

LANDMARKS' PRÉSERVATION



THE JOURNAL OF THE LOUISIANA LANDMARKS SOCIETY

**The Vieux Carré Riverfront Expressway Controversy—
Presented by William E. Borah | 2016 Martha Robinson Lecture
In celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the National Preservation Act**

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**Hilary Somerville Irvin,
Editor**

Louisiana Landmarks Society celebrates the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) with the remarkable story of its early impact locally. New Orleans was one of the first places in the country to utilize the newly minted National Historic Preservation Act and the Department of Transportation Act in one of the biggest preservation efforts in the nation's history – the Vieux Carré Riverfront Expressway battle. William Borah, one of the effort's renowned leaders and co-author of the book *The Second Battle of New Orleans: A History of the Vieux Carré' Riverfront Expressway Controversy*, recounts this contentious fight as this year's Martha Robin Lecture..

In 1946, the highly influential New York planner, Robert Moses, recommended the construction of an elevated highway through the Vieux Carré. It wasn't until 1969 that Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe announced that, as far as the federal government was concerned, the six-lane expressway would not be built. What happened in the intervening years were two decades of acrimonious debate between those in favor of the expressway and those who adamantly opposed it. Those in favor

2016 Martha Robinson Lecture
Thursday, March 10, 2016
Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities
Turner's Hall, 938 Lafayette Street
6:30-8:00 pm
FREE for Landmarks Members
\$5 for Non-members

believed that in making it easier to move vehicles to and from the city's business district, this highway would be the "economic lifeblood for the city." Those in opposition believed that cities were for people, not automobiles, and that an elevated freeway through the National Historic Landmark District would forever separate the city from its river and irreparably harm the character and quality of the famed historic French Quarter.

Prior to using the NHPA and the Department of Transportation Act to defend the French Quarter, Bill Borah, working for the Stern Foundation, testified before congressional committees on the importance of adopting the legislation. After the statutes became law, these acts were used to finally defeat the Vieux Carré Expressway.

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SAVE THE DATES!

**Martha Robinson Lecture
The Vieux Carré
Riverfront Expressway
Controversy**

Presented by Bill Borah
Wednesday, March 10, 2016

**Bayou St. John and the
Carondelet Canal:
Interconnections of History**

Curated by Louis McFaul
Exhibit continues through
March 31, 2016

**Awards for Excellence in
Historic Preservation
Program and Reception**

Orpheum Theater
Tuesday, April 12, 2016

**For more information visit:
LouisianaLandmarks.org
or call us: 504-482-0312**



The New Orleans' Nine (NON) is an annual advocacy project that brings attention to properties and physical features that are in danger of being lost from the fabric of our city. The final choices are based upon selection criteria such as historic, architectural, and cultural value, the severity of the threat, and the degree of community commitment to save the feature.

A CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Deadline: Thursday, March 31
Nomination forms can be downloaded at
www.louisianalandmarks.org.
Submit online or by mail.

A Message from the President Stephen Chauvin



"In the end, our society will be defined not only by what we create, but by what we refuse to destroy."

These pensive words of conservationist John Sawhill are worthy of our reflection. In the broadest sense, his statement applies to each of us as individuals and as a society. We are defined by our actions (and inactions) that create, destroy or preserve. Since we cannot create something out of nothing, if we so choose to create, then by default, we must alter and affect something else. Sawhill implies our measurement is found both in the good we create and the good that we refuse to destroy. Our beloved New Orleans is a shining example of his truth. Most would agree that what defines New Orleans and makes it unique and renowned throughout the world is not only what has been creat-

ed over the last 298 years, but also what has not been destroyed.

As citizens of New Orleans, we should all recognize the rich cultural, architectural and historical cornucopia we have been graced with. New Orleans is a truly unique and inspirational city. Of course it is not perfect, and those of us who love it and are inspired by it, may attempt to make it better. In our enthusiasm to improve New Orleans, we should always consider what could be lost. Certainly, the creative process for any artist, architect or builder should first begin with an understanding of the context of their work. When that context is the precious fabric of New Orleans, then a deeper understanding that respects our environment, neighborhoods, culture and history is required. A sense of place that considers the good that should not be destroyed is imperative.

Since 1950, the Louisiana Landmarks Society has played a central role in advocating the preservation of our historical resources. In 2005, the Society instituted the "New Orleans Nine Most Endangered Sites" program, modeled after the National Trust for Historic Preservation's annual list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places. Each year our list publicizes nine threatened historic places

in the city that require immediate public attention. Last year, the Carrollton Courthouse was not only selected by our committee as one of New Orleans' nine most endangered sites, but it was also selected as one of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's 11 most endangered historic places. Although listing a threatened historic site does not promise it will be saved, it begins the important step of raising public awareness in the hope of finding creative solutions that will value our future, present and past with equal respect.

With this in mind, please join us in our efforts to preserve all that is good about New Orleans as we responsibly grow. Protect our landmarks, read this newsletter and follow our advocacy. Stand with us to save the Master Plan. Support us in saving the Carrollton Courthouse and preserving all of our threatened architecture, monuments and unique culture. Inform us of a threatened site for our 2016 New Orleans Nine Most Endangered List. Reflect upon what we should refuse to destroy.

Ambassador of France, G rard Araud, at the Pitot House

Louisiana Landmarks Society was honored with the visit in February of the Ambassador of France, G rard Araud, during his first official visit to New Orleans. He enjoyed seeing the Pitot House and the continuing exhibit "Bayou St. John and the Carondelet Canal," curated by board member and treasurer Louis McFaul. Pictured left to right: Louis McFaul, French Ambassador G rard Araud, Consul General of France for New Orleans Gr gor Trumel, executive director of the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority and the city's chief resilience officer Jeff Hebert, and LLS executive director Walter Gallas.



Advocacy Updates

Hilary Somerville Irvin

CARROLLTON COURTHOUSE

On January 28th at Tulane University, Louisiana Landmarks Society in collaboration with the Tulane Master of Preservation Studies program and the LSU Reich School of Landscape Architecture hosted a student-led presentation summarizing findings from the schools' design studio projects. The report focused on the significance, history and existing conditions of this landmark, as well as proposals for its restoration, preservation and subsequent reuse (See Summer 2015 *Landmarks' Preservation*).

The project, which began in October, was overseen by Michael Shoriak, an adjunct lecturer in the MPS program at Tulane, and Lake Douglas, an associate professor of landscape architecture at LSU. At this very well-attended cold winter night event were preservationists and admirers of the building as well as potential users, including representatives from the French Consulate and advocates for a jazz museum at the site. School Board representatives discussed future steps, and noted that time is critical since the bid process for its sale likely will begin in the coming months.

Uses proposed and discussed by the

students included the following, with all plans incorporating revitalized and vibrant public green spaces:

- University-affiliated building arts/building preservation school
- Mixed use community and rental space
- Event space

Extensive details and numerous plans and renderings gathered and generated by the students can be found at: <https://carrolltoncourthouse.wordpress.com>.

To keep up with further developments go to: www.savecarrolltoncourthouse.com.

PROPOSED HISTORIC DISTRICT LANDMARKS COMMISSION (HDLC) DISTRICT EXPANSIONS

As noted in the fall issue of *Landmarks' Preservation*, the City Council under the leadership of Councilmember Stacy Head voted to study expansion of historic districts under the jurisdiction of the HDLC to include Uptown and Carrollton and portions of Mid-City in order to more efficiently and professionally deal with the epidemic of demolition applications in these neighborhoods.

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HOST YOUR EVENT AT THE PITOT HOUSE

Make Louisiana Landmarks Society's Pitot House the setting for your next event.

Whether it is 20 or 300 people, the Pitot House is a unique New Orleans venue for a meeting, a corporate cocktail hour, or a romantic wedding.

Download our rental contract from our website, and call us to schedule a site visit!

Louisiana Landmarks Society

2016 Awards for Excellence in Historic Preservation

Louisiana Landmarks Society is pleased to announce the fifteen winners of the 2016 Awards for Excellence in Historic Preservation. These awards honor projects completed in Orleans Parish (outside of the French Quarter) in 2015 which represent outstanding examples of restoration or rehabilitation of historic buildings.

Please join us for the awards ceremony and reception:

Tuesday, April 12, 2016

The Orpheum Theater | 129 Roosevelt Way

5:30 –7:00 pm

For ticket and sponsor information, please go to our website: www.louisianalandmarks.org, or call us at 504-482-0312.

The Teams

1. **225 Baronne Mixed Use**
HCI Architecture Inc., HRI Properties, Heritage Consulting Group, Looney & Associates
2. **Corpus Christi -Epiphany Community Resource Center**
2022 St. Bernard Ave.
Ryan Gootee General Contractors LLC, Archdiocese of New Orleans, Corpus Christi-Epiphany Catholic Church, Mathes Brierre Architects, Hewitt-Washington & Associates
3. **566 Emerald**
Maury Strong and Ron Caron, studioWTA, DeltaTech, Ashton Avegno, Evans+Lighter Landscape Architecture
4. **Giani Building | 600 Canal St.**
Woodward Design+Build, Canal at Camp LLC
5. **825 Girod**
Eskew+Dumez+Ripple | Architecture, Rick Fifield-Preservation Architect, Ryan Gootee General Contractors LLC
6. **The Howard | 833 Howard Ave.**
Trapolin-Peer Architects APC, Woodward Design+Build, de la Tour Holdings LLC, Melissa Legier Designs LLC



1. 225 Baronne Mixed Use



2. Corpus Christi-Epiphany Community Resource Center



3. 566 Emerald



4. Giani Building



5. 825 Girod



6. The Howard

The Teams Continued

- 7. **301 Magazine**
Gibbs Construction, Sustainable Architecture LLC, MAG 301 LLC
- 8. **The Orpheum Theater**
129 Roosevelt Way
Dr. Eric George, Mary and Roland von Kurnatowski, Eskew + Dumez + Ripple | Architecture, Jack Sawyer-Project Architect, Rick Fifield- Preservation Architect, Fountainbleau Construction, Brett Olive and Jim Elder- Project Managers
- 9. **Our Lady of Good Counsel**
1243 Louisiana Ave.
Ryan Gootee General Contractors LLC, Koch and Wilson Architects, Archdiocese of New Orleans
- 10. **Rectory of St. John the Baptist Church**
1139 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd.
Felicity Redevelopment Inc., Alfredo Moran Construction LLC
- 11. **2200 Royal**
2200 Royal Street LLC, Steven J. Finegan Architects, Portico Construction Inc., Walter Zehner Consulting Engineering, Nicole Donnes Interior Design, Dale Robertson, Holly Mandot
- 12. **The Saint Anna**
1823 Prytania St.
Winingder Enterprises LLC, studioWTA, Felicity Property Co. LLC, Palmisano Contractors, Harmon Engineering LLC, Daly Sublette Landscape Architects
- 13. **St. Roch Market,**
2381 St. Claude Ave.
Lee Ledbetter & Associates, Lucien T. Vivien Jr. & Associates, Kyle Associates, Spackman Masson+Michaels, Williams Architects, City of New Orleans, Lathan Company, Bayou Secret, SES Enterprises LLC
- 14. **The Wiltz Gym, 3041 N. Rampart**
Wiltz Properties LLC, Kupperman Companies LLC, Federated Historic Holdings LLC, Concordia Architects, Beier Construction



7. 301 Magazine



8. The Orpheum Theater



9. Our Lady of Good Counsel



10. Rectory of St. John the Baptist Church



11. 2200 Royal



12. The Saint Anna



13. St. Roch Market



14. The Wiltz Gym

Special Achievement: Tom Winingder for 1520-22 Felicity, 912 Napoleon, and 1437 Urania: Winingder Enterprises LLC, Felicity Property Co., Barron and Toups Architects, Steve Olson-Project Architect, Kendall Schindler, Priscilla Jordan, Cacioppo Contractors Inc., Da Vinci Builders



1520-22 Felicity



912 Napoleon



1437 Urania

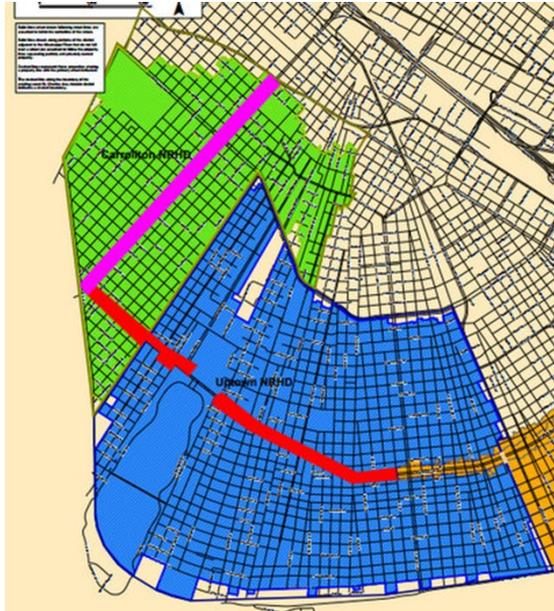
Advocacy Updates Continued

Demolition reviews have been handled until now by the Neighborhood Conservation District Advisory Committee (NCDAC). As its title indicates, the committee's actions are advisory, and every application must ultimately be acted upon by the City Council. Two historic district study committees were formed in 2015 to study details such as district boundaries and levels of jurisdiction and to make

recommendations for their implementation. On February 18, the Uptown and Carrollton Study Committee met and made its recommendations for consideration by the City Planning Commission, which in turn will forward its comments to the City Council for action.

This study committee's recommendations include the following:

- Two new Uptown and Carrollton local historic districts should be established, with their boundaries conforming to the boundaries of the existing National Register districts regularized to be more comprehensible and "user friendly."
- Boundaries for the Uptown District would be Lowerline and Delachaise Streets, South Claiborne Avenue and the river. The Carrollton District would be the area between Earhart Boulevard and the river from the Jefferson Parish line to Lowerline Street in the University area and over to Nashville in Fontainebleau. Each district would receive a designated



representative on the HDLC. Buildings in these two districts would be subject only to review and approval for demolitions and to HDLC sanctions for cases of demolition by neglect. Therefore, new construction could take any form as long as it complies with building code and Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance regulations.

- Full HDLC control would be only for buildings fronting St. Charles and Carrollton Avenues, meaning that these buildings would be subject to design review for new construction, additions, and renovations visible from the street, as well as demolition and demolition by neglect regulation.

On the other hand, in response to neighborhood concerns over designation ramifications, the study committee for the proposed Mid-City and Parkview historic district on February 22 deferred taking any action. Another meeting has been scheduled for March 28th at 6:00 pm at Jesuit High School, 4133 Banks St.

Continued on next page

National Cemetery offers volunteer opportunity through March

Chalmette National Cemetery will be the site of a month-long volunteer effort bringing together the National Park Service, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training, and D/2 Biological Solution.

This year is the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the National Park Service and the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act. Here is an opportunity to learn and experience history first-hand by helping to document, clean or re-set the historic headstones of this important place.

You may sign up for three-hour slots from now through April 1 by going to <https://savingplaces.org/chalmette-volunteer-month>. There are two time slots for each day: 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. You may sign up for as many time slots as you'd like.

Established in 1864, Chalmette National Cemetery is a unit of the National Park Service's Jean Laffite National Historical Park and Preserve and is about fifteen minutes downriver from New Orleans. It is the final resting place for Union soldiers—including United States Colored Troops—who died in Louisiana during the Civil War. There are also more than 14,000 headstones that mark the gravesites of veterans of the Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, and the Vietnam War.

Located on the site of the 1815 Battle of New Orleans, the cemetery is next to Chalmette Battlefield, and is one of 14 national cemeteries managed by the National Park Service.

From the Executive Director

Walter Gallas

The Awards for Excellence in Historic Preservation are becoming a new tradition for Louisiana Landmarks Society, and one we can be deservedly proud of. I can see this program growing in importance and influence in the years ahead. New Orleans has any number of events in its social and civic calendar, and this one deserves to be top of mind among community leaders, elected officials, businesses, and the public at large.

Each year we have managed to find an exciting venue for the presentation of the awards and the reception for the honorees. We are going to find it hard to top this year's location: the sparkling Orpheum Theater, magnificently

brought back to life better than ever, and once again the home of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra. As you will see when you attend the awards program on Tuesday, April 12, the theater has been adapted for a variety of events, and will serve us well for the presentation of the awards and for meeting and mingling afterwards.

The winning projects remind us of the practical power of historic preservation. The vast majority of them utilized historic tax credits to make them viable. They put a vacant building back into commerce—and on the tax rolls. They created jobs, and they improved the quality of our lives in New Orleans. It's a winning scenario, that can be replicated over and over throughout the community.

As a counterpoint to these positive outcomes is the reality of the continu-

ing challenges presented by buildings threatened with demolition, neighborhoods threatened by inappropriate development, or properties caught in bureaucratic entanglements. To address this side of the historic preservation coin, Louisiana Landmarks Society since 2005 has rolled out its annual list of "New Orleans Nine Most Endangered Historic Sites." We are seeking nominations for this year's New Orleans Nine now, and encourage you to submit a nomination. Go to our website to nominate a threatened place and also to view the past listings. You will see a high proportion of "saves." In fact, some of the New Orleans Nine have become Preservation Award winners.

So, as we celebrate the successes of historic preservation, we continue the work to prevent the loss of irreplaceable buildings, sites and monuments.

Advocacy Updates Continued

FLY FURY

The philosophic conflict over whether public open spaces should serve passive or active pursuits has resulted in discord for decades between Audubon Park administrators and many of the park's admirers.

The most recent outcry has resulted over the proposed change of use of the riverside portion of Audubon Park known colloquially as the "Fly," in reference to a 1960s modernist shelter demolished in the 1980s after a tugboat accident. A long favorite place for generations of New Orleanians to picnic, fly kites or to just gaze at the river, this wide expanse of tranquil green space will become a youth sports complex, if plans of the Audubon Commission and the Carrollton Boosters materialize. The plans call for a tournament



-grade soccer field with AstroTurf, bleachers and new auxiliary buildings such as restrooms, concession and press stands, resulting-- as opponents contend—increased traffic parking in new paved areas.

The area is under the private control of the Audubon Institute except for demolition and zoning issues which must be approved by the city. The existing 20-year-old steel art installation at the site would be moved into storage, which will not require review by the City Council; and the concrete block

restrooms have been approved for demolition. For pro and con information on this issue, see www.auduboninstitute.org and www.savethefly.com. At latest report, discussions continue between the Carrollton Boosters and concerned community members.



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- \$100 Supporter
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- \$1000 - 4999 Sustainer

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GET INVOLVED!

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 at 504.482.0312, email info@louisianalandmarks.org, or email our editor Hilary Somerville Irvin at hilaryirvin@gmail.com.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer docent at the Pitot House or joining in on our advocacy and education efforts, please give us a call or email.

