United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Jensen-Salsbery Laboratories

and/or common Coopers Animal Health Inc. formerly Wellcome Animal Health, Inc.

2. Location

street & number 520 West 21st Street

city, town Kansas City___ vicinity of

state Missouri code 029 county Jackson code 095

3. Classification

Category

Ownership

Status

Present Use

% district

public

occupied

agriculture

private

unoccupied

commercial

both

work in progress

educational

_ building(s)

private

_ structure

unoccupied

_ site

_ building(s)

| work in progress |

the museum

| object |

| in process |

| yes: restricted |

| industrial |

| site |

| being considered |

| yes: unrestricted |

| government |

| no |

| military |

| no |

| transportation |

| yes |

| religious |

| other: |

| scientific |

4. Owner of Property

name Coopers Animal Health Inc. formerly Wellcome Animal Health, Inc.

street & number 520 West 21st Street

city, town Kansas City___ vicinity of

state Missouri 64108

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. City Hall

street & number 414 East 12th Street

city, town Kansas City state Missouri 64105

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Midtown

has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date Feb. 26, 1982

__ federal ___ state X county ___ local

depository for survey records Landmarks Commission

state Missouri 64106

city, town Kansas City state Missouri 64106
7. Description

Condition | Check one | Check one
---|---|---
excellent | deteriorated | unaltered
fair | ruined | altered
| | original site
| | moved | date

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The tawny-colored, rough sand-cast brick and stone three-story (plus basement) structure completed in 1919, was designed by Kansas City architect Ernest O. Brostrom (1888-1969). Measuring 56 feet by 128 feet, the building extends nine bays on the south elevation and four bays on the east and west elevations. Construction of the building is reinforced concrete; roof type is flat with tar and gravel.

The basement level of the structure is faced with stone panels. On the south façade a series of brick piers and pilasters (capped with limestone) terminate in banded brick courses at the third-story level. A limestone string course separates the third-story from the parapet wall. Another string course separates the second from the third stories. The first-story windows possess stone lugsills and lintels; second-story windows are marked with limestone sills and lintels. This articulation of the main façade continues around to the east and west elevations.

At the main entrance (south façade) raised brick piers of varying width are juxtaposed against the stone lintels, sills and a flat roof canopy above the main portal, thus creating a strong interplay of horizontal and vertical elements. The entrance is ornamented at the third-story level by two figurative sculptures executed by Norwegian-born Jorgen C. Dreyer and at the basement level by two limestone urns.

Additions

In April 1919, directly north of the original structure, a two-story warehouse containing four garages was added. The area between the original structure and the 1919 addition was an alley, which was made into additional warehouse space in 1939. To the north of the 1919 addition, a one-story warehouse was added in 1947 (Frohwerk and Bloomgarten). The third floor west addition was added between 1939-1947.

Present status and condition

The Coopers Animal Health Inc. building is in good condition. Future plans to renovate the structure include tuck pointing and exterior cleaning. Windows will be replaced consistent with the original design. All work will be carried out by trained architects and technicians in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's standards for rehabilitation.

Interior

Nothing remains of the original interior design.

Site

To the north of the structure is a private residence. An interstate connector is to the west. To the south is a service station and to the east a surface parking lot.
3. Significance

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Specific dates 1918-1919  

Builder/Architect Ernest O. Brostrom, architect  
Jorgen C. Dreyer, sculptor

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Coopers Animal Health Inc. building (originally Jensen-Salsbery Laboratory building) is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places according to Criteria A and C and is significant in the following areas: ARCHITECTURE: Designed in 1918 by Kansas City architect Ernest O. Brostrom (1888-1969), the three-story structure is one of the most expressive examples of commercial Prairie School style architecture in Kansas City. The brick-faced building, still in use today for its original purpose, displays a vigorous counterplay of vertical and horizontal elements, typical of the Prairie Movement—a progressive style stemming from the followers of Louis H. Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright. INDUSTRY: Started by Dr. Hans Jensen in 1913, Coopers Animal Health Inc., manufacturing veterinary biological, pharmaceutical and surgical supplies, became one of the forerunners of the veterinary supply business in the United States and today remains one of the leading producers and suppliers of veterinary medicines in the United States, Europe, South America, Japan and Canada.

The history of Jensen-Salsbery can be traced back to c. 1900 when Dr. Hans Jensen, trained in his native Denmark as a pharmacist, had immigrated to the United States and was working in a drugstore in rural Nebraska. As he talked with local farmers, he realized the increasing need for veterinary products. To pursue his interest in the treatment of animal disease, he enrolled in the Chicago Veterinary College, graduating in 1902. He then returned to Nebraska and opened a veterinary practice and small drugstore. A few years later, he accepted a position as instructor of therapeutics at the Kansas City Veterinary College and was also a partner-shareholder in American Veterinary Supplies Company, the first corporation to furnish supplies exclusively to veterinarians.

While teaching at the veterinary college, Dr. Jensen developed many of his own formulations for use in his classes. As his students graduated and started their own practices, they began writing to him requesting his products. It was this continued demand that made Dr. Jensen, in 1913, decide to enter the veterinary drug manufacturing field. He resigned his position at the college and rented a third floor loft at 1228 Main Street in Kansas City for $35 a month. An office was walled off in the front, a sales room was set up to display pharmaceutical products and a small incubator was installed to accommodate cultures for making bacterins.

One of Dr. Jensen's first tasks in his new occupation was to prepare a sales catalogue listing the veterinary pharmaceutical products and supplies he distributed. Issued in the fall of 1914, this small catalogue of approximately 60 pages was mailed to practitioners in the midwest. Dr. Jensen carried on the manufacturing and distribution of the business's products that year with the help of two local college students.
The following year, 1915, Dr. Charles E. Salsbery, a noted veterinarian was employed to produce biological products, and Dr. G.G. Graham, also a veterinarian, joined the company with responsibility for sales and promotion. The business was incorporated that year with Dr. Jensen as president, Dr. Salsbery as vice president, and Dr. Graham as secretary and treasurer. The trade name Jen-Sal was adopted. During this year, the U.S. Bureau of Animal Industry issued Jensen-Salsbery a license to produce and sell four bacterins, thereby providing early impetus to the new business.

February, 1915 marked the appearance of the first issue of the company's Jen-Sal Journal, a monthly publication designed exclusively for veterinarians and distributed free on a national basis. Dr. Graham was editor. Published without interruption until 1960, the journal contained information on the latest veterinary techniques, products and instruments, news from other vets, and a smattering of related trade data.

During WWI, British and French representatives were buying 1,000 to 2,000 horses a day at the Kansas City stockyards, then moving the animals east. For a considerable period of time, all animals purchased received a dose of Jen-Sal's influenza bacterin for 30¢ a dose. The resultant increase in Jen-Sal's business caused the company to seek larger quarters; Jen-Sal was moved to a new 9,000 square foot laboratory in the Raymond building on Main Street. As business continued to grow, another 4,000 square feet of floor space was obtained.

In 1917, the Jensalogue, a 300-page catalog soliciting mail order business was mailed for the first time to all practitioners in the United States. Products advertised in the catalog included bacterins, vaccines, diagnostic agents, serums, pharmaceutical specialities, sundries, instruments, and drugs and chemicals. Anti-hog cholera serum, an important product, was first marketed by Jen-Sal in 1915. Blackleg filtrate and liquid blackleg vaccine were manufactured in the Raymond building beginning in 1917.

The following year, land was purchased for what is the present site of Coopers Animal Health Inc at the corner of 21st Street and Pennsylvania in Kansas City, Missouri. The architect of the structure was Ernest Olaf Brostrom, who became prominent in the Middle West as one of the proponents of the Prairie School Movement. Brostrom, a native of Sweden, came to Kansas City in 1907 as an architect from Sioux City, Iowa. By 1911, he was working as an architect for local contractor, Harry Bliss and by 1912, he had opened his own office.

As an admirer of Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Sullivan, George Brant Elmslie and William Bray Purcell, Brostrom was influenced by their style. This influence can clearly be seen in three of Brostrom's works, including the Coopers Animal Health Inc. building (formerly Jensen-Salsbery Laboratory building) designed in 1918 and completed the following year.
Avoiding the more eclectic styles which dominated Kansas City in the early 1900's, Brostrom designed the structure at 21st and Pennsylvania Streets with an emphasis on simplicity and strength. Reflecting a strong influence by Wright's Larkin Administration Building in Buffalo, New York (demolished c. 1949), Brostrom emphasized horizontal and vertical elements, a hallmark of the Prairie School Style. The massing of brick piers at the entrance, combined with the stone sculptures by Jorgen C. Dreyer, is the most forceful element of the design and is also reminiscent of the Woodbury County Courthouse (Purcell, Elmslie and Steele; Sioux City, Iowa) built in 1916-1918.

Occupancy of the new plant and warehouse took place in 1919, the year the structure was completed. The Jen-Sal staff consisted of nine men that year, six of whom possessed DVM degrees. The company claimed over 6,000 active accounts and there were distribution points in nine cities across the country. Sales that year were $753,000. New products offered during the next two years included rabies vaccine prepared from rabbit tissue, botulinis antitoxin for forage poisoning and keratitis bacterin for pink eye.

The manufacturing facility for biologicals that is now referred to as "the farm" was begun in 1921 on ten acres of land in Wyandotte County, Kansas. A building for filtering anti-serums was the first to be completed, followed by a structure to house donor horses. In the spring of 1922, the anthrax unit was completed; the following year, the anti-hog cholera serum plant was erected. Other buildings were added as they were needed.

In its 1927 biological catalog, Jen-Sal prided itself on being "one of the largest exclusively veterinary laboratories in the world...providing veterinarians with every facility for securing every requirement by mail...rendering 24 hour service...with distribution depots conveniently located for every section of the United States."

Upon Dr. Jensen's retirement in June 1929, Dr. Graham became president, Dr. Salsbery vice president and Mr. A.K. Pearson, secretary and treasurer. Dr. Jensen died at his home in California in July, 1936.

From 1930 to 1935, a period of general business depression, many veterinarians left private practice to work for the state and federal governments in a national campaign to complete the testing of all cattle for tuberculosis. A similar campaign was inaugurated for the control of brucellosis bacteria in cattle. These two campaigns increased demand for Jen-Sal's tuberculin and brucella abortus vaccine. In 1935, a U.S. patent was issued to Jen-Sal for the process of stabilizing concentrated calcium gluconate solution, for the treatment of calcium deficiency in cattle. A campaign launched for eliminating internal parasite in horses by the use of carbon disulfide provided a sizable market for Jen-Sal's C.D. bot capsules.
In 1938, Jen-Sal's laboratories prepared encephalomyelitis (sleeping sickness) vaccine from the brain tissue of horses. An encephalomyelitis lab was built at the farm during the fall of that year. The following spring, vaccine produced by a unique new method—chick embryo—was announced at the company. Jen-Sal had taken work done by the federal government on wart vaccine and developed a method of growing the necessary virus culture in chick embryos. The tragic death of Dr. Salsbery occurred during the following year, 1939. He accidentally contracted encephalomyelitis while experimenting on the vaccine, and died four days later on July 7.

In 1946, Jen-Sal merged with the Vick Chemical Company (subsequently Richardson-Merrell, Inc., Wilton, Connecticut). Until this time, Jen-Sal's products had been marketed through agents or distribution branches. There were no salesmen, little sales promotion and advertising and no organized publicity. All business was done by mail order or telephone. Hence, most of the product lines were standard and competitive. Jen-Sal, like other veterinary companies, vied for business by emphasizing fast, reliable service.

The end of WWII saw the rise of three competitive factors: the increasing importance of local veterinary distributors; the development by human ethical firms of new specialty products which often had outstanding veterinary application; and the increasing sales of veterinary products to farmers by proprietary drug houses through drugstores and supermarkets. These competitive market conditions forced Jen-Sal to change its marketing and institutional policies. One of the first steps undertaken, with guidance from Vick, was the creation of a sales force in 1949. This was followed by the implementation of a research and product development program which was to culminate in the introduction of many new products during the subsequent decade. Among the products introduced by Jen-Sal in the early 1950's were several deworming compounds, an injectible antihistamine, sulfa formulations, a fungicide, a new modified live virus hog cholera vaccine, Canine Distemper-Infectious Hepatitis Combined Antiserum, Canine Wart Vaccine, and a lyophilized (freeze-dried) modified live virus rabies vaccine.

Many additions and renovations were made during these years in the division's pharmaceutical and biological laboratories and manufacturing facilities. The hog cholera serum facility was expanded, a new research building was added, branch distribution depots were modernized and expenditures were authorized for the purchase of lyophilization and other equipment.

In 1957, Jensen-Salsbery introduced Cytohep, the first veterinary tissue culture vaccine for the immunization for dogs against infectious hepatitis. Also marketed for the first time that year was a group of products for the treatment of leptospirosis in large and small animals. In 1961, Cytogen, the first tissue culture origin modified live virus canine distemper vaccine was marketed by Jen-Sal. By the time of its 50th anniversary in 1963, the division had expanded in all respects. Sales were $3.5 million, 1.6 times...
larger than they were at the time of acquisition, research expenditures were 20 times what they had been ten years earlier and products were exported to South America, Europe, Japan and Australia in addition to being sold in the U.S. and Canada. In addition, new animal research quarters and isolation units had been constructed at the farm.

From 1965 to the present, veterinary medicine in general witnessed notable advances in the prevention of respiratory and clostridial (sudden death) diseases in cattle. These diseases pose a major threat in feedlot operations, which have grown significantly in size and number to meet the country's food requirements.

Based on technology and equipment licensed from the Wellcome Foundation, Ltd. of England, Jen-Sal's scientists developed a line of anaerobic bacterins and toxoids for clostridial diseases that set new standards for the quality, consistency and effectiveness of such products.

In March 1975, Jen-Sal received a license from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to produce Cephalovac VEW, the first three-component vaccine to protect horses against Eastern, Western and Venezuelan equine encephalomyelitis. In the area of small animal biologics, Jen-Sal was noted for its ERA strain modified live virus rabies vaccine. The strain was first isolated by another major research organization which granted Jen-Sal the U.S. marketing rights. It was the only modified live virus rabies vaccine (it is no longer used) approved for use in six species.

The company, now Coopers Animal Health Inc., now spends over $2 million on research annually. More than 75 people are engaged in the field, including a number of employees with advanced degrees. Pharmaceutical research is conducted at the downtown Kansas City, Missouri facility; biological research is done at the 30 acre farm in Kansas City, Kansas. With sales today of over $40 million, Coopers Animal Health Inc. has come a long way since Dr. Hans Jensen opened his business in 1913.

Concluding remarks on Brostrom's design:

During the early decades of this century, Ernest Brostrom, who had no formal architectural training, gave to Kansas City a new style of architecture. Influenced by the work of Wright and Sullivan, Brostrom designed the Jensen-Salsbery Laboratory building (presently Coopers Animal Health Inc. building) with a forceful, non-academic and humanistic character--a new way of thinking about the commercial structure. Over sixty-five years old, the building remains a classic example of a structure functional enough to retain its original use.
9. Major Bibliographical References

see attached sheets

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property  
Quadrangle name  Kansas City MO-KANS.

Quadrangle scale  1:24,000

UMT References

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Verbal boundary description and justification
520 W. 21st Street, Coleman's 1st addition, lots 15 through 32 and vacant alley west of and adjacent lots 17 through 24 Block 2.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state  code  county  code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title  1. Cydney Millstein  architectural historian

organization
date  8 April 1985
street & number  p. o. box 22551
telephone  (816) 363-0567
city or town  Kansas City
state  Missouri 64113

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  x local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature  

For NPS use only:
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register:

Keeper of the National Register:

Attest:

Chief of Registration:
Notes

1. Western Contractor, 3 July 1913, p. 18.

2. The figurative sculpture, molded and cast in cement, are emblematic of biology and chemistry. Derivative of the telamon, they are not, though, structural in nature.

3. The flower urns were finished by the Trusswall Manufacturing Company of Kansas City, Missouri.


5. Ibid.


10. As quoted in RMI publications p. 2.

11. Jensen Salsbery Laboratory became Burroughs Wellcome Company in 1979, then it became Wellcome Animal Health Division of Burroughs Wellcome Company, in 1980. In December, 1983, the name was changed again to Wellcome Animal Health Inc., and in October of 1984, it became Coopers Animal Health Inc.


14. The firm of Eisentraut-Colby-Pottenger sent Brostrom to Kansas City to manage one of their branch offices.


16. Elmslie had been a draftsman for Sullivan for twenty years.

17. The other two structures are the Old Rushton Bakery Company (1920), and the Newbern Apartments (1921/1925).
Bibliography (major selections)

18 Donald Hoffman, "An Architect's Subtle Marks on the City," Kansas City Times, 8 December 1964, p. 36.
19 As quoted in RMI publications, p. 2.
21 Jen-Sal Journal, September-October, 1939, p. 3.


RMI publications. "Jensen-Salsbery, then and now." (photo essay), 1976.

Western Contractor. 3 July 1913, p. 18.

2. James M. Denny
   Chief, Survey & Registration
   and State Contact Person
   Department of Natural Resources
   Historic Preservation Program
   P. O. Box 176
   Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

   Phone: 314/751-4096
   Date: May 15, 1985
JENSEN-SALSBERRY LABORATORIES
520 West 21st Street
Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri

U.S.G.S. 7.5'
"Kansas City MO-KANS."

Scale 1:24,000
Quadrangle
(1964)
Photorevised
1970 and 1975

U.T.M. Reference:
A. 15/362400/4327500
Photo Log:

Name of Property: **Jensen-Salsberry Laboratories**
City or Vicinity: **Kansas City**
County: **Jackson County**  State: **MO**
Photographer: **Joe Stornello**
Date Photographed: **Feb. 1982**

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 7. S elevation.
2 of 7. Detail of main entrance, S elevation.
3 of 7. S elevation, figurative sculpture, 3rd story.
4 of 7. Detail of W elevation.
5 of 7. W elevation.
6 of 7. E elevation.
7 of 7. Detail of W elevation, decorative brick.