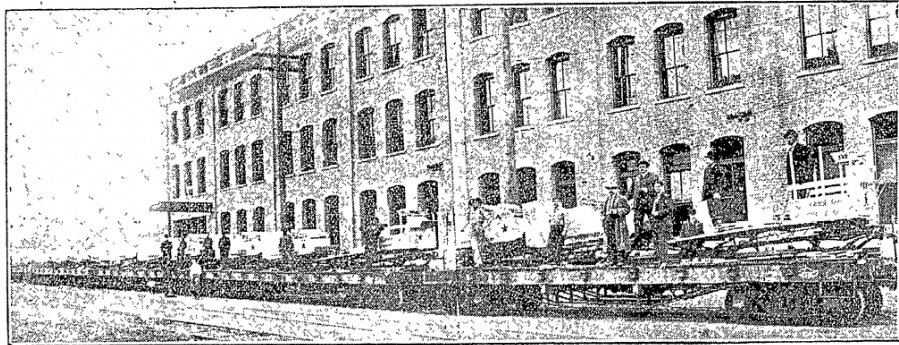
BUILD BUSINESS WAGONS OF ALL KINDS
COMPLETE AUTOMOBILE REPAIR DEPARTMENT
GET OUR PRICES BEFORE GOING ELSEWHERE

MODERN PLANT NEW EQUIPMENT SKILLED WORKMEN
BEST WORK LOWEST PRICES

101-103-105-107 CRAWFORD STREET
TELEPHONE PRESTON 447 HOUSTON, TEXAS

Figure 31. Advertisement, Eller Wagon Works, 101 Crawford Street, *Houston Post*, January 29, 1911, 51.

Loading Wagons for Eastern Shipment



LET US FIGURE ON YOUR BUSINESS WAGON REQUIREMENTS. THE PRICE AND QUALITY ARE RIGHT.
COME DOWN AND SEE OUR NEW FACTORY—THEN WATCH US GROW.

ELLER WAGON WORKS 101-103-105-107 Crawford St.—Phone Preston 447 **Houston, Texas**

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Figure 32. Advertisement, Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company, 101 Crawford Street, *Houston Chronicle*, February 18, 1923, 24.

**Plate, Art and Window
Glass, Mirrors, Paints
Varnishes, Brushes**

Greater now than ever before are the advantages to the dealer in having a nearby and dependable source of supply, complete distributing equipment and facilities. A thorough understanding of the requirements of the trade makes unique the service to be had from the Houston warehouse of the

**PITTSBURGH PLATE
GLASS COMPANY**
Houston, Texas
101-111 Crawford Preston 1891

Figure 33. Advertisement, Grocery Supply Co., 100 Jackson Street, *Houston Post*, October 21, 1940, 17.

Congratulations
to the
**INDEPENDENT
RETAIL GROCER**

We are concentrating all of our resources and manpower with the Independent Retail Grocer and can give you the best to be had in Wholesale Grocery Merchandising.

Merchandise with consumers acceptance and demand for all Retail Grocers.

McCORMICK'S
SPICES—TEA & EXTRACT

OMEGA FLOUR

LIBBY'S
101 Canned Vegetables, Fruits & Meats

**THE GROCERS
SUPPLY CO., INC.**
WHOLESALE GROCERS
100 Jackson St. Capitol 0355

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Figure 34. Advertisement, Peaslee Gaulbert Corporation, 100 Jackson Street, *Houston Post*, September 29, 1946, 18.

Radio-Wise America Has Chosen Emerson 4-Point Quality
 BETTER 1-STYLE 2-TONE 3-PERFORMANCE 4-VALUE

The New 1947 Emerson Radio
 BY THE Specialists IN SMALL RADIO

Millions of present owners—new millions of owners of QUALITY—have made up their minds, and the verdict is Emerson Radio. Emerson 4-Point Quality—BETTER in every respect in the four basic essentials of the radio—is the outstanding achievement of the world's leading specialists in small radio.

Every Emerson Radio model—Compact, Portable, Phonomatic, Recorder, Record Player or Pocket Receiver—has the highest example of progressive design and engineering. They have THREE TIMES THE POWER of previous radio.

Go to your nearest Emerson Radio dealer now. Compare the features with all others—and buy with CONFIDENCE.

New 1947 Emerson Radio Models from \$21.60

See Your Emerson Dealer Now!

Emerson Phonomatic Model 344. Radio and phonograph with automatic record changer to accompaniment of 100 and 150 records. "Music Your Way"—also one circuit and speaker development. Radio set and set, \$123.99.

Emerson 3-Port Portable Model 333. 20" set and battery operated with automatic record changer and 100 records. Small, tough and light Emerson radio in your pocket. Radio set, \$47.99.

PEASLEE-GAULBERT CORP.
 100 Jackson Street, Houston 2, Texas

ADVERTISEMENT PUBLISHED IN BEHALF OF ALL FRANCHISED DEALERS OF EMERSON RADIO

Figure 35. Advertisement, Keith Refrigeration, 100 Jackson Street, *Houston Chronicle*, February 16, 1947, 34.

NEW!
WATER COOLERS
Shipment Just Received
Another Hard to Get Item.
Immediate Delivery
One Year Free Service.
Cash or Terms.
Keith Refrigeration Co.
100 JACKSON STREET
F-2808 C-47210

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Figure 36. Advertisement, Gould's Wet Wash Laundry, 22 Chenevert, *Houston Chronicle*, May 2, 1921, 9.

WET WASH

An Economical Family Washing Service.

Gould's Wet Wash Laundry is operated by the same system as the high class wet wash laundries which are so popular throughout the North.

Each article is washed according to its needs by master washmen.

The washing is returned to you nearly dry. You iron the pieces you choose to and save nearly half on your laundry bill.

The manager of this plant has had fifteen years of washroom experience and has made a study of family washing service.

Washings received before noon are delivered same day.

5c per pound, weighed before washing.
No Washing less than \$1.00.
We Call For and Deliver.

**GOULD'S
WET WASH
LAUNDRY**
21 CHENEVERT ST.
PHONE PRES. 3510

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Photo 1. Streetscape, Commerce Street; view northwest



Photo 2. Streetscape, Crawford Street; view northeast



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Photo 3. Streetscape, Ruiz Street; view south



Photo 4. Streetscape, Chenevert Street; view north



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Photo 5. 101 Crawford, northeast (primary) elevation; view southwest



Photo 6. 101 Crawford, northeast elevation and 1929 addition; view southwest



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Photo 7. 101 Crawford, northwest elevation of 1909 original building; view southeast



Photo 8. 101 Crawford, northwest elevation of 1920 addition; view southeast



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Photo 9. 101 Crawford, oblique view of southwest (rear) and southeast elevations; view north



Photo 10. 101 Crawford, southwest (rear) elevation of 1929 addition; view northeast



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Photo 11. 101 Crawford, oblique view of northwest and southwest (rear) elevations; view east



Photo 12. 101 Crawford, southwest (rear) elevation; view northeast



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Photo 13. 100 Jackson, northeast (primary) elevation; view southwest



Photo 14. 100 Jackson, oblique view of northeast (primary) and southeast elevations; view west



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Photo 15. 100 Jackson, southeast elevation; view northwest



Photo 16. 100 Jackson, oblique view of southeast and southwest (rear) elevations; view north



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Photo 17. 100 Jackson, southwest (rear) elevation; view northeast



Photo 18. 1701 Commerce, southwest (primary) elevation; view northeast



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Photo 19. 1701 Commerce, southeast elevation; view northwest



Photo 20. 1701 Commerce, oblique view of northwest and southwest (primary) elevations; view east



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Photo 21. 1701 Commerce, northwest elevation; view east



Photo 22. City Lofts Parking Garage (noncontributing structure), 1702 Ruiz, northwest elevation; view northeast



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Photo 23. City Lofts Parking Garage (noncontributing structure), 1702 Ruiz, northeast (primary) elevation; view southwest



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Photo 24. City Lofts Parking Garage (noncontributing structure), 1702 Ruiz, southwest (rear) wall, 1701 Commerce at right; view south



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Photo 25. 15 Chenevert, oblique view of northeast and northwest (rear) elevations; view south



Photo 26. 15 Chenevert, northwest (rear) elevation historic hyphen; view south



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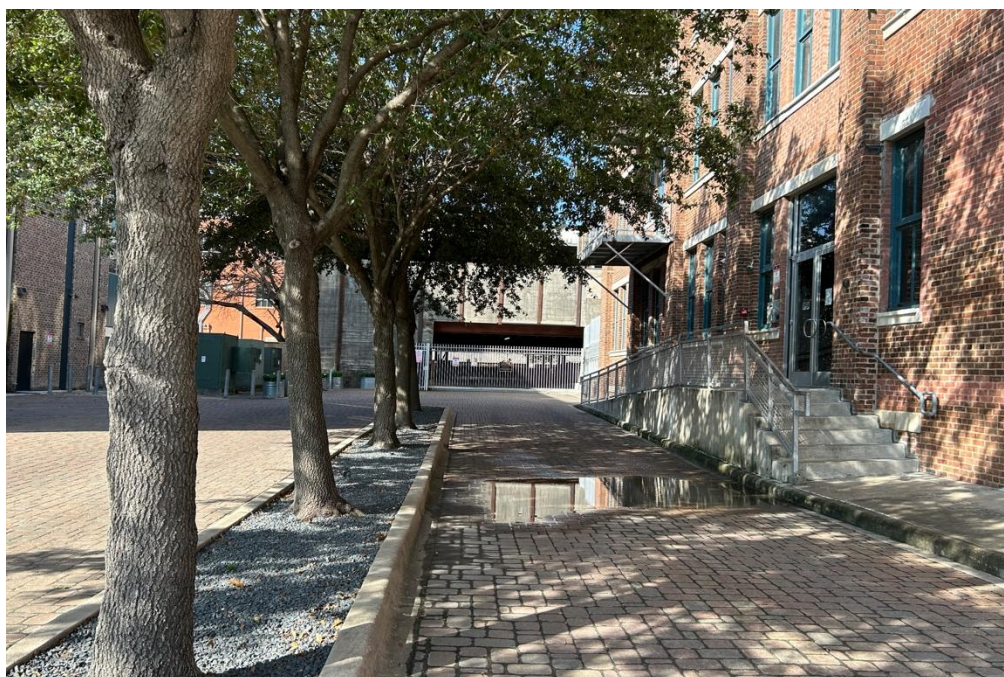
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Photo 27. 15 Chenevert, oblique view of southeast (primary) and northeast elevations; view west



Photo 28. 1702 Ruiz, southeast elevation parking garage entrance; view northwest



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Photo 29. 20 and 22 Chenevert, northwest (primary) elevations; view southeast



Photo 30. 22 Chenevert, oblique view of northwest (primary) and northeast elevations; view south



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Photo 31. 22 Chenevert, northeast elevation; view southwest



Photo 32. 20 Chenevert, northwest (primary) elevation; view east

