

August 14, 2020

Cynthia Johnson Elmore
Historic Preservation Officer
Planning & Design Services
Department of Develop Louisville
LOUISVILLE FORWARD
444 South Fifth Street, Suite 300
Louisville, KY 40202



Dear Ms. Elmore,

The Irish Hill Neighborhood Association is submitting a petition application for local landmark designation of the **Nelson Distillery Warehouse (NDW)** per 32.260. Attachments to this submittal are as follows.

- 1 Map describing the boundaries of the **NDW**,
- 2 Summary history of the structure/property,
- 3 Summary architectural description of the structure or property,
- 4 Local Landmark Designation Criteria
- 5 Photographs of the facades of the structure,
- 6 National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the structure,
- 7 Petition hard copies, and
- 8 Electronic petition sample and download.

Given Covid-19 restrictions issued by the state of Kentucky, electronic petitions have been permitted by your office for this submittal.

Regards,

Lisa Santos, Chair - Irish Hill Neighborhood Association
1318 Hull St 40204
santoslf@hushmail.com
info@irishhillneighbors.org

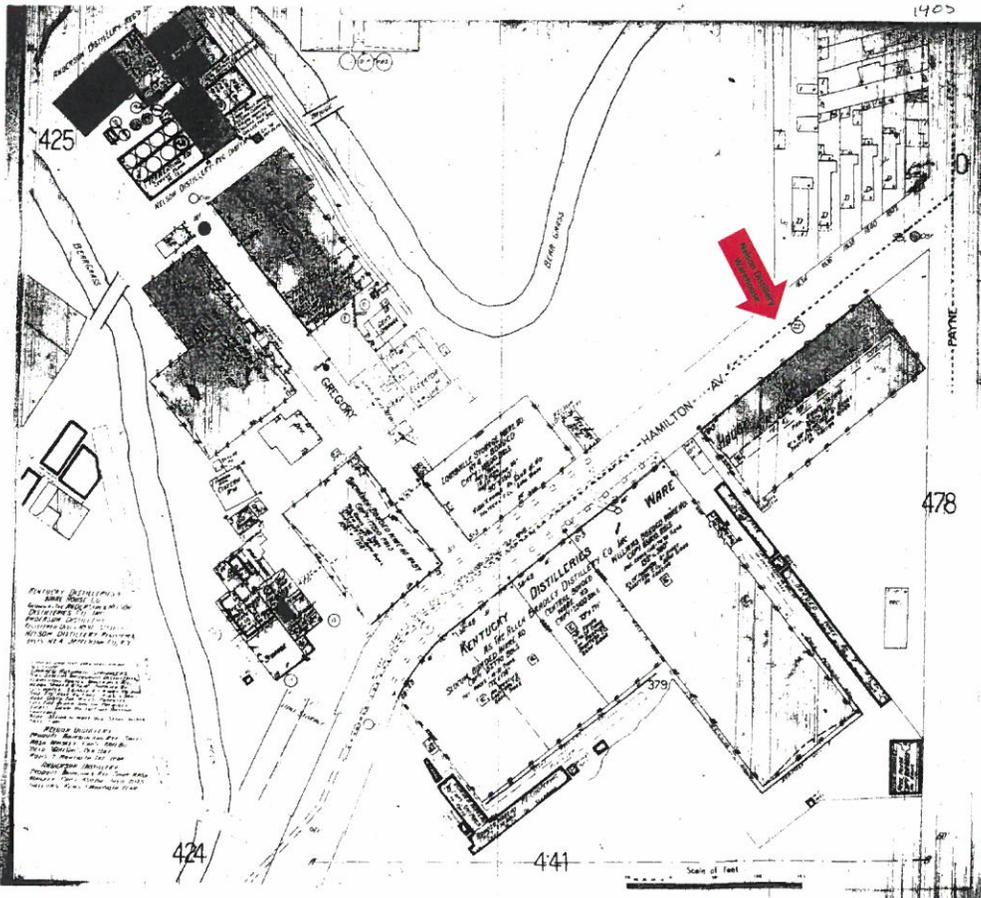
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20-LANDMARK-0003

1 Maps



Proposed Boundary for Designation (www.lojic.org/lojic-online)



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Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1905

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2 Summary History Built in 1895/96, the **Nelson Distillery Warehouse (NDW)** was part of the Anderson-Nelson Distillery (AND) Company, which began on a site nearby in 1860. In the community of Irish Hill, the **NDW** was one of the last capital building projects of what was once the largest and oldest distilling company in Kentucky, prior to Prohibition in 1920. It was a result of an ever-increasing demand for their products and the expanding market of the distillery.

The **NDW** and site are part of a rich history of the Bourbon Whiskey industry in Louisville, Kentucky. The plant's operation spanned some 134 years. At the height of development of the AND Company, the corporation included the Allen-Bradley Distillery and Elk Run Distillery, and later the Kentucky Distillery & Warehouse Company and National Distillers. This conglomerate encompassed some 35 acres of production facilities, with a combined capacity for more than 735,000 barrels of Kentucky Bourbon Whiskey. The distillery complex stood beside the Middle Fork of the Beargrass Creek, a main water source initially for production, near a major rail line, and within proximity of the Ohio River, all contributing to the company's success in local markets and beyond.

The whole of the complex was built before 1918. The largest portion of production facilities were consolidated to the North side of Hamilton Avenue (now Lexington Road), adjacent to Beargrass Creek. Distillery aging warehouses were built interspersed between the fermenting and distillation plants, as well as across Hamilton Avenue. Each of the distilleries had their own bonded warehouses, and additional free warehouses. This included Nelson Bonded Warehouse No. 4, Buchanan Bonded Warehouse No. 97, Finck Bonded Warehouse No. 97, Slocum Bonded Warehouse, Central Bonded Warehouse, Williams Bonded Warehouse, Louisville Storage Bonded Warehouse No. 4, Southall Bonded Warehouse, Nelson Distilling Company Warehouse, and Whitestone Bonded Warehouse of Allen-Bradley and Elk Run Distilleries. Additional structures for grain storage, cisterns, bonded bottling facilities, and more were all located on the site. Improvements were made to the distillery until the onset of Prohibition.

For forty-six years following the repeal of Prohibition, distilling continued at the site of Anderson-Nelson Distillery Company. Operations were confined to existing structures, as less of the original plant was needed. Competition and decreased demand led to its demise. Existing buildings were dismantled and others abandoned until the entire plant was shut down and abandoned in 1979. A revival of the industry in recent years has contributed to an appreciation for the historic forms of architecture associated with the bourbon whiskey industry, giving rise to repurposing of many structures which are no longer used for production. Abridged information from the National Register of Historic Places. For the full text, see Section 5.

Nineteenth century Irish Hill had its local dairy, slaughterhouse, quarry, and other farming and industrial activities that served to employ the residential neighborhood of brick and frame shotgun houses. By far, the largest area of commerce occurred where multiple distilleries operated on and around Hamilton Avenue (now Lexington Road) and the Middle Fork of Beargrass Creek. The **NDW** represents the history of the development of the area and the livelihood of the many working class Irish and German immigrants and their descendants who settled in Irish Hill.

The **NDW** property has always been a part of us and not just as an employer. It serves as an iconic anchor of the Irish Hill Neighborhood and plays in one of the major historical events of the 20th century. During the flood of 1937, locals helped the National Guard construct a pontoon bridge of barrels from the distillery to pass over the flooded lower Phoenix Hill area to

safety. Irish Hill residents put in many hours helping people evacuate to higher ground as well as feeding and sheltering them. Our late neighbor, Rob Kenney, described to us his service during the flood. Some adults sent him and another youngster in a johnboat to retrieve liquor out of the building for 'medicinal purposes'. If children manned the boat, there would be more weight capacity for booze.

Memories from the living include smelling the bourbon as you approached home, bringing your dolls down to play by the warehouse to feel the cool breeze from inside, watching the bottles wobbling in their crates as they passed over Lexington Road on a conveyor, and of future parents meeting there and settling in Irish Hill.

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4 Local Landmark Designation Criteria

(a) Its character, interest, or value as part of the development or heritage of city, the Commonwealth, or the nation

The extant building retains a historical connection to the development of the Kentucky bourbon whiskey industry in Louisville; as such the **NDW** survives as a rare example of an early bourbon aging warehouse in Louisville.

The **NDW** the warehouse retains integrity of important associations with Louisville's bourbon whiskey industry. Its existence documents the previous long running expansion in Louisville' bourbon industry and one the few original examples of a particularly early period in distilling history.

(d) Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen; or its embodiment of a significant architectural innovation; or its identification as the work of an architect, landscape architect, or master builder whose individual work has significantly influenced the development of the city, the Commonwealth, or the nation.

The **NDW** possesses the distinctive characteristics of a type of construction, a Kentucky bourbon whiskey aging warehouse.

(e) Its historic significance is based on its association with underrepresented history within the city, the Commonwealth, or the nation.

The **NDW** represents the history of the development of the area and the livelihood of the many working class Irish and German immigrants and their descendants who settled in Irish Hill and surrounding neighborhoods. Subsequent employment continued to include distilling, bottling, clerical, and delivery workers of all heritages until it closed in 1979.

The **NDW** serves as an iconic anchor of the Irish Hill Neighborhood.

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5 Photos



American Medicinal Spirits Company, Louisville, Kentucky, 1929

Image Number ULPA CS 099413, Caufield & Shook Collection, Photographic Archives, University of Louisville, KY



Pontoon bridge, Louisville Kentucky, 1937

Constructed from whiskey barrels from the National Distillery Co., owner of the **NDW** at this date.

Image Number ULPA P_00512_1, R. G. Potter Collection, Photographic Archives, University of Louisville, KY.

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100 Distillery Commons Looking West

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100 Distillery Commons Looking Southeast

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100 Distillery Commons Looking Northeast



100 Distillery Commons Looking North

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