

BUILDING ON THE COMMON EDGE

by Steven Bingler, AIA



STEVEN BINGLER OF CONCORDIA ARCHITECTS, STANDING CENTER WITH FOLDER, LEADS A COMMUNITY TEAM WORKING SESSION.

Architects and city planners work best when they respect the need of the general population for an attractive and meaningful built environment, but some professionals are not always willing to create buildings with design elements that resonate broadly. They often claim that architects are uniquely trained to understand the esoteric building arts and that their well-educated opinions are essential to the design of a good building or city. However, it is time to craft a new, broader proposition for architectural design, one that addresses the needs of the community and

the arts with an ongoing edification of the three-dimensional language of architectural design.

WHAT DO ARCHITECTS HAVE IN COMMON WITH EVERYONE ELSE?

The relationship between a good designer and the larger community need not be combative; it can be collaborative. Over the centuries the world's most accomplished planners and designers have used their creativity to address the needs of the whole community. They have made an effort to research and apply universal and intuitive design principles that work in tandem with those that are more esoteric and academic. Mastering these principles involves knowledge of many aesthetic tools, such as geometric proportions that are derived from natural and musical harmonies that embody attributes of grace and style. But in the last decades, these universal design tools have often lost out to the architect who prefers to make design decisions according to his or her own singular beliefs or what he might conceive to be a cutting edge style. The time has come to revive the common language of architectural design and planning and reunite it with the creative edge of contemporary artistic achievement. At our firm Concordia we have been exploring these concepts of *"building on the common edge"* for many years.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

One way to interpret the idea of a common edge of architectural design is to study buildings that have sustained their appeal to the broad population over many years. An example is the

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Anne Morse, President



We've had a very busy, productive year to date. Our newsletter editors, Susan Kierr and David Stefferud, continue to produce outstanding informative issues, with the help of layout editor, Tarah Arcuri. Educational programs are thriving with Tulane students as well as the elementary school children with "Life on the Bayou". Advocacy efforts under the leadership of Keith Hardie have been ongoing with LLS taking a position on several key issues. The 2010 New Orleans' Nine Most Endangered list will be released in late May. Betsy Stout has been the chairperson and has assembled a great committee representative of the entire New Orleans community. Our thanks go out to all who volunteered to serve.

Much needed work on the Pitot House has been completed including the 1st phase of the landscape gardening plan, construction of the new fence along Moss St., electrical work for better lighting and security, and a new electrical panel to service the property. This work has been made possible in part by generous donations from members.

We have had great turnouts at our spring monthly "Vino on the Bayou" events. On March 12th, we set a record for attendance, but that may have been due to everyone having "cabin fever" after an unusually cold winter. It was a beautiful early spring afternoon with great gypsy music. As always, many thanks and appreciation to Jon Smith of Cork & Bottle for donating all proceeds.

A special thanks to architect George Hopkins who gave a wonderful presentation to the membership in January, based on his book *Creating Your Architectural Style*. We were very fortunate to have as the 29th annual Martha Robinson lecturer John Stubbs, vice president for field projects for the World Monuments Fund. The Historic New Orleans Collection graciously agreed to host the event again this year.

The highlight of this year, so far, has been the Crepuscule Concert fundraiser held on April 18th at the Pitot House. Pamela Pipes did an outstanding job of chairing and making the event happen in such a special way. We had a wonderful committee, many of whom were new to our organization. They worked tirelessly to insure a success. For those of you who attended, I'm sure you would agree that it was a "magical" afternoon.

Finally, I have enjoyed my term as president of LLS. It has been a very rewarding experience getting to know so many wonderful people both within the organization and the preservation community. It has been an exciting time to be part of the City's redevelopment. I look forward to making

further contributions as a member of LLS.

My best thanks to our staff, Susan and Tarah, for making this job easier and for their loyal dedication to our mission. The incoming president, Susan Kierr, will be a very capable and dedicated leader. I look forward to working with her to insure a smooth transition. Thank you for giving me this opportunity.



From left: Debbie de la Houssaye, Bitsie Mouton, Lake Douglas, and Grover Mouton at the May 14th "Vino on the Bayou" event.

A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Some books and movies have, over the years, contributed to the stereotype of the irascible, gruff figure of the "editor", presiding over minions of high-minded young authors ill-tutored in commas and gerunds and not capable of pulling off the fastidiously crafted sentence. I hasten to remind you, dear reader, as if you didn't already know, that our Co-editor, Susan Kierr, is not one of those autocratic editors, if they ever existed. She has been the wise and tactful midwife to many a clever, informative and entertaining piece in these pages, while herself demonstrating a skill in the use of our language we all would like to emulate.

She leaves as co-editor for the best of all possible reasons: she is promoted, if the Trustees agree, to the post of President of the Louisiana Landmarks Society. Therefore, if I have read the tea leaves correctly, there remains but one editor and he appears to be... yours truly. My Co-editor emeritus assures me, and you, that I can continue to benefit from her erudition and style.

It will be my fondest ambition to do, and be, as she would wish: to embellish the credentials of the Society through "La Preservation" and to encourage the writer we all know exists within us to contribute to our journal. With a subject as all-encompassing as the preservation of our history, and with a focus as significant and fascinating as our beloved Pitot House, we all surely have something to contribute to our journalistic voyage. I take the opportunity to say again that the editor's job is to put together the fragments he or she might be given, and any such bits of truth and interest are welcome in whatever form they may arrive.

David Stefferud

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Houses by the Hundreds

by J. Keith Hardie, Advocacy Chair

In two New Orleans neighborhoods, hundreds of houses are at risk. In the Mid-City National Register Historic District, the land for the new VA hospital is being cleared, and over 100 historic homes in the footprint are scheduled for demolition. Many of the properties slated for destruction date from the 1880's and 90's and a few from even earlier. The houses threatened are mostly double and single shotguns and craftsman bungalows, but include a few Edwardian cottages and doubles, a Creole cottage and commercial buildings, such as a corner grocery. Many have been recently renovated with Road Home and other grants, and have new wiring and plumbing, new roofs, fresh paint, and new appliances.

As of now, with a few exceptions, these houses will be torn down and taken to a landfill. Only a few decorative elements will be salvaged. Once the houses are destroyed, the City will lose the property tax revenue associated with them, and vacant lots, where the properties could be relocated, will continue to pay taxes at unimproved rates.

City officials, including Councilmember at Large Jackie Clarkson and Councilmember Stacy Head, have met with volunteers who hope to have the houses moved to empty lots in the City. While relocation would seem to be a win-win for both preservation and the VA, the VA's bureaucracy is difficult to turn around, and potential remedies, such as warehousing the houses somewhere, are complex.

Landmarks assisted the Mid-City Neighborhood Organization and others in publishing a booklet cataloging the houses and in creating a web site, www.savemidcityhouses.com, where there are pictures of the houses and where additional information will be published.

In the Central City National Register Historic District, a hundred houses which have been under limited HDLC protection for as long as thirteen years may lose that protection. Beginning in 1997, at the request of then Councilmember Oliver Thomas, the HDLC staff nominated a number of houses for landmark status. While under nomination, those houses were protected. The HDLC staff recently proposed that 100 of these properties receive landmark designation as a group. However, at HDLC meetings held in the first part of this year, the attempt to nominate the houses as a group failed, and some claim that the properties lost the protection of HDLC regulations. Architect Stephen Chauvin, a Landmarks member, pointed to procedural irregularities and appealed the HDLC decision to the City Council, asking the Council to overrule the HDLC, allowing HDLC protection to remain in place until a study can be performed to determine if a Central City Historic District should be created. Landmarks wrote the Council supporting the designation of the Central City properties as landmarks, and asking the Council to accept the recommendation of the HDLC staff and designate all one hundred buildings or to create a "full control" historic district in Central City. A partial control district, which would allow the HDLC to control new construction, demolition, and demolition by neglect is



Detail from home page of
www.savemidcityhouses.com

the minimum needed to prevent disinvestment. A full or partial control district could help restore the Oretha Castle Haley business corridor.

The threat to vernacular housing stock in neighborhoods such as Mid-City and Central City reflects a misconception that significant architecture and history is limited to the few neighborhoods traditionally frequented by tourists, suppressing other narratives, such as the importance of black culture and commerce. The airing of the television series Treme has done much to correct that misconception, showing the nation that the unique culture and architecture of the City extends to living, breathing neighborhoods like Central City and Mid-City. The loss of these houses would mark a loss of our heritage just at a point when it looked as if the tide were changing for the better.



217 S. Tonti and 2422 Palmyra St are both renovated houses in the footprint of the medical district. (www.savemidcityhouses.com)



2431 Palmyra St. - Pump No. 15 and 228-30 S. Tonti Creole Cottage are non-renovated structures located in the footprint of the medical district. (www.savemidcityhouses.com)

Continued from page 1

historic Pitot House in New Orleans. Built around 1799, the building's Louisiana French Colonial design is a product of its time and place and represents a departure from some well-established neoclassical norms. For example, while the design is rooted in classical principles of climatic adaptation and mathematical proportion that have guided architects, artisans and craftspeople for centuries, some proportions of the building's parts are more delicate and spindly than the more classically literal and bulky forms that were more fashionable in other areas. In this way, the building's designers succeeded in addressing a universal common language of architectural design, while at the same time expressing a new and distinctively southern edge of form, shape and style. For its time, it was out there - on the common edge.

One of the key attributes of creativity in the design of the Pitot house is the integration of its many programmatic and design elements. In many ways the building stands as a nexus of physical, cultural, social and environmental influences, and as a testament to teamwork among its many creative co-collaborators.



The historic Pitot House on Bayou St. John.

NEW WAYS OF TEAMING

The design team for the Contemporary Arts Center in New Orleans embraced some similar opportunities. The starting point was a historic Renaissance Revival warehouse structure. Concordia architects worked with a team of six visual artists to create interior modifications that embody the expressions of many personalities and creative points of view. Included in the final design is an artist-designed elevator shaft, a cast-glass entry desk, and a sculptural metal frieze. Many of the individual designs make visual reference to thematic content that is derived from the culture and landscapes of New Orleans and Louisiana. These references to local images recall more traditional design practice in which teams of architects, artisans and craftspeople worked together to modify and refine an evolving language of architecture and ornament over time.

BRIDGING BETWEEN OPPOSING POINTS OF VIEW

In Concordia's design for renovations and additions to the original Jackson Brewery Brew House in the French Quarter, we were challenged to work with two conflicting preservation policies. The first, held by the Vieux Carre Commission, required that the design adhere to historic architectural guidelines in order to preserve the *tout ensemble* of the French



CAC Renaissance Revival exterior.



CAC interior lobby, showing the integration of 20th century artwork and materials.

Quarter's historic ambiance. A second policy, held by the National Park Service, followed a more archeological point of view. This policy required that new additions reflect the styles and materials of the 1980's when the additions were made, so as to establish a clearer record of the building's growth over time and a more accurate record of changes in the evolution of cultural tastes and styles. As the design process proceeded, local leaders and community activists also became involved in the design negotiations. The result is a marriage of traditional architectural detailing, as seen on the building facades that face the historic French Quarter, with the more sleek and contemporary forms and materials on the major additions facing the emerging twentieth century redevelopment along the edge of the Mississippi River.



Jackson Brewery Front - historic materials and details facing the French Quarter.



Jackson Brewery Back - contemporary materials and details facing riverside.

MOVING FORWARD

These three architectural examples represent different approaches for addressing a bridge between common concepts and creatively “edgy” design ideas. But to move further towards building on the common edge of community planning and architectural design, we will need to consider even more changes. The first change will require a design process that is inclusive than exclusive, with as much listening as talking, and an effective means of reaching agreement through consensus building.

A second change will be the invention of new, creative tools to help reinforce overlapping design ideas. For example, many architects are now integrating “green” building techniques into their designs to foster more environmentally sustainable building practices. Beyond the integrative components of green design lie many more elements of the physical, cultural, social, economic, organizational and educational domains of community life. When these six domains are interacting, they support each other as a whole. At Concordia we call this kind of interaction the nexus.

INTERACTION - THE NEXUS DESIGN

The first of six domains of the nexus design is **physical**, in a broad sense. Tools like numerology, sacred geometry and contemporary counterparts, such as bio-mimicry and algebraic topology can be engaged to help shape physical space. Other useful design tools exist in the **cultural** domain, archetypes expressed through symbolic shapes, pictorial storytelling or spiritual and poetic citations similar to those that have been incorporated into building designs throughout the ages. The **social** domain of community life embraces attributes like affordability, equity and social justice. Design solutions that address these critical needs range from accommodations for the infirm to the use of healthy and ecologically responsible materials and fair trade purchasing practices. The **economic** domain embraces the balance of resources needed to maximize financial, human and environmental capital. At the heart of these concepts is the search for quality, durability and life-cycle cost/value relationships. Design decisions that address the functional and aesthetic needs of specific groups or community interests are addressed within the **organizational** domain, including the participatory and self-organizing principles leveraged through small and large group collaboration. Finally, architectural form that incorporates principles of mathematics, geometry, science, history and social behavior can manifest the relevance of these resources within the **educational** domain.

Although each of these six domains are very different, it is the nexus of the interactions among them can best drive community-centered planning and design towards a more synergistic and harmonious outcome. The process of developing, expanding and applying these new systemic design tools can offer exciting opportunities for inquisitive and creative planners and designers everywhere.

GOOD INTENTIONS

Implementing these common edge ideas will require teamwork. In architecture, as in other fields, this can often be a challenge. Noted jazzman Wynton Marsalis speaks of the concept of “swing” in jazz performances: “Swing demands three things,” he says, “It requires extreme coordination, because it is a dance with other people who are inventing steps as they go. It requires intelligent decision-making, because what’s best for you is not necessarily best for the group or for the moment. And it requires good intentions, because you have to trust that you and the other musicians are equally interested in making great music and are not guided by ego or musical shortcomings that haven’t been addressed.”

That’s an excellent description of the common edge. For too many years our contemporary culture has encouraged the pursuit of individualism rather than universal truth. A new common edge of community planning and design can help to close the gap between these two extremes. New tools will be needed to support these more systemic and inclusive planning and design practices, and the changes will require collaboration among diverse voices, but the result will be a more democratic, holistic and exciting direction for the future.



Louisiana Landmarks Society Names the *2010 New Orleans' Nine Most Endangered Sites*

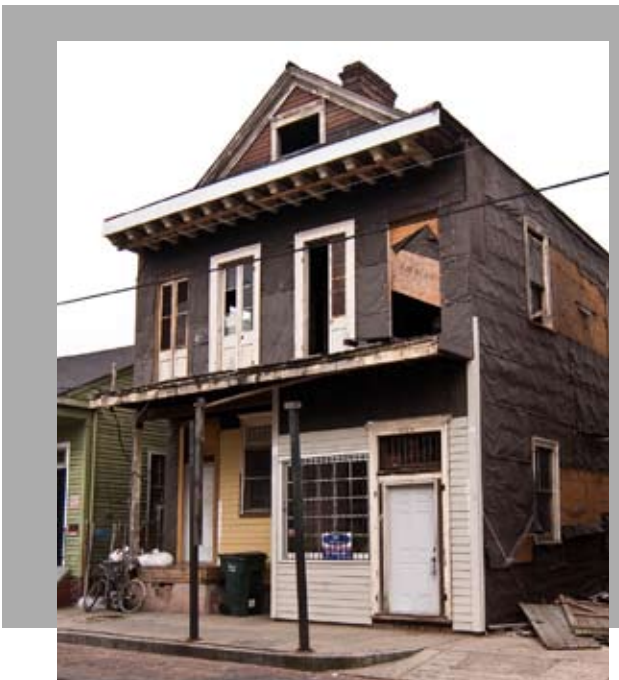
Based on the model of the Most Endangered program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Louisiana Landmarks Society has each year since 2005 chosen to bring to the public's attention its own local list of most endangered historic structures. This year's list is a poignant reminder of the continuing challenges of rebuilding New Orleans and the sometimes conflicting needs of preservation versus a quick return to service. Our tumultuous school situation, the rebuilding of the medical district, and bureaucratic challenges of city-owned properties are represented in this year's New Orleans' Nine, illustrating the problems we face. We hope our members, city leaders and all who care about our community

PROFESSOR LONGHAIR'S HOUSE

Location: 1740 Terpsichore Street

Threat: Demolition by neglect

Henry Roeland Byrd, (1918 - 1980), aka. Professor Longhair, New Orleans Rock 'n Roll pianist and songwriting legend lived modestly, often reclusively, in the house at 1740 Terpsichore in the Central City neighborhood. *Esquire* magazine credits "Fess" with giving "Elvis Presley his Blue Suede Shoes voice, Little Richard his boogie frenzy, and Fats Domino his rumba left hand." *Rolling Stone* magazine called him "one of the off-handed founders of modern day popular music." Allen Toussant called him the "Bach of



will recognize the enduring value of our heritage buildings and take full account of our precious past in constructing the future.

Louisiana Landmarks Society thanks all who submitted nominations and the New Orleans' Nine Committee who devoted their time and expertise to the selection process. Suggestions for inclusion in next year's list are welcome at any time. Keep an eye out for likely candidates and join us in our preservation mission.

Text by Betsy J. Stout,

Chair of the 2010 New Orleans' Nine Committee



Rock." During his life, Professor Longhair was mostly unknown beyond New Orleans, poverty stricken and unable to make a living in music, even with hits for Mercury and Atlantic records, the Mardi Gras anthem *Big Chief* in 1965, and a 1975 album titled *Live on the Queen Mary*. After his passing, Professor Longhair was awarded a Grammy in 1987, and in 1992 he was inducted into the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame. His house, a late nineteenth century home now divided into three units, appears uninhabitable.

ABANDONED AND DECOMMISSIONED CHURCHES AND PLACES OF WORSHIP

Location: Citywide

Threat: Demolition by neglect, fire, and vandalism

New Orleans has a variety of churches in a wide range of materials and styles. Many of these churches have lost their congregations or have been abandoned in favor of larger, more centralized places of worship. It is a cultural and architectural tragedy that we are losing these buildings to neglect, fire, and demolition.

The graceful and abandoned Coliseum Square Baptist Church was destroyed by a fire set by squatters. In the Lower Garden District, Felicity Street Methodist Church and the Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church are for sale but deteriorate while they await buyers. Chevra Thilim Synagogue, once an anchor of the Jewish community in Broadmoor, is slated for demolition.

The 1852 Gothic Revival church pictured is Saint Maurice Catholic Church in Holy Cross, closed since Hurricane Katrina. Early Roman Catholic Churches often served specific immigrant populations from Ireland, Germany, and Italy, such as the abandoned Holy Trinity, a German church

in Marigny. These churches could be adapted for reuse as community centers, such as Saint Alphonse at 2030 Constance Street. Churches have also been adapted for commercial use as art studios, theaters, restaurants, and night clubs, and even for residential use in some cases.



POLICE JAIL AND PATROL CENTER

Location: 2552 St. Philip Street

Threat: Demolition by neglect

The stone above the door of this beautiful Queen Anne style structure reads "Police Jail and Patrol Station." Owned by the City of New Orleans, this 1902 gem is currently for sale. Its location within the Bayou Road African American Heritage Cultural District entitles the owner to a 50% tax credit toward restoration if the building is used for commercial purposes for a five year period, or a 25% tax credit if it is used as a residence. The appraised value of over one million dollars is not realistic, and without a buyer, the lovely "jail" will continue to be a victim of demolition by neglect.



AUDUBON PARK TENNIS COURTS AND AVENGER FIELD

Location: Tchoupitoulas Street to the Levee

Threat: Commerical development

In 1929, the Audubon Park Natatorium's articles of incorporation included "providing tennis courts and athletic fields." In 1949, land stretching from Tchoupitoulas Street to the river levee, incorporating Avenger Field, a baseball diamond that included stands for 300 people, was purchased by the Natatorium from the Texas and Pacific Railroad for this purpose. Since 1987, Audubon Park tennis courts have shared this green space with the ball field. After Hurricane Katrina, lights were added to the ball field for evening games. This public recreational space, now under the stewardship of the Audubon Park Commission, has been enjoyed continuously for decades by the citizens of New Orleans, and is designated as recreational green space in New Orleans' new Master Plan. Over the past year, the



Audubon Park Commission has entertained an offer from Children's Hospital to lease this land, replacing the tennis courts and ball field with several high rise hospital buildings. However, Children's Hospital recently stated that it intended to pursue the abandoned New Orleans Adolescent Hospital campus for its expansion, "although [it] did not rule out revisiting the idea of securing land now owned by the Audubon Commission" (*Times-Picayune*, 4/17/10). As long as the Audubon Park Commission is willing to consider allowing development on this historic community resource, it remains in danger.

GENERAL LAUNDRY CLEANERS AND DYER'S BUILDING

Location: 2512 St. Peter Street

Threat: Neglect

Constructed in 1939, the General Laundry, Cleaners and Dyer's brightly hued terra cotta façade is attached to a nondescript warehouse. New Orleans has only a handful of Art Deco buildings remaining, and this is one of the most intriguing, and by far the most colorful.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974, the façade's various motifs, in unfaded colors, epitomize the Art Deco approach to geometric pattern as does no other New Orleans building. Threatened with demolition at the time of its National Register listing, a plan to build a new post office and parking lot would have saved the façade. This plan was never realized. In 1995 when the Parkview National Register Historic District was designated, the boundaries took in this significant building.



Today the building is accessed from the rear and is used for storage of salvaged "white goods" such as used appliances. Located adjacent to the site of the former Lafitte Housing project, this one-of-a-kind façade suffers from neglect and lack of maintenance. Although the building is actively used, the façade, visible from Orleans Avenue, is in need of care and attention to ensure that it retains its vibrant appearance and remains for future generations.

DEW DROP INN

Location: 2836 LaSalle Street

Threat: Demolition by neglect

Dubbed "New Orleans' swankiest nightclub" by the *Louisiana Weekly*, the Dew Drop Inn was famed for the best in African American entertainment from 1945 – 1970. This cultural icon is one of the few remaining vestiges of a scene that once included the Gypsy Tea Room, the Funky Butt, Lincoln Beach, the Golden Cadillac, and the Astoria.

The two buildings that comprise the Dew Drop Inn incorporated a barber shop, restaurant, barroom, and hotel, all operated by the Painia family. The Dew Drop Inn opened in 1939 and by the end of World War II featured national and regional acts such as blues great Joe Turner, female impersonator Bobby Grant, dancer "Iron Jaw" Harris, as well as local acts Blanche Thomas, guitarist Erving Charles, Diamond Joe, Li'l Booker, and Patsy Even. Blues singer Joseph August remembers, "It was the foundation for musicians in New Orleans. Whether you were from out of town or from the city, your goal was the Dew Drop. If you couldn't get a gig at the Dew Drop, you weren't about nothing."

The Dew Drop Inn was given permanent local landmark status in January, 2010. Now owned by the founder's grandson, the Dew Drop Inn is in dire need of repair and restoration.

LAFAYETTE CEMETERY NUMBER ONE

Location: 1400 Washington Avenue

Threat: Neglect, vandalism, root damage

Lafayette Cemetery Number One is one of New Orleans' most accessible historic cemeteries for tourists and residents to visit. Laid out in four quadrants by Benjamin Buisson in 1833, it served the Protestant founders of the Garden District. A fragile cemetery hidden behind high walls, Lafayette Cemetery Number One is important both for its beauty and as an historical record, and has appeared on the World Monuments Fund Watch List for endangered places.

Two massive oak trees now threaten over thirty historic tombs. Owned and operated by the City of New Orleans, the cemetery also suffers from inadequate grounds keeping, improper tomb maintenance, and lack of supervision of the film industry. Film trucks, lights, cameras, film crews and extras have become regulars in the cemetery. The fees for the use of this cemetery are not dedicated for its maintenance, and there is no apparent evidence that film crews are supervised so that graves are not trampled and damaged.



MID-CITY HISTORIC DISTRICT

Location: Bienville St. to the I-10 Pontchartrain Expressway and City Park Ave. to North Derbigny St.
Threat: Confiscation and rezoning residential neighborhood for medical services district

Bounded roughly by Bienville Street to the east and the I-10 Pontchartrain Expressway to the west, City Park Avenue to the north and North Derbigny Street to the south, most of the structures in this National Register neighborhood were built between 1850 and 1949. The District's housing stock includes Italiante, Colonial Revival, and Bungalow/Craftsman structures.

The twenty-seven block LSU/VA hospital district was inserted into the Master Plan without input from residents and includes no buffer between the hospitals and the surrounding neighborhood. Some of the threatened Mid-City properties were damaged by Hurricane Katrina and have since been restored with State and Federal funding, such as the Road Home

NEW ORLEANS BRACKETED HOUSE

Location: 3619 Camp Street

Threat: Demolition by neglect and illegal intrusion

This excellent example of the New Orleans Bracketed Shotgun was constructed in 1889 as one of a trio, forming a handsome street scape representative of late nineteenth century New Orleans architecture. It was purchased in 1911 by the City of New Orleans as a residence for the custodian of the adjacent school. It has been abandoned now for many years and is in a state of extreme neglect, blighting the rest of the block.

The Orleans Parish School Board recently passed a resolution asking BESE (Board of Elementary and Secondary Education) and the Louisiana Department of Education/Recovery School District to relinquish control of the New Orleans Free School, which includes the Camp Street property, and return it to the Orleans Parish School Board to be designated as surplus for disposition and/or adaptive reuse.



program. Now that the LSU and VA project appear to be moving forward, these houses are in danger of being demolished and taken to landfills. Several non-profits are currently working to save architecturally significant residences by moving them to empty lots.

The threat to Mid-City goes beyond LSU and the VA. The proposed Greater New Orleans Biosciences Economic Development District (GNOBEDD) would rezone a 2.4 mile district stretching from Loyola to South Carrollton Avenue, and Earhart Boulevard to Iberville Street for medical services. Conversion of such a huge area to commercial and medical use could wipe out this once flourishing neighborhood. City authorities should consider these large scale proposals carefully, as they will change the City forever, and run the risk of demolishing neighborhoods for development that never materializes, like so many "urban renewal" projects in the 1960's. At the very least, the Mid-City Historic District needs local historic district oversight and protection such as that offered by the Historic District Landmarks Commission.



2010 LOUISIANA LANDMARKS SOCIETY AWARDS

THE LOUISIANA LANDMARKS SOCIETY IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE WINNERS OF THE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL AWARDS, PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING ON SUNDAY, THE 16TH OF MAY, 2010 AT THE PITOT HOUSE.

SERVICE AWARD

presented to Lyn Tomlinson



LYN SPEAKING AT THE ANNUAL MEETING MAY 16, 2010

The Service Award is presented this year to Lyn Tomlinson. No member is more deserving of this recognition for all of the many contributions she has made to LLS over the years. Lyn has been willing to serve the organization in any way asked. She has served on every committee, chaired the membership committee, and has ably served as president.

She has generously lent her support both financially and with endless amounts of time to insure that the organization flourishes. These past 3 years, Lyn has served as nominating committee chairman, and has excelled in seeking outstanding contributing members to insure a well-balanced board. We thank her for everything she has done for LLS and congratulate her in accepting the Service Award at the May 16th annual meeting.

HARNETT T. KANE PRESERVATION AWARD

presented posthumously to Pam Dashiell

*This nomination letter for Pam Dashiell was submitted
by William E. Borah*



JACKIE CLARKSON, PAM DASHIELL AND MAJORA CARTER AT KATRINA REMEMBRANCES IN 2009 FOR FRIENDS OF HOLY CROSS AND THE LOWER NINTH WARD.
PHOTO TAKEN BY DARRYL MALEK-WILEY.

I want to recommend Smart Growth for Louisiana board member Pam Dashiell for the 2010 Harnett T. Kane Award. No one in this community is more deserving of the prestigious Louisiana Landmarks Society Award.

As an active Smart Growth board member, Pam strongly supported every issue that the nonprofit took on. She was of invaluable assistance in the St. Thomas Hope VI/Wal-Mart battle, and the Boston native worked tirelessly for months in the successful campaign to get the Master Plan Charter changes adopted. Because of her strong and continuous support, New Orleans is now required to develop a Master Plan to direct future development that will have the force of law. Pam was committed to the unique values of New Orleans and did all she could to see that future development would complement, not irreparably harm, the city that she came to love.

Moreover, Pam was extremely active in the environmental community. Known for her long association with the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association and the organization's opposition to the widening of the Industrial Canal, she was also active in the Delta Chapter of the Sierra Club, Lower 9th Ward Center

for Sustainable Engagement and Development, the Louisiana Bucket Brigade Holy Cross/Lower 9th Ward Initiative, the national Center for Community Health Research, and the Alliance for Affordable Energy. With the meetings she attended, and the daily commitment to causes she supported, one wonders how Pam found time to sleep.

And lastly, Pam was a dear friend to all of us trying to protect the integrity of this unique city while seeking development that would compliment its unique charm. It is why the lady joined the board of Smart Growth, and why she worked so diligently to foster responsible land use planning to protect the city's "quaint and distinctive character."

I know of no one in this community more deserving of the Harnett T. Kane Award. And it is my distinct honor to recommend my dear friend Pam for this prestigious gift. She was the best and deserves the best.

Saving Our Past:

THE WORLD MONUMENTS FUND'S WORK
IN ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION.
THE MARTHA ROBINSON LECTURE FOR 2010 –
JOHN H. STUBBS

REVIEWED BY SUSAN KIERR

On a beautiful summer evening at the Historic New Orleans Collection, John Stubbs amazed, inspired, and taught a full house of LLS members and friends, with slides and information about his work as part of a world-wide effort toward architectural conservation: heritage protection.

Stubbs is Vice President of Field Projects for the World Monuments Fund. He once studied and now teaches at Columbia University in NYC. Originally from Monroe, LA, he credits his Louisiana upbringing with “shaping everything” in his life, and “everything” appears to include a deep commitment to preservation of architectural history.

A dapper, agile man, he speaks to crowds with the enthusiasm and energy some might save for a heated discussion around the kitchen table. He is passionate about his work and his passion is contagious. His slides are of buildings around the world that are considered international monuments, each part of a worldwide effort toward curatorial management. He likens these efforts to “stirring the pot” – which is another way of saying every effort of the World Monuments Fund sets into motion a domino effect that starts a ball rolling and may lead to awareness and action. A vital part of his mission is the training of a



Image from Stubbs' book *Time Honored: A Global View of Architectural Conservation*, published by Wiley, John & Sons, Incorporated, January 2009.

future generation of heritage preservation managers.

Stubbs says, “We must do this – preserve our heritage – we’re here today, and no matter how difficult, we must try.” He also pointed out, parenthetically but emphatically, the role of women in preservation, who understand more quickly the necessity for continuity. “Like in all the world, the women are the smart ones!”

In a bar in Mexico City in 1996 a group of his colleagues dreamed up a World Monuments Watch List, much like the New Orleans’ Nine list that appears in this edition of *Préservation*, only it looks all around our globe for sites that need to be watched and efforts that need to be made to preserve them. Now 650 sites in 125 countries, including some in New Orleans such as the New Orleans’ Nine’s Phyllis Wheatley School, are on this list.

Stubbs’ slide show at HNOC was a whirlwind tour of many of these World Monument sites, accompanied by his personal stories and commentaries. We traveled with him, moving east, from London’s St. Georges Bloomsbury before and after images of its restoration, to Stowe House, a famous boy’s prep school in England; the Temple of Hercules in Rome; Pompeii in southern Italy; an incredible aqueduct in Spain; the Tower of Belem in Lisbon, Portugal, an icon as significant to Portugal as the Statue of Liberty is to the United States. The slides showed sites in France, Croatia, Yugoslavia, Istanbul, Cambodia, China, Russia, Japan, Antarctica, Easter Island, Guatemala, Barbados, Peru, Havana and New Orleans. All sites can be seen at the World Monuments website.

Preserving Summer's Harvest

During the colonial period, books on housewifery were occasionally found in Louisiana homes. But most people depended on traditions of housewifery and cooking that were passed from person to person. Some educated housewives wrote down recipes, creating their own unpublished cook books.

According to Ann Masson, Assistant Director of the Preservation Studies Program at the Tulane School of Architecture, the first American book of the type was printed in Williamsburg in 1742 and was essentially a reprint of *The Complete Housewife* published in London in 1727. *American Cookery* was published in Connecticut in 1796. In the 1820s books of “receipts” and other household information were widely circulated.

Foods of the interpretive period of the Pitot House would include a number of versions of a sweet bread and butter pickle, which preserved the summer cucumber harvest. Here is one that might be handed down within the household.

SWEET BREAD AND BUTTER PICKLES

PUT IN A LARGE CONTAINER FOR 2 HOURS:

- 4 QTS. CUCUMBER THINLY SLICED
- ½ C KOSHER SALT
- 2 QTS. SLICED ONIONS, DRAINED

BOIL TOGETHER FOR 10 MINUTES:

- 1 QT CIDER VINEGAR
- 4 C SUGAR
- 2T MUSTARD SEED
- 1 T GINGER
- 1 T TURMERIC
- 1 T CELERY SEED

ADD CUCUMBERS AND ONIONS AND BRING TO A BOIL AGAIN, THEN PACK IMMEDIATELY IN 8 (12OZ) JARS.

A NORTHSHORE DECONSTRUCTION

By David Stefferud



Lance Ostendorf

Lance Ostendorf, and his family have “deconstructed” a wonderful old summer cottage in Madisonville, in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana. The word has two meanings to architects and preservationists: the first is described in Wikipedia as “disjointed and disassembled architecture” in the style of Frank Gehry, Rem Koolhaas, Daniel Libeskind; certainly not the meaning we want in this story, and “the selective dismantlement of a building for re-use, recycling and waste management,” or “construction in reverse” That benign activity is

what we’ve got going here.

Lance, 30, his wife Tiffany and young daughter Layna live across Highway 21 from the property, which recently changed hands, and Lance saw the looming danger of demolition involving bulldozers and a fire. As an amateur historian and with his family’s roots firmly planted in Madisonville’s long past, he knew the value of the house, both as a cultural icon and as a soundly built structure with life left in her components: heart of longleaf pine, hardwood flooring and warmly-colored old brick. Lance got permission to deconstruct the house for re-use.

The house had a “T” shaped plan, a style popular in Louisiana’s “ozone belt,” much favored for a summer escape from New Orleans’ heat and threat of yellow fever, and was built in the middle or late nineteenth century. The linear bedrooms were surrounded by a gallery and the windows on the north side were supplanted on the south by tall shuttered doors which would normally stand open at night to the prevailing southerly breezes. She stood a few yards off the post road to Covington, amidst pine, oak and magnolia. Two crepe myrtles, now enormous, were added by previous owners.

On a recent February day, a rare warm one for this spring, Lance’s father Ralph Ostendorf sat chipping the sandy binding material from the bricks of the two double fireplaces and the house piers. “New bricks are under a dollar,” he remarked, “but these, cleaned up, are worth a dollar and a half. And look at the color...” They are a warm, soft orange shading into beige. They would lend their dignity and style to any subsequent use. Ralph was illustrating two advantages to deconstruction over demolition: some old building components are worth more than their contemporary versions, and some have attributes of beauty and remembrance which don’t come with a price tag.

The decision to raze a building comes from many motivations: blight removal, economic pressure to develop new buildings, presumed “higher and better uses,” aesthetic mismatches, any number of presumed advantages lead to the wrecker’s ball and the bonfire. But preservation groups have found that, for the most part, the decision is made in haste and the tradeoffs are not carefully considered. Furthermore, the new use is not always the most lucrative for the owner. Widely known preservation economist Donovan Rypkema has pointed out, for example, that the cost per space for a parking lot where an old building might have stood could easily be \$17,000-\$20,000 where land plus cost of demolition, cost of paving, etc. are figured in. Would you pay \$17,000 for a parking space? Also, deconstruction lowers the need for virgin resources and diverts solid waste from landfills.

Certainly there’s time for the tradeoffs to be considered and a little arithmetic applied before the bulldozers arrive.



Lance Ostendorf and his family have cleared a site at no expense to the owner. They have a sizeable store of lumber and brick on pallets and under tarpaulins await-

ing a new life in a new house. And what fine material it is! You won’t see mellowed brick and longleaf pine at the lumberyard very often. The owners before Lance must be pleased that their investment in good materials well put-together won’t go up in smoke, and Lance’s “sweat equity” marks him as not only a sensitive preservationist and historian but a shrewd businessman as well.

HAVE YOUR NEXT EVENT AT THE PITOT HOUSE

weddings • receptions
birthdays • luncheons • tea parties
private dinners • corporate events

For more information, please call 504.482.0312
or email info@LouisianaLandmarks.org

Louisiana Life on the Bayou

By Susan Kierr



"The Cypress"
Photo detail courtesy
of David Barfield,
dbarfieldphotos@gmail.com

Madisonville used the Tchefuncte River to facilitate harvesting its outstanding cypress trees and employed large numbers of boat builders in its shipyards and as sole practitioners of the art, constructing boats from the 18th to the 20th century. The early loggers and boat builders lived along the river in Creole cottages, usually two rooms divided by fireplaces. As families grew, so did the houses, with extensions behind, leading toward the swamp and bayou.

301 St. Paul Street is one of those homes, and in 1995 T. Windle Dyer recognized that, as it had been preserved by the influence and power of poverty, it offered an opportunity for restoration. He had restored many houses in Algiers Point, New Orleans, and Mountain View, Arkansas. After purchasing the Madisonville house in 1997, he began a careful restoration. Some but not all doors and windows needed to be replaced, and these were hand milled by Charles Guillot, a Madisonville carpenter, to maintain the character of the house.

No colors were changed. No changes were made in the various levels or walls of the house. Two back rooms in the 1940's extension were made into one large bedroom. Plumbing and electric wiring were brought up to code. The two fireplaces and chimney had crumbled and had been sealed off and these were both reopened

and the chimney rebuilt in the style that would have been original to the house. The roof had been tin and its condition necessitated that it be replaced with new tin.

The home now of Mr. Dyer's widow, Susan Kierr, it is surrounded by cypress wetlands from which the boat builders harvested lumber in the 18th century. The house represents a successful vernacular solution to the need in those days for shelter and comfort without great expense for the craftsmen of the riverside and their families. The trees, now in a protected wetland fully matured after that earlier harvest, demonstrate what majesty 200 years of cypress growth achieves. The site is adjacent to Bayou De Zaire, which feeds the Tchefuncte River and the home is now on the Madisonville historic home tour.



"The Cottage"
Photo detail
courtesy of
David Barfield,
dbarfieldphotos@
gmail.com

JOSEPH GRIMA BERNARD

Louisiana Landmarks Society lost a very good friend earlier this year, and we will miss him greatly.

Joseph Grima Bernard died on January 24, 2010, at the age of 88. Joe was an architect by training and a preservationist by inclination. A graduate of Tulane University, he helped design the Union Passenger Terminal and did work on the Monteleone Hotel and Jesuit High School. In 1973 he was named resident architect for Tulane University Medical Center.

Throughout his life he worked to protect our area's architectural history. He helped save Destrehan Plantation and worked against the French Quarter riverfront expressway. From 1994-1996 he served as president of Louisiana Landmark Society. In 1970 Mayor Schiro appointed him to the Vieux Carre Commission where he served for eight years.

Survivors include his wife, Virginia Fairfax Bernard; two sons, John Bernard of Mandeville and Joseph Bernard, Jr. of Mamaroneck, N.Y.; two daughters, Marcelle Bernard and Celeste Bernard Bitchatch; a sister, Suzanne Ewing; and three grandchildren.

DIONE RAGAN HARMON, R.N.

Dione Ragan Harmon died on January 17, 2010. Dione was a graduate of the Charity School of Nursing. After her marriage to Warren Walter Harmon, Jr., she moved to Honolulu where she raised her family and practiced nursing. When she was widowed in 1976 she returned to New Orleans with her two daughters.

While working full-time as a nurse and raising her family she also found time to serve as president of the Algiers Point Neighborhood Association. She helped start the revitalization of the Point with the Preservation Resource Center's Live in a Landmark program, then continued revitalization work in the Irish Channel and served on the board of the Algiers Courthouse.

A longtime member of the Louisiana Landmark Society, Dione served on the Board of Trustees as secretary in 2003-2004. She was recently employed as a nurse liaison at the LSU Interim Public Hospital in the Emergency Room.

Survivors include her sister, Claire Ragan Cieslinski; daughters Nicole Harmon, Michelle McGeivey and two grandchildren.



Pitot House Director's Report

By Susan McClamroch

I seldom get asked what's new at the Pitot House... and I'm fairly certain that's because stability is associated with historic houses, more often than change. While good stewardship that provides the Pitot House with stability is the Louisiana Landmarks Society's goal, a static and stuffy old house museum certainly is not. With that in mind, I will implore you to banish any thoughts of monotonous boredom here at the Pitot House because this "perpetual" place has been bustling with people, projects, and things new and novel!

Young magnolia and cypress trees* arrived earlier this year to replace the dying Bradford Pear trees that had been removed during the winter and the fresh Satsuma trees that had been donated by this fall's blushing bride, Bridgett Kelly Hayes, were planted to form a future citrus grove on the site's south side...while newly split pickets joined those preparing to celebrate their sesquicentennial... in order to complete the fence's west side reconstruction... and Tulane's whitewashing architecture students continued to confront the rare pieux's on-going preservation.



Sophie Gabrielle Pitot's blue bedroom view.

All through the spring individuals and groups—youthful and sage, creative and re-creative—popped in to participate in the Pitot House action. Evidenced in a sampling of this season's documentation, their visits were informed and informative, fun and fundraising, fan gathering (with 250+ Pitot House fans and about 30 fresh facebook fans on the Louisiana Landmarks Society's brand spanking new page) and most importantly, passionate preservationist producing.

However, the most current development at the Pitot House is positively electrifying...as, made possible by Mr. Jerry Affolter's generous donation,



Left to right:
old electric
panels;
Webb
Johnson
of Aurora
Services

the archaic and obsolete electric panels put into service last century (left photo) were finally replaced with a shiny NEW 2010 model, as seen in the photo on the right.

In light of all this progressive news, please know you should never hesitate to ask "What's new-fangled?" at your favorite historic house on the bayou!

**Correction to last issue's "What's Blooming" article (Vol. 47, No. 1). It erroneously credited Claudia deGruy Voulgarakis with the donation of two Magnolia grandiflora for the Pitot House grounds. Please note that the correct plant donation was for two Metasequoia trees.*

LOUISIANA LANDMARKS SOCIETY WELCOMES OUR NEW MEMBERS!

WELCOME ABOARD!

The Louisiana Landmarks Society is overjoyed to have the following members join us this quarter in our quest to save what's best in the Louisiana built environment, especially our precious Pitot House, and to add to our strong voice in advocacy for preservation:

Mr. Philip J. Arbo
Mr. Theodore Argote
Mr. Richard Carriere
Ms. Katherine Chulvick and Mr. Michael Fouquier
Afua Sarah Ann Dave
Ms. Debbie de la Houssaye
Ms. Katherine deMontluzin
Mr. Fernin Eaton
Mr. Gary Fretz
Ms. Missy McCroskey
Ms. Sylvia Moncada, Nonna Mia
Ms. Jeane Pitot-Frank
Mr. Peter Politzer and Ms. Jane Murray
Mr. and Mrs. Tom Rey
Ms. Isabel Reynolds
Ms. Sophie Roark
Ms. Holly Sharp
Mr. Mark Thomas
Mr. and Mrs. T.C. Thomasson
Mrs. Myra Van Hoose

The Society is glad to have you with us: your talent and enthusiasm are our most important resource and we look forward to seeing you in our many activities and in the pages of *Préservation* if you care to make a written contribution.



Argentine Productions, Inc. filming for Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve on January 12. Actors are: (from left) National Park Service Ranger Matt Boswell, dressed as a member of Plauche's Battalion; Chris Becker as a U.S. Dragoon Officer; Jimmy Lee, Jr. as Andrew Jackson; and Shawn Mefferd as a U.S. Naval Officer.



On April 1, the Mississippi Steamboat Chickens, a dixieland band from Germany, performed for a tour of German *Dixiefreunde*.



On April 16, descendents of both James Pitot, the fourth owner, and Joseph Reynes, the second owner, visit the Pitot House. From left: Gerard Patrick Roeling, Sandra Serth, Bette Roeling Staelzing, William J. Roeling, and Harold A. Pilie, Jr.



On January 20, Greg Lambousy (left) from the Louisiana State Museum System and Richard Campanella (right), author, geographer and Tulane professor, study the Pitot House attic for possible use of barge boards in its original construction.



At the Garden Study Club's March meeting, Lake Douglas, PhD, ASLA discussed the implementation of Phase II "The Louisiana Landscape, 1700-1820" project with its funders.



On May 7, Trinity Episcopal School's "Brave Alligator" taught Ben Franklin Elementary preschoolers about life on the bayou while Tulane Preservation Studies students observe in preparation for Heritage Education program revisions.

Pitot House Director's Report

Continued from page 15



Crepuscule Concert Photographs, courtesy of Susan Snee, Argenta Photography, 504-228-1959

The entire collection of photos can be viewed and purchased by going to the Landmarks website, www.louisianalandmarks.org



Crepuscule Concert photos from clockwise: Ben Jaffe and The Preservation Hall Jazz Band; silent auction table; the Charmaine Neville Band; and neighbors Mignon Faget and Mario Villa.



LOUISIANA LANDMARKS SOCIETY THANKS THESE INVALUABLE VOLUNTEERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN CREATING THE *CREPUSCULE CONCERT!*

- Jill Adams
- Joseph Biniek
- Beth Cherry
- Lenora Costa
- Jessie Craighead
- Taylor Schmidt Curry
- Anne Dargusch
- Jeff Drouin

- Erin Edwards
- Shiobhan Edwards
- Allison Heine
- Alba Houston
- Townsend Jordan
- Kevin Judd
- Anne Morse

- Joan Mueller
- Katherine Phelen
- Pamela Pipes
- Hill Riddle, Jr.
- Jon Smith
- Jennifer Taylor
- Andy Towbin
- Myra Van Hoose

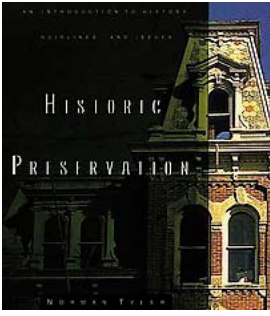
- Winn Veneble
- Allison Waldron
- Ryan Wladron
- Tristin Wellmeyer
- Tanga Winstead
- Philip Woollam
- Michele Zembo

SPECIAL THANKS TO ALTON O. DAVIS AND KEVIN CLARK ELECTRICAL SERVICES.

THANK YOU WWOZ!

David Freedman arranged to have WWOZ produce and record the Crepuscule Concert performances. He describes the magic of New Orleans as threefold: its food, its music and its architecture. WWOZ's role as a preservationist of local music and Landmarks' role as preservationists of local architecture, and a shared appreciation of New Orleans culinary arts, guarantees we will continue to work together.

-Susan Kierr



NOUNS AND VERBS: A BOOK REVIEW

“Historic Preservation: An Introduction to its History, Principles and Practices” by Norman Tyler, Ted J.

Ligibel and Ilene R. Tyler. (2nd. Edition); W. W. Norton & Co. New York, 2009. Other editions: 1994, 2000.

REVIEWED BY

DAVID STEFFERUD

*ARE YOU A RUSKIN OR A VIOLLET-LE-DUC?
AND DID YOU KNOW THAT AS AN AMERICAN INTERESTED
IN PRESERVATION, YOU'RE ONE OR THE OTHER?*

If you love the quaint, completely Mission-style California town of Santa Barbara or Colonial Williamsburg, an “authentic” town of seventeenth century Virginia, you’d agree with the preservation philosophy of Eugene Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879), one of the first French master builders concerned with the restoration of landmark structures. He philosophized that important monuments should be rebuilt not as they originally were, but as “they should have been.”

If, on the other hand, you think old buildings should not be restored, that we have no right to improve the work of another era, that old buildings should be left to look old, then nineteenth century writer and critic John Ruskin (1819-1900) might be your kind of preservationist.

There are other cultures with different perspectives on restoration: the Chinese place more value on the saving of images through art and writing than on the preservation of old buildings. The Japanese recreate an old building, (shrine), rather than rebuilding or repairing. Many Native Americans place greater significance on the geographical place and surroundings than on the structure. But the modern American preservationist wrestles with the le-Duc/Ruskin dichotomy continually: restore, restore to what date, stabilize or clean up and leave it. Do our efforts on our beloved Pitot House bear this out?

Perhaps the best resolution was postulated by John Lawrence, former dean of Tulane’s School of Architecture: “The basic purpose of preservation is not to arrest time, but to mediate sensitively with the forces of change. It is to understand the present as a product of the past and a modifier of the future.” (Quoted in the reviewed work, p.14.)

Here’s another thought-provoking analogy. When buildings are viewed as objects, they are nouns. But when they are seen as places of involvement — where historic events took place — they are verbs, implying action. “Just as nouns and verbs are both needed to make a complete sentence, both the noun and verb aspects of historic buildings are needed to describe their full significance.”

For example, New Orleans’ Charity Hospital, devastated by Hurricane Katrina and now empty and its future uncertain, when seen as a place — a sad place — is an enormous Art-Deco thing: a noun. But our Charity in its “verbal “manifestation speaks volumes of societal, political, medical and human history of the most poignant and meaningful sort.

These insights come from early chapters of “Historic Preservation”; there are more wonderful moments of revelation in store, all written in clear and readable prose that delights both the casual and professional reader.

The history of preservation in America is carefully charted. Perhaps the first act of preservation was the successful effort in 1816 to save Independence Hall in Philadelphia. But the paths of preservation diverged, with private attention most often centered on important persons and associated structures, while government was involved in saving and making accessible natural features and establishing national parks. These trends eventually combined at the time of the enactment of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966. Mt. Vernon was saved by public participation in 1853. In 1887, Congress appropriated \$2,000 to protect the Casa Grande ruins in Arizona, the first ever federal funding for preservation.

A perfectly clear and concise tour through the American architectural styles, mirable dictu, segues nicely into contextual aspects of preservation and the need for, and increasing use of design guidelines. The problems compound and the controversies abound: ask yourself what your position is on facadism, for example, where an historic façade is preserved while the rest of the structure is demolished or severely altered, e.g., Brown’s Velvet/Post Office on Carrollton Avenue.

Naturally a long legal story unfolds alongside the preservation movement, and it goes to the heart of some serious political issues in the country. The “takings” clause of the Constitution is much in the news; zoning and historic and cultural districts are a constant feature of our municipal endeavors. These tangled threads are clearly unraveled in this fine book. The importance of these legal matters is sharpened by a succinct discussion on “appeals through litigation”, a disturbing tactic by developers to short-circuit the approval process. A threat of a lawsuit against individual historic district commissioners or council members who don’t give quick approval to a project can wonderfully quicken the mind of a public official but gives pause to any thoughtful student of the process.

In sum, this is a well-written (and illustrated) textbook and resource on the entire range of preservation history, issues and practices.



Initially conceived as a support group aimed at providing assistance to the VCC at the time of its 50th anniversary, the Friends has become reinvigorated in the wake of Katrina and has reemerged as a formal 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization. Its 22-member Board of Directors includes representatives of the Quarter's business and neighborhood groups, as well as prominent preservation organizations including the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Louisiana Landmarks Society and the Historic New Orleans Collection.

The Friends has also launched its first website, www.friendsofvcc.org. Visitors to the website can use it both to learn more about the organization and to join as charter members.

For over seven decades, the VCC has led the drive to preserve and protect the Quarter from neglect, ill-conceived development and abuse. But today it faces a crisis in funding and many people are still uninformed about its work or misunderstand its legal mandate. Through its fundraising and educational outreach, the Friends will expand awareness of historic preservation and foster understanding of the work of the Commission to bolster its ability to preserve our historic treasure.

In announcing its creation, President of the Board, Mark S. Wilson said, "The Friends of the Vieux Carré Commission has been established to ensure the long term viability of the French Quarter, one of America's most unique districts. As a neighborhood and business community we need your help to maintain and nurture the historic integrity that makes the French Quarter so authentic to this country."

Dr. E. Ralph Lupin, Chairman of the Commission, said. "Given the City's dire financial status, it has become necessary that the VCC receive assistance from outside sources to guarantee its ability to function beyond bare-bones conditions. I hope that everyone who treasures the French Quarter will lend their support to the Commission by joining with the Friends of the VCC to aid in that effort."

CONTACT: Kate Bishop (504) 813-9178

SPRING LECTURE BY GEORGE D. HOPKINS, JR.

Standing before a power point screen that displayed impressive homes designed by his architectural firm, George Hopkins, Jr. addressed a room full of preservationists and other LLS members at our first 2010 lecture. On the screen behind the speaker we watched recurring images of homes: elegant ones, simpler ones, cozy and grand, tall and wide, narrow and low, contemporary and traditional. We, the audience, were guests in the parlor of a stately St. Charles Avenue club, and we were comfortably settled in on a cold rainy January night.

While Hopkins' starting point was his own family home, including his kinesthetic memory of jumping off the roof of his lakefront house onto thick St. Augustine grass and his recollections of his grandparents' uptown home, he quickly made the jump to how such impressions and memories appear in all our home choices. He talked to us about the interesting relationship between architects and their clients, as the designer is challenged by the memories as well as the aspirations of the family wanting to create their next home, or renovate their old one.

He gave his audiences enticing examples of some challenges he has faced: a client who wanted a home that would be like a log cabin on the outside and a New York Apartment on the inside; an owner who wanted her home to be reminiscent of her grandmother's New Orleans Victorian cottage, followed by a slide of the house he created for her, which was built in Covington's Tchefuncte Estates. He quoted a client who said his goal was to have a home that caused his friends to say "wow — but not loudly." He told us that he had been asked to design a house that allowed a muscle car to drive into the downstairs TV room, and in this same house he was charged with creating a "love nest" on the third floor.

Hopkins clearly relished these challenges and for every story he was willing to tell us, one imagines many more, some of which can be found in his new book, *Creating Your Architectural Style*.

Report written by Susan Kierr



Barbara Roberds' Bayou St. John window art (above) and Cypress Tree transom (left).

LOUISIANA ARCHITECTURE INSPIRES LOCAL ARTIST

I've always been drawn to scenes with a retro theme and enjoyed displaying them in my own hand made unique frames. But what really influenced my use of architectural pieces was the abundance of valuable remnants of homes tossed out on the streets of New Orleans after Katrina. I feel like I'm preserving parts of what was lost and giving them a new life. When I find a window like the one shown here, it leads me to an image, either one in my archives or one remembered and captured specifically for that window.

-Barbara Roberds
barbara@broberds.com

LOUISIANA LANDMARKS SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

William E. Borah, *A Master Plan for New Orleans: What Is It? Why Do We Need It?* (1998) One of the most crucial issues facing New Orleans as it enters the 21st Century is its lack of a coherent, legally-binding plan for the city's growth and development. In this pamphlet attorney and veteran preservationist Bill Borah, who helped prevent destruction of the French Quarter in the 1960s, cogently explains how this glaring omission threatens our city's heritage and distinctive character. (\$1, 6 x 9 in., soft cover, 8 pages.) SOLD OUT

Abbye Gorin, ed., *Conversations with Samuel Wilson, Jr., Dean of Architectural Preservation in New Orleans*. (1991) The venerable historian and scholar who for six decades championed preservation of New Orleans' architectural heritage tells his own story, recounting specific restoration projects as well as sharing his personal philosophy about architecture. A must for any serious student of historic preservation. (\$12, \$10/members, softbound, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2 in., 180 pages, illustrated).

Abbye Gorin, ed., *Learning from Samuel Wilson, Jr.: A Collection of Oral Histories, 1980-1989*. (1999; rpt. of 1992) Compiled by one of Prof. Wilson's former students and based directly on audiotape recordings, these are the unabridged transcriptions that served as the basis for *Conversations with Samuel Wilson, Jr.* (\$12 \$10/members, softbound, 8 1/2 x 11 in., 110 pages)

James Guilbeau, *The St. Charles Streetcar: or, The New Orleans & Carrollton Railroad*. (1992; rpt. of 1975) A thoroughly detailed history of the oldest, continuously operated street railway line in the world, built in 1835 and now honored with status on the National Register of Historic Places. (\$12 \$10/members, softbound, 6 x 9 in., 108 pages, illustrated with rare black & white photographs)

Leonard V. Huber and Samuel Wilson, Jr., *Landmarks of New Orleans*. (1991; rpt. of 1984) New Orleans is justifiably renowned for its architecture, and this handsome and profusely illustrated volume records and depicts many notable structures in the Crescent City. French Quarter townhouses, plantation homes on Bayou St. John, Garden District mansions, notable churches, distinctive warehouses, banks, and schoolhouses are each represented by a half-tone photograph and brief history. (\$20 \$18/members, softbound, 8 1/2 x 11 in., 163 pages, over 250 illustrations, maps)

Leonard V. Huber, *The Battle of New Orleans and Its Monument*. (1993; rpt. of 1983) Provides a concise overview of Andrew Jackson's decisive victory in 1815 plus a detailed history of the efforts, begun in 1839 and completed in 1908, to construct a monumental obelisk commemorating the battle's heroes. (\$9 \$8/members, soft cover, 6 x 9 in., 40 pages, numerous black & white illustrations) LIMITED SUPPLY

Leonard V. Huber, *The Battle of New Orleans: New Orleans As It Was in 1814-1815*. (1994; rpt. of 1965) A written and pictorial reconstruction of life in New Orleans at the most crucial period in its history. (\$9 \$8/members softbound, 5 x 8 in., 48 pages, rare black & white illustrations.) LIMITED SUPPLY

Jerah Johnson, *Congo Square in New Orleans*. (2000; rpt. of 1995) For over a century the legendary *Place des Negres*, better known as Congo Square, served as a public gathering place for slaves and free people of color. Today it is considered by scholars to be the birthplace of both jazz and modern American dance. This highly readable study traces the Square's history from its earliest days in the French colonial period to the challenges it faces in the present day. One of Louisiana Landmark Society's most popular publications. (\$10 \$8/members, soft cover, 6 x 9 in., 54 pages, 12 black & white illustrations)

Karen Kingsley, ed., *Modernism in Louisiana: A Decade of Progress 1930-1940*. (2001; rpt. of 1984) Traces the work of the "neglected moderns" -- that first generation of American architects who sought to reconcile the new forms of Modernism with the local traditions and semi-tropical climate of Louisiana. (\$1, soft cover, 11 x 8 1/2 in., 14 pages, 12 half-tone illustrations.) SOLD OUT

Bernard Lemann, *The Vieux Carre: A General Statement*. (2001; rpt. of 1966) Beginning in the 1920s, New Orleans was one of the first U.S. cities to deliberately attempt preservation of its architectural heritage. Paradoxically, much of that momentum has today been lost and the fate of the French Quarter now hangs in the balance. In this influential and

prophetic essay, Tulane professor of architecture Lemann argues for a rational balance between commercial growth and historic preservation in the French Quarter, offering a philosophical blueprint for keeping the Quarter a living, vibrant neighborhood. As pertinent a document today as it was when first written three decades ago. (\$12/\$10, softbound, 7 x 9 in., 92 pages, black & white illustrations)

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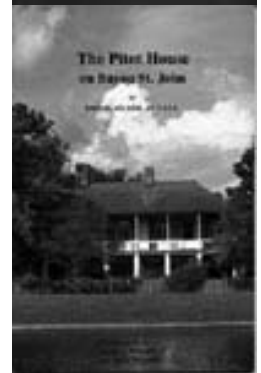
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Harry L. Moses' yacht "Rowena" moored on Bayou St. John in front of the Pitot House. In 1904 Gustave Moses rented the Pitot House at 1370 Moss Street and raised his family there. They included Bernard, Will, Sara, Harry, Frances (Bowman), and Carroll.

-Image courtesy of Warren G. Moses



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