

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK/SITE NAME: Magnolia Brewery Building

OWNER: 110 Milam L. L. C.

APPLICANT: Anna Mod, consultant for 110 Milam L. L. C.

LOCATION: 110 Milam Street – Main Street/Market Square
Historic District

HEARING NOTICE: Jun-03-03

AGENDA ITEM: Va

P.C.MEETING DATE: JUN-26-03

HPO FILE NO.: 03L108

DATE ACCEPTED: May-03-03

HAHC HEARING DATE:06-19-03

SITE INFORMATION

Tracts 3A-1 and 4A-1, Block 17, SSBB, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The commercial building on the site is a four-story, load bearing masonry building with brick and stucco veneer.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

The Magnolia Brewery Building at 110 Milam, constructed by the Houston Ice and Brewing Company in 1906, is the second oldest of only three remaining buildings once part of the extensive complex of the Magnolia Brewery. Constructed as a cold storage and packing building, it survives as the oldest remaining example of the brewery buildings designed by Cooke & Company, a prominent Houston architectural firm. Their “new” design for the brewery complex buildings, which had previously been ornately Victorian in nature, now featured Neo-Classical detailing. The building at 110 Milam is the only remaining example of the brewery complex that exemplified the grandiose, neo-classical design of Cooke & Company. Their design included tall, narrow circle-headed apertures crowned with keystones and rusticated stucco façade to simulate stone. They also featured the more traditional elements found on the other brewery buildings of their design, including the distinctive, rhythmically bracketed cornices and capped pedestals rising above the flat roof (treatment also featured on the brewery taproom at 719 Franklin [1912] in the Italianate style).

The building is located in the Main Street/Market Square Historic District that is both a City of Houston and National Register Historic District. The building in the historic district was classified as “potentially contributing” when designated by City Council on March 5, 1997. The Main Street/Market Square Historic District was previously listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district on July 18, 1983. The boundary of the historic district was increased subsequently on February 23, 1984. The building at 110 Milam and 719 Franklin (both once part of the Magnolia Brewery complex) as well as some adjacent buildings were included in the expanded historic district.

The architectural firm Cooke & Company designed the rectangular plan, four-story, four by six bay, load bearing brick commercial building at 110 Milam in 1906 for the Houston Ice and Brewing Company, also known as the Magnolia Brewery. This building was part of the early twentieth century expansion of the company's ice and beer making complex that began on the north side of the bayou in 1887 and grew to include over 20 contiguous acres and over ten buildings.

The Houston Ice and Brewing Company, owners of the Magnolia Brewery, was founded in 1893 and had its factory and ice-making plant at Fourth and Washington streets on the north side of Buffalo Bayou. The company manufactured ice but was largely recognized for its lager beer that sold under the names “Standard,” “

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Magnolia Pale” and “Southern Select.” The *Brewers Journal* of February 1893, as noted in *The Encyclopedia of Texas Breweries*, reports that “the Houston Brewing Company, Houston, Texas, of which Hugh Hamilton is president, Bertrand Adoue [of Galveston], vice-president, and H. Prince, secretary and treasurer, have completed the building of their extensive establishment and commenced brewing” (Hennech, page 84). “In 1897 the company announced an addition to the brewery and in 1898 a storage building was constructed and a new bottling house followed in 1901” (Hennech, pages 84-85).

“Hugh Hamilton, founder of the Houston Ice and Brewing Company, began his career as vice-president and manager of the Central Ice Factory, located on the corner of Washington Avenue and Sixth Street in the First Ward industrial area on the north side of Buffalo Bayou. By 1886 Hamilton had become proprietor of the Crystal Ice Works located about one block east of the Central Ice Factory” (Houston Architectural Survey, page 61). “In addition to ice manufacturing and packing, the company became coal dealers and agents for Christian Moerlein Brewing Company of Cincinnati” (Houston Architectural Survey, page 61). Hamilton incorporated the company as the Houston Ice and Brewing Company in March 1892 and by June of that year hired architect, Eugene T. Heiner, to design a new building at Fourth and Washington.

By 1903 the company had a capacity of 500,000 pounds of ice per day and 200,000 barrels of beer per year. A pipeline was installed between the brewery and bottling house in 1905. In 1906, the *Brewer's Journal* announced that the “Houston Ice and Brewing Co., Houston, Texas, has commenced operating two powerboats between Houston and Key West, transporting beer in casks to Cuba. The boats are equipped with modern cold storage” (Hennech, page 86).

The original buildings of the Houston Ice and Brewing Company were designed by Eugene T. Heiner (1852-1901), an important nineteenth century architect noted for his Texas courthouse designs, houses, commercial and civic buildings in Houston and throughout the state. Among Heiner’s well-known Houston buildings are the Houston Cotton Exchange (1884) and the Brashear Building (1882), both located in the Main Street/Market Square Historic District.

“The building program of the Houston Ice and Brewing Company lasted from 1892 until about 1915 and encompassed more than ten buildings joined together physically and stylistically” (Houston Architectural Survey, page 59). The designs of Heiner were Italianate in style and highly ornamented as was typical of buildings of the Victorian era. Cooke & Company continued the building campaign after 1905 and while their structures do show an influence of the Victorian era, they are less ornate – a stylistic trend that was common in the first decades of the twentieth century. “The complex spanned Buffalo Bayou in the 1915 during the peak years of the company. The Magnolia Brewery was located on the north side in an industrial area and administrative offices of Houston Ice and Brewing Company were south of the bayou [719 Franklin] near the downtown commercial center” (Houston Architectural Survey, page 59). In 1980, only three of the buildings remained from this once extensive industrial and commercial complex: part of the original building built in 1893 and later expanded on Washington Avenue [known as 404 Washington]; 110 Milam Street (ornate section fronting Milam), built in 1906 south of the bayou, and 719 Franklin Avenue, the Taproom built in 1912, which is located one lot away from the Milam structure.

Henry C. Cooke (1852-1920) founded Cooke and Company, and the firm designed all the buildings for the Houston Ice and Brewing Company after Heiner’s death in 1901. Cooke was a native of England and studied architecture there and in Italy. He came to Texas and opened an architectural firm in Galveston in the early 1890s but retreated to Houston after the storm of 1900. W. A. Cooke, his architect son, began managing the firm that “was responsible for the additions of the Houston Ice and Brewing Company after 1905” (Houston Architectural Survey, page 62).

“By 1906 the company [Houston Ice and Brewing Company] had acquired the property on the south side of bayou [Buffalo] and begun to locate certain facilities there. The section at 110 Milam is thought to have been the first constructed on this side. It apparently housed a cold storage facility and packing plant” (Houston Architectural Survey, page 62). The original building was an L-shaped, *one-story* structure with frontage on Milam and Franklin. In addition to cold storage and packing division, the machine shop was located at 615 Franklin, a large office building was located at 707-717 Franklin and the Magnolia Café – the taproom for the brewery – was located at 719-721 Franklin and Milam. The complex was most likely at its largest around 1915 when the building program had been completed. The upper three floors of the L-shaped building were added between 1910 and 1928. Historic photographs from the 1929 flood show the L-shaped building with four floors and the two different street frontages. The flood of 1935 removed the rear L-shape and separated the two buildings.

“When the prohibition amendment took effect in 1920, the Houston Ice and Brewing Company began its decline. Ice manufacturing and packing became the dominant services rendered by the company, but its financial success had depended on manufacturing beer. Different sections of the building were at first leased out. In 1924, the 110 Milam Building was sold to Dixon Packing Company who had been located next door [to the north] before they began to lease 110 Milam in 1921. During prohibition the company changed its name to Houston Ice and Cold Storage and the Magnolia Brewery became the Magnolia Ice Plant. The flood of 1935 destroyed 707-717 Franklin and severely damaged all but a few of the buildings. This natural disaster along with prohibition ruined the company, although it did not officially go out of business until 1950. After 1950 the remaining section of the building on Washington Avenue was used for several successive industrial and storage purposes, including a ships chandlery and finally a moving and storage facility. Freeway construction in the 1960s obliterated 410-426 Washington, leaving the building at 404 Washington as a unoccupied ruin” (Houston Architectural Survey, page 63).

Sanborn map research of the 100 Block of Milam and the 700 Block of Franklin clearly show the evolution of the building campaign of the Houston Ice and Brewing Company. The 1885 map shows two frame buildings on the west side of this block. The northern-most building is a one-story commercial structure listed as “shop” and “storage.” The roof is wood shingle and there is a full width side porch that faces east toward the prevailing breezes. The business operating at this location is Rohde and Hoencke of Houston Barrel Factory. The 1877-78 City Directory lists the business of Rohde and Hoencke – (Fritz Rohde and Claus H. Hoencke) as coopers, with their office on Milam between Commerce and Franklin. Coopers were barrel makers and often repaired and made wagon wheels. Directly to the south is a one-story, frame dwelling with a full width porch that faces Milam. There is a wooden bridge over the bayou at Franklin. There is a second bridge to the north that crosses the bayou at Milam.

The 1890 Sanborn map show the two bridges and the Franklin Street Bridge is still wooden and the Milam Bridge is iron. There is more development on this block [Block 17, SSBB] and the commercial structure has been clad with metal or masonry and a metal clad addition has been added to the north side. The small frame dwelling is still extant. South of the dwelling is a two-story masonry or metal clad “female boarding house” with an interior stair. On the corner of Franklin is a one-story metal or masonry clad saloon with a one-story porch that extends over part of the street. On Franklin, there is a two-story iron clad building on “high posts” with a platform near the bayou. The business occupying the building is listed as “Livery.” City Directories were unavailable for this year.

The 1907 Sanborn map shows the 1906 design of Cooke & Company for the Houston Ice and Brewing Company. The load bearing masonry construction is listed as *one-story* with basement and is L-shaped with commercial frontage on both Milam and Franklin. The addresses are 110 Milam and 709-711 Franklin

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respectively. The outside of the L-shape juts out over Buffalo Bayou, a design feature that would cause the demise of the building thirty years later. The map also notes the construction is “cemented on expanded metal.” On the corner of Franklin and Milam are four, two-story frame commercial buildings with the addresses 713-719 Franklin. Behind the commercial row the “female boarding house” is extant. To the west of the L-shaped building is a triangular-shaped building, address 703-707, that also meets the bayou. North of this commercial development some of the smaller commercial buildings noted on previous maps are extant and their addresses are listed as 102-106. The upper three floors of the entire L-shaped building were added between 1910 and 1928.

The 1924 Sanborn map shows the connection of the Milam/Franklin part of the Houston Ice and Brewing Company to the main factory and brewery complex located on the north side of the bayou on Washington between Fourth and Fifth Streets. To expand the complex and create a connection with the buildings on the south side of the bayou, a concrete platform was constructed that spanned the bayou. By this time, the Texas Packing Company is listed on the map as the occupant of 110 Milam. The Lone Star Creamery is listed as the occupant of 701-711 Franklin. Lone Star Creamery is listed in the 1926 city directory as manufacturers of dairy products, including the “Honey Boy” ice cream and “Lone Star” butter brands. The company also sold pasteurized and filtered milk, sweet cream, and cottage cheese. Their plant was located at 400 Washington and some of their executive officers were the same as the Houston Ice and Brewery. Adjacent to 110 Milam to the north is the Dixon Packing Company, the company that eventually purchased 110 Milam this same year. To the north of 110 Milam there is a tin shop and blacksmith's shop. The 1926 City Directory shows Grown and Gross operating a tin shop at 100 Milam and Hahn and Clay at 102-102 Milam with their blacksmith business. The J E Burton Meat Packing Company is located at 106 Milam and at 108-110 is the Dixon Packing Company. A third meat packing company, Terry Packing Company, is located at 112-114 Milam. On the Franklin side, Landrey Baking Company occupies 701-705, and the Magnolia Hotel and Café is at 711. Roland Mason Company, a livestock venture, is listed at 713-715 Franklin, and G. P. Hope is listed as operating a shoe shine parlor at 717 along with the barbers, Presswood and Chivone, and T. Anselin, a cleaner. On the corner at 719 is O.P. Shirar and Son, a bicycle shop business. Signage for the bicycle shop appears in one of the historic photographs.

The final Sanborn map of this area is originally dated from 1924 but has its sheets pasted over showing revisions by 1934 and 1951. This map shows the configuration of the building after the 1935 flood that took away the rear bend of the L-shape. The map shows the buildings similar as they appear today – they no longer are connecting in the rear. The small commercial buildings to the north of 110 Milam have disappeared and this block of Milam is solely dedicated to meat packing, sausage making and wholesale meat concerns. The occupants include the Dixon Packing Company, Ubell and Sons Packing and a wholesale meat vendor on the corner of Franklin.

The symmetrical east, or primary façade, is four bays wide and faces Milam Street, a major downtown street. The 100 Block of Milam is bounded with Commerce Street to the north and Franklin to the south. To the north and west of the building is Buffalo Bayou. Spanning the bayou is a bridge from the UH-Downtown's main building, the Merchant and Manufacturers Warehouse, and a downtown destination exit ramp from the Interstate Highway. To the south is a one-story commercial building followed by the two-story Magnolia Ballroom at the corner of Franklin. The setting is urban and there are no street trees or other plantings. These three buildings on the 100 Block of Milam are all built to the property line and create a continuous street front adjacent to the sidewalk.

RESTORATION HISTORY/CURRENT CONDITION:

Despite the ravages of at least two major Houston floods and unsympathetic alterations to the main facade, the building at 110 Milam retains its architectural integrity albeit in a ruinous state.

The east façade, facing Milam Street, has four distinct floors yet each follows the regular rhythm established by the four equally spaced bays. On the second floor there are four equally spaced rectangular openings, two on each side of a central structural pilaster. An identical pilaster also appears on each of the outer walls of the building at this floor level. The finish on this floor is smooth plaster. Each opening on this level is 1/1 wooden sash windows with the exception of the first bay that is sealed with plywood. The third floor is the most decorative of the building and has scored plaster to simulate cut, coursed stone. There are four pairs of arched 1/1 wooden sash windows, two per bay, that tilt open from a central pivot located on each side at the meeting rail. Below each window is a square panel that once held a plaster relief of a magnolia blossom – the trademark graphic image of the Magnolia Brewery. Crowning this floor is a belt course which features denticulation. The fourth floor has a smooth plaster finish and four 1/1 jack-arched window openings, one per bay. Below each window is a small rectangular opening where metal grates were once installed. A shallow relief of a stylized cartouche punctuates the spaces between each of the windows and the outer walls. The cartouche looks similar to a flat stylized urn or an upside down spade. There is a projecting metal cornice with three very large equally spaced brackets – one in the center and one on each side. The cornice, cartouche and plaster finish wrap around the north and south facades of the building. Above the cornice is a parapet with modest projecting towers in the center and each end. There is a brick elevator penthouse with a hipped roof in the southwest corner of the roof near the main façade.

The north façade facing Buffalo Bayou originally was six bays wide but three and a half of the bays collapsed during or following the 1935 flood. Currently, this façade has two regularly spaced bays, as defined by the structural buttresses, and a partial remnant of the third bay. The openings on this façade are irregular. There is a door opening on the first and second floors, four jack-arched window openings on the third floor and two metal framed, multi-paned industrial windows on the fourth floor. The south façade has a similar pattern of irregular door and window openings as seen on the north façade. The west façade is a testament to the ruinous state of the building. The building has sat open since the rear bays collapsed in the 1930s. There is no rear wall and the interior floors of the building jut out towards the bayou.

On January 16, 1997, the HAHC granted the owner a certificate of appropriateness to restore the upper façade of the building only and to secure the first floor storefront facing Milam. Originally the storefront consisted of four flat-arched openings. On the first floor storefront plywood was installed which consisted of a façade painted with trompe l'oeil “faux painted” arched doors. The work was completed.

On March 15, 2001 the HAHC granted the owner a certificate of appropriateness for the following work: East elevation – (facing Milam Street) - remove the plywood which currently secures the first floor storefront and construct four sets of paired wood doors. Doors will feature arched tops to compliment the existing upper most windows. Doors will be wood frame featuring elongated glass lights in the upper 2/3 portion and a wood panel in the lower 1/3 portion. Doors will be separated by vertical columns/pilasters that will be clad in stucco to match material of existing building. Construct a metal canopy over the sidewalk. Canopy will extend over sidewalk 10'-3" and will be supported by four original 10"-round columns stored in the building. Columns are 10'-5" in height with total canopy height being 12'-1". The canopy edge (1'-8" in height) will be faced with decorative metal and finished at the top with a crown molding. The canopy roof will consist of standing seam metal and the ceiling of the canopy over the sidewalk will be finished in decorative, metal panels. North elevation – (side - facing bayou) – install on third floor two 2/2 sash windows to match existing; restore existing metal multi-light window on fourth floor; install a metal frame, double garage door with glass panels; and install a metal fire escape (Jomy Safety Stair) to meet fire safety requirements. South elevation – (facing neighboring building) infill window on second floor and install new 2/2 sash window above it on third floor to match existing. West elevation – (rear - facing bayou) – enclose façade (currently open to elements) by

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constructing a metal frame and glass curtain wall. The curtain wall will need to be inset from the existing façade whose north and south walls are jagged and irregular (existing and to remain being the juncture at which the rear portions of the original building were demolished). The curtain wall will feature metal-frame glass panels, operable metal-frame windows, overhead doors, and entry doors that will be accessed by balconies with metal railings and stairs to match fire escape material. The same type metal railing will be constructed on the roof but inset from the existing masonry 5' parapet wall. Convert existing elevator tower on roof of building to a roof pavilion that will feature arched openings with metal grilles and a standing seam metal hip roof.

OTHER SOURCES

Fox, Stephen, Houston Architectural Guide, 1990

Hennech, Mike. Encyclopedia of Texas Breweries: Pre-Prohibition (1836 – 1918). Texas: Albe Publishing Co., Irving

Houston Architectural Survey, 1980, Vol. 1, pages 59-62, "Houston Ice and Brewing Company/Magnolia Brewery"

Houston City Directory, various years and 1902-03, advertisement inside back cover

APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION...:

Sec. 33-224. Criteria for designation of a Landmark.

(a) The HAHC and the commission, in making recommendations with respect to designation, and the city council, in making a designation, shall consider one or more of the following criteria, as appropriate for the type of designation:

S	NA	S - satisfies	D - does not satisfy	NA - not applicable
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- (8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Recommends that the Houston Planning Commission accepts the recommendation of the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission and recommends to City Council the Landmark designation of the Magnolia Brewery Building at 110 Milam Street.

SITE LOCATION MAP
MAGNOLIA BREWERY BUILDING
110 MILAM STREET
NOT TO SCALE