



Legislation Text

File #: R-058-21, **Version:** 1

The Clerk Reports

Declaring the intent to designate the building located at 331 N. Superior Street, Toledo, Ohio a historic landmark; and declaring an emergency.

SUMMARY & BACKGROUND:

Architectural Significance of the Building for consideration to become a Designated Landmark

The odd numbered side of the 300 block of N. Superior Street lies in the heart of downtown Toledo and exhibits a variety of architectural styles and commercial uses ranging from the 1890s to the 1960s. This block contains seven vintage office/commercial structures, all with the same paved sidewalk, fifteen foot setback from the street. Included are 311, 317, 319-21, 327, 329, 331-33, and 335 N. Superior Street. These addresses range in height from two to six stories. All structures are masonry, largely brick, some with steel framing. Three of the buildings are faced with grey Indiana limestone, and two with mid-century modern era paneling. Most of the first floor storefronts have been renovated at some point, though all but one (319-21), were completed within the Period of Significance. Stylistically, the designs include Italianate Style(1), High Victorian Romanesque Style(1), Commercial Style(1), Art Deco influenced(3), and vernacular storefront (1). Such a variety of styles and forms is representative of what was happening in Toledo after the turn of the 19th century when the replacement of many nineteenth century downtown Toledo buildings occurred, utilizing more modern architectural styles popular in the 1910s and 1920s, reflecting influences from the Arts & Crafts movement, classical idioms, and Art Deco designs. This trend revived after World War II as seen on both 317, where a mid-century vertical cladding was added to the facade covering over a Chicago style commercial design, and at 319-21 where a mid-century small-square tiled facade was added, (this facade has been covered over again just recently).

Architectural Details of the Building:

331-333 N. Superior Street (referred to as 331-33 herein) is a three story brick commercial structure supported by steel framing, and with a glass, granite, and limestone facade; it faces southeasterly on the northwest side of N. Superior St. Erected in 1916-17 on the site of two older brick commercial structures, both demolished, the original form of 331-33 still is evident, though the ground floor facade was updated with a new architectural design in 1928. Flanked by four and six story masonry commercial buildings, only the facade and rear elevations of 331-33 are visible. The exterior appearance has remained virtually the same since the 1928 storefront alteration, and evidences the use of steel frame construction allowing the upper two stories of the facade to be largely comprised of glazed fenestration.

The façade rises from grade level sidewalk, and reveals an architecturally sophisticated design, with hints of the rectilinearity of Art Deco styling on the first floor. The building is set back fifteen (15) feet from the street. The first floor is the product of the 1928 facade renovation and is faced in light gray Indiana limestone and features a wide, double-door, recessed central entry (currently boarded up for security reasons), with a black granite surround and black granite flanking panels in the recess. Fire damage is evident in the recessed entry, especially

in the ceiling, side walls, and former transom window area.

Flanking the entryway are wide, tripartite showcase windows topped by vertically-divided transom-like lites. Black granite enframements surround each window group and black granite also is located below the windows as a dado-like base, extending to grade level and connecting with the granite entry surround at grade. Centered above each window is a large, flush-set marble roundel, featuring swirled patterns of several blue-grey hues each exhibiting a low bas relief carving of the Hart, Schaffner & Marx clothing company's famous mounted Trumpeter emblem/logo.

The second and third stories are unchanged in form from the 1916-17 erection date and are framed in limestone with large expanses of glass in divided lite showcase form, topped with lighted vertical transom-like lites above. Each story is divided into seven (7) individual large window units with a two-inch vertical metal support between each unit. The transom lites are similarly divided vertically but are set in groups of four above each window unit. A slightly extended paneled stone band separates the first and second floors, while a larger paneled stone band separates the second and third stories; (historically advertising was located on these bands). A stone sill runs at the base of the third story windows, while an identical paneled stone band separates the third story from the cornice; (historically advertising also was located on this band).

Quoin-like, slightly protruding square limestone blocks rise at either side of the building and pierce the cornice, culminating in a carved-stone scrolled coping that rises just above the roof-line. Above the third story is a projecting limestone cornice, modest in its overhang. Atop the cornice is a recessed and inwardly sloping roof that is covered with red clay pantiles, capped by horizontal ceramic coping. This tiled roof rises slightly above the main roof, which is flat and slopes westerly toward the rear of the building. The main roof features a former elevator head-house at the rear, southwest corner of the roof. The three-story rear elevation is common brick pierced with three sets of paired windows with smaller lites above each pair on the two upper stories. The first floor rear elevation also has three sets of smaller paired windows in its upper portion with a raised overhead delivery door and a single entry door at grade. All windows have concrete slip sills.

The interior has been largely cleared of all accouterments and internal divisions and thus presents as three large open spaces, some as a result of past fire damage. The walls and ceilings are largely plastered and the floors covered with a cementitious overlayment, some displaying moisture damage. The first and second levels are fully open from front to rear, while the third floor has a row of vertical wood supports running down the center. Elevator shaft and stairwell enclosures are found at the rear, southwest corner of each floor. A series of boxed, plastered ceiling steel beams run the width of the first and second floors, approximately ten feet on center. Between these, wooden joists support the upper floors and the roof. Inside the main front entry on the first floor, a portion of the 1928 ribbed plastered ceiling that was not damaged by fire, remains.

Significant Buildings Located in the Same City Block:

Period of Significance: 1890 to 1969

The odd numbered side of the 300 block of N. Superior Street lies within the commercial center of downtown Toledo, running immediately north of Madison Avenue, which was Toledo's "financial canyon" throughout the Period of Significance. The 300 block of N. Superior is surrounded by previously listed National Register of Historic Places listings, including being immediately adjacent to the current Madison Avenue National Register Historic District (Ref #:86003829) and to the Lasalle, Koch, & Company Department Store (National Register Ref#:95001001), and lying across the street from the historic Valentine Theater, (National Register Ref#:87000686).

The buildings in this block exhibit a variety of architectural styles and commercial uses ranging from the 1890s to the 1960s. The continued existence of such a cohesive block in downtown Toledo is significant as it represents the spectrum of architecture and uses that characterized late 19th and early-mid 20th century downtown Toledo, at a time when Toledo' population increased from 81,434 in 1890 to 290,718 by 1930. Concomitant with these population gains, the physical form of the city expanded rapidly, and this section of downtown was cemented as the financial and business core of the city.

The 300 block of N. Superior contains seven vintage office/commercial structures, six of which maintain a high degree of architectural integrity. These include 311(c. 1900; now Toledo Bar Association), 317(c.1905/1925; now vacant), 327(c. 1890; now vacant), 329(c.1895; now Lateral Gig clothing), 331-33(1917/1928; now vacant), and 335(Superior Studios Art Gallery). 319-21 (date unknown; now Jed's Restaurant and vacant) has a very recent façade which has diminished its historic architectural integrity; in-depth research will be needed to reveal the actual age of the building and its renovations.

Stylistically, the designs range from Italianate Style(1), High Victorian Romanesque Style(1), Commercial Style(1), Art Deco influenced(3), and vernacular storefront(1). The variety of styles and forms represented in this block was typical for Toledo after the turn of the 19th century when, in response to the robust economy of Toledo, the replacement/refacement of many nineteenth century downtown Toledo buildings occurred, utilizing more modern architectural styles popular prior to World War II, reflecting influences from the Arts & Crafts movement, classical idioms, and Art Deco designs. And this trend revived after World War II as seen at both 317 and 319-21 N. Superior where mid-century cladding was added to cover these facades.

Historic uses have ranged from a tailor, piano company, a bank, four physicians, four jewelers, multiple offices spaces (largely on upper floors), a printing/engraving firm, the Toledo Railway and Light Company, two saloons, a barber, a bootblack, and a corset supplier in 1914. By 1939, the commercial character had changed, owing to several vacancies as a result of the disastrous economic impact of the Great Depression, though the block was not totally vacant; remaining viable were a restaurant, two banks, numerous offices (again on upper floors), two jewelers, and two clothing stores. 331-33 N. Superior Street has a long history as a prominent, high-end clothing store in Toledo, and architecturally represents a sophistication of styles designed to reflect the sophistication of its product.

Historical Uses of the Building:

331-33 was created as a business venture of the then well-known Rathbun Realty Company, who owned the property from 1916 to 1974. Rathbun Realty developed the property in response to the robust economy of Toledo at the time, an economic vitality that saw the replacement of many nineteenth century downtown Toledo buildings with more modern architectural styles popular in the 1910s and 1920s, reflecting influences from the Arts & Crafts movement, classical idioms, and Art Deco designs. The most prominent architectural firm in Northwest Ohio at the time, Mills, Rhines, Bellman, & Nordhoff, were chosen to prepare the original plan (1916-17) of the structure as well as the 1928 facade renovation. This firm was known to have designed many iconic structures throughout the city, including commercial, residential, hotel, industrial, and religious buildings. The firm's preferred standing was gained through the execution of such prominent edifices as the Secor and Commodore Perry Hotels, , the ornate white terra-cotta Edison Building, the classical Toledo Club, Lamson's Department Store, the venetian Gothic Burt's Theater, the Greek Revival bank temple for Northern National Bank, and the expansive Berdan & Company and Bostwick-Braun Company warehouses, all in downtown Toledo. In addition, they designed numerous industrial and residential structures that fueled the

Toledo economy such as the Willys-Overland (now Jeep) Administration Building and plants and the Renaissance-inspired home of Edward Ford (one of the founders of the plate glass industry in America) in Toledo's Old west End (NR Ref #:73001503). The firm's presence in the architecture profession lasted until the 1990s, though under different names, most recently as Bauer, Stark & Lashbrook, which was the oldest architecture firm in Ohio at the time of its dissolution in 1999.

The Rathbun Realty also served as the leasing agent for this property throughout their ownership (1916-1974). The building opened in 1917 as the Isenberg Brothers Jewelers and Tailors under the proprietorship of Moses Isenberg. This firm occupied the building until approximately 1928, at which time the firm of Hoffmann-Thomas, an exclusive men's clothing store, opened at this address. Founded by William Hoffmann and Bernard Thomas, the firm specialized in fashionable clothing, and was the exclusive Toledo dealer of the select and high-quality Hart, Schaffner, & Marx clothing line. Founded in Chicago in 1887, Hart, Schaffner, & Marx rapidly moved to establish a national market, including this location in Toledo. The 1928 facade renovation of 331-33 reflected this arrangement and included two marble bas relief carvings with the Hart, Schaffner, & Marx logo on the first floor exterior, which remain to this day. The Hoffmann-Thomas firm operated at this location for nearly thirty years, closing in 1958 following the death William Hoffmann. The Hoffmann-Thomas firm was succeeded by the H. O Nichols Clothing Company, another well-known Toledo clothier, that occupied the structure for another ten years. Since that time a number of other businesses have occupied the building, including its last occupant, Leo's Bookstore, which closed at the end of 2009. The structure currently stands vacant.

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the Council of the City of Toledo:

SECTION 1. That the City Council does hereby declare its intent to designate an historic building as a landmark situated at 331 N. Superior Street, and more fully described as follows:

331 N. Superior former Leo's Book Store
Assessor # 0106004
Parcel ID 1216894
Legal Description: Port Lawrence Lot 469 Sub 3

SECTION 2. That this matter be referred to the Toledo City Plan Commission and the Toledo City Historic District for its review, recommendation and appropriate hearing date.

SECTION 3. That this Resolution hereby is declared to be an emergency measure and shall be in force and effect from and after its adoption. The reason for the emergency lies in the fact that same is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety and property, and for the further reason that this Resolution must be immediately effective so that the historic property will be eligible for the federal and/or state historic tax credit as soon as feasibility possible.

Vote on emergency clause: yeas _____, nays _____.

Adopted: _____, as an emergency measure: yeas _____, nays _____.

Attest: _____
Clerk of Council

President of Council

Approved: _____

Mayor