

NEW ORLEANS HISTORIC DISTRICT LANDMARKS COMMISSION
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT HISTORIC DISTRICT LANDMARKS COMMISSION

Helena Moreno
MAYOR

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Bryan Block
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Monday, May 04, 2026

Honorable City Council
1300 Perdido Street
New Orleans, LA 70112

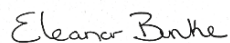
Re:
6307-09 South Miro Street, 6309-11 South Claiborne Avenue & 3100 Calhoun Street

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Attached, please find a report regarding the appeal of the New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission's denial of an application to demolish 3100 Calhoun Street and deferral of the applications to demolish 6307 South Miro Street and 6309 South Claiborne Avenue located in the Uptown, partial control, local historic district.

Should you have any questions or require any additional information, please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Eleanor Burke
Deputy Director

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Summary of Appeal

Applicants seek to demolish three buildings to develop a 3-story, mixed use development.

One of the structures, 3100 Calhoun Street - Ted's Frostop restaurant, is an iconic and beloved cultural institution and rare remaining example of 1950's Googie style commercial architecture.

HDLC denied the demolition of 3100 Calhoun Street and has no opposition to the demolition of the other two structures.

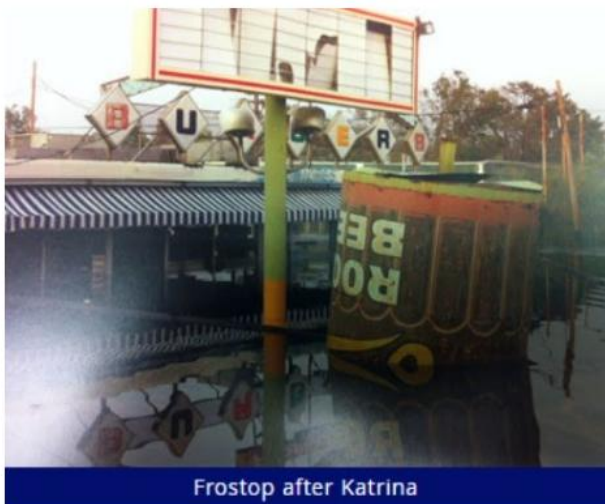
Click [here](#) for entire HDLC Staff report



3100 Calhoun Street

Section 12, Pages 23-24 of the Guidelines for New Construction, Additions and **Demolition** states that the demolition of all or portions of historic resources within a local Historic District or Landmark site are considered drastic actions, since they alter the character of the area. Once historic resources or buildings that contribute to the heritage of the community are destroyed, it is generally impossible to reproduce their design, texture, materials, details and their special character and interest in the neighborhood. When reviewing demolition applications at properties located within a Historic District or at a Landmark site, the HDLC uses the following criteria in its evaluations:

- **The historic or architectural significance of the building or structure as designated by its “rating”:** Non-Contributing, however, the structure exhibits qualities and characteristics that warrant additional consideration.
- **The importance of the building or structure to the tout ensemble of the area:** While the building was constructed outside the period of significance for the Carrollton local historic district (1840 to 1937), Ted’s Frostop is considered a New Orleans cultural institution. The building was constructed in 1955 by Ted Sternberg, who eventually went on to own seven Frostop locations in Louisiana and Arkansas. The iconic neon-lit Root Beer mug signage, designed and patented by T.W. Ganus in 1958, graced the building until 2005, when Hurricane Katrina toppled the mug. It sat upside down for years, ultimately becoming a symbol of the City’s renewal when it was righted and placed back atop its pole next to the freshly renovated building in 2012.
- **The alternatives to demolition that have been explored by the applicant:** The applicant has not provided information regarding alternative options to demolition that may have been explored, such as retention or adaptive reuse of the existing structure. However, the unique and flamboyant building signage has already been granted Classic Sign status and so both elements can potentially be retained and incorporated into the facade of the proposed redevelopment.
- **The difficulty or impossibility of reproducing such a building or structure because of its design, texture, material or detail:** While modest in scale and footprint, the existing one-story structure would likely be difficult to replicate under current conditions due to its overall aesthetic character, design approach, and integrated features. The building reflects a mid-20th-century commercial design ethos prioritizing visual expression, novelty, and automobile-oriented visibility, resulting in a highly stylized overall building form, expressive architectural roofline, and integrated large-



Frostop after Katrina

2005



Ted's Frostop NOLA 2008

2008

Frostop-Side-Up Again at Ted's

WWNO - New Orleans Public Radio | By Ian McNulty

Published February 9, 2012 at 4:30 PM CST



The iconic root beer mug at Ted's Frostop is right-side-up again.

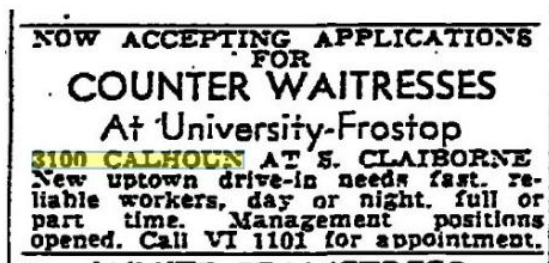
2012



scale signage and neon lighting elements. By contrast, contemporary commercial construction typically emphasizes efficiency, standardization, and cost control, which would likely diminish or preclude such exaggerated forms and custom detailing. Additionally, the building's extensive use of neon would be difficult to replicate today due to the limited availability of skilled fabricators and maintenance expertise, and the scale and placement of the signage would not comply with current zoning regulations. Based on this, while a new building could be constructed, the distinctive architectural character and design qualities of the existing structure would likely be difficult, if not impossible, to reproduce in contemporary new construction.

- **The special character and aesthetic interest that the building or structure adds to the local Historic District:** Frostop was established in 1926 and became a prominent regional presence with significant ties to the New Orleans area. In 1954, T.W. Ganus opened the South's first Frostop in Kenner and later patented the revolving root beer mug sign in 1958, a design manufactured locally on Magazine Street and distributed nationwide. By 1959, national franchising operations were directed from New Orleans. At its peak, Frostop operated approximately 350 locations nationwide; however, as of 2026, only a small number remain, with even fewer retaining their original buildings.

Although constructed outside the period of significance, the building continues to contribute to the Carrollton and Uptown district's broader cultural and visual character as a rare and intact example of mid-20th-century drive-in commercial architecture. It is an exceptional surviving example of the kind of fast-food outlets that proliferated along America's highways in the 1950s and 1960s in response to the surge in automobile ownership, car culture, roadside commerce, and fast-food service. It also appears to have retained its original architecturally expressive roof and building form, prominent signage, integrated neon and fluorescent lighting, and distinctive exterior elements such as checkerboard tile cladding and slender, raked structural supports.



New Orleans States - October 19, 1957



Times Picayune - May 10, 1968

Architecturally, the building reflects characteristics associated with Googie-influenced commercial design, a style identified in the early 1950s and defined by expressive forms, bold signage, and a focus on roadside visibility and immediacy. Its longstanding operation at this location since 1955, combined with its iconic signage and strong community associations, has established the site as an informal local landmark within the public realm. As such, the building contributes to the tout ensemble of the district by illustrating a later layer of development that complements, rather than detracts from, the area's historic character. Additionally, while the property has not been formally nominated for landmark study, Staff finds that it appears to meet applicable criteria based on its noted architectural distinctiveness and cultural significance. Additional historic research prepared by HDLC Principal Architectural Historian, Yvette Jett, is included with this report.

- # Signs Of The Times: Revolving Root Beer
- A revolving root beer, daily becoming familiar all over the United States, is but one of the applications effected through Industrial Electric, Inc., 3227 Magazine.
- The whirling mug, manufactured by Industrial Electric for Frostop Root Beer Stores, a fast-growing national chain, was originated by Thurman Ganus, New Orleans, distributor over several states for the chain.
- • •
- THE** application, said M. E. Frohlich, assistant vice president of Industrial Electric and a veteran
- of 20 years with the firm, was worked out in the company's facilities on Magazine. "It is now required for every new Frostop store," said Frohlich, long experienced in unique sign developments in the area.
- A specialist in industrial and commercial signs for Industrial Electric, Frohlich and his wife, the former Olga Lamson of New Orleans, live at 4607 St. Charles.
- In his spare time, Frohlich goes fishing at North Shore. He is an accomplished fisherman, "at times."
- 
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- © 1964 Industrial Electric, Inc. All rights reserved. Frostop Root Beer is a registered trademark of Industrial Electric, Inc.





Staff Recommendations:

While the building was constructed outside the period of significance, it remains in good condition with minimal alterations and exhibits special qualities that reflect a distinctive and increasingly rare mid-20th-century drive-in commercial typology. It retains a recognizable level of architectural integrity, including its expressive form and integrated signage, and possesses strong cultural significance as a longstanding and widely recognized local commercial establishment. The building also contributes to the broader visual and cultural character of the district. Based on these factors, Staff recommends denial of the request for demolition to grade. If demolition is approved, Staff recommends a proviso that the Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition shall not be issued until any associated new construction permit is ready for issuance by the Department of Safety and Permits.

- **Recommendation:** *Denial. However, if approval is granted, Staff recommends a proviso that the CofA for demolition shall not be issued until any associated new construction permit is ready for issuance by the Department of Safety and Permits.*

Historic District Landmarks Commission Building Ratings and Demolition Review Process

National Register Vs HDLC Building Ratings:

Typically, all buildings are given an architectural rating at the time the historic district is established. The HDLC has a three-tiered rating system. Significant, Contributing and Non-contributing. In 2017, due to staff and financial constraints, the City elected to adopt the National Park Service (NPS) ratings for the four partial control local historic districts being proposed: Parkview, Mid-City, Uptown and Carrollton Avenue because they were already National Register Districts that had been surveyed. The National Park Service rating system differs from the HDLC rating system in that it is only two tiers: Contributing and Non-contributing. Due to the differing systems, the HDLC uses the architectural rating given to the structure as one of many things to be considered when evaluating the significance of a structure. For example - there are many buildings in the Uptown historic district that would carry a Significant rating under HDLC criteria, but do not have one because it doesn't exist in the NPS system.

HISTORIC PROPERTY RATING

Both the National Register and the local historic inventories recognize that there are some resources that have a greater historical and/or architectural significance than others.

To recognize the range of levels of historical and/or architectural significance, all of the designated Landmarks and every property within each of the City of New Orleans' local, full control Historic Districts have been classified into one of three categories: Significant, Contributing and Non-contributing. Properties in Demolition only districts have been rated as either Contributing or Non-contributing.

The level of review established in the *Guidelines* is based on the building's historical and/or architectural significance. Please contact the HDLC at (504) 658-7040 for the rating of specific properties.

S **Significant:** Resources that are of national importance or major state, regional or local significance (*Formerly Purple and Blue rated properties*)

C **Contributing:** Resources which are integral components of the City because they are historically or architecturally significant (*Formerly Green, Red and Gold rated properties*)

N **Non-Contributing:** Resources which are not historically or architecturally significant (*Formerly Grey or Black rated properties*)

Given the importance of Significant properties, proposed alterations should be minimized to maintain historic integrity.

Demolition Application Staff Review Process:

In any district, regardless of the rating of a building, when a demolition application is filed – the HDLC Staff performs research to evaluate the building's architectural, historic, social, economic or cultural significance. The research includes, but is not limited to: Sanborn fire insurance maps, historic newspapers, reference books including the *New Orleans Architectural Series*, HDLC files, architectural archives and property owner records. The HDLC performs this research to assess what may or may not be significant about the building and its inhabitants for the Commission to have the information they need to make an informed decision regarding demolition. A structural inspection is also performed to evaluate the condition of the building. This information may not be readily known which is why the research and inspection are performed. The Staff compiles the information, evaluates the

significance and condition of the building based on the information gathered, and presents it to the Commission along with a recommendation for their consideration.

Buildings with a non-contributing rating (HDLC or National Park Service) are not automatically approved by the HDLC for demolition but there is a greater likelihood that something may be approved by the Commission for demolition if it carries a non-contributing rating. The HDLC Staff receives many calls inquiring about potential candidates for demolition prior to the actual applications being filed. HDLC performs cursory research in those cases to give the caller an idea of whether it may be a good candidate for demolition. As a result, many demolition applications are never filed.

Related Cases:

An application was filed for the demolition of a non-contributing rated building at 1538 Louisiana Avenue in the Garden District historic district in August of 2025. Once the demolition application was filed, HDLC staff performed research into the property. It was found that the building carried significance associated with the building's architect and its contribution to the mid-century modern architectural style in New Orleans. As a result, the HDLC Staff recommended denial. The application for demolition was withdrawn prior to the HDLC hearing. <https://sites.google.com/view/no-cmm-081525/new-demolition-applications/1538-louisiana-ave>



The Camellia Grill at 626 South Carrollton Avenue, a non-contributing rated building located in the Carrollton Historic District, was nominated as a landmark for its cultural significance. Like Ted's, the building itself is significant because the two cannot be separated without significant loss of integrity to the institution.

<https://nola.gov/nola/media/HDLC/Designation%20Reports/Camellia-Grill-nomination-report.pdf>



HDLC Action:

At their meeting of April 8, 2026 the Commission held a lengthy public hearing regarding the proposed demolitions. The majority of the public comment voiced opposition to the demolition of Ted's Frostop. Additional concerns included the design of the new building, Tulane University's role in the project, traffic and parking concerns. HDLC only has jurisdiction over the proposed demolition of the building and does not have a role in the design of the proposed new construction. HDLC also has no jurisdiction over use, density, parking, traffic or the interior of structures. The Commission voted unanimously to deny the demolition of 3100 Calhoun Street and to defer the applications for 6307 South Miro Street and 6309 South Claiborne Avenue. The HDLC has no objection to the demolition of 6307 South Miro Street and 6309 South Claiborne Avenue.



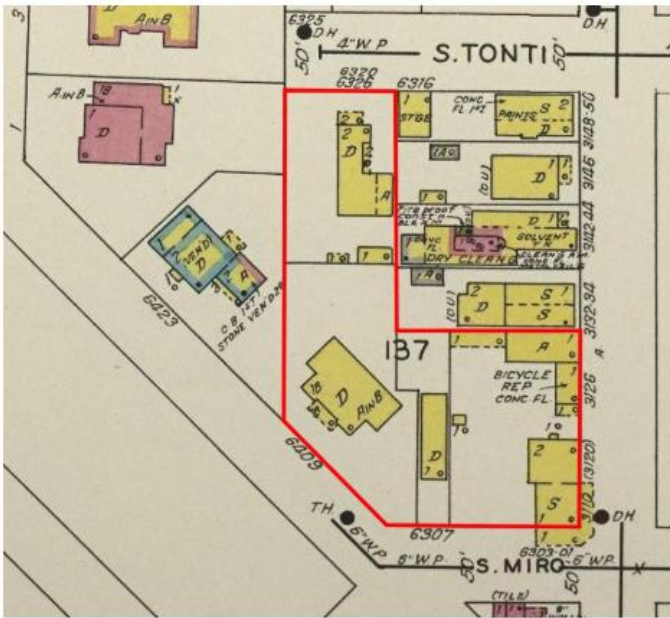
The City of New Orleans is an assemblage of neighborhoods defined by their distinct architecture, restaurants, bars, street names, shops, and residents. These cohesive neighborhoods are stitched together through shared experiences and collective memory. While the cultural cornerstones of one neighborhood may not be well known to those outside the community, their significance to the people that live there shouldn't be overlooked. Ted's Frostop is one such local institution that has, over the years, humbly provided a neighborhood gathering spot for generations of New Orleanians. As fiercely proud New Orleanians – we frequent these places and treasure them ever more fiercely because they are not particularly well known, filled with tourists, celebrated with James Beard awards or overflowing with craft cocktails. These are the places that are for those of us who live and work here – day in and day out, year in and year out, sharing our lives and simpler moments together.

As the City continues to lean into the commodification and extraction of all those things that make us unique and special – the things that once knit us together so tightly – the loose yarn of our sweater continues to unravel. The simple shops keep closing, the bakery gone, the dive bar bought out, the pharmacies absorbed by national corporation, and homogeneity settles in. City leaders rush to highlight our cultural distinctiveness and idiosyncratic ways when marketing the city to outsiders. They would be wise to protect those distinctive things when they are threatened with extinction. We've learned that protecting these places is in our collective best interest -why would we consider otherwise? The HDLC respectfully requests that the City Council uphold the HDLC and deny the application for the demolition of 3100 Calhoun Street.

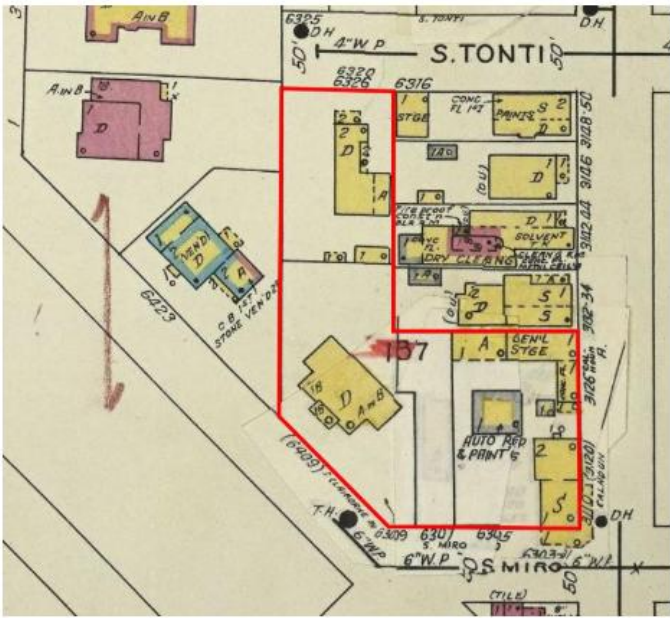
Assessor's Information:

Sales

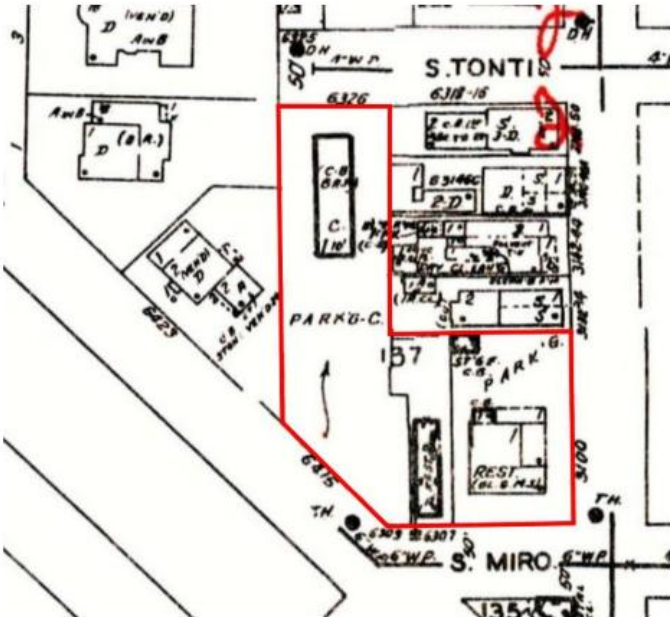
Sale/Transfer Date	Price	Grantor	Grantee	Notarial Archive Number	Instrument Number
5/16/2025	\$100	CAFE BEIGNET LLC	RCR CLAIBORNE VENTURE III LLC	202515954	755778
2/4/2022	\$100	NZK LLC	CAFE BEIGNET LLC	202205379	705921
6/10/1998	\$50			98-30173	000161668
11/20/1997	\$0			12161997	000150976



1940



1950



1983



Current Overhead View

Addendum: HDLC Research

Importance of the building to the tout ensemble of the area

While the building was built outside the period of architectural significance for the District, Ted's Frostop is a New Orleans cultural institution. Ted's Frostop was built in 1955 by Ted Sternberg, who eventually went on to own 7 Frostop locations in Louisiana and Arkansas. The iconic neon-lit Root Beer mug signage, designed and patented by T.W. Ganus in 1958, graced the building until 2005, when Hurricane Katrina toppled the mug. It sat upside down for years, ultimately becoming a symbol of the City's renewal when it was righted and placed back atop its pole next to the freshly renovated building in 2012.

The special character or aesthetic interest that the building of structure adds to the local historic district

As this building falls outside the period of architectural significance for the District, the HDLC will base its argument for the significance of the structure on the four criteria as established by Section 84.22 of the City Code that the HDLC uses to establish if a building meets the qualifications for landmark designation.

The staff finds that the building meets two of the criteria, in that it:

- (1) Exemplifies or reflects the broad, cultural, political, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or community.
- (3) Embodies distinguishing characteristic of an architectural type or specimen.

The drive-in diner is emblematic of 20th Century Americana: an architectural typology formed by car culture, fast food, and commercialism. As architectural historian Alan Hess wrote in his 2004 treatise on the drive-in, "No modern building unified function, advertising, and urban presence more effectively... these drive-ins expressed contemporary function and structure in startling new forms.... The drive-in was shaped to the radius and use of the car."¹

The concept was invented in the 1920's; the first being the Pig Stand in Dallas, Texas, in 1921. The first Frostop opened just five years later in Springfield, Ohio. T.W. Ganus opened the South's first Frostop, in 1954, in Kenner, patenting his revolving root beer signage in 1958. Copyrighted designs were sold to other Frostop operations across the US. The revolving mugs were manufactured at Industrial Electric, Inc at 3227 Magazine St.² In 1959, Ganus became president of Frostop Products, Inc. and directed all national franchising from his headquarters in New Orleans.³

¹ (Hess, 2004)

² (Signs of the Times; Revolving Root Beer, 1958)

³ (New Orleans, La Patent No. Des. 183,836, 1958), (T.W. Ganus - Frostop Success Story, 1963)

Ted's Frostop predates Ganus's patented design but features his iconic giant root beer mug. Indeed, the signage on Ted's Frostop is a study in the power of commercialism to drive design. From the memetic neon root beer mug to the Circus-like BURGERS sign, this is a building meant to sell you something. It's not pretending to be anything else. Googie was first defined as a style in 1952 by Douglas Haskell in a satirical article in *House and Home* magazine meant to decry the lowbrow nature of the Southern Californian vernacular commercial style which was emerging at the time. The style was colorful, fun, futuristic, and most notably, unabashedly commercial. Signs were meant to be seen, easily legible from a car passing by. In 2012, Hess wrote that "Googie was an unpretentious aesthetic meant to appeal to the average, middle-class American: One of the key things about Googie architecture was that it wasn't custom houses for wealthy people — it was for coffee shops, gas stations, car washes, banks... the average buildings of everyday life that people of that period used and lived in. And it brought that spirit of the modern age to their daily lives."⁴

The drive-in was mostly replaced by the drive-thru, a typology invented in the 1970's. The drive-in, now a relic of an era when cars were still new enough to be a novelty. At its height, Frostop had 350 nationwide locations. As of 2026, there are 9, only 7 of which, including Ted's, are still in their original buildings.

Society of Architectural Historians Archipedia entry:

(<https://sah-archipedia.org/buildings/LA-02-OR173>):

Ted's Frostop written by Karen Kingsley and Lake Douglas

1955. 3100 Calhoun St.

A frothy, neon-lit, giant root-beer mug high atop a freestanding support quickly identifies a Frostop diner. Red, blue, green, and yellow letters spelling BURGERS, spaced across the width of the facade, advertise the signature item on the menu. Above them, a pediment-shaped metal and neon sign displays the restaurant's name at its center. The restaurant, small-scaled and unobtrusive compared with its signage, has a continuous window that wraps around the front and one side above the tile-covered lower wall. On the other side, a deep, cantilevered roof shelters what formerly was a drive-in area, where customers had to walk only a few steps to the service windows. Exterior surfaces are caramel- and khaki-colored tile. Inside, a counter and booths are arranged around the perimeter of the space. These features, with only slight variations, were found in other Frostops in southern Louisiana, most of which have since been demolished. Ted's Frostop is a rare surviving example of the kind of fast-food outlets that proliferated along America's highways in the 1950s and 1960s in response to the surge in automobile ownership. The buildings, designed to be seen at a distance, joyfully utilize brightly colored, outsize signage made possible by the availability and reasonable price of such materials as aluminum, plastic, and neon. The first Frostop opened in Springfield, Ohio, in 1926; the name and products were franchised nationwide.

WORKS CITED

⁴ (Novak, 2012)

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Karen Kingsley and Lake Douglas, "[Ted's Frostop](#)", [[New Orleans, Louisiana](#)], SAH Archipedia, eds. Gabrielle Esperdy and Karen Kingsley, Charlottesville: UVaP, 2012—, <http://sah-archipedia.org/buildings/LA-02-OR173>.

Novak, M. (2012, June 15). Googie: Architecture of the Space Age. *Smithsonian Magazine* .

Signs of the Times; Revolving Root Beer. (1958, March 17). *New Orleans Item*, p. 19.

T.W. Ganus - Frostop Success Story. (1963, August). *Frostopics*, pp. 2-3.