

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

August 2, 2023

HDRC CASE NO: 2023-299
ADDRESS: 1226 E HOUSTON
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 573 BLK 12 LOT E-F G, H, N, N 1-2 OF I, N IRR PT OF J & K, NE IRR OF L & NW IRR OF O
ZONING: D,HE
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 2
LANDMARK: Individual Landmark
APPLICANT: Texas Historical Commission
TYPE OF WORK: National Register Nomination Review
CASE MANAGER: Charles Gentry

REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a review and recommendation regarding the draft nomination of the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, 1226 E. Houston Street, to the National Register of Historic Places.

FINDINGS:

- a. The City of San Antonio is a Certified Local Government (CLG) and is responsible for providing comment on proposed nominations for individual properties or districts within the City limits of San Antonio for listing on the National Register for Historic Places. Listing in the National Register provides national recognition of a property's historical or architectural significance, denotes that it is worthy of preservation, and provides basic eligibility for financial incentives, including federal and state tax credits for the rehabilitation of historic buildings.
- b. OHP received notification of the proposed nomination from the Texas Historical Commission. The THC administers the CLG program and the review of National Register nominations and will forward the nomination with this recommendation to the State Review Board in San Angelo on September 23, 2023.
- c. As noted in the nomination, the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse is significant under Criterion A, Commerce, as the c.1907 home to two prominent local wholesale firms: the Hugo & Schmeltzer and the Collins Company. The building is also significant under Criterion C, Architecture, as a three-story commercial structure with Alamo-esque parapets and decorative quatrefoils as well as Romanesque Revival style details.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends support of the nomination and listing of the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, 1226 E. Houston Street, to the National Register of Historic Places.

SBR Draft

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse

Other name/site number: Collins Company (1910-1942)

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 1226 E. Houston Street

City or town: San Antonio State: Texas

County: Bexar

Not for publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this

☐ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

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

☐ national ☐ statewide ☐ localApplicable National Register Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

State Historic Preservation Officer

Signature of certifying official / Title

Date

Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☐ entered in the National Register☐ determined eligible for the National Register☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.☐ removed from the National Register☐ other, explain: _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

Category of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

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

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: Commerce/Trade: warehouse

Current Functions: Work in Progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification: Warehouse; Late Victorian: Richardsonian Romanesque and Late 19th & Early 20th Century Revivals: Mission Revival

Principal Exterior Materials: Concrete, Brick, Steel, Glass

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 7-10)

Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
<input type="checkbox"/>	B	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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.
<input type="checkbox"/>	D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations: NA

Areas of Significance: Commerce, Architecture (*both at local level of significance*)

Period of Significance: 1907-1942

Significant Dates: 1907

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

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

Architect/Builder: L.P. Boettler (Builder)

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 11-19)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheet 20-22)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☒ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. (*NPS approved Part 1 10-13-22*)
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☒ University – University of Texas at San Antonio, Special Collections
- ☐ Other –

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Less than one acre

Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 29.424778° Longitude: -98.478125°

Verbal Boundary Description: NCB 573 BLK 12 LOT E-F G, H, N, N 1/2 OF I, N IRR PT OF J & K, NE IRR OF L & NW IRR OF O. Bexar CAD Property ID# # 105859 (accessed 3/23/2023) See Map 3.

Boundary Justification: The boundary includes all property historically and currently associated with the nominated building.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Megan Warley McDonald, MHP, MA (Architectural Historian), Maria Watson Pfeiffer
Organization: Post Oak Preservation Solutions, Inc.
Street & number: 2506 Little John Lane
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Date: April 5, 2023

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheets 25-30)

Additional items (see continuation sheets 31-45)

Photographs (see continuation sheets 46-66)

Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photograph Log

Name of Property: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse
City or Vicinity: San Antonio
County: Bexar
State: Texas
Photographer: Ellis Mumford-Russell
Date: May 10, 2022
Location of Original Files: 2506 Little John Lane, Austin, Texas 78704

Photo 1
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, North
Elevation. View South.

Photo 2
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, East
Elevation. View Southwest.

Photo 3
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, East
Elevation. View Northwest.

Photo 4
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, East
Elevation. View Northwest.

Photo 5
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, South
Elevation. View Northwest.

Photo 6
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, West
Elevation. View Northeast.

Photo 7
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, Entrance on
West Elevation. View East.

Photo 8
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, partially
infilled entrance on West Elevation. View East.

Photo 9
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, Rear
Addition. View Northeast.

Photo 10
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, Basement.
View Southeast.

Photo 11
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, Basement.
View Northwest.

Photo 12
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, Infilled
Lightwell in Basement.

Photo 13
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, Portion of
Former Office Area. View Northeast.

Photo 14
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, Staircase
Leading from Historic Office Area to Historic
Warehouse. View South.

Photo 15
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, First Floor
Interior. View Southwest.

Photo 16
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, First Floor
Interior. View West.

Photo 17
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, First Floor
Interior. View South.

Photo 18
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, First Floor
Kitchen Interior. View Southwest.

Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 19

Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, Rear Addition
Interior. View Southwest.

Photo 21

Hugo & Schmeltzer Building, Second Floor Interior.
View Southeast.

Photo 20

Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, Rear Addition
Stairs and Second Floor. View Northeast.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Narrative Description

The 1907 Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse is a three-story masonry commercial building with a rectangular plan on the Southern Pacific Railroad corridor in central San Antonio, Bexar County. The warehouse's Alamo-esque parapets on its outer bays and decorative quatrefoils fittingly reference the wholesale grocery firm's previous location next to the Alamo in the c.1730 Mission San Antonio de Valero *convento*. Romanesque Revival vocabulary is expressed in round arched windows and corbeled eave details. Steel structural posts support the interior's simple and utilitarian open floorplans that remain intact at the basement and second floor. The first floor, most recently a restaurant, has added partitions and non-historic materials that reflect this function. A rear (south) addition built in the mid-1960s does not detract from the design. Overall, the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company warehouse is remarkably intact and retains excellent integrity to communicate its historic and architectural significance.

Setting

The 1907 Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse is 0.5 miles east of Alamo Plaza in San Antonio, Bexar County at 1226 E. Houston (formerly Starr) St. Nearby buildings support commercial and light industry and are representative of the neighborhood's historic character. The streets in this area are generally laid out in a grid pattern. The nominated building is on a corner lot of a block bordered by E. Houston St. (north), the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks (east), E. Crockett St. (south), and Chestnut St. (west).

Site

The nominated boundary is a right trapezoid, approximately 0.9 acres in size, and slopes east-west. Hugo & Schmeltzer Warehouse is an 80x165 foot rectangular building on the lot's northeast corner. Its north elevation has a minimal setback from E. Houston Street, with only a sidewalk separating it from the road. An asphalt driveway, which replaced the historic railroad spur, is between the east elevation and the railroad tracks. The south elevation faces an asphalt driveway, and a surface parking lot is located to the west of the building. The site is minimally landscaped, with some shrubbery and a single tree located along the northern border of the parking lot. A painted brick wall is located along the western border of the property, and a chain-link fence runs along the southwest corner of the property line. According to the 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance (Map 6), a rectangular wooden structure with ten garages used to occupy the area along the western property line. Today, there are no secondary structures within the boundary.

Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse

Exterior

The Hugo & Schmeltzer building is a two-story rectangular warehouse of load-bearing masonry construction with interior timber and steel structural columns supporting open-plan floors. It has a flat roof. The buff brick exterior walls are laid in a five-course common bond pattern throughout, and the public-facing north and east elevations. A circa 1966 one-story concrete addition is located at the rear of the structure.

The **north elevation** of the building faces E. Houston Street and historically served as the entrance to the Hugo & Schmeltzer offices (Photo 1). Masonry piers divide the elevation into four equal bays. The outermost bays feature Alamo-esque parapets with ornamental concrete quatrefoils.¹ Additional decorative brickwork includes arched window surrounds, belt courses, and brick corbeling. The second-floor features four, single-hung, arch-topped, wood-frame

¹ The term "Alamo-esque" refers to Mission Revival parapets that mimic the parapet profile of the 18th century Mission San Antonio de Valero chapel ("the Alamo") in San Antonio, Texas.

Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

windows in a two-over-two configuration. The first-floor features eight two-over-two, single-hung, wood-frame windows. All window frames are historic, with some broken and replacement glass throughout. Most of the windows on this elevation feature two metal brackets anchored into the brick on one side of the window, where adjustable shutters were originally installed. Historic iron bars are located on the exterior of all first-floor windows. A recessed entrance is elevated above street level and is accessible via terrazzo stairs sheltered by a non-historic canvas awning. The entryway has been modified with non-historic beadboard affixed to the walls and the ceiling. The original door has been replaced. Non-historic transom windows are located along the top of the walls in the entryway. A metal handrail is in the center of the staircase.

The **east elevation** of the Hugo & Schmeltzer building faces the railroad tracks and is considered the primary façade of the building (Photos 2-4). It is divided into eleven bays by masonry piers. Alamo-esque parapets are located at the center and outermost bays of this elevation and feature ornamental quatrefoils. The year of its construction, “1907,” is inscribed on the quatrefoil of the centermost parapet. Other ornamental brick features on this elevation include arched window surrounds, belt courses, and brick corbeling. The second-floor features eleven, single-hung, arch-topped, wood-frame windows in a two-over-two configuration. Green gooseneck light fixtures are located over six of the windows on the second story. The first-floor features twelve windows of the same materials and type. All the windows feature two metal brackets anchored into the brick on the left side of the window, where adjustable shutters were originally installed. The two southernmost first-floor windows on this elevation have been infilled with brick. All window frames on this elevation are historic, with some broken glass and replacement glass throughout. Historic iron bars are located outside each of the first-floor windows. This elevation historically featured three large, recessed entrances for the loading and unloading of merchandise from the adjacent railroad tracks. The two left-most entrances have been completely infilled with brick (Photo 3), while the entrance located at the center of this elevation has been partially infilled to fit a modern security door (Photo 2). A concrete ramp and railing lead to this entrance and extend several yards along this elevation. Seven lightwells are located along the base of this elevation, though all have been covered over with brick and concrete structures. The circa 1966 concrete addition extends from the westernmost edge of this elevation. It is several feet shorter than the original building and does not feature any windows or doors.

The **south elevation** of the Hugo & Schmeltzer building consists of the southernmost wall of the circa 1966 addition (Photo 5). The wall consists largely of painted concrete masonry units and does not have any doors or windows.

The **west elevation** of the subject building is much less ornamented than the north and east elevations (Photo 6). It features a flat parapet with simple corbeling along the roofline as the primary source of ornament. This façade is divided into eleven bays by masonry piers. The second-floor features eleven, single-hung, arch-topped, wood-frame windows in a two-over-two configuration. Green gooseneck light fixtures are located over six of the windows on the second story, and two modern security lights have also been installed along the second story. The first floor features eight windows of the same type as those on the second floor. All of the windows feature two metal brackets anchored into the brick on the left side of the window, where adjustable shutters were originally installed.² Three entryways are located on this elevation. The northernmost entrance may historically have been a window, and the non-historic door is sheltered with a non-historic awning (Photo 7). A concrete ramp extends from this entrance and angles around the porch. The two southernmost entrances on this elevation were historically large, arched, recessed openings, which have been partially infilled with brick in order to install modern security doors (Photo 8). A large, non-historic wood porch covered by an awning runs most of the length of the first floor of this elevation. While the porch is not original, historic photographs indicate it is affixed to the building where the original wood awning was hung (Figure 10). Several lightwells are located along this elevation, but all have been infilled and are covered by the porch. The circa 1966-one-story, concrete addition extends from the easternmost edge of this elevation (Photo 9). It features an elevated

² Based on Figure 10, most of the shutters on this elevation appear to have been lost or removed by the 1930s.

Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

loading dock sheltered by a wood awning supported by metal poles. A small metal staircase is located to the right of the loading dock, leading to an exterior door.

Interior

There are three interior levels: basement, first floor, and second floor. It is an overall simple and utilitarian space with wood floors, brick walls, and exposed ceiling structure. The historic configuration consisted primarily of open storage space across all three levels, with structural posts punctuating the interior. On the first level, steel posts are boxed in by wood on the first floor while wood posts are on the second floor. A single enclosed staircase connects the three floors at the south end of the building. It is simple and utilitarian with wood steps and both wood and pipe handrails. Plywood has been installed along the walls of the stairwell. Though historically there were two elevators in the building, neither are extant.

The **basement** features a concrete floor, painted brick walls, and exposed ceiling structure (Photos 10-11). Steel beams and structural posts are located throughout. Three small wood-frame storage spaces were constructed near the center of the basement. The openings to the light wells are largely still extant along the basement walls, though most have been boarded up and at least two have been sealed with concrete (Photo 12). Plumbing pipes are suspended from the ceiling.

The **first floor** of the Hugo & Schmeltzer building was historically a large open space with an office area in the north section. The former office area features historic terra cotta mosaic flooring and plaster coated walls (Photo 13). A portion of the office at the northeast corner has been converted into two restrooms. One restroom features historic terra cotta mosaic flooring and the other has historic tile flooring. The office section of the building has a lower floor plate than the rest of the first floor, and a small staircase leads from the historic office space to the historic warehouse space (Photo 14). This section of the first floor was historically an open room with exposed steel structural posts located throughout (Photos 15-17). At an unknown date, simple wood boxes were constructed around the steel structural posts. The first floor consists of historic wood floors, brick walls, and exposed ceiling structures. Most of the wood floors are in good condition, though some of the flooring near the perimeter of the building is in poor condition. Windows feature simple wood moldings with bullseye corner blocks.

When the building was renovated for use as a restaurant in 1991, a series of beadboard partitions were installed throughout the first floor to create dining rooms, the kitchen, storage areas, etc. Some of the interior brick walls were painted, beadboard was mounted on many of the walls, and decorative stained-glass windows installed throughout the dining spaces. A large trolley car was also placed in the dining space. Carpet was installed in the east side of the building, but historic wood floors remain exposed in the majority of the first floor. Non-historic lighting, ceiling fans, and HVAC ductwork were also hung from the ceiling. Partitions were constructed at the rear of the original building to create a separate kitchen. The kitchen features non-historic tile flooring, non-historic walls, and a non-historic drop ceiling with acoustical tiles (Photo 18). The rear addition is accessed via the first floor and consists of two rooms with concrete floors and painted concrete masonry unit walls (Photo 19). The western room of the addition appears to have primarily served as a storage and utility space and has a second story storage space accessible by a flight of wooden stairs (Photo 20). The eastern room of the addition is a restroom.

The **second floor** maintains its historic character as a large, open, warehouse space (Photo 21). Historic wood floors are covered with protective plywood, and wood structural posts are located at regular intervals throughout the room. The brick walls have been painted white. Ceiling structures are exposed and unpainted. HVAC ductwork is exposed on the second floor, connected to equipment on the roof. Non-historic, fluorescent tube lighting is located at regular intervals along the ceiling.

Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Alterations

The exterior of the Hugo & Schmeltzer building is remarkably intact. It has experienced minimal change and appears much as it did when it was first constructed in 1907. Several of the openings have been altered, including the infill of two windows on the east façade and the partial or complete infill of entryways on both the east and west facades. All the lightwells have either been covered over or sealed. Though some glass has been replaced over time, all the windows retain their historic wood frames. While the building originally had adjustable shutters on the windows, based on historic photos these were lost or removed prior to the 1930s, early in the period of significance. Though a non-historic porch has been appended to the west elevation, the awning of the porch was placed where an awning had historically been located. The concrete rear addition is a relatively small structure that was appended to the least visible side of the building. It does not extend the full height of the original building and the historic rear wall remains intact inside of the addition.

The interior has experienced some alterations but is also largely intact. The basement and second floors have experienced minimal change and maintain their simple, open, utilitarian floor plans. The addition of modern HVAC and utility equipment and small storage spaces are the primary changes that have taken place on those floors. The first floor experienced several changes when the building was converted to a restaurant in 1991, including the construction of partitions to create distinct dining spaces and a kitchen, and the addition of decorative elements such as beadboard, carpet, stained glass windows, and a trolley car. However, many of the simple, utilitarian elements of the first floor remain intact, including exposed wood structural supports, brick interior walls, and exposed ceiling structures. While one section of the first floor has been carpeted, wood floors remain beneath the carpet and exposed wood floors remain in much of the historic warehouse space. Though non-historic lighting, fans, and HVAC equipment have been installed along the ceiling of the first floor, the exposed ceiling structure was retained. The front office section of the building has experienced some re-configuration. However, it retains several of the character defining features that differentiated it from the warehouse portion of the first floor including a lower floor plate, and terra cotta mosaic flooring, and plastered walls throughout. Under its current ownership, the building is scheduled for rehabilitation utilizing federal tax incentives and in partnership with the National Park Service Technical Preservation Services.

Integrity

The Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse retains excellent integrity to convey its historical and architectural significance as an early 20th century wholesale warehouse. It retains the integrity of *its setting* and *location* at its original site on E. Houston Street next to the railroad tracks. Historic outbuildings on the western property line were demolished. The removal does not substantially affect the building's integrity. Though some changes have been made to openings on the exterior and a small addition was constructed at the rear, the exterior of the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company building is nearly identical to its appearance upon construction in 1907. On the interior, the basement and second floor have experienced minimal change and retain their simple, open, utilitarian character. While several alterations took place on the first floor, it retains much of its utilitarian character with exposed structural supports, brick interior walls, exposed ceiling structures, and wood floors. Therefore, the Hugo & Schmeltzer building retains integrity of *design* and *materials*. Decorative brickwork on the exterior takes the form of Alamo-esque parapets, arched window surrounds, belt courses, and corbeling. Richardsonian Romanesque stylistic elements include the use of round arches and corbeled eave details, while the Mission Revival style is expressed through the building's buff monochromatic exterior and Alamo-esque parapets. Little change has taken place to these elements, and the building retains excellent integrity of *workmanship*. The building effectively communicates its historic function as a commercial warehouse, both by its location along a railroad siding and by its simple, utilitarian design and materials, thereby retaining integrity of *feeling* and *association*.

Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Statement of Significance

The Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse was built in 1907 as a new headquarters for the successful wholesale grocery firm. The building replaced the company's previous location in the c.1730 Mission San Antonio de Valero (Alamo) *convento* when a heated local debate arose over the *convento*'s preservation. Hugo & Schmeltzer subsequently sold the business to another prominent wholesale firm, the Collins Company, in 1910, and the nominated building operated as a grocery warehouse until 1942. It is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Commerce and Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a particularly intact early 20th century Romanesque Revival commercial building bearing appropriately Alamo-esque parapet motifs on the outer bays. The period of significance extends from 1907 to 1942, the span during which the building's core function remained consistent with its original use as a grocery warehouse.

Early History of the Property

The land on which the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company building is located was originally subdivided by developers H.B. Adams and E.D.L. Wickes in 1882 (Figure 1). As is illustrated on the plat map, the land had previously been irrigated by the short-lived Valley Ditch. Opened in 1874 but abandoned only a few years later, the ditch had followed Walnut Street and the future path of the railroad tracks from north to south.³ In 1890, Adams and Wickes sold Lots 1-6 to Otto Mackensen, a railroad postal clerk. Mackensen further subdivided the property in June 1898, laying out Mackensen Street which extended from east to west to connect Walnut and Chestnut streets (Figure 2). Lots were redrawn and reoriented to face Starr (later renamed Houston) and Mackensen rather than Walnut. In March 1907, Bernard and Mamie Mackensen of Bexar County and Louis Mackensen of Harris County sold Lots E, F, G and H to Hugo & Schmeltzer for \$6,250.⁴

CRITERION A: Commerce

The Hugo & Schmeltzer Company building was constructed in 1907 by one of San Antonio's most prominent wholesale grocery businesses, Hugo & Schmeltzer Company, and was subsequently occupied by another successful wholesale grocery company: the Collins Company. From 1907-1942 the building was continuously occupied by thriving wholesale grocery businesses. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, San Antonio became a crucial distribution center for the border region and the Southwestern United States and was at one time regarded as the "Wholesale Grocery Center of Texas and the Southwest."⁵ San Antonio wholesale grocery firms became a crucial part of the city's economy, and were responsible for supplying settlers, military installations, businesses, and institutions with food and supplies. The Hugo & Schmeltzer Company building's relationship to two of San Antonio's long-standing wholesale grocery concerns ties it to the city's rich history as a regional center for wholesale grocery distribution.

³ L. Wayne Cox, *The Spanish Acequias of San Antonio* (San Antonio: Maverick Publishing Company. 2005) 54-57, 71; San Antonio *Express*, February 23, 1877.

⁴ BCDR V1:153-154 (Simpson and Radaz to Adams and Wickes, May 15, 1869); BCDR 79:87 (Adams and Wickes to Otto Mackensen, March 21, 1890); BCDR 262:229-231 (Mackensen et al to Hugo, Schmeltzer and Company, March 19, 1907). Mackensen purchased Lots 1-6 in the subdivision of Block 12 made by Charles P. Smith for Adams and Wickes on January 27, 1882 (City Engineers Book 1, Page 441.) Mackensen's subdivision was of City Blocks 572 and 573.

⁵ "San Antonio the Wholesale Grocery Center of Texas and the Southwest," San Antonio Light and Gazette, February 12, 1911, p 72.

Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

History of San Antonio, Texas

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Spanish explorers surveyed the land of, what is now, San Antonio, Texas. A series of Spanish missions were founded in the area and the region existed as an agricultural society under Spanish control until the Mexican Revolution. In 1836, the Texas Revolution (and the famed “Battle of the Alamo”) led to the formation of the Republic of Texas. It was annexed by the United States a decade later, at which point the population of San Antonio began to grow dramatically. The city experienced steady population growth during the 1850s, becoming the largest town in Texas by 1860. Following the American Civil War, San Antonio was a prominent military center and thrived economically as a cattle, distribution, and mercantile center.⁶

Following Texas’ annexation to the United States, San Antonio became a crucial distribution and mercantile center for the border region and the Southwestern United States. Prior to the arrival of the railroad in San Antonio, goods were hauled over land from the Gulf port of Indianola using wagon trains. Transporting goods was an arduous and oftentimes hazardous affair. Continued conflict with Native Americans in the late nineteenth century presented a challenge to shipping merchandise, and military escort was frequently a necessity. From San Antonio, goods were distributed throughout the region and to Mexico. Fort Davis, a West Texas military outpost depended upon supplies and goods from San Antonio, a journey that took approximately three weeks.⁷

With the arrival of the railroads during the late nineteenth century, San Antonio experienced unprecedented population and economic growth. The Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railway (later acquired by the Southern Pacific Railroad) was the first to arrive in 1877. The arrival of the railroad expanded the regional market for the exchange of raw and manufactured goods and allowed for the faster, safer transport of goods. Initially, most of San Antonio’s commercial and industrial enterprises had to load and transport their goods from commercial buildings downtown to and from the railroad at the city’s periphery. Many entrepreneurs began to see the benefits of locating their operations immediately adjacent to the railroad with spur lines connected to their property. This time and cost saving strategy led many of San Antonio’s commercial and industrial enterprises to construct their warehouses along the city’s railroad corridors. This development pattern was seen along the Southern Pacific Railroad on the city’s east side, as well as on the city’s west side following the arrival of the International & Great Northern Railroad in 1881.

Hugo & Schmeltzer Company

Founded in 1872 by Charles Hugo and Gustav Schmeltzer (Figures 3 & 4), the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company was one of San Antonio’s earliest and most successful wholesale grocery firms. Capitalizing on San Antonio’s location as a distribution center to the west, the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company evolved from a small retail grocery firm to become the city’s leading wholesale grocery operation over the course of four decades.⁸

Hugo arrived in the United States in 1854 and settled in Dewitt County, Texas where he was a merchant with James Schwab. He moved to San Antonio soon after 1870 and became a partner in the Barry Retail Grocery which he later purchased. Schmeltzer immigrated to the United States from Germany in 1849. After spending several years working on a ranch outside of San Antonio, Schmeltzer worked for the quartermaster’s department of the U.S. Army stationed in the West Texas borderlands. He also later served as a ranger and courier on an expedition in the Guadalupe Mountains. These experiences equipped Schmeltzer with a unique understanding of the challenges involved in

⁶ Laurie E. Jasinski, “San Antonio, TX,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed March 30, 2022, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/san-antonio-tx>.

⁷ Jasinski, “San Antonio, TX.,” “Freight Hauls to Mexico in Frontier Days Took Several Weeks,” *San Antonio Light*, February 25, 1932, 35.

⁸ Alamo National Bank, San Antonio, Bexar County, National Register of Historic Places, Reference # 6000364.

Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

overland travel and trade. After serving in the Confederate Army during the Civil War, Schmeltzer returned to San Antonio and began working with Charles Hugo. The men formed a partnership in 1872, and the following year William Heuermann, Sr. joined the firm. Originally a retail grocery store, Hugo & Schmeltzer entered the wholesale grocery business after receiving large government and settlers contracts.⁹ The company's first location was at Commerce and Navarro streets in downtown San Antonio (Figure 5).

During the company's early years, the railroad had not yet arrived in San Antonio and all goods were carried overland in wagon trains. With the arrival of the railroad in San Antonio in 1877, the transport of goods became faster, safer, and much less expensive, allowing for the expansion and increased profitability of the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company. The company secured several large, lucrative state contracts to supply institutions with food, including the Southwestern Insane Asylum in Austin.¹⁰ They also secured the rights to serve as the sole agents in San Antonio for several high-profile companies, including Anheuser Busch and Schlitz.¹¹ By 1885, the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company averaged \$1,000,000 in annual transactions (Over \$30,000,000, in 2023 dollars). As further evidence of the great financial successes of the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company, partners Charles Hugo, Gustav Schmeltzer, and William Heuermann garnered enough personal capital and local influence to charter the Alamo National Bank with two other local businessmen.¹²

When their previous location was destroyed by fire, Hugo & Schmeltzer relocated in 1884 to "Grenet's Castle," a medieval-style structure built over the ruins of the c. 1730 Mission San Antonio de Valero (Alamo) *convento* (Figure 6). While the Alamo chapel building is an iconic landmark, the *convento* was a two-story building located directly adjacent to the chapel. The *convento* (meaning "cloister") housed the Spanish friars who operated the mission and was constructed prior to the chapel, c. 1730. Today, it is the oldest extant building on the Alamo site. By the early nineteenth century, the Alamo property was occupied as a Spanish fort, at which time the *convento* was called the "long barracks." Following the 1836 Battle of the Alamo, the long barracks was reduced to its exterior walls. Though owned by the Catholic Church, the property was rented by the U.S. Army in subsequent years and used as a supply depot. The army repaired the long barracks building during this time.¹³

In 1877, the long barracks was purchased by Augustine Honore Grenet, another of San Antonio's earliest and most successful wholesale grocers. Originally from France, Grenet arrived in San Antonio sometime before 1858 and quickly engaged himself as a merchant.¹⁴ By 1866, Grenet was operating a grocery store at the corner of Nacogdoches (Bonham) Street and Crockett Street.¹⁵ In 1877, Grenet purchased the Alamo *convento*/long barracks building from the Catholic Church and operated a mercantile business there from 1879 until his death in 1882. Under his ownership, he transformed the long barracks by constructing wooden walls around the masonry ruins. The two-story general store

⁹ "Death Claims C. Hugo," *San Antonio Daily Light*, September 15, 1906, 1; "Prominent Citizen Dead," *San Antonio Daily Light*, May 17, 1900, 4.

¹⁰ "Contracts Awarded," *San Antonio Daily Light*, November 20, 1895, p 4; "Asylum Supplies," *San Antonio Daily Light*, December 6, 1899, p 7; "SAN ANTONIO MERCHANTS: Those Who Secured State Contracts to Supply Food," *San Antonio Daily Light*, November 30, 1900, p 12.

¹¹ "Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Wholesale Grocers," *San Antonio Daily Light*, December 8, 1893, p 6.

¹² Alamo National Bank, San Antonio, Bexar County, National Register of Historic Places, Reference # 6000364.

¹³ Gerald Moorhead, "The Alamo," *SAH Archipedia*, Accessed June 20, 2023, <https://sah-archipedia.org/buildings/TX-01-SA1>; Susan Schoelwer, "San Antonio de Valero Mission," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 20, 2023, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/san-antonio-de-valero-mission>.

¹⁴ 1858 Bexar County, Texas Tax rolls. Ancestry.com. *Texas, U.S., County Tax Rolls, 1846-1910* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014.; 1860 US Census

¹⁵ University of Texas at San Antonio Special Collections. "1866 bird's-eye view of the Honore Grenet grocery store and residence." Accessed April 4, 2023. <https://digital.utsa.edu/digital/collection/p9020coll008/id/6896/>

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was topped with a crenelated parapet with towers, known as “Grenet’s Castle.” Hugo & Schmeltzer leased the store in 1884 and purchased it in 1886. The firm remained in this prominent location next to the Alamo for twenty years.

In 1903, Clara Driscoll, a member of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT), acquired a \$75,000 option on the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company building. The DRT’s goal was to protect the Alamo premises, a “Shrine of Texas Liberty,” from commercial encroachment. Local debate, however, erupted over whether to restore or reconstruct the historic *convento*.¹⁶ Meanwhile, the DRT and state leaders helped finalized the sale in 1905, the same year the Texas State Legislature transferred custodianship of the Alamo chapel to the DRT (Figure 7).¹⁷ In news coverage of the controversy, the *convento* was frequently called the “Hugo & Schmeltzer Building,” even after the tenants vacated two years later. In 2023, the defunct wholesaler’s name is often referenced in histories of this national and state designated landmark.

Once more needing a new home, in 1907 the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company purchased vacant land at 320 Starr Street (later designated 1226 East Houston Street) adjoining the main line of the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio (G.H. & S.A.) Railway. Their purchase of this site east of downtown San Antonio was related to the city’s evolving rail network: the G.H. & S.A. built its Sunset Passenger Depot (NRHP 1975) and freight depot (no longer extant) in 1902 at Commerce Street, two blocks from the future Hugo & Schmeltzer tract (Figure 8).

The new passenger station and freight depot inspired the construction of numerous commercial, industrial, and warehouse buildings in the immediate area. Among the first was the Collins-Gunther building (NRHP 1979) at 243 Center Street, built sometime between 1903-1905.¹⁸ In April 1907, the City Council granted the G.H. & S.A. Railway the right to extend its tracks to the south side of Starr Street. “This track is to be built for the purpose of connecting with a warehouse of the Hugo & Schmeltzer company.”¹⁹ Though the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company was certainly not the first to strategically place their business along the rail corridor, following the move of such a prominent and influential firm, a string of businesses followed suit. In the immediate vicinity, the Merchants Ice and Cold Storage Company (NRHP 2002) constructed a new building in 1909, and in 1911 the Guggenheim-Goldsmith Company constructed their wholesale produce warehouse across the street.

In August 1907, the San Antonio *Gazette* reported that Hugo & Schmeltzer’s building was under construction and would be “a handsome and substantial structure.”²⁰ (Figure 9). By early August, the basement was completed, and the first story was progressing. The building was finished by late 1907 and, after vacating the Alamo property on February 10, 1908, the company opened for business on Starr Street. Their inventory included a variety of goods ranging from fine whiskeys, champagnes, jellies, soaps, and fruits to dynamite.²¹ Unfortunately, Charles Hugo died in September of 1906 and did not live to see construction of the company’s new, purpose-built warehouse. Two months later, Hugo’s

¹⁶ For further reading, see *The Second Battle of the Alamo: How Two Women Saved Texas’ Most Famous Landmark* by Judy Alter and Debra L. Winegarten.

¹⁷ Bexar County Deed Records (BCDR) 7:373-375 (Pellicer to Grenet, December 1, 1877); BCDR 48:50-52 (H. Grenet estate to Hugo & Schmeltzer, February 1, 1886); BCDR 223:260-261 (Hugo to Driscoll, February 10, 1904); BCDR 238:363-366 (Heuermann to Driscoll, September 1, 1905); San Antonio *Herald*, January 25, 1878; Heusinger, Edward W. Heusinger, *A Chronology of Events in San Antonio* *San Antonio: Standard Printing Company, 1951) 42; Cecilia Steinfeldt, *San Antonio Was* (San Antonio: San Antonio Museum Association, 1978) 30; “J.B. Collins buys the Hugo-Schmeltzer Co.” San Antonio *Light and Gazette*, February 22, 1910, 10.

¹⁸ Southern Pacific Depot Historic District, San Antonio, Bexar County, National Register of Historic Places, Reference # 79002917.

¹⁹ “City will sue for property,” San Antonio *Gazette*, April 9, 1907, 2.

²⁰ “Work on Warehouse,” San Antonio *Gazette*, August 8, 1907, 8.

²¹ “Death Claims C. Hugo,” San Antonio *Daily Light*, September 15, 1906, 1; Jules A. Appler’s *General Directory and Blue Book of the City of San Antonio*, 1907-1908.

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estate purchased Gustav Schmeltzer's interest, although the company's name remained unchanged. Schmeltzer continued as president for a time and was succeeded by Charles Hugo's son, Victor.²² In 1910, Victor Hugo announced that the wholesale grocery business of Hugo & Schmeltzer Company would be sold, citing ill health. Though the company retained and continued to operate its wholesale liquor and cigar business at a new location, the sale marked the end of Hugo & Schmeltzer Company's association with San Antonio's wholesale grocery industry, after four successful decades.²³

The Collins Company

In February 1910, only two years after the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company building was completed, it was announced that Victor Hugo had reached an agreement to sell the company's wholesale grocery business to J. Burnett (J.B.) Collins's McCord-Collins Company of Fort Worth. The firm had many branches throughout Texas and was said to be "one of the best-known wholesale grocers of the state." The vast majority of Hugo & Schmeltzer Company employees were retained by the Collins Company at the Starr (later Houston) Street location. The agreement, executed by Collins's estate, included a five-year lease on the Starr Street (later Houston Street) building.²⁴

While visiting San Antonio to finalize details of the purchase, J.B. Collins contracted pneumonia and died after returning to Fort Worth. The nominated building was optioned in April 1910 for \$60,000 by his executor, Charles Bell. In an ironic twist, Victor Hugo, who was in poor health while negotiating details of the sale, died in November 1910.²⁵ Following J. Burnett Collins's death, his wholesale grocery company was divided into two entities, the Collins Company, and the James McCord Company. The warehouse operated under the Collins Company name while the James McCord Company remained based in Fort Worth. The San Antonio firm was managed by T. Weir Labatt and A.B. Weakley who was married to J. Burnett Collins's niece, Susan. Both men were company shareholders and beneficiaries of Collins's will. They remained associated with the Collins Company until it ceased operation (Figures 10, 11 & 12).²⁶

The Collins Company was the longest occupant of the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company warehouse, operating there from 1910-1940. Over the course of three decades, the company managed a successful wholesale grocery business that expanded significantly over time. Shortly after occupying the property, the Collins Company joined several other San Antonio wholesale grocery firms in an effort to secure contracts with the military, in particular with Fort Sam Houston. Despite the fact that San Antonio was home to more wholesale grocery concerns than any other city in Texas, all of which were within close proximity to the Fort, the vast majority of food being purchased for soldiers was coming from outside of the state.²⁷ After submitting their bids for a variety of commodities, the San Antonio wholesalers successfully proved that they could furnish Fort Sam Houston with many of their grocery and supply needs at a lower cost than competitors outside of the city. The Collins Company landed initial contracts for 4,850 pounds of evaporated

²² "Bought by Hugo Estate," *San Antonio Daily Light*, November 3, 1906, 4.

²³ "J.B. Collins buys the Hugo, Schmeltzer Co." *San Antonio Light and Gazette*, February 22, 1910.

²⁴ "J.B. Collins buys the Hugo, Schmeltzer Co." *San Antonio Light and Gazette*, February 22, 1910, 10; "Death Comes Suddenly to Victor Hugo," *San Antonio Light and Gazette*, *San Antonio Light*, November 5, 1910, 9. McCord-Collins was founded in 1893 by J.B. Collins and Fergus Moriarty. Though Hugo retained ownership of the company's wholesale liquor and cigar business which moved to 613-615 W. Commerce Street where it operated under the Hugo-Schmeltzer name.

²⁵ BCDR 379:507-508 (Hugo & Schmeltzer to Hugo, filed January 26, 1912); *San Antonio Light and Gazette*, March 16, 1910, 7. The company, through its president, Victor Hugo, sold the building's real estate and other unrelated tracts to Elise Haseloff Hugo for \$85,800 in October 1910. The transaction was only three weeks before Victor Hugo's death.

²⁶ Personal Communication, Blair Labatt, Sr. to Maria Watson, January 14, 1991.

²⁷ "San Antonio the Wholesale Grocery Center of Texas and the Southwest," *San Antonio Light and Gazette*, February 12, 1911,

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peaches and 5,800 pounds of salt.²⁸ The company would continue to earn large, profitable contracts with Texas military installations in the years to come. As the United States prepared to enter World War I, Camp Travis was established as a training camp five miles north of downtown San Antonio. With thousands of soldiers to feed, the government awarded numerous contracts to local wholesale grocers. In just one instance in late 1917, the Collins Company earned a contract to supply Camp Travis with 1,086,000 pounds of potatoes and 310,000 pounds of onions.²⁹

The Collins Company was managed by T. Weir Labatt, who became a prominent figure in both the San Antonio and greater Texas wholesale grocery industry. In 1914, Labatt was elected president of the South Texas Wholesale Grocers' Association, a professional association of wholesale grocers who joined forces to advance and advocate for their business interests.³⁰ The South Texas Wholesale Grocers' Association was founded in 1911 and included members from Austin, San Antonio, Houston, Galveston, and towns between with annual conventions taking place in Galveston.³¹ The organization's primary office, however, was located in San Antonio at N. Medina and W. Travis Street from at least 1915 to 1923. In 1915, the association had 44 members, which increased to 60 by 1923.³² Labatt was one of several San Antonio wholesale grocers who was involved with the South Texas Wholesale Grocers' Association. Leon Goodman (Goodman Grocery Company), A.G. Castanola (Castanola & Son), Jake Wolff (J. Oppenheimer & Co.), were all active members of the association, as well as Labatt's managing partner at the Collins Company, A.B. Weakley.³³ The South Texas Wholesale Grocers' Association merged with the North Texas Wholesale Grocers' Association in 1929 to form a single, statewide association: the Texas Wholesale Grocers' Association.³⁴ Labatt's son, T.W. Labatt, Jr., would later serve as the Association's president during the 1950s.³⁵

During the 1920s, the Collins Company expanded, opening warehouses in other cities, and acquiring several other wholesale firms. In 1926, the Collins Company acquired one of San Antonio's oldest wholesale firms, the M. Castanola Grocery Company (also known as Castanola & Son). Beginning in a rock and adobe building on Main Avenue, the M. Castanola Grocery Company had operated a thriving business in San Antonio since 1853. A primary impetus for the acquisition was M. Castanola Company's exclusive right to sell the lucrative Del Monte line of grocery products in the San Antonio territory.³⁶ By 1932, the Collins Company was distributing throughout the region and Mexico, supplying numerous military posts, and operating branches in Uvalde, Del Rio, Kerrville, and Fredericksburg.³⁷

The Collins Company was locally managed by A.B. Weakley and T. Weir Labatt during the company's three decades of operation on E. Houston Street. Following the death of A.B. Weakley in 1938, the business and property were left to his wife, Susan Steele Weakley, and managed by T. Weir Labatt, Jr., and his son Blair. Upon her death in 1940, Susan

²⁸ "San Antonio the Wholesale Grocery Center of Texas and the Southwest," *San Antonio Light and Gazette*, February 12, 1911, 72; "Uncle Sam May Buy Supplies in San Antonio," *San Antonio Light and Gazette*, January 7, 1911, 1; "Local Jobbers Land Contract," *San Antonio Light and Gazette*, March 30, 1911, 1.

²⁹ "Contracts on Supplies for Camp are Let," *San Antonio Light*, September 23, 1917, 7.

³⁰ "T.W. Labatt Heads Wholesale Grocers," *San Antonio Light*, June 20, 1914, 2.

³¹ "Wholesale Grocers Begin Convention," *The Galveston Daily News*, June 19, 1915, 5; "The Lure of Galveston," *Galveston Daily News*, June 20, 1918, 4.

³² U.S. Department of Commerce, *Commercial Organizations of the United States*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1915); Appendix to the Congressional Record Volume LIII, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1916); U.S. Department of Commerce, *Commercial Organizations of the United States*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1923).

³³ "Wholesale Grocers Begin Convention," *The Galveston Daily News*, June 19, 1915, 5.

³⁴ United States Department of Commerce, *Domestic Commerce*, Vol. 3 No. 13, (April 1, 1929): 9.

³⁵ "San Antonian Heads Wholesale Grocers," *San Antonio Express*, March 1, 1950, 10.

³⁶ "Collins Buys Castanola Company," *San Antonio Light*, September 3, 1926, 40.

³⁷ "Freight Hauls to Mexico in Frontier Days Took Several Weeks," *San Antonio Light*, February 25, 1932, 35.

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Weakley's executors sold the business and property to Perry Shankle and Arthur S. Bird.³⁸ Following the sale, T. Weir and Blair Labatt took the knowledge and experience gained over three decades with the Collins Company and formed Labatt Wholesale Grocers. Today known as Labatt Food Service, the company still operates in San Antonio and traces its history to the Houston Street (formerly Starr Street) building that the Collins Company occupied for thirty-seven years. As of 2023, the company is the tenth largest food distributor in the United States.³⁹

The Bird-Shankle Company

Bird and Shankle were partners in the San Antonio Wholesale Grocer Company which, only two months earlier, had occupied a newly built warehouse just south of downtown. Following the Collins acquisition, the partners incorporated a new firm, Bird-Shankle. The local press called the purchase "one of the most important business transactions to occur in the San Antonio commercial world in several years..."⁴⁰ Bird-Shankle's inventory already included Dole Pineapple products and other popular brands of the era. The acquisition of Collins' assets included the lucrative Del Monte product line.⁴¹

Bird-Shankle's ownership and occupancy of 1226 East Houston was short-lived. The partners' new, modern warehouse on South Flores Street was operational, and after two years, they sold the old Houston Street building to Associated Seed Company based in Connecticut and licensed to operate in Texas. With this sale, the building's association with San Antonio's wholesale grocery business ended.⁴²

Property History: 1942-2023

Since 1942, the nominated building has served seed, appliance, and boot companies, and a restaurant. Associated Seed Company operated in the Houston Street building from 1942 until 1950 when it sold the property and building to Joseph Thiele, Inc., a company that specialized in household appliances, furnishings, and later, wholesale electrical supplies. Joseph Thiele, Inc., remained at 1226 East Houston Street until about 1973, and in early 1974, sold its property to the Blue Bell Boots division of Blue Bell, Incorporated. The parent company specialized in manufacturing men's and women's clothing and its product lines included Wrangler, Rustler and Maverick jeans.⁴³

The Blue Bell Corporation acquired the Lucchese Company in 1970. Lucchese was founded in San Antonio in 1883 by Italian immigrant, Sam Lucchese. The company first manufactured boots and shoes for the United States Army at Fort Sam Houston and later specialized in high-quality custom boots for the civilian market, including Hollywood stars. Lucchese moved its manufacturing and retail operations several times throughout its history as the company expanded.⁴⁴ As a division of Blue Bell Boots operating under its Wrangler Division, Lucchese had access to national

³⁸ "A.B. Weakley Funeral Rites Slated in S.A.," *San Antonio Light*, September 18, 1938, 1-A; "Woman Civic Leader Dies," *San Antonio Light*, June 3, 1940, 20; BCDR 1769:588-590 (Steele et al to Bird and Shankle, July 29, 1940).

³⁹ "About Us," Labatt Food Service, <https://web.labattfood.com/about>, Accessed April 4, 2023.

⁴⁰ "Collins Co. purchased by Bird and Shankle," *San Antonio Light*, July 7, 1940, 43.

⁴¹ The Bird-Shankle warehouse was located at 931 South Flores Street. In 2022 this is the site of Deansteel Manufacturing Company.

⁴² BCDR 1881:412-516 (Bird and Shankle to Associated Seeds, February 19, 1942).

⁴³ Arthur J. Simpson (ed.) *The Century in Southwest Texas* (San Antonio: Southwest Publications, 1937) 180; BCDR 7283:928-930 (Thiele to Blue Bell, February 15, 1974); "Firm Buys Lucchese Co.," *San Antonio Light*, June 17, 1970, 25. The Blue Bell Company Plant in Greensboro, North Carolina, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2020 (<https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/nr/GF8969.pdf>, accessed July 11, 2022).

⁴⁴ "Lucchese Moving Again," *San Antonio Light*, August 5, 1972, 15; "Acme to purchase Lucchese Boot Co. in S.A.," *San Antonio Light*, July 7, 1984. At the time Lucchese was acquired by Blue Bell, it was located in downtown San Antonio above Paris Hatters, another San Antonio legacy company.

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and international markets. The demand for its custom-made Western boots increased and a larger production facility was needed. In response, Blue Bell purchased the vacant building at 1226 East Houston Street. “The move was necessitated because of increased demand for Lucchese custom boots, which retail for \$125 and up per pair.”⁴⁵ The company was still operating there in 1984 when it was acquired by the Acme Boot Company, the world’s largest bootmaker. The Houston Street property was also conveyed to a company operated by Acme, the Post Boot Company.⁴⁶ Sometime between 1984 and 1986, Lucchese’s manufacturing facility was relocated to a suburban warehouse. Then, in response to declining demand for cowboy boots, the San Antonio operation closed in August 1986 and was moved to El Paso where production was merged with the Post Boot Company. Eighty-five employees were left without jobs and the Houston Street building was left vacant.⁴⁷

A year after Lucchese’s San Antonio operation relocated to El Paso, Post Boot sold the company’s former building to local real estate investor and contractor, F.W. Riesenecker. In partnership with another developer, Michael Berrier, Riesenecker envisioned Unserhaus 1226, with offices for companies specializing in design, graphic arts, and advertising. A 6,000 square foot space for exhibits and performances was also created. The project proved to be short-lived and in 1991, the building was purchased by Spaghetti Warehouse and renovated in the popular franchise’s theme décor. Spaghetti Warehouse operated at 1226 East Houston Street until it closed in April 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴⁸ The building was sold in 2022 and plans for its future use have not been determined.

CRITERION C: Architecture

The Hugo & Schmeltzer Company building is an early 20th century warehouse that embodies elements of both the Richardsonian Romanesque and Mission Revival styles of architecture, a common stylistic combination in San Antonio. Although many of the city’s commercial buildings adopted this historicist vocabulary, the nominated warehouse was constructed as a direct result of the company vacating the Alamo *convento*. Mission Revival style was popularized in California during the 1890s and was directly tied to Richardsonian Romanesque. Shortly after Richardson’s death, his firm designed the Stanford University Quadrangle, applying characteristics of 18th century California missions (open arcades, exposed ceiling beams, tile roofs, and monochrome exterior surfaces) to Richardson’s round arches and rusticated stone. The resulting Mission Revival style proliferated throughout California and the American Southwest and reached Texas by the late 1890s.⁴⁹

The style was popularized in Texas through the Southern Pacific Railroad, which adopted Mission Revival as the standard style for its train stations. The Southern Pacific Railroad Station, constructed in San Antonio in 1902 just blocks from the Hugo & Schmeltzer building, was a primary stop along the “Sunset Route” and is a prominent work of Mission Revival architecture in San Antonio. Because of the significance of the Alamo mission to Texas history, works of Mission Revival in both San Antonio and wider Texas frequently mimicked its distinctive curved parapet.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ “Lucchese Boot Expands Plant,” *San Antonio Express-News*, March 31, 1974; BCDR 7283:928-930 (Thiele to Blue Bell, February 15, 1974).

⁴⁶ BCDR 3160:527-530 (Blue Bell to Post Boot, July 16, 1984).

⁴⁷ “Lucchese closes up; 85 left without jobs,” *San Antonio Express-News*, August 20, 1986, 98

⁴⁸ “Building Renovation,” *San Antonio Express-News*, October 21, 1988; “Former boot factory stepping up with renovations for offices, arts,” *San Antonio Express-News*, March 25, 1989, 3-C; BCDR 5023:2210-2213 (Riesenecker to Spaghetti Warehouse, May 15, 1991); “Cloudy with no chance of meatballs; National chain shutter massive restaurant near downtown after decades of service,” *San Antonio Business Journal*, April 22, 2020.

⁴⁹ Jay C. Henry, *Architecture in Texas, 1895-1945*, (Austin: University of Texas Press), 19-20.

⁵⁰ Jay C. Henry, *Architecture in Texas, 1895-1945*, (Austin: University of Texas Press), 144.

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The Hugo & Schmeltzer Company warehouse is a modest expression of both Richardsonian Romanesque and Mission Revival, with round arches and corbeled eave details pointing to Richardsonian inspiration, while the Alamo-esque parapets and buff monochrome exterior point to the Mission Revival style. Though Alamo-esque parapets were commonly employed throughout the state, in the case of the Hugo & Schmeltzer warehouse, the building's Alamo-esque parapets point to the company's unique relationship to the historic mission. They are a highly significant feature of the building's design, as they are a direct link to the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company's longstanding former location in the Alamo *convento*.

At the time of its construction, the Hugo & Schmeltzer warehouse was considered a state of the art, "modern" design, with local newspapers boasting: "In appointments and modern convenience for the transaction of a wholesale grocery and liquor business the new building is second to none in the South." With two electric elevators, an adjacent railroad spur, and cemented basement, the warehouse also featured loading doors and a freight chute to the basement for efficient loading and unloading of goods. An additional "modern" feature of the property was the use of steel throughout to provide a measure of protection from fire.⁵¹

Warehouse Architecture of Early Twentieth Century San Antonio

The extension of the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railway (later acquired by the Southern Pacific railroad) stimulated the construction of numerous commercial, industrial, and warehouse buildings along the railroad corridor east of downtown. Particularly after the 1902 construction of the Sunset Passenger Depot (Southern Pacific Railroad Passenger Station, NRHP 1975) and the Southern Pacific Freight Depot (no longer extant), development in this area increased dramatically.⁵² Among these early twentieth century buildings were several warehouses, many of which were occupied by wholesale grocery firms. Warehouses constructed along the Southern Pacific corridor on the east side of San Antonio vary in height, size, and exterior ornament, but most were masonry vernacular construction and featured open, utilitarian plans.

Hugo & Schmeltzer hired contractor L.P. (Lewis) Boettler to oversee the construction of their new warehouse adjacent to the Southern Pacific railroad. Whether the plans were architect-drawn is not known. The two-story, brick warehouse consists of a simple, utilitarian design in keeping with the building's functionality with elements of Richardsonian Romanesque and Mission Revival style. The two most public facing facades of the building feature Alamo-esque parapets along the roofline, a direct reference to the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company's previous location in the Alamo *convento*. The nearby 1902 Sunset Depot is a Mission Revival building that features similar Alamo-esque parapets, and the more vernacular Collins-Gunther warehouse also features modest elements of the Mission Revival style.

Comparative Properties

A one-story brick warehouse known as the Collins-Gunther building (NRHP 1979) was constructed two blocks south of the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company at 243 Center Street, sometime between 1903-1905. The warehouse was constructed by the Collins-Gunther Company, which specialized in the manufacture of large machinery, including windmills. The Center Street property was the location of the company's repair business, which remained an independent entity when the manufacturing arm of the Collins-Gunther Company was sold to the nearby San Antonio Machine and Supply Company (SAMSCO).⁵³ Located immediately adjacent to the Southern Pacific railroad tracks, the warehouse features similar mission-shaped parapets as those present on the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company building.

⁵¹ "Hugo, Schmeltzer & Co.," San Antonio Light, January 26, 1908 8.

⁵² Southern Pacific Depot Historic District, San Antonio, Bexar County, National Register of Historic Places, Reference # 79002917.

⁵³ "Machinery Co's. Are Combined," The San Antonio Light, September 6, 1908, 3.

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Though a similar example of early twentieth century warehouse design, the Collin-Gunther building has lost much of its integrity due to insensitive rehabilitation.

Another nearby warehouse built in the early twentieth century is located two blocks south of the Hugo & Schmeltzer building at 1203 E Commerce Street.⁵⁴ Designed by architect Atlee B. Ayres, the warehouse features Neoclassical Revival elements, including a prominent cornice and a symmetrical facade. The building was originally a wholesale warehouse as a part of the San Antonio Machine and Supply Company (SAMSCO) property.⁵⁵ By 1927, the Pruitt Commission Company was operating their wholesale grocery firm out of the warehouse.⁵⁶ The warehouse is a contributing building in the Southern Pacific Depot Historic District (NRHP 1979).

Two years after the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company building was completed in 1907, the Merchants Ice and Cold Storage Company (NRHP 2002) constructed its plant immediately northeast across the tracks (Figure 11). Initially the production of ice was the company's most profitable endeavor, though with the advent and proliferation of refrigerators, the company refocused on providing cold storage for wholesale distributors. Merchants Ice and Cold Storage also provided cold storage for the U.S. Government, particularly during WWII to house meat waiting to be shipped to training camps and military installations. Because the nature of the Merchants Ice and Cold Storage Company's work necessitated interior temperature control, the brick warehouses on this property do not feature many windows and are remarkably simple and utilitarian in appearance.⁵⁷

In 1911, the Guggenheim-Goldsmith Company constructed its wholesale warehouse directly across the street from the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company warehouse and across the railroad tracks from the Merchants Ice and Cold Storage property. It is a one-story brick building with shaped parapets along its primary elevation. The combination office and warehouse building contained a cold storage room for the preservation of fruit and produce, the company's chief products. The cold storage room was supplied with frigid air via an underground pipe that connected to the Merchants Ice and Cold Storage Company.⁵⁸

Other area warehouses representative of this period has been demolished including the Southern Pacific Freight Depot and General Hotel Supply Company building (both constructed in 1913). Much of the San Antonio Machine and Supply Company (SAMSCO) complex, which consisted of numerous vernacular warehouse and light industrial buildings and at one time encompassed an entire city block, has also been demolished.

While the above comparative examples are located on San Antonio's east side along the Southern Pacific railroad, other examples of twentieth century vernacular warehouses are located on the west side of San Antonio along the International and Great Northern railroad corridor. The Scobey Fireproof Storage Company property features a number of vernacular warehouses, including a 1913 warehouse building that features Mission Revival parapets similar to those on the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company warehouse.⁵⁹ Another grouping of vernacular warehouses is located in the Blue Star Street Industrial Historic District, constructed between 1917 and 1934 along the San Antonio Belt and Terminal Railway (a subsidiary of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad) property.

⁵⁴ Southern Pacific Depot Historic District, San Antonio, Bastrop County, National Register of Historic Places, Reference # 79002917.

⁵⁵ University of Texas at San Antonio Special Collections. "San Antonio Machine and Supply Company: Atlee B. Ayres photograph collection." Accessed April 4, 2023 <https://digital.utsa.edu/digital/collection/p9020coll008/id/6137/>

⁵⁶ "Concern Ships Produce Over Texas," San Antonio Light, November 5, 1927, p 12.

⁵⁷ Merchants Ice and Cold Storage Company, San Antonio, Bexar County, National Register of Historic Places, Reference # 2001060.

⁵⁸ "New Home of Big Wholesale Business," San Antonio Light, October 15, 1911, p 88.

⁵⁹ Rebecca Wallisch, "Scobey Fireproof Storage Company," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Draft, 2023.

Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Conclusion

The Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse was built in 1907 as the successful wholesale grocery firm's new headquarters. The building replaced the company's previous location in the c.1730 Mission San Antonio de Valero (Alamo) *convento* when a heated local debate arose over the *convento*'s preservation. Hugo & Schmeltzer subsequently sold the business to another prominent wholesale firm, the Collins Company, in 1910, and it operated as a grocery warehouse until 1942. The building is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Commerce and Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a particularly intact early 20th century Romanesque Revival commercial building bearing appropriately Alamo-esque parapet motifs on the outer bays. The period of significance extends from 1907 to 1942, the span during which the building's core function remained consistent with its original use as a grocery warehouse. A rear addition built in the mid-1960s does not detract from the design. Overall, the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company warehouse is remarkably intact and retains excellent integrity to communicate its historic and architectural significance.

Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

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-----BCDR 48:50-52 (H. Grenet estate to Hugo & Schmeltzer, February 1, 1886).

-----BCDR 223:260-261 (Hugo to Driscoll, February 10, 1904).

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-----BCDR 1881:412-516 (Bird and Shankle to Associated Seeds, February 19, 1942).

-----BCDR 2837:417-420 (Associated Seeds to Thiele, May 15, 1950).

-----BCDR 7283:928-930 (Thiele to Blue Bell, February 15, 1974).

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Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

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-----“Bought by Hugo Estate,” November 3, 1906, 4.

-----“Collins Buys Castanola Company,” September 3, 1926, 40.

-----“Collins Co. purchased by Bird and Shankle,” July 7, 1940, 43.

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-----“Death Claims C. Hugo,” September 15, 1906, 1.

-----“Firm Buys Lucchese Co,” June 17, 1970, 25.

-----“Freight Hauls to Mexico in Frontier Days Took Several Weeks,” February 25, 1932, 35.

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-----“T.W. Labott Heads Wholesale Grocers,” June 20, 1914, 2.

-----“Woman Civic Leader Dies,” June 3, 1940, 20.

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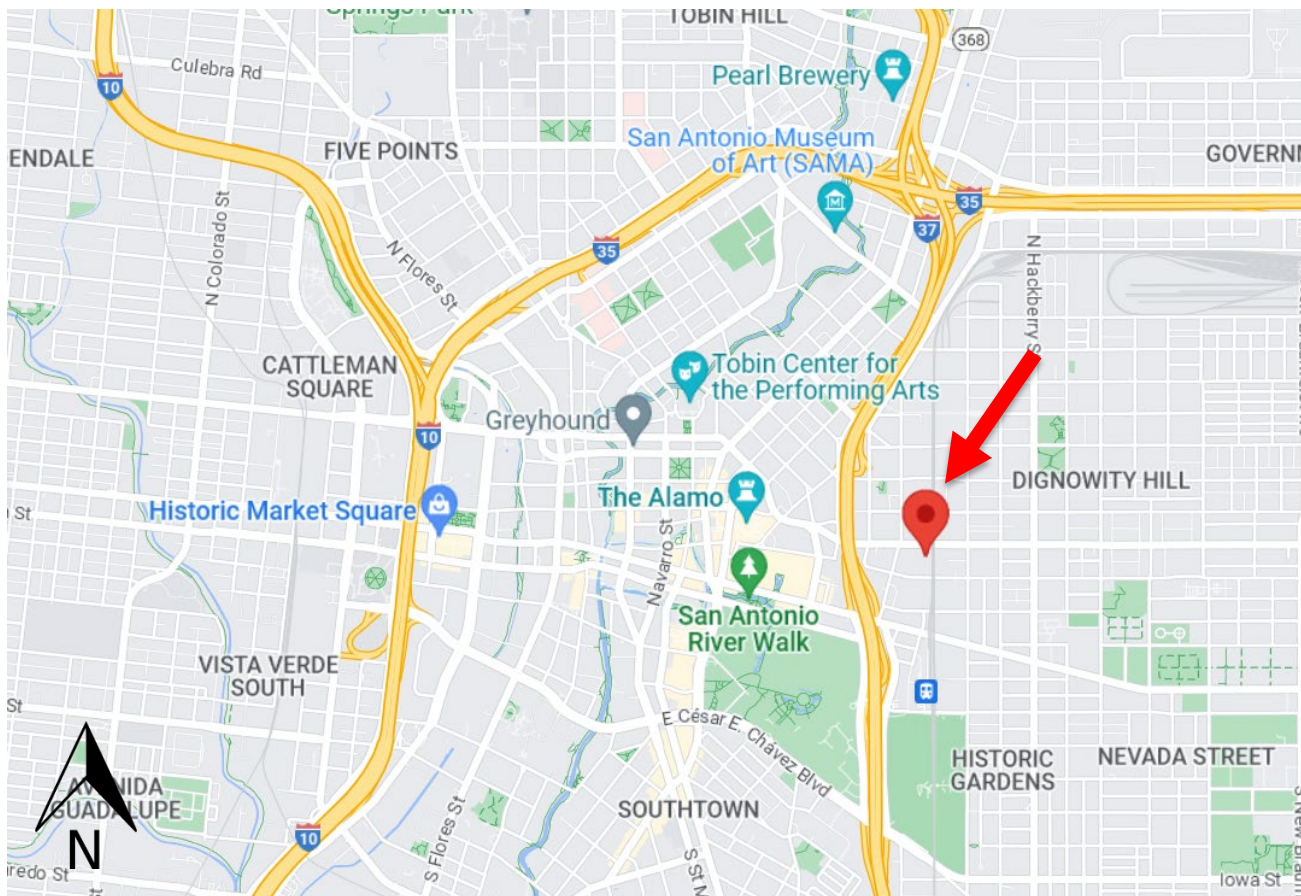
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Maps

Map 1. Bexar County, Texas.



Map 2. The red arrow points to the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse (1226 E. Houston St.) in San Antonio. Google Maps, Accessed March 28, 2023.



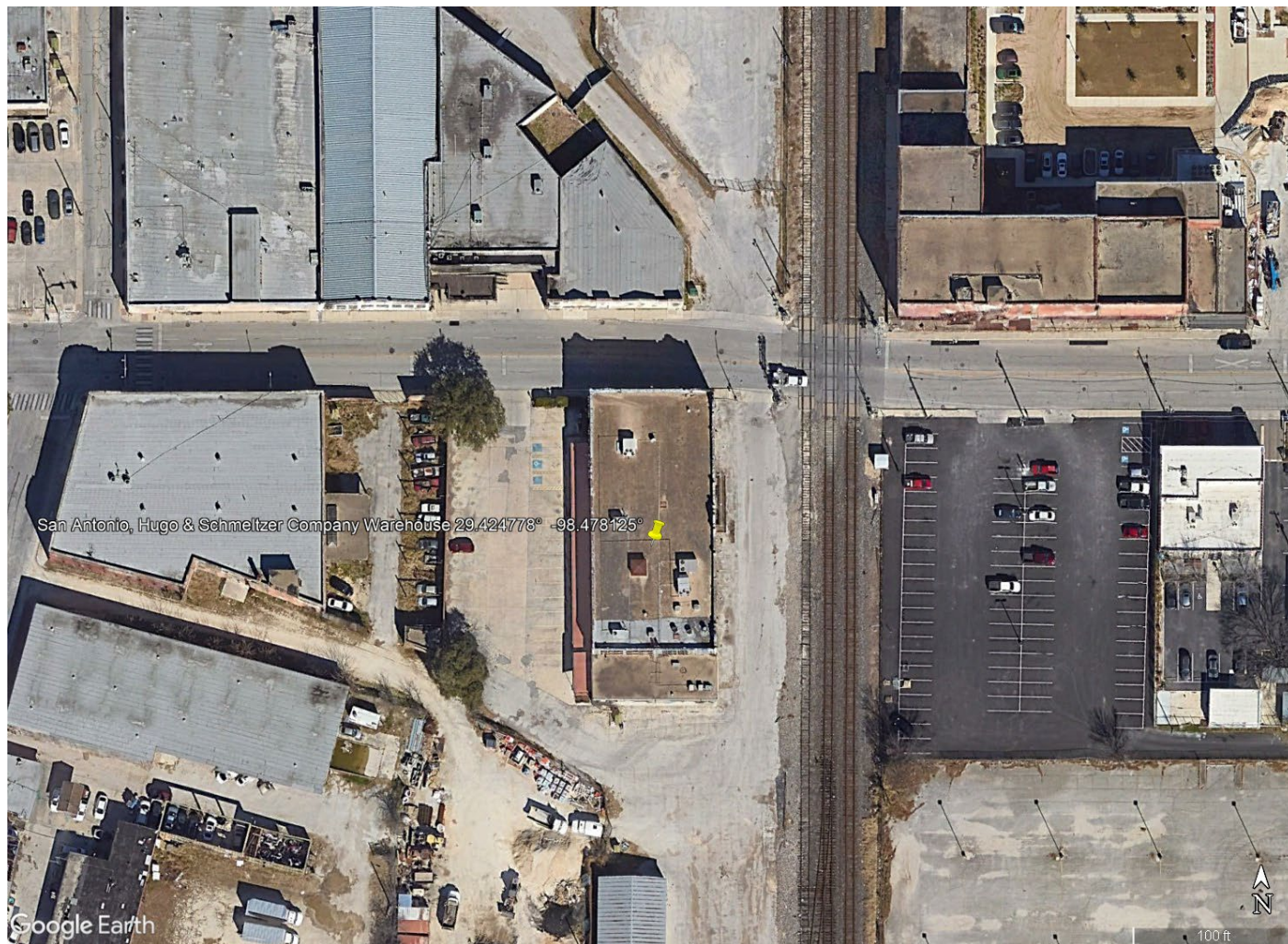
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Map 3. Bexar Appraisal District map of the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company building property, subject parcel outlined in red. Accessed March 28, 2023.

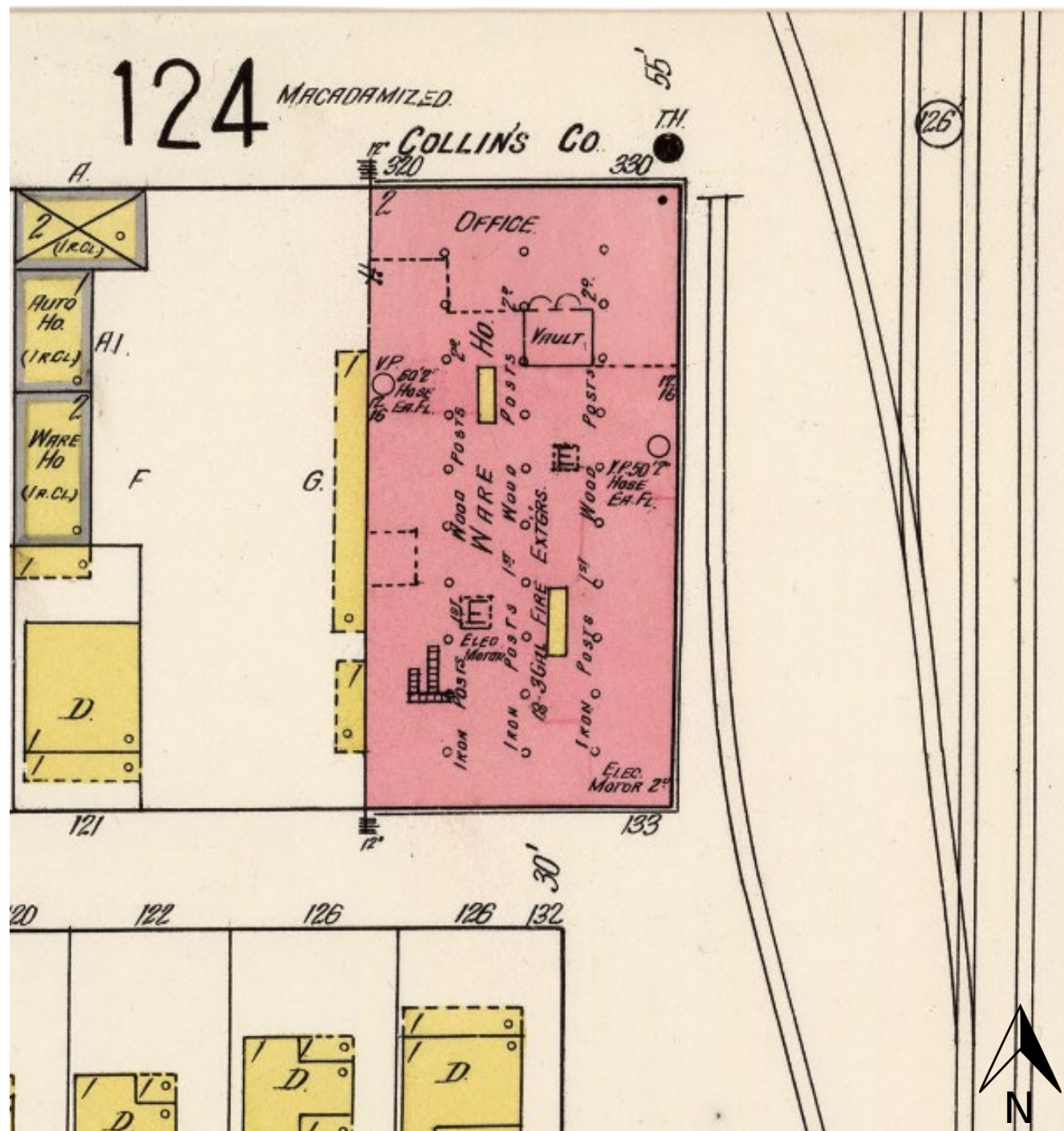


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Map 4. San Antonio, Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse 29.424778° -98.478125°, accessed 7/5/23.

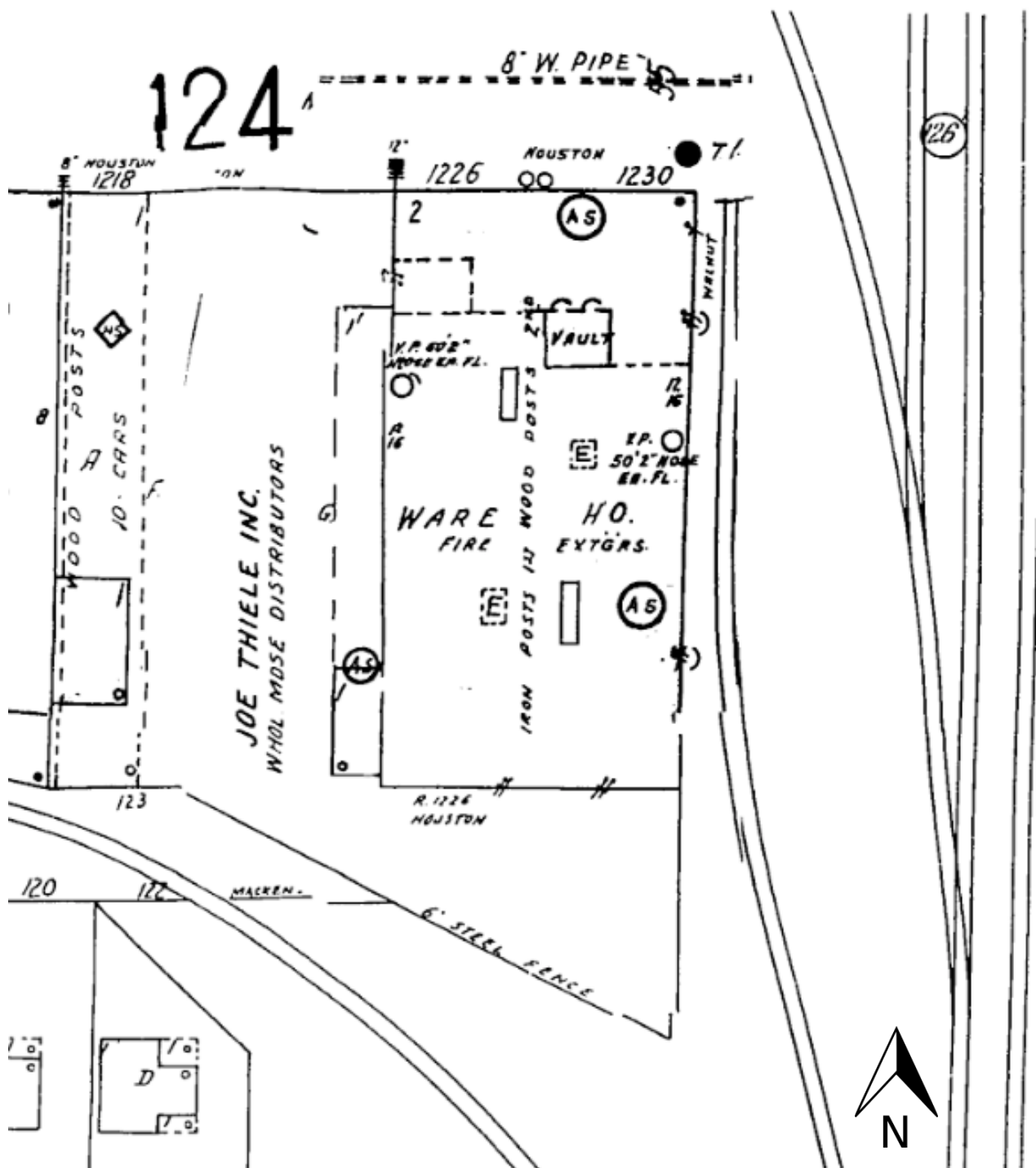


.Map 5. 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Map 6. 1911-1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Library of Congress.

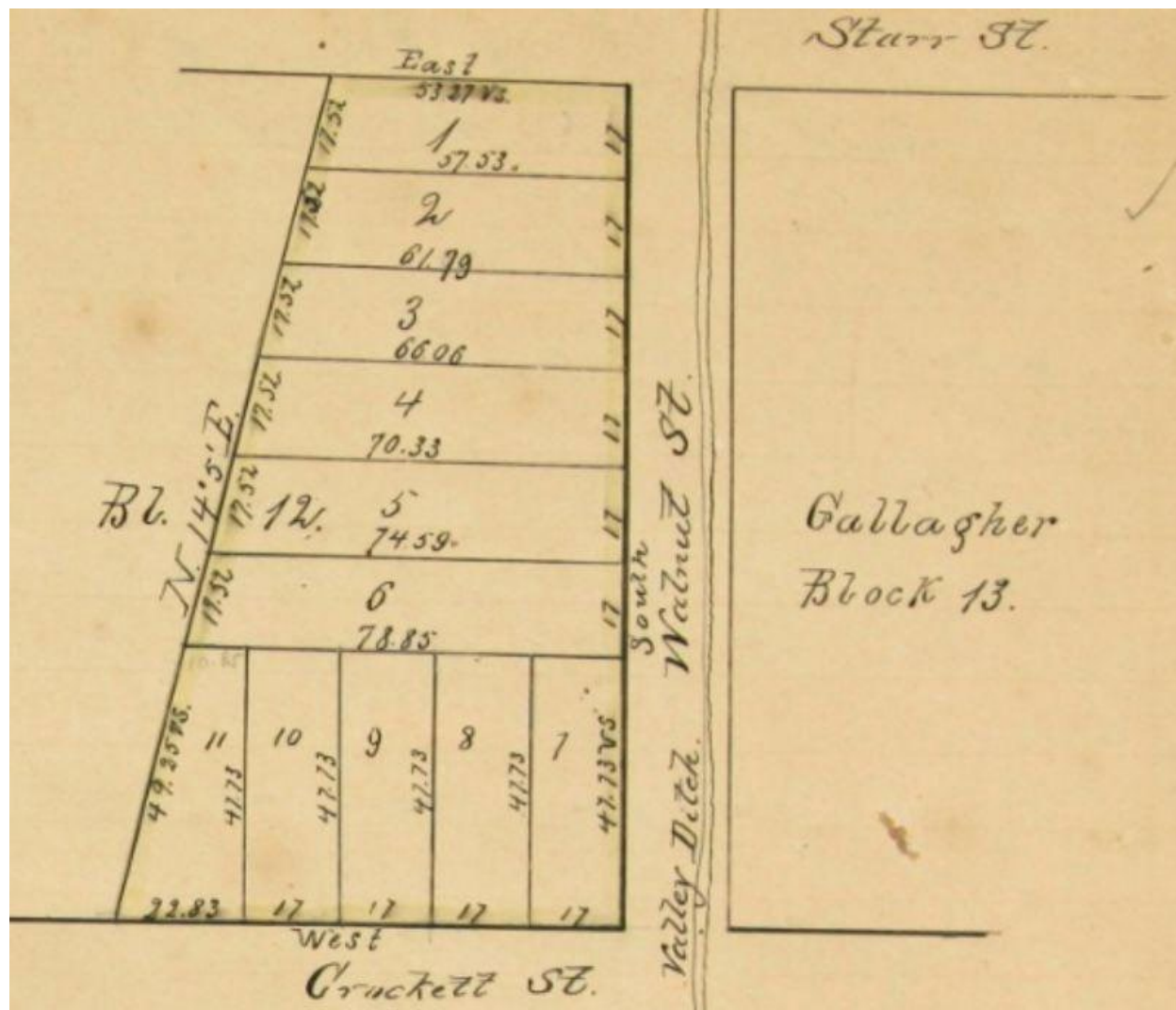


SBR Draft

Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

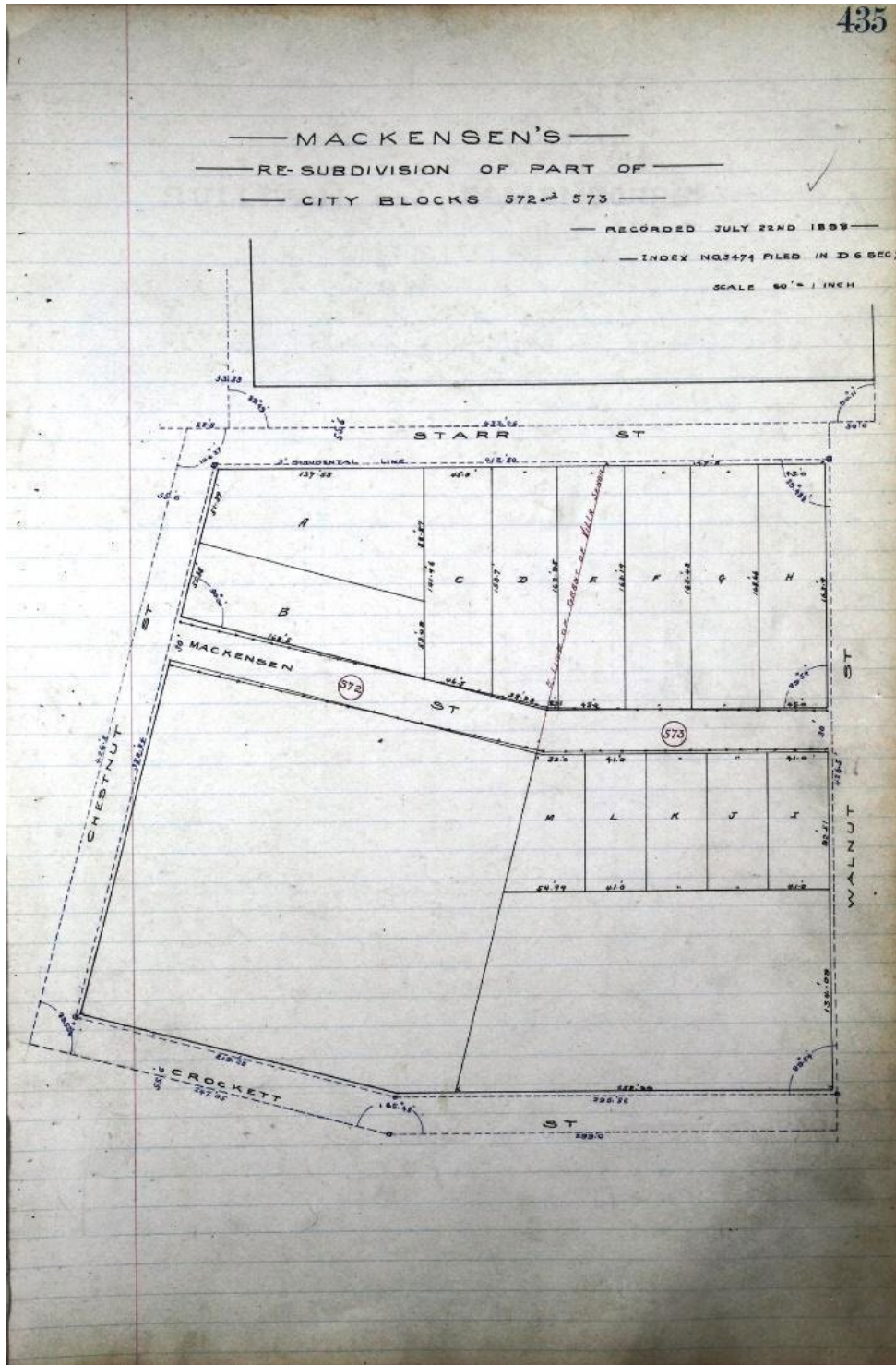
Figures

Figure 1. Plat depicting the Adams and Wickes Subdivision. City of San Antonio, City Plat Book, Volume 1, Page 441



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Figure 2. Mackensen's Subdivision. City of San Antonio, City Engineers Book 5, Page 435



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Figure 3. Charles Hugo, undated. Lewis Publishing Company (comp.) *A Twentieth Century History of Southwest Texas* Volume 1 (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1907).



Figure 4. Gustave Schmeltzer, undated. University of Texas at San Antonio Special Collections.



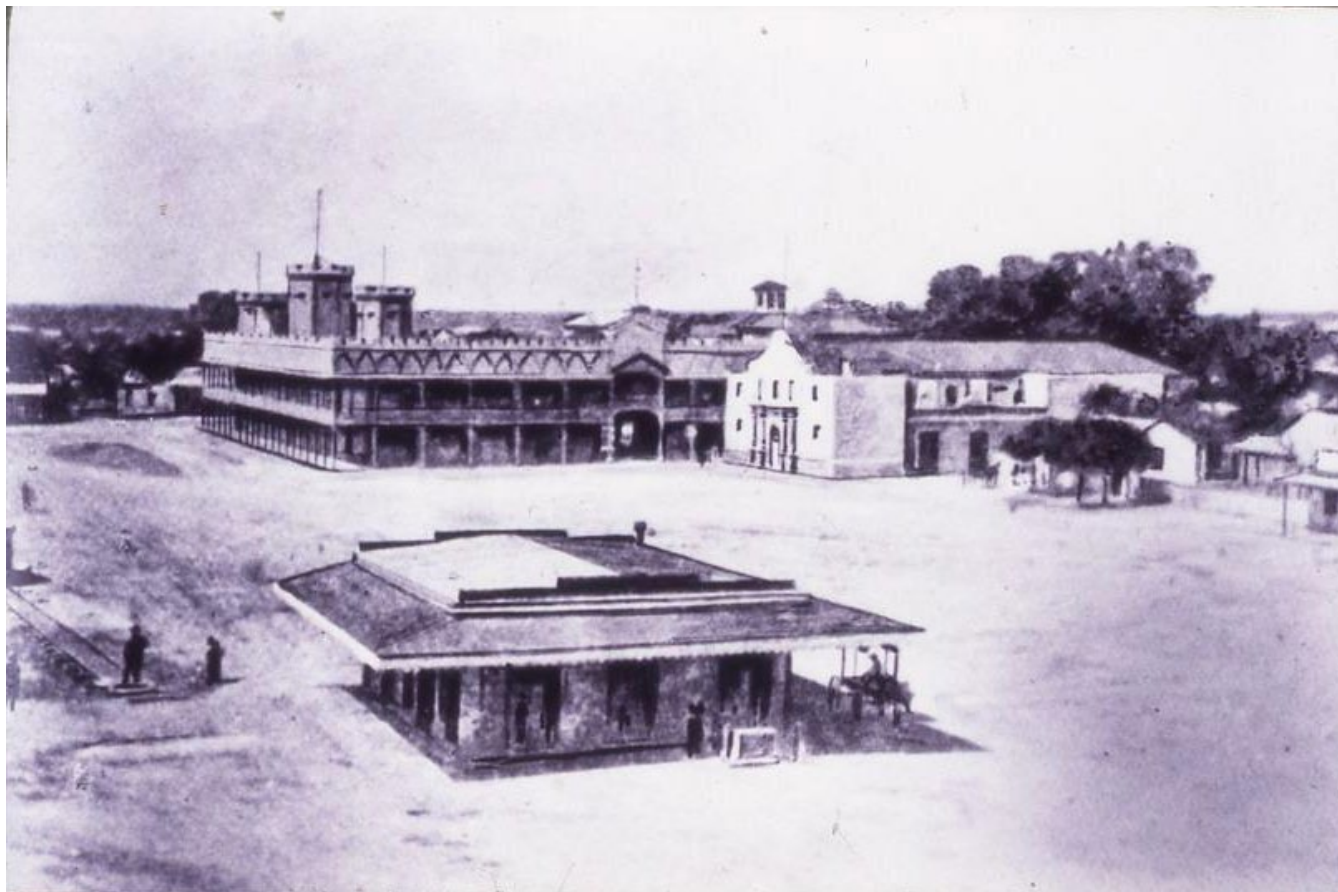
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Figure 5. "Oxcarts outside Hugo and Schmeltzer Wholesale Grocery Store, corner of Commerce and Navarro Streets, San Antonio, Texas, early 1870s," University of Texas at San Antonio Special Collections.



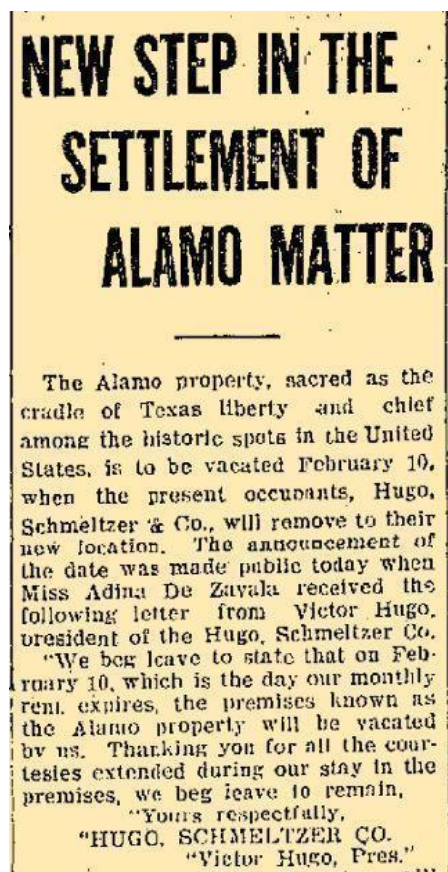
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Figure 6. Undated photograph of Grenet's Castle, left of the Alamo. University of Texas at San Antonio Special Collections.



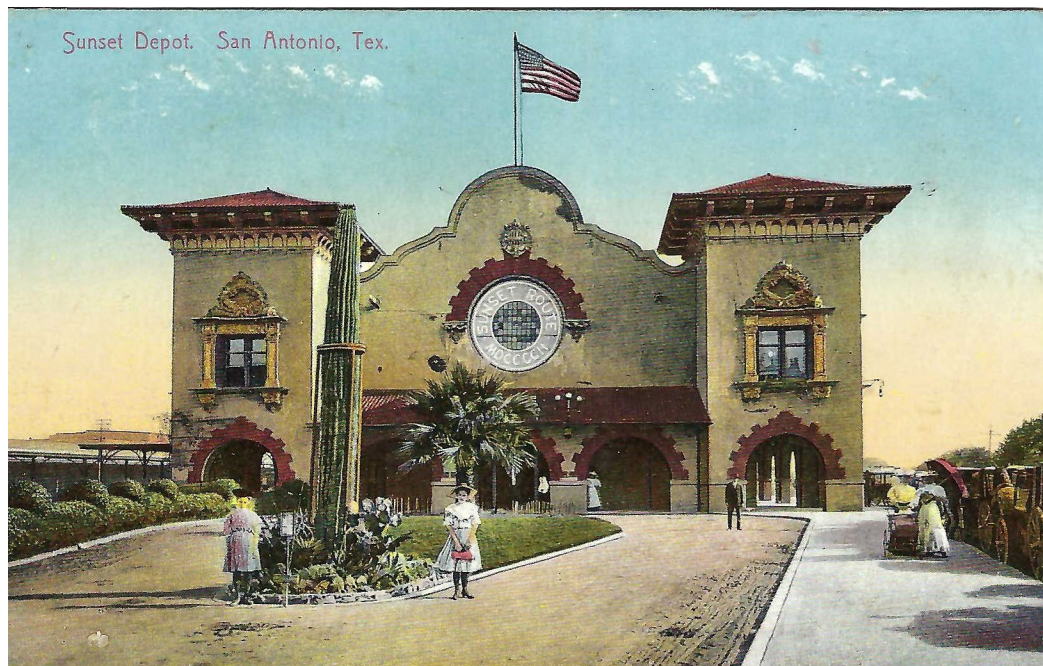
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Figure 7. Newspaper article describing Hugo & Schmeltzer vacating the Alamo property. "New Step in the Settlement of Alamo Matter," San Antonio *Light*, January 24, 1909.



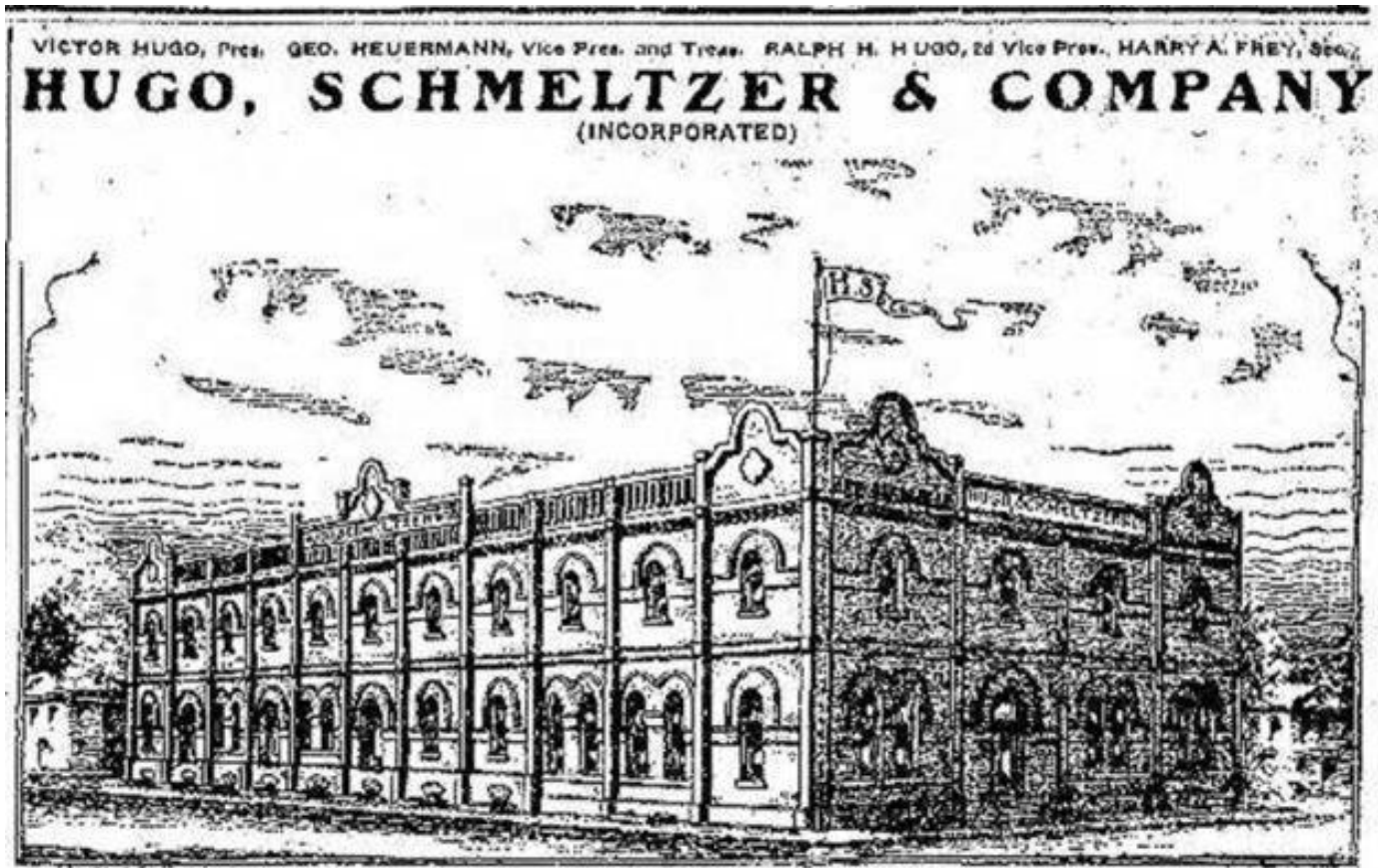
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Figure 8. Sunset Depot, San Antonio, Texas, c. 1910.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Figure 9. Artist's depiction of the Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building. *San Antonio Light*, January 26, 1908.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Figure 10. Collins Company, San Antonio, Texas, c. 1930. Labatt Food Service Company Archives.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Figure 11. Collins Company, San Antonio, Texas, c. 1920. Labatt Food Service.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

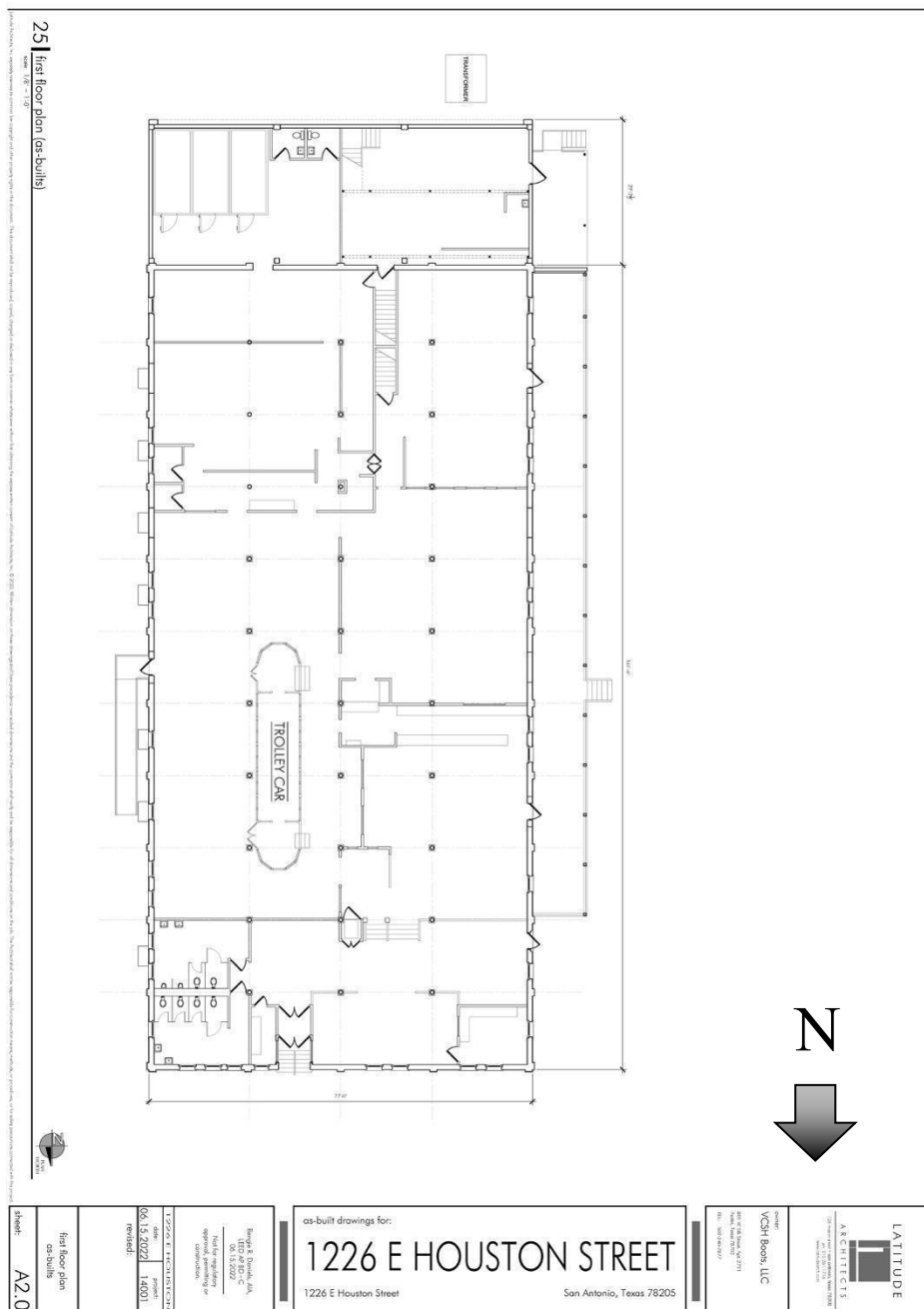
Figure 12. Collins Company, Office. Labatt Food Service Company Archives.



SBR Draft

Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

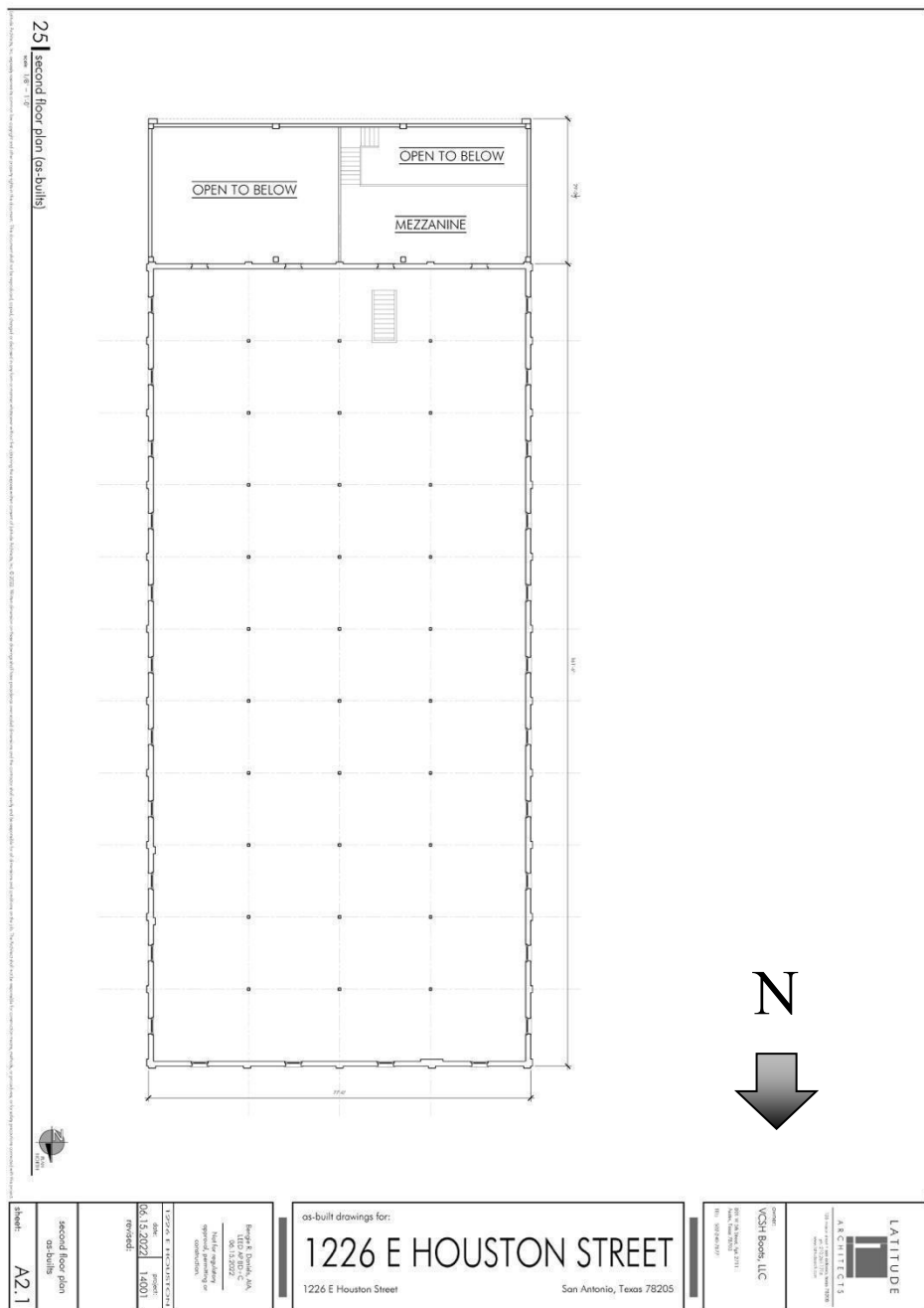
Figure 14. As-built footprint of Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building first floor (Latitude Architects 2022)



SBR Draft

Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Figure 15. As-built footprint of Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building second floor (Latitude Architects 2022)



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photograph Log

Name of Property: Hugo & Schmeltzer Nomination
City or Vicinity: San Antonio
County: Bexar
State: Texas
Photographer: Ellis Mumford-Russell
Date: May 10, 2022.
Location of Original Files: 2506 Little John Lane, Austin, Texas 78704

Photo 1: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, North Elevation. View South.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 2: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, East Elevation. View Southwest.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 3: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, East Elevation. View Northwest.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 4: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, East Elevation. View Northwest.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 5: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, South Elevation. View Northwest.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 6: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, West Elevation. View Northeast.



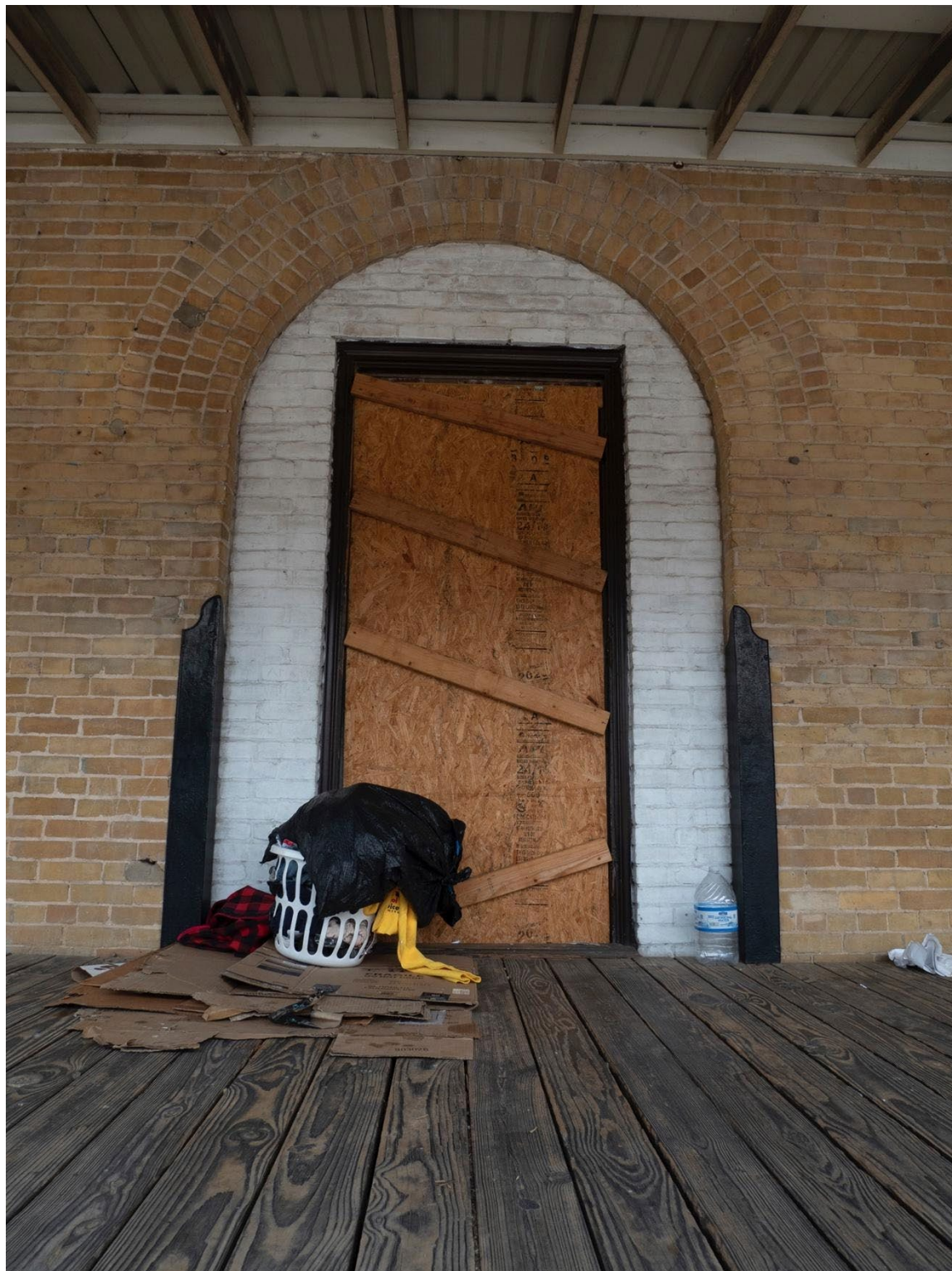
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 7: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, Entrance on West Elevation. View East.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 8: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, partially infilled entrance on West Elevation. View East.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 9: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, Rear Addition. View Northeast.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 10: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, Basement. View Southeast.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 11: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, Basement. View Northwest.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 12: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, Infilled Lightwell in Basement.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 13: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, Portion of Historic Office Area. View Northeast.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 14: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, Staircase Leading from Historic Office Area to Historic Warehouse Area. View South.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 15: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, First Floor Interior. View Southwest.



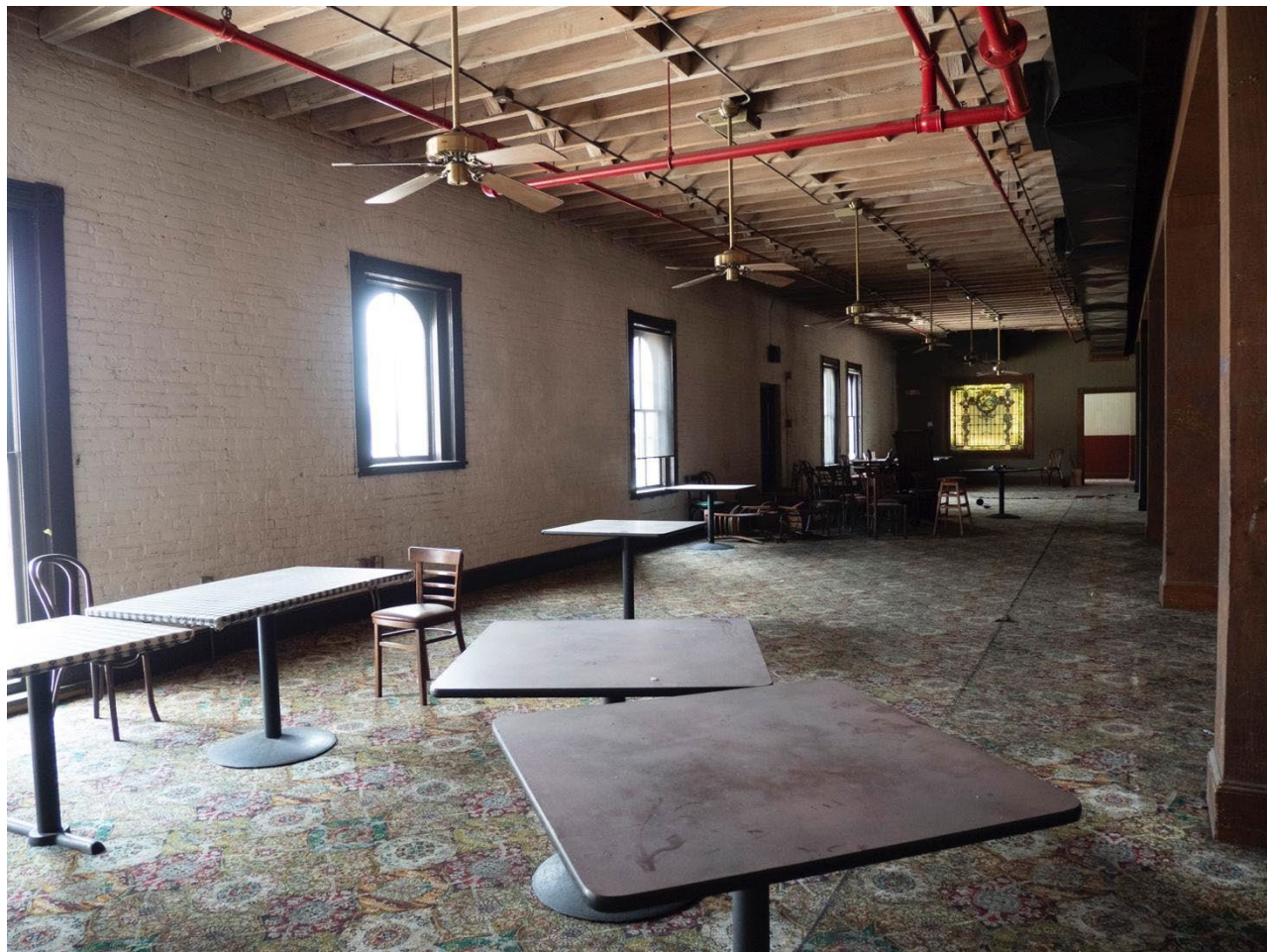
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 16: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, First Floor Interior. View West.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 17: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, First Floor Interior. View South.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 18: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, First Floor Kitchen Interior. View Southwest.



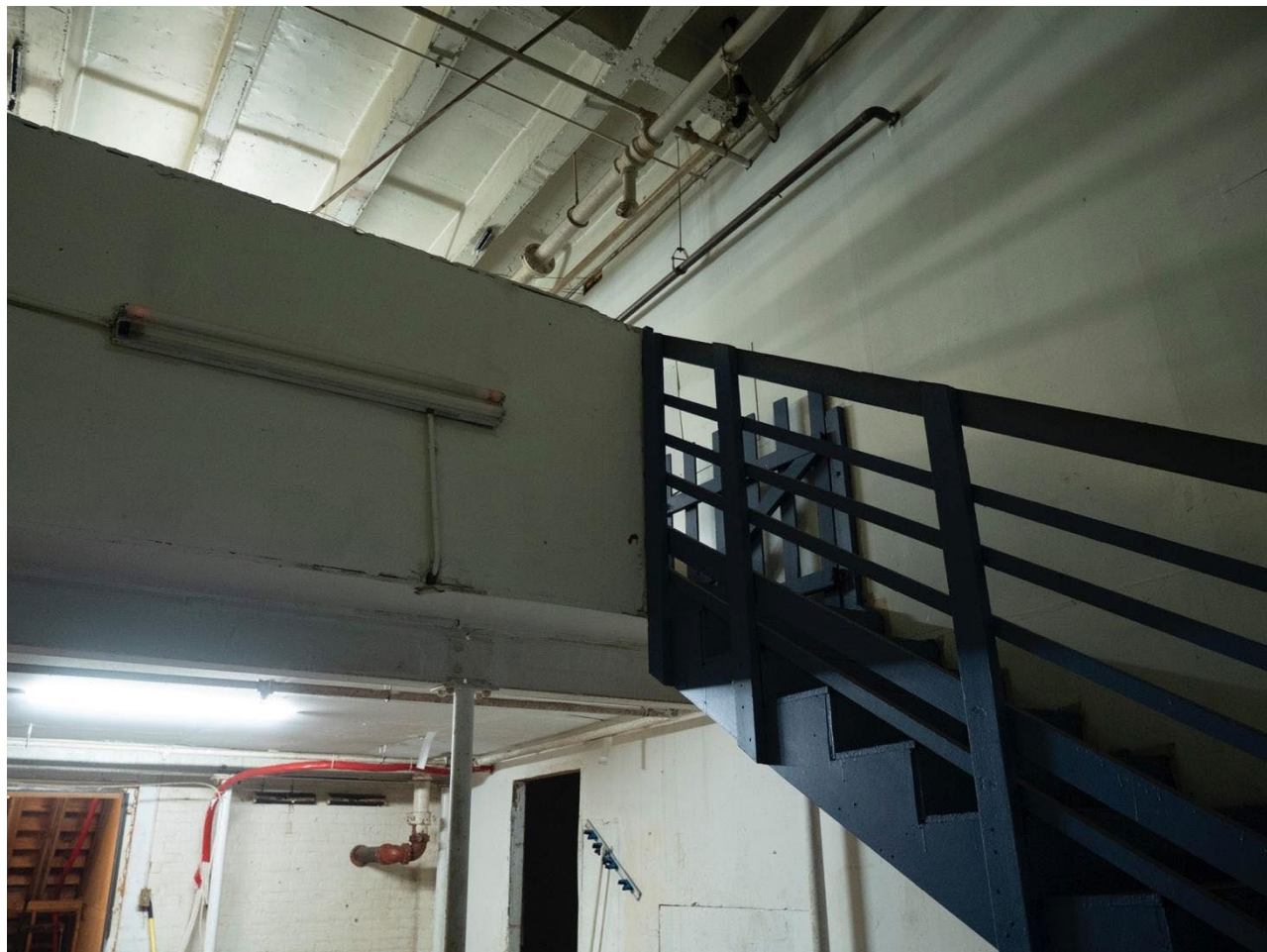
Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 19: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, Rear Addition Interior. View Southwest.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 20: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, Rear Addition Stairs, and Second Floor. View Northeast.



Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Warehouse, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 21: Hugo & Schmeltzer Company Building, Second Floor Interior. View Southeast.

