

# LANDMARKS' PRÉSERVATION



THE JOURNAL OF THE LOUISIANA LANDMARKS SOCIETY

Vol. 59. No. 1 April 2021



## President's Remarks

Over the past year, media outlets have found new ways to cover the pandemic by describing the hobbies that people with time on their hands have taken up. At the Pitot House and Landmarks Society, it is hard to imagine time on our hands. Board and staff have spent the year meeting challenges from paying the bills to keeping the house, the roof, the pipes, and one another safe.

After a too-long slumber, spring is here, the garden is awakening, and the Pitot House will open with a newly polished appearance.

As noted elsewhere in this publication, our dedicated House Committee has been working continually to manage repairs and installations (paid with generous grants from the New Orleans Town Gardeners and Garden Study Club). A welcome loan from the Bernard Family of the newly-installed "Fairfax Bed," with details identified as work of the mysterious, unidentified "Butterfly Man" has initiated a sequence of changes in the museum.

Weddings, concerts, and family gatherings are again on the calendar, and we look forward to seeing members and guests at our first 2021 Vino on the Bayou Thursday April 29. Please also plan to attend the Louisiana Landmarks Society annual meeting for which we have moved back to our traditional balmy Sunday afternoon venue May 30.

On the Advocacy side, we continue to support the University neighborhoods in their struggles to contain the so-called "Doubles to Dormitories" scourge. There is also hope at long last that the disfiguring elevated highway over historic inner-city neighborhoods may be relocated.

We welcome your suggestions for programming and urge you to visit anytime-but particularly on April 29 where we may enjoy a glass together on the delightful Pitot House galleries during an exquisite spring evening.

Sally K. Reeves

## Doubles To Dormitories: A Battle For Truth

By Keith Hardie



The luxury student housing fad christened "Doubles to Dormitories" (D2D's) continues to explode in Carrollton and is proving even more problematic to local neighborhoods than Airbnb's. D2D projects are usually based on 4-bedroom, fully-furnished units, typically renting for \$ 4,000 and up per month.

Last March, at the urging of Councilmember Giarrusso, the Council imposed an Interim Zoning District ("IZD") as a stopgap measure, requiring developers to add a new parking space for each new bedroom. While permanent legislation has been introduced, planning commission staff have continued to oppose it without providing any workable solutions for neighborhood residents.

Continued on Page 2

**SAVE THE DATE**

**Fiesta!**

Vino on the Bayou  
and Taco Dinner

April 29, 2021

At Pitot House

## LPO Performs at the Pitot House Spring

The Pitot House kicked off March with a lovely performance by LPO harpist Rachel Van Voorhees. The event was open to the public and supported the LPO and Louisiana Landmarks Society.

Another performance is scheduled for **May 6, 2021**. Mark your calendar for this special event and visit our website regularly to stay up-to- date on several other events the Pitot House will be hosting .



*Continued from page 1*

Some recent cases involve projects started before the IZD took effect. At 1409 Broadway, Amicus, a New York company specializing in private student housing, planned to put three 4-bedroom units in a greatly expanded 4-bedroom raised Craftsman bungalow. Neighbors appealed their permit, and the BZA held that the developers could not expand the footprint of a non-conforming triplex, a decision affirmed in Civil District Court. Amicus countered with an 8-bedroom duplex that the City approved in 2021 while neglecting IZD compliance. Neighbors respond that plans submitted after the date of the IZD should have had to comply with it.

Amicus also proposed raising a one-story shotgun double at 7612-14 Burthe Street to create a two-story, 10-bedroom dormitory without parking. Since the application, filed on March 5, 2020, coincided with the effective date of the IZD and Safety and Permits could not produce plans filed on that date, neighbors argue that the application was not complete before the effective date. The City later produced a set of plans supposedly filed before the IZD was effective, and despite discrepancies in the paper work, the BZA found that the plans had been submitted timely, and the house was raised.

After the IZD took effect, Amicus submitted an application for 631 Broadway stating "total number of bedrooms not to increase," and submitted a drawing showing twelve "existing" bedrooms, the plan shown without living or dining spaces. Based on an affidavit from the prior owner stating that there had only been seven bedrooms at the time of the sale, the BZA rejected the developer's claims. Once again, Amicus filed new plans, reducing the number of proposed bedrooms to ten, claiming they would provide three new parking spaces to support three new bedrooms under the IZD. However, it's unclear whether the proposed spaces comply with the CZO, and the new driveway to reach them is only a bit wider than seven feet. The City still approved their plan, stating that the CZO does not set a minimum width for driveways. Amicus also claims two "grandfathered" spaces in front, but a neighbor provided an affidavit stating that one had rarely been used, and one was blocked by a planter, thus they could not be grandfathered. The matter will be heard by the BZA.

The future of the fight over D2Ds will continue to be over the number of "existing" bedrooms and the required number of new parking spaces, and developers will continue to have an economic incentive to exaggerate the number of both existing bedrooms and parking spaces. Whether strapped City officials will begin to ferret out developers' misrepresentations is yet to be seen, so the job of establishing the truth unfortunately continues to be left to increasingly

demoralized neighbors. Mayor Cantrell's new systems guru, Peter Bowen, recently spoke of a department that would be "customer friendly," a characterization that caused neighborhood residents overrun with D2Ds to bristle. Bowen seemed unaware of the chronic problem of misrepresentations in building permit applications and an overworked permitting staff friendly to architects and developers and unfriendly to residents' concerns. The staff is unlikely to better scrutinize applications—even those that come from developers known to exaggerate. Truth is having a rough time in the Carrollton housing market.

## Louisiana Landmarks Society Remembers Suzanne Turner



*Photo by Jeannie Frey Rhodes*

Sue W. Turner, committed preservationist and recipient of the 1992 Louisiana Landmarks Society Harnett Kane Award, passed away on December 27, 2020, at age 93. Sue was one of the early leaders of the Foundation for Historic Louisiana, and played a major role in the saving of c. 1791 Magnolia Mound Plantation House, one of the oldest extant structures in Baton Rouge. She was also instrumental in preserving Magnolia Cemetery, the Old State Capitol, the Pentagon Barracks and other noted historic structures in Baton Rouge. She and her husband Bert restored a number of properties in Beauregard Town, a downtown Baton Rouge historic district near the State Capitol Building and also restored Live Oak Plantation near St. Francisville, which served as their country home. For her lifetime of preservation work, she received national recognition, serving on the Advisory Board of the National Trust for Historic Preservation for several years. Sue was extraordinarily dedicated and generous to the cause of preservation in Baton Rouge and in Louisiana, and was most deserving of the Harnett Kane recognition.



Call for Nominations for the  
Louisiana Landmarks Society's  
Board of Trustees



Nominations should provide a statement on the nominee's qualifications for the board; a bio/CV for the nominee, if available; and a short letter expressing interest in and acceptance of the nomination signed by the nominee. Self-nominations are permitted.

**Nominations are requested to be received by Thursday, April 15, 2021.** Nominations may be submitted by e-mail to [info@louisianalandmarks.org](mailto:info@louisianalandmarks.org) or mailed to Louisiana Landmarks at 1440 Moss Street, New Orleans, LA 70119. Call (504) 482-0312 if any questions.

Call for Nominations for the  
2021 Harnett T. Kane Award



The Harnett T. Kane Award was created and endowed by LLS founding member Harnett T. Kane in 1965, to be given in recognition of an individual or organization for significant lifetime contributions to historic preservation, locally or regionally.

Previous winners include James G. Derbes, Sue Turner, Mary Louise Christovich and Nathan Chapman.

Please send your nomination to:

[info@louisianalandmarks.org](mailto:info@louisianalandmarks.org) or call us at 504-482-0312. **Deadline is Thursday, April 15, 2021.**

Louisiana Landmarks Society Announces  
the Annual Meeting for 2021



**Sunday, May 30, 2021**

**4 pm**

**At Pitot House**

**1440 Moss Street, New Orleans**

All members and prospective members invited

Contact [info@louisianalandmarks.org](mailto:info@louisianalandmarks.org) for questions or concerns



## New Garden Lighting at the Pitot House

The Louisiana Landmarks Society's House & Garden Committee and staff have been hard at work in the garden preparing our outdoor spaces for upcoming events and weddings. After many months of plans, research and hard work, old fixtures have been updated and new path lighting has been installed throughout the garden beds and along the paths to provide safe, well-lit paths for evening guests. They also enhance the beauty of the gardens with ambient light.

In addition to the path lights, new lights were added to the Magnolia tree. The tree is a favorite of wedding couples who choose to say their vows underneath its boughs. The new lights provide lovely pools of light further enhancing the use of the very special space.

Up lights were also added on both sides of the Pitot House Museum sign at the front of the property and a special slim light was added to highlight the DAR plaque at the entrance of the property.

All of these additions and updates have transformed the gardens and outdoor spaces making them ideal for evening events and weddings. We are looking forward to a successful year of rentals and to visitors enjoying the Pitot House gardens.

The lighting was provided and installed by Outdoor Lighting Perspectives and was funded by a generous grant from The Garden Study Club of New Orleans to whom we are very thankful.

## PITOT HOUSE WEDDING & EVENTS

BOOK NOW!  
WEDDINGS, RECEPTIONS,  
ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS,  
MEMORIALS



**20% OFF**

**Summer Events**



# LOST LANDMARKS

## ODD FELLOWS HALL



*Photo Courtesy of the State Library of Louisiana*

In 1845, the growing Independent Order of Odd Fellows in New Orleans sought to celebrate the “energy and perseverance of the Order” in Louisiana. They erected a “grand and imposing” building on the corner of Camp and Lafayette Street, bookending Lafayette Square with the new city hall (Gallier Hall) under construction on St. Charles Street. In doing so, the Order sought to serve not only their need for a headquarters building, but also to provide the community with “a magnificent hall”. Designed by architect George Purvis, the grand hall was completed in 1852 and was described as “an ornament to the city and an object of attraction” to locals and “sojourning strangers”. Its elegant appointments included frescoed walls and ceilings “in the highest style of the art”. The hall quickly became the “very center of joy and music and song” and among the most important public buildings in the city, hosting all manner of public social gatherings. Among those events was the public eulogy in honor of the popular statesmen, Henry Clay, who died in June of 1852.

Unfortunately, among the sojourning strangers attracted to the building in April, 1862, were the occupying Federal forces. A Union Army regimental command commandeered the building, except for the lodge rooms. While permitting Odd Fellows, Masonic and Druid lodge members ingress and egress to those rooms without interference and with “courtesy and respect”, the occupying forces over the next three years helped themselves to all of the valuable furniture and contents of the building. Adding insult to injury, the military, apparently not patrons of the highest art style, chose to deface and destroy all the beautiful frescoed walls.

The Odd Fellows were very forgiving. The Grand Lodge of Louisiana had been originally reluctant to separate itself from the Grand Lodge of the United States, but did so in February of 1862. However, two months before the end of the war and several months before possession of Odd Fellows Hall was returned to the Order by the military command, the Grand Lodge of Louisiana rescinded its resolution of separation and resumed its relations with the brotherhood of Odd Fellows.

As bad as the military occupation was, it was not the worst of the fates to be meted out to this beloved property. On July 4, 1866, just eight months after the building was returned to the Order, it was reduced by fire to a “blackened and crumbling mass of ruins”, according to press accounts. The fire reduced the “scene of our joys and hopes” to a “black cloud of smoke and cinders”, a disastrous loss that was “universally regretted by all classes of our people”. The fire apparently began among the combustible materials in the ground floor paint shop and quickly grew beyond all control. Eventually, the flames burst from the roof, after which the “work of destruction then was rapid”, with the upper walls falling with a crash that “shook the earth for several squares”.

Undaunted and ever determined, the Odd Fellows then sold the lot and purchased a nearby building, enlarging it for their use and the use of the public. The new hall, smaller than the old, served the organization from 1868 to 1937, at which time it was seized by the mortgage holder and sold to Pan-American Life Insurance Company. The almost 100 years of a grand downtown Odd Fellows Hall had come to an unceremonious end.

Written by Michael Duplantier

REFERENCES: “History of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows in Louisiana”; John G. Dunlap, 1877.  
 “St. Patrick’s Hall and Its Predecessor, Odd Fellows Hall”; Francis P. Burns, Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association, Volume 4, Number 1, 1963.  
 The Times Picayune, July 5, 1866

**BECOME A MEMBER OR RENEW**

**STUDENT - \$20**

Free admission and tour for one  
10% discount in gift shop  
Advance notice of events

**35 and UNDER - \$35**

Free admission and tour for one  
10% discount in gift shop  
Advance notice of events

**INDIVIDUAL - \$50**

Free admission and tour for one  
10% discount in gift shop  
Invited to member events and advance notice of events

**HOUSEHOLD - \$75**

Free admission and tours for four  
10% discount in gift shop  
Invited to member events and advance notice of events

**ADVOCATE - \$100**

Free admission and tours for four  
10% discount in gift shop  
Invited to member events and advance notice of events

**BUSINESS - \$200**

Free admission and tours for six  
10% discount in gift shop  
Invited to member events and advance notice of events

**GUARDIAN - \$250**

Free admission and tours for eight  
10% discount in gift shop  
Invited to member events and advance notice of events

**PROTECTOR - \$500**

Free admission and tours for eight  
10% discount in gift shop  
Invited to member events and advance notice of events

**PRESERVER - \$1000**

Free admission and tour for eight  
10% discount in gift shop  
20% discount on event rentals  
Invited to members events and advance notice of events

Louisiana Landmarks Society

**Mission Statement**

*The Louisiana Landmarks Society promotes historic preservation through education, advocacy, and operation of the Pitot House*

**Board of Trustees and Staff**

Sally K. Reeves - *President*

James R. Logan, IV - *1st Vice President*

Betsy Stout - *2nd Vice President*

Michael Duplantier - *Treasurer*

Louis McFaul - *Assistant Treasurer*

Nathan Lott - *Recording Secretary*

James Rolf, III - *Corresponding Secretary*

Greg Arceneaux

Mary Ann Barkerding

William Barry, Jr.

John F. Bernard

Isabelle Dissard-Cooper

René Fransen

Keith Hardie

Michael Mancuso

Jenny Dyer - *Historic House Manager*



**1-Year Membership (For a renewal, the year's membership will begin when the current membership expires.)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ (as you would like it to appear in acknowledgments) Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zip \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Check Membership Level:  Student \$20  35 and Under \$35  Individual \$50  Household \$75  Advocate \$100  Business \$200  Guardian \$250  Protector \$500  Preserver \$1000

I would like to make an additional donation in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is a check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_. I prefer to charge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to type of card \_\_\_\_\_ Card # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Expiration Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ CVV number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to: Louisiana Landmarks Society  
 Mail to: Louisiana Landmarks Society  
 1440 Moss Street, New Orleans, LA 70119

You can also charge your membership securely online, all major cards are accepted.  
[www.louisianalandmarks.org](http://www.louisianalandmarks.org)

