

# Dallas Landmark Commission Landmark Nomination Form

## 1. Name

historic Busch Building  
and/or common Kirby Building

## 2. Location

address 1509 Main Street land survey \_\_\_\_\_  
location/neighborhood CBD block/lot \_\_\_\_\_ tract size \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Current Zoning

CA-1

## 4. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other

## 5. Ownership

Current Owner: Hall-Kirby Associates Phone: 748-9842  
Address: 1509 Main #520 City: Dallas State: TX Zip Code: 75201

## 6. Form Preparation

Name & Title Louisa Cook, Prop. Mgr. Organization Hall Mgmt. Corp.  
Contact Louisa Cook Phone 748-9842

## 7. Representation on Existing Surveys

Alexander Survey (citywide)  local  state  national  National Register  
H.P.L. Survey (CBD)  A  B  C  D  Recorded Tx Historic Ldmk  
1985 Historic Resource  high  medium  Tx Archaeological Ldmk  
Oak Cliff \_\_\_\_\_  
Victorian Survey \_\_\_\_\_  
1987 Historic Resource  high  medium Other \_\_\_\_\_

### For Office Use Only

8. Date Rec'd: 6/29 Survey Verified: Y/N by: ke 9. Field Check by: \_\_\_\_\_

### 10. Nomination:

Archaeological  Structure(s)  District  
 Site  Structure & Site  Petitions needed

Z867-231/8368-N

### 11. Historic Ownership

original owner Adolphus A. Busch  
significant later owner(s)

### 12. Construction Dates

original 1913  
alterations/additions 1970; 1982-87

### 13. Architect

original construction Barnett, Hayes & Barnett  
alterations/additions

### 14. Site Features

natural  
urban design sig. corner loc, dense urban streetscape; sig. views of it from S Akard

### 15. Physical Description

Condition	Check One:	Check One:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> moved (date: _____)
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered

*Describe present and original (if known) physical appearance; include style(s) of architecture, current condition and relationship to surrounding fabric (structures, objects, etc.). Elaborate on pertinent materials used and style(s) of architectural detailing, embellishments and site details.*

The Busch Building, a combination office and retail building completed in 1913, stands as one of the finest examples of Late Gothic revival architecture in Dallas and the nation. Rising 250 feet above the intersection of Main and Akard Streets in downtown Dallas, the building has 17 stories, plus basement and a tower.

The building is in three parts: a five story block (originally leased by the A. Harris department store); a projecting, U-shaped body; and a small, one story tower positioned over the southwest corner of the building at Main and Akard. The outside of the U-shaped portion aligns to the west, south and east, while the interior light court faces north. The building fronts 100 feet along Akard Street and 125 feet along Main. The two most significant building elevations face these two streets, and are lavishly decorated with curvilinear, Continental Gothic terra cotta relief work and complex fenestration patterns. Face brick is the predominant material of the east and north elevations as well as of the light court.

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On Main and Akard Streets, granite-clad structural steel columns form a street level arcade. The columns continue as pilasters throughout the full height of the building. They form the outermost plane of the facade, which is broken by horizontal string courses every three floors and by a heavy cornice at the 16th floor. All secondary spandrels and non-structural pilasters are recessed away from this plane. A glass storefront is setback in the ground floor, approximately seven feet from the face of the ceramic tile-clad exterior columns. The columns are topped by a massive spandrel that is broken by an arch at the building's lobby entry on Main Street. This arch, which is inscribed inside a rectangle, springs from two small volute-shaped shelves attached to the pilasters. The small triangular areas between the rectangle and arch are decorated with quatrefoils, as is the underside of the arch itself. The arch is ribbed horizontally with rows of dentils and flower motifs serving as decoration. The lobby entry with its original granite facade is one of the original remaining portions of the original street facade, as the remainder was remodeled in 1970 to create the pedestrian arcade. A small canopy replaces the heavily ornamented cast iron canopy that once marked the entry to the retail portion of the building.

The second floor is heavily ornamented, its windows framed with low, flat arches and enclosed between two horizontal friezes of heavy relief Gothic detailing. The corner bay at Main and Akard has one large window flanked by small windows, all of which is enclosed under one large ornamental terra cotta arch. (A similar detail is repeated over the lobby entrance.) Another large window is placed along each side of this window grouping. These and all remaining windows on the second floor are topped by individual arches.

The third through fifteenth floors carry identical elements and have little detail or ornamentation. The Akard Street elevation is divided into four bays: from left to right, the first three bays have four equally sized and shaped 1/1 sash windows separated by secondary pilasters that run the full height of the building. The fourth, or corner, bay, which is detailed similarly on both the Main and Akard elevations, is wider than the other bays, creating a strong visual anchor for the building. Two small 1/1 sash windows separate the three larger windows to create an ABABA rhythm. The five remaining bays on the Main Street elevation are divided (from left to right) into two alternating bays of three and four windows for the first four bays and then a smaller three-window fifth bay at the far right. The last bay contains the building's elevator lobby. The east and north elevations, as well as the light court, contain 2/2 sash windows set flush with the face brick exterior walls.

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The Main and Akard Street elevations are characterized, at the 16th floor, by a heavy cornice separating that level from the stories below (the same separation is represented by a terra cotta band on the secondary facades); the cornice is pierced by the points of exaggerated arch motifs at all major pilasters. Above the 15th floor on the east elevation, the elevator penthouse is sheathed with terra cotta set in the same plane as the surrounding brick. A highly decorated battlement caps the building, and a series of pinnacles and finials terminate the upward thrust of the dominant pilasters. The skyline of the building is broken by a tower, characterized by the same fenestration pattern as the floors directly below and topped by a battlement, finials and pinnacles. Inside the battlement are the walls of the mechanical penthouse that contains the building's boilers.

In 1970, the Kirby building was renovated, including the adaptation of the retail portion of the building, left vacant when A. Harris departed in 1965. Smaller retail areas were added on the ground story, and the street arcade along Main and Akard replaced the original shop windows. The elevator lobby and upper floor corridors retain much of their original decoration, with extensive use of marble, cut glass panels and carved wood.

## 16. Historical Significance

*Statement of historical and cultural significance. Include: cultural influences, special events and important personages, influences on neighborhood, on the city, etc.*

The Busch Building, built in 1913 for Adolphus A. Busch & Company, stands today as one of the finest examples of the Late Gothic Revival style, a motif that was regarded in the period as the most perfect expression of the skyscraper form. Designed by the architectural firm of Barnett, Hayes & Barnett of St. Louis, in association with Lang and Witchell of Dallas, the building was one of the first Gothic Revival skyscrapers to be constructed in the nation, along with the highly acclaimed Woolworth Building in New York by Cass Gilbert. The 17 story building was planned as a complementary retail and office facility for the nearby Adolphus Hotel, completed a year earlier. The Busch Building was the home of the A. Harris department store (now Sanger-Harris), and through a later alteration became the first tall building in Dallas to contain its own heating system on the roof.

During the 1910s, Dallas was enjoying rapid physical expansion and growing prosperity, making it one of the largest cities in Texas. It was also becoming the financial center of the Southwest, and thus was subject to rapid redevelopment of the downtown area. Civic leaders interested in promoting that growth included Charles F. Bolanz, Henry D. Linsley, S.L. Hay and F.B. Tyron. In 1910, these business leaders travelled to St. Louis to suggest that Adolphus A. Busch, owner of Dallas' Oriental Hotel, build a second hotel in the city. Best known for his interests in the Busch Brewery division, Busch was also chairman of the Board of the Busch-Sulzer Diesel Engine Co., director of the Manufacture's Railroad Co., and board chairman of the St. Louis O'Fallon Railroad Co. From this meeting came the decision to construct the 23 story Adolphus Hotel; completed in 1912, the hostelry served for years as a pattern for luxury hotels in the southwest. When the hotel was completed and open, Busch began work on the 17 story Busch Building, which was to serve as an office and retail supplement to the Adolphus, less than a block away.

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## 17. Bibliography

## 18. Attachments

District or Site map

Site Plan

Photos (historic & current)

Additional descriptive material

Footnotes

The Busch building was completed in 1913. During this period, the architectural taste of Dallas developers was beginning to shift away from the Chicago School influences predominant a few years earlier and turn toward historical eclecticism for expression. The shift was due, in part, to the influence of outside firms moving to the Southwest who brought their own architectural firms and their own architectural tastes with them. The firm of Barnett, Hayes & Barnett brought with them the eclectic philosophy of architects in the midwest, and decided to give the Busch Building a unique character through Gothic ornamentation, a style not yet applied to the skyscraper form except for the Woolworth Building in New York, by Cass Gilbert, also completed in 1913. Barnett and Gilbert had evidently arrived at the same conclusion: that the Gothic style, which dramatically displayed the verticality of cathedrals, was also appropriate for the facades of tall commercial buildings. Although the Woolworth Building has been described as the first Late Gothic Revival skyscraper, the simultaneous construction of it and the Kirby Building suggest that Gilbert was not entirely a lone pioneer of the style.

When the Busch Building opened in 1913, the first five floors and basement were devoted to the A. Harris department store, a thriving business founded in Dallas in 1891. ( The store occupied the Busch Building for 48 years, moving to another downtown location in 1965 after merging with Sanger Brothers a few years before.) Sold in 1918 to the Southern Life Insurance Company, the structure was sold again the following year to the Kirby Investment Company, which renamed it. In 1947, the Main and Akard Investment Corp., owners since 1941, installed rooftop boilers for heating the building; until then, it had been provided heat from the exhaust steam from the Adolphus Hotel electric generating plant. The new system was needed when the Adolphus converted to the public utility supply for electric power. The rooftop system, designed by engineers Zumwalt and Winther of Dallas, in consultation with the Martyn Brothers Plumbing Co., was the first of its kind in the nation and, as such, attracted attention throughout the construction industry.

Although significantly altered on the ground floor exterior, the Gothic revival elements of the Busch/Kirby Building have remained essentially intact, and the building's association with the Busch family and business and its unique architectural detailing make it a structure significant in the cultural and architectural history of Dallas.

**Designation Merit**

- |  |          |   |          |
|--|----------|---|----------|
| A. Character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City of Dallas, State of Texas or the United States. | <u>X</u> | H. Embodiment of elements of architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant architectural innovation                              | _____    |
| B. Location as the site of a significant historical event  | _____    | I. Relationship to other distinctive buildings, sites or areas which are eligible for preservation according to a plan based on historic, cultural or architectural motif | _____    |
| C. Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city.   | <u>X</u> | J. Unique location of singular physical characteristics representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community or the city                  | _____    |
| D. Exemplification of the cultural, economic, social or historical heritage of the city  | <u>X</u> | K. Archaeological value in that it has produced or can be expected to produce data affecting theories of historic or prehistoric value                                    | _____    |
| E. Portrayal of the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style                                 | <u>X</u> | L. Value as an aspect of community sentiment or public pride  | <u>X</u> |
| F. Embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen   | _____    |   |          |
| G. Identification as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city                             | <u>X</u> |   |          |

**Recommendation**

The Designation Task Force requests the Landmark Commission to deem this nominated landmark meritorious of designation as outlined in Chapter 51 and Chapter 51A, Dallas Development Code

Further, the Designation Task Force endorses the Preservation Criteria, policy recommendations and landmark boundary as presented by the Department of Planning and Development

Date:

Debra Mitchell  
 Debra Mitchell, Chairman  
 Designation Task Force

Ron Emrich  
 Ron Emrich, Senior Planner  
 Historic Preservation