

LANDMARKS' PRÉSERVATION



THE JOURNAL OF THE LOUISIANA LANDMARKS SOCIETY

Sexton in the City

By Sandra Stokes and Michael Duplantier

More than two years of work to save the sexton cottages in New Orleans' publicly-owned Lafayette Cemeteries No. 1 and No. 2 was not enough to prevent the proposed demolition of the historic cottages by the City of New Orleans.

In March 2012, representatives of Louisiana Landmarks Society, the Foundation for Historical Louisiana, and Save Our Cemeteries visited Holt, Lafayette No. 1 and Lafayette No. 2 Cemeteries to review the work being proposed by the city. The preservation groups learned that the \$2.6 million of improvements at cemeteries across the city included the demolition of the historic sexton cottages at these three cemeteries.

Because federal funds were scheduled to be used for the costs of replacing the cottages, the required Section 106 process was initiated by FEMA, and representatives of the non-profits, along with other government agencies and contractors joined in the review process with the objective to "avoid, minimize, or mitigate" adverse impacts to the historic cemeteries. After it was determined that the cottage at Holt Cemetery was in good condition and could easily be renovated, the city agreed to do so, and the focus turned to the cottages in Lafayette No. 1 and No. 2. Saving these cottages was more complicated. The buildings had been allowed by the city to fall into serious disrepair, and the city wanted to demolish the historic cottages to build cinder block maintenance sheds clad in cement board.



Sexton Cottage at Lafayette Cemetery No. 2

In September of 2012, after much debate, the city agreed that instead of demolishing the two cottages, it would allow preservationists to donate architectural designs and the project manual for the cottages' renovation, provided that the renovation plans would allow for construction within the available budget. The engagement of the preservationists and the resulting solutions reached by the consenting agencies were praised as a perfect example of a Section 106 process. There would no longer be any adverse effect to the historic properties.

Over the course of the next year and a half, the preservation groups and the city worked together in good faith toward this apparent win-win solution. The non-profits worked tirelessly, meeting with the city every step of the way. Architect Michael Rouchell provided the drafting and the project manual, while John Schackai of Sustainable Architects was the designer and architect of record. The designs were

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James Wade, Editor

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New Gift Passes

LLS has developed a new way for members to introduce people to the Society and the Pitot House. We are offering a booklet of ten passes for you to hand out as you choose. The booklet of ten costs \$50.00 based on a discounted tour rate of \$5.00 per person.

These Passes have no expiration date and are handy to have on hand for houseguests, new neighbors, or that person at your office who just moved to New Orleans.

A Message from the President



Dear LLS Friends and Supporters,

The Mission of the Louisiana Landmarks Society is to promote historic preservation through advocacy, education and the operation of the Pitot House.

The founding members of this society felt strongly about saving the built environment of our city, and came together to fight for it.

In becoming a member of the Louisiana Landmarks Society, you joined that advocacy organization envisioned nearly 65 years ago. In becoming a member of LLS, you stood up to be counted in the continuous efforts to save New Orleans. This is what we do. In fact, we are one of the only city-

wide organizations whose primary mission is standing up for the built environment of our city against those who would endanger the character of a unique place. When our neighborhood organizations need help to save their neighborhoods, we work with them to preserve the culture of our city.

The Pitot House also defines Louisiana Landmarks Society. We own the Pitot House because it was the only way that we could save it from demolition and preserve it as an important part of our city and its story. This year marks the 50th anniversary of this important save, and we pledge to you, the members of the Louisiana Landmarks Society, that we will continue to be good stewards of this property. Remember, you, the membership, are a part of this house. You, the members, can make sure that it is paying its way by holding your weddings and other social or business affairs at the house and by supporting the events held there. This house will endure for the next generation if you, the membership, support it.

We are also all responsible for insuring that there are funding sources available to support the important work of the Society. I urge you to get involved in the fundraising activities of the Society through volunteering to help with the March  des F tes, supporting the Vino on the Bayou events, or by making donations to the Society.

How else can you help support your Louisiana Landmarks Society?

- Increase your level of membership
- Write advocacy letters to your public officials when asked to do so
- Get involved in the work of the various committees

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Margot Hammond, our volunteer coordinator, at info@louisianalandmarks.org.

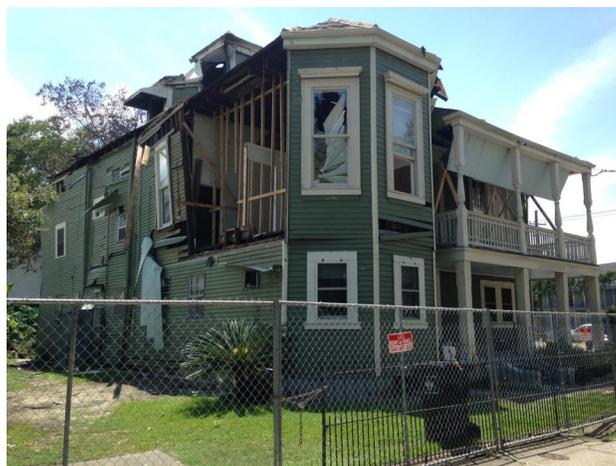
We promise on our part to keep you, the membership, the real owners of this Society, advised about how you can help ensure that the uniqueness of New Orleans is preserved.

Sincerely,

Casey

1722 Esplanade By Charles A. Berg AIA, NCARB, MPS

Early in the morning of May 10, 2014, a fire and explosion severely damaged a multi-family residence at 1722 Esplanade. While no one was injured, the building, a large early 20th century home converted to 12 apartments, was severely damaged, with the riverside wall blown out and the roof and third floor almost completely collapsed. The cause of the blaze is still under investigation. At this time, some minor stabilization efforts have been implemented at the front fa ade, but according to the HDLC, no long-term plans have been submitted for restoration. With the roof open to the sky and elements, water damage and decay will continue. With no visible progress to protect it, this structure, the only remaining building between two parking lots on the uptown side of the street, is clearly in danger of being lost. You can help by contacting District "D" Councilmember Jared C. Brossett at jcbrossett@nola.gov, and urge enforcement that will mandate the repairs necessary to bring this forlorn residence back into commerce, and prevent further blight.



1722 Esplanade Avenue post fire and explosion

Sexton and the City (Continued)...

approved by all parties at all levels. The only remaining issue was that in order for the city to accept the donation of the architectural designs and services, Sustainable Architects would also need to sign a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) with the city.

The renovation of the cottages reached an impasse when the negotiations broke down over certain of the obligations required by the city to be part of the CEA. The obligations could not be agreed to, and the city eventually cancelled the working agreement to save the historic cottages.

The preservation groups then learned that the city no longer found the previously approved designs for the sexton cottages acceptable, and had concluded that the low maintenance of newly-constructed cement masonry structures was the only option.

The preservationists then suggested ways to salvage something from the proposed demolition of the cottages, such as using revised designs provided by the preservationists to build the new cottages, or deconstructing the existing cottages and reusing some of the material and trim. Just prior to a scheduled meeting to discuss these and other design options, the preservationists were startled to learn that the city had withdrawn its request to use FEMA funds that were available for the cottages, thus

abruptly ending the Section 106 review. The city left federal funds on the table rather than continue meeting with preservationists to discuss ways to make the new designs blend better with the historic cemeteries that the cottages served. This cleared the path for the city to demolish the buildings and build cement masonry buildings with no further design consultation or review from preservationists.

The Louisiana Landmarks Society, the Foundation for Historical Louisiana, Save Our Cemeteries and the dedicated architects gave their all for more than two years to save these two historic cottages, an effort deemed important due to the critical role that the cemeteries play in the cultural history and authenticity of our city. The unfortunate result of this failed effort is particularly disappointing in that the goals of the City of New Orleans and preservationists were not mutually exclusive. The restoration of the historic sexton cottages could have maintained the cemeteries' integrity, while meeting the programmatic and maintenance needs of the city. The impending destruction of the historic cottages represents not only loss of a part of New Orleans' historic fabric, but loss of the promising precedent of an effective and consequential working relationship between preservationists and public officials.

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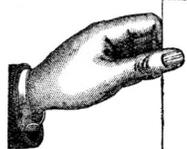
New Orleans, LA 70119

Ph. 504-482-0312

info@louisianalandmarks.org

www.louisianalandmarks.org

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SAVE THE DATES!

Beginning in October, Louisiana Landmarks Society will again be partnering with Save Our Cemeteries on a series of joint tours focused on mourning customs in the 19th century. The tours will be every Friday beginning October 3rd and running weekly until November 21st. Attendees will tour St. Louis Cemetery No. 3 before returning to the Pitot House for a tour featuring mourning items and customs.

Harnett T. Kane Award Presented to Michael Duplantier



From left: Sandra Stokes, Michael Duplantier, T. Casey Stuart, and Walter Gallas

On May 19th at LLS's Annual Meeting, the 2014 Harnett T. Kane Award was presented to local preservationist, Michael Duplantier.

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.

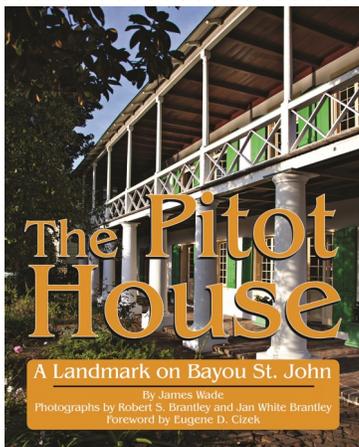
A native New Orleanian, Michael Duplantier became actively involved in preservation in downtown New Orleans in 1973. He lobbied to have the City Council pass a moratorium on the demolition of historic buildings down-

town and was appointed by Mayor Moon Landrieu to the study committee for historic districting downtown. He helped lobby for passage of the enabling legislation, wrote the ordinance establishing historic districts downtown, and served on the first historic district commission. Duplantier also worked to establish historic districting for Canal Street and has been involved in the fights to save threatened historic buildings downtown, including the Bradford Building, the Hicks Building, the Cumberland Building, the MECO buildings and the Orpheum Theater, among many others.

Duplantier has served as legal counsel

for the Historic Faubourg St. Mary Corporation, the Vieux Carré Commission and the Historic District Landmarks Commissions. His decades of volunteer work have included zoning and neighborhood preservation; public interest counseling and litigation; drafting legislation; serving on commissions, committees and boards, and many appearances at hearings before the city council, public boards, the state legislature. He was also very involved with the citizens committee that secured the City of New Orleans master plan charter amendment in 2008. He has served as president of the Central Business District Improvement Association, the Esplanade Ridge Association, and served on the board of the PRC, the Lafayette Square Association, Vieux Carré Property Owners, Residents and Associates, and the Louisiana Landmarks Society. He recently concluded a seven year term on the board of Save Our Cemeteries, serving as president in 2010.

In presenting the award, Sandra Stokes, Landmarks' 2nd Vice President and Chair of Advocacy said, "Michael Duplantier has made remarkable contributions in the area of historic preservation in our community, where he has worked tirelessly for decades. Michael has been more than generous with his time and expertise on the Landmarks Society's Advocacy Committee, so I was particularly pleased to be the person to call him with the news of this award. The award is well deserved and long overdue."



Arriving on Bookshelves in Fall 2014!

To mark the 50th Anniversary of the acquisition and relocation of the Pitot House by Louisiana Landmarks Society, we are proud to announce the forthcoming publication of *The Pitot House: A Landmark on Bayou St. John*. Written by James Wade, with photography by Robert S. Brantley and Jan White Brantley, as well as a foreword by Eugene D. Cizek, this new book captures the history and beauty of the Pitot House. Readers will no doubt come away with a stronger understanding of the property and the Society's mission.

To reserve your copy and take advantage of member pricing contact us at:

504-482-0312 or info@louisianalandmarks.org

From the Archives

First published in *Préservation*, Vol. 10, No. 1, August 1967

From the Editor: 2014 marks the 50th anniversary of Louisiana Landmarks Society's acquisition of the Pitot House on Bayou St. John. The occasion, along with work on our forthcoming updated Pitot House book, inspired us to take a journey through our archives. In this issue, we would like to share a August 1967 article by Ethel S. Vernon in which she updates the LLS membership on the history and progress of the Pitot House restoration. We hope you enjoy!

Pitot House Report

With the restoration of Pitot House approaching its final phase, a report on the project from its inception seems indicated.

The Society became involved in an actual restoration as the result of a letter from Mr. Sidney Gonzales in June, 1963, alerting Landmarks to the threatened demolition of two historic homes on Bayou St. John by the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

Through the tireless efforts of Harnett Kane, Tom Meunier, Sam Wilson, Leonard Huber, Rose D'Antonio, Felix Kuntz, Sidney Gonzales, Mme. and M. Henry Pitot (descendents of Mayor Pitot) and many others, the rescue was launched.

By March, 1964, the buildings had been examined and measured and an estimate secured for moving them. By mid-May, 1964, we still had no firm commitment from the Sisters. But by this time the Mayor and City Council were listening to our plans for saving the more important of the two houses- the home of New Orleans' second mayor, James Pitot.

Finally, in June, 1964, almost a year after Mr. Gonzales' warning letter, our efforts began to show results. The Sisters were glad to give us the house-

if we would move it; the City of New Orleans provided a portion of nearby land; Mr. Seymour Weiss made the first sizeable contribution to the restoration; Koch & Wilson were chosen as architects for the restoration; Abry Brothers were hired to move Pitot House to its new location; the Landmarks Board transferred \$5,000 from our Restoration Fund for the project. Now the arduous task of moving and restoration began.

As soon as our plans were announced, public interest was most rewarding. Bayou St. John residents, local news media, garden clubs, local antique dealers and just ordinary citizens offered aid and assistance. Financial contributions, some of them quite substantial, arrived in every mail. By Fall of 1964 moving was completed and the restoration begun.

On January 21, 1965, the following report of Pitot House expenditures was made to the Board:

Materials (bricks, blocks, etc).....	971.76
Abry Bros. to move house.....	10,500.00
J. Waters, foundation.....	5,104.26
Architects fees.....	1,030.50
Watchman.....	282.00
Insurance.....	118.00
Advertising & miscellaneous.....	102.57
Expenditures total.....	\$18,109.09
Paid in by donors.....	25,617.06
Landmarks pledge.....	5,000.00
Balance in House Fund.....	\$12,507.97

In spite of our paid watchman, Pitot House has continually suffered from vandalism. To deter such destruction, Mr. A.G. Vandenburg, representative for Quaid Fence, erected a sturdy metal enclosure- his gift for the project.

Then came hurricane Betsy. Mr. Me-



Pitot House shortly after move, July 1964

unier, our legal advisor, estimated our damage to be around \$14,000- plus the loss of many months of labor. Insurance covered the financial loss, but because of the extensive damage to property throughout the city, the resumption of restoration on Pitot House was delayed for some time.

Mr. Vandenburg generously replaced the hurricane-destroyed fence; John Manville is selling us roofing at 1/3 the cost (to replace lost slates); and many of our workmen, contractors and suppliers have made financial contributions. It has literally been a 'labor of love' for many. In May, 1966, our Plantation Tour netted us \$290.78 and our Bayou St. John Tour added \$597.50 to the Pitot House Fund. By November, 1966, Pitot House was restored to the point it had reached when the hurricane struck.

Now it is August, 1967. The latest financial accounting on the Pitot House Fund is as follows:

Total expenditures.....	\$52,334.82
Total income	46,201.62
Balance on Waters contract...1,750.00	
Total deficit	\$7,833.20

In addition to raising money to clear up this deficit, portions of the exterior need plastering and the wood trim must be painted. This will add approximately \$5,400 to the sum we must raise. Mr. Wilson estimates that it will cost another \$30,000 to finish the interior properly and install bathroom and kitchen facilities.

Meet the Board of Trustees

T. Casey Stuart President

Born in New Orleans, Casey graduated from Jesuit High School and received a Bachelor of Business Administration from Loyola University. After retiring from thirty years in the pharmaceutical industry, he earned a Master of Preservation Studies from Tulane University, where he has also taught as a volunteer. Formerly Landmarks' 1st Vice President, he has also served as Vice-President for Education and Community Outreach on the board of Save Our Cemeteries. He is a member of numerous other historical and genealogical organizations. He has lectured extensively on New Orleans history and architecture topics and on the historic cemeteries of New Orleans.

R. Stephen Chauvin, AIA, NCARB 1st Vice President

A life-long resident of New Orleans, Stephen holds a Masters degree in Architecture from Tulane University. As recipient of the John Lawrence Travel Research Fellowship in 1978, Stephen travelled, researched and lectured on Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), architect and artist, Glasgow, Scotland. He is the president of Chauvin Arkhitekton, a Professional Corporation, established in 1983. Licensed architect and general contractor specializing in residential design and construction, Stephen has a passion for advocating for the preservation of the architectural/cultural treasures of our city.

Sandra Stokes 2nd Vice President

Sandra Stokes has served as 2nd Vice President and chair of the Landmarks' Advocacy Committee for the past year. She has also served on the board of the Foundation for Historical Louisiana for seven years, most notably spearheading the massive effort that raised some \$600,000 for a study of



the Charity Hospital building and then leading the campaign to show that the building could be returned to use as a 21st century hospital. She is

also on the boards of Smart Growth for Louisiana and the Lafayette Square Association. Sandra is the recipient of the National Trust's first Peter Brink Award for Individual Achievement in Historic Preservation.

Aubry A. Miller Treasurer



Aubry Miller is a native of New Orleans. She received her Bachelor of Science in Management from Louisiana State University and later earned her MBA from the University of New Orleans

with a concentration in Finance. After previously working as a Certified Internal Auditor, Aubry currently works for Entergy as a Lead Financial Analyst in the Finance Business Partners division. In addition to her involvement with the Louisiana Landmarks Society, Aubry is an alumni advisor for Delta Gamma sorority at Loyola University and a member of the Junior League of New Orleans. Aubry resides in historic Old Gretna with her husband, LaCour, her dachshund, Gumbo, and rescue cat, Smudge.

Charles A. (Chuck) Berg, AIA



Assistant Treasurer

Raised in Mexico City of American diplomat parents, Chuck graduated with architecture degrees from Houston's Rice University (1974 & 1978). An

enduring interest in historic preservation brought him to New Orleans, and a

Master of Preservation Studies degree from Tulane University (2011) ensued. After a stint with the Vieux Carré Commission, he returned to private architectural practice focusing on the restoration of historic properties throughout New Orleans. He currently resides in an 1853 shotgun house, a work in progress, in the Faubourg Marigny.

Rachel Robinson Recording Secretary

A native of Chattanooga, Tennessee, Rachel is the executive director of the Vieux Carré Commission Foundation. She has a Master's degree in urban and environmental planning and a certificate in historic preservation from the University of Virginia School of Architecture. She has lived in New Orleans for six years.



Betsy Stout Corresponding Secretary

Betsy Stout is a life-long New Orleansian, descending from French and Spanish families in New Orleans for over 200 years. She became interested in preservation as a small child when she discovered that half of the mansions on St. Charles Avenue had been torn down to build drug stores, gas stations, and apartment buildings. She believes that citizens must keep a close watch on government to insure that plans for preservation of our priceless architecture and neighborhoods are followed.

Michael D. Ballard, Jr.

Mike Ballard is a graduate of Tulane University with a Master of Architecture and a concentration in Historic Preservation. Since 2002, he has designed and



consulted on historic rehabilitation throughout the country. Mike joined the CORE USA team in February as Director of Integrative Design and manages sustainable design and historic rehabilitation incentives.

Edward (Eddie) Bonin

Eddie is a descendant of the last private owner of the Pitot House, Joseph Steckler. Steckler's daughter who was Eddie's grandmother, Gertrude, first introduced him to the house when he was a child visiting New Orleans from St. Martinville, and he has felt a connection to it ever since. His motivation for being a member of Louisiana Landmarks Society is to be a part of preserving the culture and character of this great city and state.

Hilary Somerville Irvin

A native of Minter City, Mississippi, Hilary moved to New Orleans 42 years ago from Providence, Rhode Island, where she had the pleasure of working with the *grand dame* of preservation, Antoinette Downing, who whetted her appetite for urban preservation. Hilary holds a B.A. in history from Hollins College and an M.A. in history from the University of New Orleans. From 1985 until her retirement in 2013, Hilary served as the principal architectural historian with the Vieux Carré Commission. She is now an independent historical and architectural consultant.



Heather Knight

Heather received her B.A. in Political Science with a double minor in History and Louisiana Studies from Tulane University. She holds a Master of Preservation Studies from Tulane University School of Architecture (2006). A member of the New Orleans Crafts Guild, Heather was a Research Assistant for the Building Arts Research Project sponsored by the Regional

Louisiana Folklife Office. She has traveled to Guatemala, Cuba, Scotland, Ireland and France to study vernacular architecture, traditional building arts and lime-based technology. She has served as Director of Tulane's Preservation Studies Summer Field School and Professor of the Preservation Technology course that used the Pitot House as a learning laboratory in the spring of 2009.

Elizabeth M. Landis

Elizabeth Mahorner Landis is a lifelong resident of New Orleans. She appreciates that the rich history of our city lives on in its many architectural treasures. As a long-time elementary educator, Elizabeth loves watching schoolchildren experience history and learn the importance of preservation through the example of the Pitot House.

Howard W. Mielke, Ph.D.

A native of St. Paul, Minnesota, Howard came to New Orleans to settle in September, 1989. He is employed by Tulane University School of Medicine as a faculty member in the Department of Pharmacology, where he studies and maps environmental chemicals that have life-long effects on children's health and behavior. His goal is to promote improvements in New Orleans communities to transform them into safer areas for present and future generations. He hopes ideas about inter-generationally sustainable communities ultimately support the long-term preservation goals of the Louisiana Landmarks Society.



Thomas W. (Tommy) Milliner

Mr. Milliner is a native New Orleanian with a passion for preservation and the urban fabric. A 1980 graduate of Tulane Law School, he is a former Deputy City Attorney and is currently

a partner in the Anzelmo, Milliner & Burke law firm. He has handled a number of city planning and zoning matters while serving in the City Attorney's Office and in his private practice.



Taylor Schmidt Pospisil

A native New Orleanian, Taylor attended Louise S. McGehee School where she developed a strong appreciation for art history. She later graduated from The University of Mississippi with a degree in art history and hospitality management. Taylor is actively involved in the community, and is a member of the Junior League of New Orleans. Her love for the city of New Orleans, preserving its rich cultural history, and her experience in event planning and development have led to the opportunity to serve on Landmarks' Board of Trustees and to co-chair the Development Committee in 2013-14.

Drew Stewart

A native New Orleanian and LSU graduate, Drew returned home in 2012 after a nearly 30 year career in Washington, D.C., as a producer/director of high profile video communications for corporate, government, and international non-profit organizations.

James Wade

James holds advanced degrees in history, library science and historic preservation. A former rare books librarian and archivist, James focuses his work with the Louisiana Landmarks Society on using the Pitot House as a tool for education and promoting the publishing efforts of the society. His interests include Creole culture and architecture.





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- \$40 Advocate *household*
- \$100 Supporter
- \$250 - 499 Guardian
- \$500 - 999 Protector
- \$1000 - 4999 Sustainer

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**WE WANT TO HEAR
FROM YOU!**

As always, if any of our members have an item of interest or an idea for something they would like to see in *Préservation*, please let us know! Leave a message at the Pitot House, email info@louisianalandmarks.org, or email our editor James Wade at iacobus1@mac.com.

