

## **News Release**

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### **For Immediate Release**

#### **Preservation Efforts Needed; PRC Reports on Historic Districts**

“We need your help in generating resources, volunteer and financial support for the restoration effort. The power of people working for their neighborhoods and to restore their homes is a tremendous resource that must not be underestimated and this sends the most positive message possible about the future of our city,” said Patricia H. Gay, executive director of the Preservation Resource Center ( PRC) of New Orleans in messages to preservationists and organizations across the country.

“We are hopeful that we do not have to worry about arbitrary, wholesale demolitions, that we hear are being discussed at the state and federal levels,” she said.

In Baton Rouge, the Foundation for Historical Louisiana has already set up a fund within the Baton Rouge Area Foundation to assist with restoration advocacy and the preservation of New Orleans’ cultural treasures in the storm’s wake. “We are urging individuals and organizations to make donations as we assist our sister city with this effort,” said Carolyn Bennett, executive director. Colleague organizations and preservationists across the

country are contacting both PRC and FHL. Bennett shared the following report from the PRC with FHL Board of Directors and members along with media on Monday (Sept. 12). Bennett says the PRC has a long tradition of strong success in working with neighborhoods, especially through exemplary programs such as Operation Comeback and Rebuilding Together and the group is stepping up organization efforts at this moment to do more than ever to make the City of New Orleans better than ever.

### **PRC REPORT ON HISTORIC DISTRICTS OF NEW ORLEANS:**

“This report is based on my tour of New Orleans on Wednesday, Sept. 7, and on eye-witness reports,” stated Patty Gay.

#### **Intact historic districts with very minimal damage:**

- Bywater
- Faubourg Marigny
- Vieux Carre
- Central Business District (which includes several local districts)
- Lower Garden District, Garden District, Irish Channel, Uptown District (composed of many neighborhoods - largest in US, Algiers Point
- Carrollton (I heard today from someone in NO that there was no water on Carrollton all the way to Claiborne--of course the water had receded but this was good news)
- Districts that had water in some portions - these are areas where advocacy will be directed to saving buildings:
- Holy Cross - I only saw into Holy Cross from the bridge over the Industrial Canal. The streets I saw had very little water but there was evidence of higher water earlier. Someone saw media that said there was 8 feet of water in the Jackson Barracks (impressive complex of Greek Revival buildings, built in 1840), which is the lower boundary of Holy Cross. Many houses are 19th and early 20th century so we are hopeful that they can be salvaged. (For two years we have been buying and restoring and selling houses in this area, and for 17 years we have been painting and repairing the homes of elderly homeowners.)
- Faubourg New Marigny (St. Roch)- Dry from St. Claude Avenue at least for a few blocks. Report from a resident that there was 2-3 feet of water in places. Have seen media of houses further away from St. Claude with water

up to porch level - not in the houses. May have been in earlier, of course. We will be involved in saving these houses.

-- Esplanade Ridge - Am very hopeful about this historic district. It includes Faubourg Tremé and Faubourg St. John. Bayou St. John did not flood. Most of the district is on a ridge. We are very worried about any demolitions here because the buildings have survived, they are on high ground and are of historic building stock and we feel many if not most suffered little damage.

-- Mid-City - Am afraid this historic district got a lot of water. However, again we have solid building stock, and many two-story buildings. Trying to track down residents. We are hopeful. People are determined.

-- Parkview - We are hopeful that since part of this district is on higher ground of City Park Avenue that there was not great damage. Know of one house on City Park Avenue that had no water.

-- Broadmoor - This is substantial early 20th century neighborhood. Much water. But, as with all of the above, no demolitions should occur without thorough review, and without consideration of the determination of owners to save their houses.

-- Central City - The portions along St. Charles Avenue got very little water - closer to Louisiana Avenue apparently there may have been water. I do not know yet about the portion beyond OC Haley Blvd. (formerly Dryades Street). We will continue to search for contacts as there is much late nineteenth century housing stock in this area.

-- Gentilly Terrace - This twentieth century neighborhood was built on berms, and on Gentilly Ridge. While most of Gentilly, of which Gentilly Terrace is a part, got much water, I feel these fairly substantial houses built on berms have sustained little damage.

**Area seeking National Register designation:**

-- Ponchartrain Park - Built in 1950 for African American homebuyers, this neighborhood has now reached historic status and in any case is an important neighborhood in New Orleans. Reports are that there is much water. I hope that this neighborhood is not lost to our city. The most careful assessment must be made.

-- Historic areas not on National Register – we will soon have contacts in all of these areas:

-- Area north and east of Esplanade Ridge, including the fairgrounds - I will find out more about conditions here.

-- Area northeast of Bywater – Information not yet available.

Neighborhoods on either side of Elysian Fields north of I-10 - We were working with all of these neighborhoods. Much water.

-- Many streets are filled with trees and limbs, but the loss of trees is minimal, all things considered. Some parks and squares will have less trees but remaining trees will come back. “A landscape architect with our group said the live oaks have suffered much less loss of limbs than might be expected and he said they would all come back,” she said.

-- As you can see from this report, most of our National Register historic

districts are intact. We are currently organizing to rebuild those that have suffered. I am trying to reach people we know who lived there. It is not too soon to start discussions about rebuilding.”

Bennett said that the Foundation for Historical Louisiana will be working closely with the Preservation Resource Center, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and other groups to assist in historic preservation and rebuilding efforts. For further information, contact the Foundation offices at 225-387-2464.