



Louisiana Landmarks Society

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July 14, 2026

Historic District Landmarks Commission
City of New Orleans
1300 Perdido Street, 7th Floor
New Orleans, LA 70112

Re: Request for a Landmark Designation Study of Ted's Frostop, 3100 Calhoun Street

Dear Commissioners,

Louisiana Landmarks Society formally requests that the Historic District Landmarks Commission initiate a study to designate Ted's Frostop, located at 3100 Calhoun Street, as a local landmark. We ask that this designation cover the building, the signage, and its freestanding root beer mug sign, in recognition of their combined architectural, cultural, and historical significance to New Orleans.

Ted's Frostop has stood at this corner since 1955, when Ted Sternberg, a local veteran of the Korean War, purchased the Frostop franchise and opened the diner. It is one of the last intact examples of the mid-twentieth-century drive-in restaurants that once proliferated along America's highways. Its Googie-influenced signage, wraparound windows, and 14-foot revolving root beer mug represent a rapidly disappearing typology of roadside commercial architecture.

Beyond its architectural merit, the site carries deep cultural significance for this community. The mug sign, toppled by Hurricane Katrina and later restored and reinstalled in 2012, became a widely recognized symbol of recovery. The diner continues to serve as an active daily gathering place for neighbors, students, and multiple generations of customers.

In April 2026, this Commission unanimously voted to deny a demolition permit for the property, and its staff report and commissioners' own comments recognized the building as a cultural icon and an increasingly rare example of mid-century modern commercial buildings. That decision reflected overwhelming public opposition to demolition, including a petition signed by roughly 2,000 residents, now tallying at over 3100 – and 162 pages of public comment. In our own letter to the Commission at that time, we wrote that "once Ted's Frostop is gone, it cannot be rebuilt. Its design, its materials, its neon character, and its singular place in this community's memory are irreplaceable." In June 2026, the developer withdrew its appeal of that decision to the City Council, leaving the Commission's denial in place and the building safe from demolition for now. A formal landmark designation would build on the Commission's April finding by giving Ted's Frostop forward-looking protection.

We respectfully ask the Commission to direct staff to prepare a landmark designation study for the property.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued stewardship of New Orleans's historic built environment.

Sincerely,

Sandra Stokes
Chair of Advocacy
Louisiana Landmarks Society