

# **The Central Business District Expansion**

## **Study Committee Report**

### **Introduction**

The Upper Central Business District - National Register Historic District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990. The designation report cited the architectural, commercial, and industrial significance of this area. The district included the area generally bounded by Poydras Street, Convention Center Boulevard, St. Joseph and Howard Streets, and Baronne Street. In 1993, the Louisiana State Division of Historic Preservation recognized that a significant portion of the Central Business District had been excluded from this National Register district. They corrected the oversight by having this district expanded to include the area generally bounded by St. Joseph and Baronne Streets to the Pontchartrain Expressway, adding twenty-nine buildings to the National Register district. Although these properties were recognized at the state and national level, this area continued to be left out of the two local districts, Lafayette Square and the Warehouse District, which were formed around the 1990 boundaries of the National Register district. Since they were left out of local district designation, properties in this expanded National Register area have been subject to considerable discussion regarding their architectural and historical merits.

In an effort to recognize those structures that do possess architectural or historical significance, the Central Business District Historic District Landmarks Commission has either landmarked or nominated selected buildings for landmark status. Several Commissioners as well as members of the community suggested that it was better to review the area for expansion of the

two adjacent local historic districts - the Warehouse District and Lafayette Square District - than to continue with the individual landmarking process. On November 11, 2000, the City Council adopted an Interim Zoning District (IZD) to be known as the "CBDHDLC Design Review Interim Zoning District" (No. 19885 M.C.S.) to allow design review by the staff of the HDLC prior to the issuance of permits relative to the demolition, renovation, or new construction of projects in this area until a decision is made whether or not this area should be under local district designation. The area specified under the IZD is bounded by the uptown side of Lafayette Street, the riverside of O'Keefe Avenue, the lakeside of Convention Center Boulevard and the downtown side of the Pontchartrain Expressway.

Local district designation would put this area under the jurisdiction of the Central Business District Historic District Landmarks Commission (CBD-HDLC) which was established to regulate, preserve, and protect historic districts and landmarks within the Central Business District of New Orleans. This commission is empowered to safeguard the heritage of the City by preserving landmarks and districts which reflect elements of its cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history, to preserve and enhance the environmental quality of the Central Business District, and to strengthen the City's economic base and stimulate tourism. Should this area become part of the existing local historic districts, the properties therein would require the CBD Commission or its staff to review and approve all work performed on those portions of the exterior of all existing buildings which are visible from the public rights-of-way including new construction, demolitions, demolitions by neglect, alterations and additions. To establish local historic district designation, a study must be performed in accordance with State Act 804, which includes the appointment of a study committee by the Mayor, to be confirmed by the City Council.

### **Original CBD Preservation Study Committee - 1977**

The original Central Business District Preservation Study Committee was established on December 21, 1976 to study the feasibility of establishing a separate Historic District Landmarks Commission for the Central Business District. The Committee members included representatives of the Central Area Council of the Chamber of Commerce, the Core Area Development District (now known as the Downtown Development District - DDD), the Historic Faubourg St. Mary Corporation, the Central Business District Improvement Association (now known as the Lafayette Square Association), and the American Institute of Architects. This group represented downtown property owners, business people, preservationists and developers. As part of that study, they analyzed the area and evaluated the Central Area New Orleans Growth Management Program, the Summary Report of the 1975 Historic District Study Committee, the criteria and procedures used by the New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission, as well as those used by other Historic District Commissions throughout the United States, the CBD zoning, and the Tax Reform Act of 1976. They then made recommendations in reference to the establishment of a CBD Commission, CBD historic districts, CBD local landmarks and a draft ordinance. The final majority report, dated April 24, 1977, did not specify why the current boundaries were drawn where they were.

Study Committee member Michael Duplantier and Historic Faubourg St. Mary Corporation representative Dr. Jack Stewart were interviewed on April 9, 2002, in an effort to understand the reasoning behind the current boundary locations. Their recollection was that the Study Committee was comprised of a majority of business representatives, some of whom were completely opposed to historic districts for the downtown area. There was great pressure within the Committee to have the smallest and fewest districts possible. The Committee members

worked to reach a consensus within a conservative approach. When reviewing which buildings would possibly be included or where the possible boundaries would be, the Committee tended to be very cautious. If there was any question about the historical or architectural value of a property, they would almost always place it outside of the potential historic district. The few preservationists on the Committee made many compromises and were temporarily satisfied with the initial recommendation of two full control districts and one demolition review only district.

To appreciate the context in which the initial boundaries were drawn, it is necessary to understand the atmosphere of the time. In 1977, during the time of the initial study, the preservation movement was still relatively young. The City was inexperienced with historic districts outside of the Vieux Carre. Many of the early twentieth century buildings in the area now under study for expansion of the CBD historic districts were often considered not old enough to be valuable. The idea of industrial buildings as historic properties had not yet been realized. There was not yet a concept of redevelopment planning, of using preservation and historic districts to guide redevelopment and appropriate new construction. At the time, some Committee members felt that Howard Avenue and Lee Circle should not be included because they thought that area would be the next Poydras Street and wanted it to be open for intensive high rise development. Time has shown that this, of course, did not happen. There was also an effort to make the districts uniformly shaped, without complicated, uneven boundaries. All of these factors led the initial Study Committee to recommend the current district boundaries for the Lafayette Square historic district, the Picayune Place historic district, and the Warehouse District historic district, the last one with demolition control only.

Since that time, the Warehouse District has been made a full control district (1985) and the Canal Street Historic District has been added (1984.) But the original boundaries for the

earlier districts have never been re-studied or altered.

For the study of the possible expansion of the Lafayette Square and Warehouse District historic districts, a new study committee was appointed by Mayor Marc Morial. On January 17, 2002, the City Council ratified that study committee. The study committee members included Jack Stewart, PhD., Dickie Brennan, Tony McHale, Gary Froeba, and Hilton Bell.

The HDLC staff then researched the historical and architectural significance of this neighborhood using the following criteria:

1. History: Do the buildings in this area share the origin and historical development of the existing districts to which they might be added?
2. Identity: Does the area proposed for inclusion share the same identifiable name, function, ethnic or cultural association as one or both of the existing local historic districts?
3. Integrity: Does the street character of the existing districts carry over to the proposed areas? Are the elements of scale, materials, architectural types or the buildings' relationship to the street similar to that of the existing districts?
4. Physical Condition: Does the area still have a potential for revitalization because a viable building stock still exists?
5. Regional Expression: Are the buildings of the proposed area similar in age and character to those within the boundaries of the current local districts? Are the buildings illustrative of the same phase of development as those of

the existing adjacent districts?

6. Boundaries: Would the addition of this area place the boundaries of the local districts in an arbitrary location, or would it place them in a more natural geographical location?

### **History**

The area now known as the Central Business District originally belonged to Jean Baptiste Le Moyne Sieur de Bienville, granted to him by the Superior Council of Louisiana on March 27, 1719. He retained the section from approximately Canal Street up to the present Felicity Street, with his own residence at the corner of Magazine and Common Streets. In 1726, he sold this property to the Jesuit Fathers. They held it until 1763, when their lands were seized and they were banished from the colony. The plantation was divided into six parcels and sold at public auction in July and August, 1763. Tract Number One, with the land closest to Canal Street, was sold to Charles de Pradel, who also bought the next adjacent tract, Tract Number Two, from the gentleman who had bought it at auction. But de Pradel died soon afterward, and the property eventually was sold to Andre Reynard in 1773. He, too, died, and the land was passed to his widow, Dona Maria Josefa Deslonde, who then married Don Beltram Gravier. After the Great Fire on March 21, 1788, Madame Gravier and her husband had the property surveyed by the Spanish Royal Surveyor, Don Carlos Laveau Trudeau, and a new faubourg was laid out. This allowed the city to expand upriver, across Canal Street. Later it would serve to accommodate the large influx of Americans that were to come after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. First known as Ville Gravier, its name was changed to Faubourg Ste. Marie after the death of Madame Gravier. It is now known as Faubourg St. Mary. The upriver boundary of Faubourg St. Mary

was just below present Howard Avenue.

The next two tracts of land, from just below Howard Avenue to between Calliope and Clio Streets, were purchased at the 1763 auction by Louis de Bonrepos and Etienne Garnier, Jr. These two tracts were then acquired by Francois Duplessis in 1765. Shortly afterward, Mr. Duplessis built a plantation house at what is now the corner of Annunciation and Poeyfarre, which became known as the original Delord-Sarpy house. The Duplessis property was auctioned off in 1782. Sometime after 1787, it was sold to Jean Baptiste Sarpy and Silvestre Delord Sarpy. In 1807, the widow Madame Delord-Sarpy sold the entire plantation to Armand Duplantier. Duplantier had noted architect and surveyor Bartheleme Lafon draw a plan to subdivide the land into a new faubourg. On this plan is the first concept for the St. Mary Market. It also shows the *Place du Tivoli* at the intersection of Howard and St. Charles Avenues, now Lee Circle. Although Lafon titled the subdivision plan as an extension of the Faubourg St. Mary and the new Faubourg Annunciation, it became known as the Faubourg Duplantier, as shown on the Jacque Tanesse map of 1817. The Delord-Sarpy house, also known as the Duplantier plantation house, was demolished in 1882 for the construction of the Maginnis Cotton Mill, now known as the Cotton Mill apartments. The area of the Faubourg Duplantier is now the upper area of the current Central Business District, and includes the Pontchartrain Expressway and the lower edge of Central City and the Lower Garden District.

In 1807, shortly after acquiring the former Delord-Sarpy plantation and having the plan drawn by Lafon, Armand Duplantier sold much of the land to John Henry Ludling. In May of 1813, part of this property was acquired by Dr. Joseph Montegut, who built a house for his daughter on square 18, bounded by Magazine, Camp, Howard and Clio Streets. But before the house was finished, Dr. Montegut encountered financial set backs and the land was lost to

creditors. It was then purchased by Madame Delord-Sarpy in March, 1817, who completed construction of the house and gave it to her daughter Louise to use as her residence. In 1957, this second Delord-Sarpy house, by then the oldest house above Canal Street, was demolished by the Mississippi River Bridge Authority to construct the Camp-Magazine Street exit ramp from the bridge.

Among other structures of interest in the district were the Eliza Gardens, an amusement park located between the two Delord-Sarpy houses from approximately 1810 to 1832, and the Cornelius Paulding house, on the square bounded by S. Peters, Clio, Calliope and Tchoupitoulas, built in the 1820s. This house became the first site of Touro Infirmary in 1852. It remained Touro Infirmary until the new hospital was built at the current site on Prytania Street in 1882.

The area was characterized by a mix of commercial and residential construction through the 1860s. After the Civil War, residential construction ceased and development shifted to commercial buildings, especially in the area known today as the Warehouse District, continuing all the way to the current Pontchartrain Expressway. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this area saw large scale industrial development, such as the Maginnis Cotton Mill, the Fulton Bag Company, and the Federal Fibre Mills.

The area that comprises the proposed annex to the existing local historic districts was developed contiguously with the adjacent land that is now the Lafayette Square District and the Warehouse District. They share a very closely related and often overlapping history that can scarcely be separated. For example, the plan for the Faubourg Duplantier, immediately adjacent to the Faubourg St. Mary, which first proposed St. Mary's Market on Diamond Street, currently in the Warehouse District, was also the plan that first proposed Lee Circle, known then as Tivoli Circle, which is in the proposed expansion area. The upper boundary line of the Faubourg St.

Mary cut diagonally across the squares that are now between Julia Street, St. Joseph Street and Howard Avenue, from roughly Loyola Street to the river. Thus the current local historic district boundaries take in only part of Faubourg St. Mary, excluding the area on the lakeside of Baronne Street, and take in a portion of Faubourg Duplantier, excluding the entire upriver section.

### **Identity**

The study area shares the same identity as the adjacent local historic districts. “The history of the City of New Orleans as a major commercial center is tied inextricably to its port and the businesses which prospered from association with the port. Nowhere else in the city can this record of commercial history be more clearly read than in the Upper Central Business District (National Register Historic District.)” (National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Upper CBD Historic District, Commercial and Industrial Significance) The Warehouse District and Lafayette Square local historic districts and the study area are all located in the Upper CBD National Register historic district.

By the end of the eighteenth century, New Orleans handled river commerce from throughout the Mississippi Valley. The first steamboat on the Mississippi in 1811 ushered in golden age of river commerce, and by 1840 New Orleans was the second most important port in the nation. The study area and adjacent local historic districts became the center of this river related commerce.

“The most prominent aspect of the development of the Upper Central Business District in the years between 1860 and 1900 was the steady rise in industrial activity. Large scale operations such as the Maginnis Cotton Mills...began in the 1880s.”

(National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Upper CBD Historic District, Commercial and Industrial Significance) This industrial activity is today reflected in the buildings of the Warehouse District, Lafayette Square and the study area.

Batture/Daniel Webster case

residential development - World's Fair aftermath, cotton mill, etc.

bridge development

adjacent to Convention Center - hotels, etc.

### **Integrity**

The area under study for expansion of the two existing local historic districts is visually indistinguishable from the historic districts that surround it. Almost without exception, it shares the same streets as the adjacent historic districts, which just continue into the study area from the districts. For example, Baronne Street, Carondelet Street and St. Charles Avenue extend through the Lafayette Square district into the study area, as do Julia and Girod Streets. Higgins Boulevard (Howard Avenue), Tchoupitoulas Street and St. Joseph Street extend from the Warehouse District into the study area. The street grid is basically unchanged from the historic districts into the study area, until it reaches the Pontchartrain Expressway.

The elements of scale, materials, architectural types and the relationship of the buildings to the street is very similar in the study area and the surrounding historic districts. Like the buildings in the historic districts, nearly all of the buildings in the study area are built to the front

property line and abut the sidewalk. In the study area, the main exception to this is the row of three frame shotgun houses in the 900 block of John Churchill Chase Street. These houses, some of the few remaining residential building types left in the area, are set back a small distance from the sidewalk. Two other residential buildings, masonry townhouses in the 1000 block of Magazine Street, also are set back a short distance from the sidewalk. However, the corner building does abut the sidewalk on the Higgins Boulevard side. This setback condition is identical to the row of masonry townhouses in the 700 block of Camp Street, located within the Lafayette Square Historic District.

The scale of the buildings in the study area is very similar to the scale of those in the surrounding historic districts. The buildings closest to the Lafayette Square historic district are those found on St. Joseph Street, Julia Street, Howard Avenue, O'Keefe Avenue and St. Charles Avenue. On O'Keefe Ave., the buildings in the study area are all one and two story buildings of a fairly small scale. They are all masonry with the exception of two that are wood frame construction with wood weatherboards. On Julia Street, the buildings under study are all two and a half and three story masonry buildings. The three story building is an early twentieth century industrial type structure, but it is only three bays wide and is a relatively small scale building for that type. The rest of the structures on the block under study are 19<sup>th</sup> century masonry townhouse buildings that share party walls to create a continuous row, which is very typical of the adjacent Lafayette Square Historic District. Similar rows in the district are found in the 300 block of Lafayette Street, 700-714 Carondelet Street, and the 800 block of Julia Street. Another similar pair of masonry townhouses in the study area is in the 800 block of St. Joseph Street. These unique buildings reach through the narrow triangular-shaped block they are on to face also onto Howard Avenue. The taller, more massive buildings in this part of the study area, such as 901

Howard Avenue, 829-35 Howard Avenue, 816-20 Howard Avenue and 724 St. Joseph are historic buildings that date from the early twentieth century and represent changing technology and the economic growth of the City at that time. Although larger than some of the surrounding buildings, they are still in keeping with the overall scale of the area and the adjacent district, and are similar to those within the Lafayette Square Historic District, such as 827 Carondelet (Jacob's Candy Factory), 861 Carondelet, 701 Carondelet, 546 Carondelet, and 755 Magazine Street. All of these larger scale buildings have masonry exteriors, both in the study area and in the district.

Lee Circle retains only two early historic buildings - a two and ½ story frame residential structure at 1032 St. Charles Ave., and a side facade of the Howard Memorial Library, 601 Howard Avenue. The rest of the buildings fronting onto Lee Circle are twentieth century construction and are mostly buildings of very large scale. They include the Tivoli Place building, 1036-44 St. Charles Ave., which dates from the early twentieth century and is important in jazz history, the three story Arts and Crafts style building on the corner at 1000 St. Charles Ave., and the ten story 1950s former YMCA building, now Le Cirque hotel. It also includes the small former American Bank building, 1014-18 St. Charles Ave., an important example of 1950s Modernist architecture. These larger, twentieth century buildings are compatible with the scale and architectural types of the adjacent Warehouse District, which is mainly composed of twentieth century commercial and industrial buildings, many of which are quite large and massive. Also on Lee Circle is the massive K&B Plaza, 1055 St. Charles Ave., which was built in the 1970s. The large scale, isolated site and distinct late 20<sup>th</sup> century design of this building make it something of an anomaly, but it is known as a local landmark in the area.

Other buildings under study that are closest to the Warehouse District local historic

district are found on Annunciation Street, Camp Street, Magazine Street and Tchoupitoulas Street, among others. As in the study area adjacent to the Lafayette Square district, many of these streets are simply extensions of the streets within the historic district. The buildings on Annunciation Street are all two stories, with the exception of 1050-56 Annunciation, the former Royal Broom and Mop Factory, which is three stories. They are all masonry, and date from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. They vary in size from two bay townhouses to the fairly large industrial Dixie Machine Welding & Metal Works building. This collection accurately reflects many of the block faces in the adjacent Warehouse District historic district.

The buildings under study on Camp Street encompass a variety of building types, as does the Warehouse District itself. These include the four story Ogden Museum of Art, currently under construction; the Confederate Museum, a designated local landmark building built in 1889 in the Richardsonian Romanesque style; the four story, seven bay Ives building, which is a large, early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial building; and the three bay, three story 19<sup>th</sup> century masonry townhouse at 1061 Camp Street, complete with service wing and carriage house. With the exception of the Confederate Museum, which is individually recognized as a unique and outstanding architectural example, any of these buildings could easily fit into the context of the adjacent Warehouse District.

On Magazine Street, the buildings under study range in height from one to three stories and all have masonry exteriors. They range in size from a two bay, single story commercial building to three bay, two story masonry townhouses, to the early industrial building at 1040 Magazine and the single story but massive modern Prager Complex at 1000-26 Magazine. Again, any of these buildings would completely fit into the context of the adjacent Warehouse District. They are similar in height and mass, and in materials and type to the buildings in the

historic district.

The area of Tchoupitoulas Street that is under study is dominated by the massive Boland Marine complex. Although only two stories in height, it fills the entire 1000 block and incorporates both historic and non-historic buildings. The other dominant building in this section is the Lengsfeld Packaging building at 1101 Tchoupitoulas. This three story building is also massive in scale, occupying nearly an entire square. However, there are examples of large industrial buildings in the Warehouse District historic district as well. 333 Julia Street, the Woodward Wight building at 400 St. Joseph Street and the former Hurwitz Mintz warehouse at 700 Tchoupitoulas Street are all large industrial type buildings that each cover an entire block within the historic district. In addition to these two large industrial buildings in the study area, there are also notable examples of smaller scale 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, such as the row of three masonry townhouses in the 1100 block of Tchoupitoulas, which are typical of townhouse rows found throughout the adjacent historic districts.

These comparisons clearly show that the integrity of the area under study is nearly identical to that of the adjacent local historic districts. The street character is the same; the scale, materials, architectural types and buildings' relationship to the street are very similar to that of the existing districts.

### **Physical Condition**

#### **Ratings:**

The area under study contains 133 sites, within which are 114 buildings, 14 parking lots, one park and four vacant lots, two of which have new construction planned. Among the 114 buildings are four designated local landmarks and 18 nominated landmarks. Every building in the study area has been assigned a rating by the Principal Architectural Historian on the staff of

the HDLC, just as every building in the local historic districts is assigned a rating. This rating helps the staff denote the relative significance of each building, as well as its degree of integrity. Two of the designated landmarks have the highest possible rating, a purple rating, which indicates buildings of national importance. They are the Howard Memorial Library, 601-15 Andrew Higgins Boulevard, and the Confederate Museum, 929 Camp Street. The second highest rating is a blue rating, which denotes buildings of major architectural importance. There are 23 blue-rated buildings in the study area, including two of the designated landmarks, the Maginnis Cotton Mill at 1050 Constance, which occupies an entire square, and Turner's Hall, 938 Lafayette Street. Other examples of blue-rated structures in the study area include the former Bradford Furniture building, 731 Howard Avenue; the former Jahnke building, 814 Howard Avenue; the row from 1001-1013 Magazine Street; and the former firehouse at 1043 Magazine Street.

Green-rated buildings possess architectural or historical importance and are typical examples of architectural styles or types found in New Orleans. There are 15 green-rated buildings in the study area. Some examples are the Federal Fibre Mills, 1107 S. Peters Street, a former industrial building converted to residential use that occupies an entire square; the striking International style former American Bank building on Lee Circle, 1014 St. Charles Avenue; the row of Greek Revival masonry townhouses at 1128, 1130 and 1132 Tchoupitoulas; and the large commercial building at 816-20 Howard Avenue.

Red-rated buildings are important buildings that have been altered, but still make a notable contribution to the overall character of the area. If a building in this classification were to be properly restored or renovated, the rating would automatically be raised. Though placed in a lower category, the significance of these buildings should not be overlooked or minimized.

There are 33 red-rated buildings in the study area, which would be upgraded to a green rating if they were property restored. Examples of red-rated buildings within the study area include the pair of masonry townhouses at 1038-40 Annunciation Street, which have had their balconies removed; the nominated landmark at 932-34 John Churchill Chase Street, a shotgun double that has had its original windows and doors removed and replaced by shortened, inappropriate versions; the former Howard Baronne Storage building, 901 Howard Avenue, which has had its ground floor covered with concrete; and 920-26 Julia Street, which has had its entry altered and some of its second floor windows removed.

There are 22 gold-rated buildings in the study area. These are buildings that contribute to the scene and tend to be newer buildings of less stylistic importance. They are frequently quite modest in appearance, but are important to the character of the area due to scale, materials, and/or increasing age. Examples in the study area include the two story corner store at 1100 Constance Street; the small masonry warehouse building at 404 Andrew Higgins Boulevard; and the one story commercial building at 828-32 Howard Avenue.

Unrated buildings are generally twentieth century buildings with no real architectural value. Some of them have a detrimental impact on the area, while others are sympathetic to adjoining buildings. There are 19 unrated buildings in the study area, including 1042-46 Annunciation Street, the new portion of the Hampton Inn at 1201 Convention Center Boulevard, 524 Andrew Higgins Boulevard, and the gas stations on Lee Circle at 700 Howard Avenue and 919 St. Charles Avenue.

#### Building Types:

The study area encompasses a variety of building types, including industrial warehouses, residential townhouses and shotguns, and commercial/store buildings. Since much of the study area is adjacent to the Warehouse Historic District, it is understandable that the majority of buildings found there are industrial/warehouse structures (42 of 114). These vary from large, high style structures such as the Maginnis Cotton Mill complex (1050 Constance Street, designated landmark) or the former Krauss warehouse (320 Gaiennie Street, nominated landmark), to the smaller and less ornate, such as the Universal Merchandise Company at 310 Andrew Higgins, to the simple and almost unadorned warehouses of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as 1040 Magazine Street. There are also some unrated, later 20<sup>th</sup> century warehouses without architectural style or interest, such as 520 Andrew Higgins.

Also related to the industrial and commercial nature of the area are the 31 commercial buildings in the study area. These buildings were used for retail stores, office buildings, and wholesale establishments, and are concentrated more in the Lafayette Square portion of the study area. They include large stylish commercial buildings such as the Ives Building at 1009 Camp Street and the former Bradford Furniture building at 731 Howard Avenue, as well as former automobile showrooms at 822 Howard Avenue and 901-11 St. Charles Avenue. This category also encompasses some unusual buildings - Turner's Hall, a designated landmark building at 926-40 Lafayette Street, and the Triangle building at 829-35 Howard Avenue. Among the commercial buildings are some small structures as well, including the former Jahnke building at 814 Howard Avenue, the single story buildings at 828 Howard Avenue and 1000 S. Peters Street, and the modernist former American Bank at 1014 St. Charles Avenue. There is also some modern construction represented in this category, including the mansard roofed structure at 820 O'Keefe Avenue, the contemporary office building at 923 Howard Avenue, and the massive

K&B building at 1055 St. Charles Avenue. In addition to these 31 commercial buildings, there are also three corner store-type buildings in the study area. Originally these were generally commercial on the ground floor and residential above, sited on a corner, often with a diagonal entrance.

There are seventeen townhouse buildings in the study area, sprinkled throughout both the Warehouse and Lafayette Square sections. These represent the earliest development of the area, and are the last remnants of its original small scale residential appearance. These townhouses are generally found in rows of party wall buildings, and pre-date most of the surrounding buildings. Examples are found at 1128-32 Tchoupitoulas Street, 1038-40 Annunciation Street, and 810-14 St. Joseph Street.

Other residential building types found in the study area are shotguns, double shotguns and two level gallery (double gallery) buildings. There are three shotgun doubles in the area, all within close proximity of one another - 928-30 John Churchill Chase Street, 932-34 John Churchill Chase Street, and 1131-33 Tchoupitoulas Street. There are two single shotguns in the study area, one at 936 John Churchill Chase Street and one at 716 O'Keefe Avenue. The shotgun at 716 O'Keefe is a rare surviving example of a masonry shotgun, the only one left in the study area. Masonry shotguns are very rare even in heavily residential neighborhoods. There were a few more of these in the CBD area, but they have all been demolished except this one. There is one double gallery house in the study area at 1041 Magazine Street. A common 19<sup>th</sup> century house type, there were once many more of these in the area in its earlier days, when it was more residential. However, this is the sole surviving example in the study area. Now an anomaly in the downtown area, this appears to be the only double gallery house left in the entire downtown of New Orleans.

There are four hotel buildings in the study area - these are buildings that were designed and built specifically as hotels, although their use may have changed over the years. There is the building on Lee Circle that originally held the residential rooms of the YMCA, now converted to a full service hotel, and the Tivoli Place building on Lee Circle, built as a hotel but now converted to elderly apartments. The other two hotel buildings are new construction, built recently to serve the nearby Convention Center.

In addition to commercial, industrial and residential buildings, there are four institutional buildings in the study area. These include two of the designated landmarks - Confederate Memorial Hall and the Howard Memorial Library. The other two are the YMCA building on Lee Circle and the Ogden Museum of Art on Camp Street, which is under construction.

There are a handful of other building types in the study area. There are three gas/automotive service stations, two of which are located on Lee Circle and still function as gas stations. There is one fire house, which now serves as a police station at 1043 Magazine Street. There is one accessory or service building that has lost its main building and had a front addition placed on it, so that the former accessory building is now the only building on the lot. Located at 700 O'Keefe Avenue, it now serves a commercial function. And there are two buildings that do not fit into any pre-defined category, listed as "other." The one at 446 Gaiennie Street appears to be a heavily altered service wing for the building at 1128 Tchoupitoulas Street, but due to its heavy alteration and possible additions, it is impossible to tell from an exterior visual inspection. The other, at 748 O'Keefe Avenue, is a two story residential building that appears to date from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century but has also been severely altered.

From this analysis of the physical buildings in the study area, it is clear that the area contains extensive viable historic building stock with great potential for revitalization, much like

the adjacent local historic districts. In addition, there are a total of 18 vacant lots and parking lots that offer possibilities for new construction. The designation of a local historic district would ensure that this new construction be compatible in size, scale, materials and design with the surrounding buildings.

### **Regional Expression**

As noted earlier, the buildings in the study area are contemporaries of the buildings in the surrounding historic districts. There is no material difference between the character of the buildings in the study area and that of the buildings in the adjacent local historic districts. They are similar in age and character, and share the same development period and the same history. The study area adjacent to the Warehouse District runs along the river and Convention Center Boulevard, both of which are factors in its development, in exactly the same manner as they influence the Warehouse District. It has a variety of industrial buildings, mixed with earlier residential structures, mirroring the same Warehouse District components. The study area adjacent to Lafayette Square historic district encompasses St. Charles Avenue and shares the smaller scale and more residential quality of the Lafayette Square district.

### **Architectural Styles:**

Like the surrounding historic districts, the buildings in the study area display a wide variety of architectural styles, ranging from high style designs to simple unadorned designs. These styles are typical regional expressions of New Orleans, and reflect those found in the surrounding districts. Due to the industrial and warehouse nature of many of the buildings in the study area, some of them do not fall into an easily definable stylistic category. Of the 114 buildings, 50 of them are classified as “other,” meaning that they have no clearly defined architectural style. This does not necessarily mean that they possess no decorative elements or

visual aesthetic, but that they can not be classified into any standard architectural style definition.

The most prevalent architectural style in the study area is the Italianate style, popular throughout the country from 1860-1885. In New Orleans, the Italianate style lingered even longer, mixing with elements of the Queen Anne style and lasting into the 1890s. There are 21 buildings classified as Italianate in style in the study area. Key elements of this style exhibited in the study area include segmentally arched window openings, bracketed cornices and roof overhangs, and corner quoins. The style is displayed on buildings as diverse as frame shotgun doubles, two story masonry townhouses, a former firehouse and large industrial buildings such as the Maginnis Cotton Mill (a designated landmark). Some examples are much more elaborate than others. Warehouses may have only vestigial stylistic elements, such as segmentally arched window openings and a corbeled cornice, while residential structures display the full representation of the style, with arched openings, drop siding, quoins, brackets and cornices.

There are 13 examples of the Greek Revival style in the study area, and they are all townhouses dating from the mid-19th century. This style was prevalent from 1840 to 1860. Some of them are representative of a more pronounced Greek Revival style, and some of them are more simple interpretations. The two masonry townhouses at 1038-40 Annunciation Street are very simple Greek Revival buildings, with pronounced lintels above 6/6 windows and a banded cornice. The townhouse at 935 Julia Street is slightly more elaborate, with third floor frieze windows, cast iron balcony railing and a Greek Key door surround. The townhouse at 1037 Magazine Street is even more elaborate, with full length windows, Greek Key door surrounds and denticulated cornices. These townhouses are some of the oldest buildings remaining in the study area, reflecting its earlier status as a residential subdivision.

The stylistic category labeled “Contemporary” refers to late twentieth century and twenty-

first century buildings reflecting a modern architectural vocabulary. There are nine of these in the study area. These include the Odgen Museum of Art (under construction,) the Clear Channel Radio offices at 923 Howard Avenue and the Hilton Garden Inn at 1041 S. Peters Street. Those labeled “Mid-20th Century” are buildings that are slightly older and display characteristics of the mid-20th century design aesthetic. There are four of these in the study area, including 1042-46 Annunciation Street and the YMCA at 920 St. Charles Avenue. In addition, there is one International Style building which dates from 1952-54. This is the former American Bank building on Lee Circle, designed by noted New Orleans architect Moise Goldstein and featured in *Fortune Magazine* in 1957 for its cutting edge design.

The Arts and Crafts or Craftsman style was popular from the turn of the last century through 1940. A rebellion against the ornate Victorian era styles, this style stressed hand made craftsmanship, with elements of Japanese design and simple lines. While generally a residential style, some elements of it were adapted for use on commercial structures as well. There are five such structures in the study area. They include the remarkable former Bradford Furniture building at the corner of Carondelet Street and Howard Avenue, the small commercial building at 813 Howard Avenue, and the former automobile dealership at 822 Howard Avenue.

There are four Chicago style buildings in the study area. This style originated in Chicago at the turn of the last century and features large expanses of glass between structural members. It emphasizes the verticality of the structure and presents an almost flat surface, with minimal ornamentation. All of the Chicago style buildings in the study area are former warehouses, except the commercial Ives building at 1009 Camp Street. Warehouse examples include 901 Howard Avenue and 920 Julia Street.

The Renaissance Revival style, (1890-1935), was inspired by Italian Renaissance

architecture and adapts much of the massing and many of details from those structures. There are three Renaissance Revival style buildings in the study area - the former Krauss Warehouse, a nominated landmark at 320 Gaiennie Street; the commercial building at 816-20 Howard Avenue; and the Tivoli Place Apartments at 1036-44 St. Charles Avenue. These are all large imposing, multi-story structures that can carry this grandly scaled style with ease.

Two of the designated landmarks in the study area, the Richardson Memorial Library and the Confederate Museum, are located side by side and both display the Richardsonian Romanesque style. This style is named after New Orleans native Henry Hobson Richardson, the architect who created this unique architectural style. It is characterized by heavy stone construction, round arches, and round towers with conical roofs. Buildings in this style were expensive to build and there were not many of them constructed, especially in the South. To have two excellent examples located side by side is very rare. As noted earlier, both of these buildings are rated purple, denoting their extreme importance and national significance.

In the study area, there is also one example of Art Nouveau style and one example of Neo-Classical Revival. The Art Nouveau example is the former Jahnke building at 814 Howard Avenue. Once considered for landmark designation, this otherwise small and unassuming building features particularly fine Art Nouveau style ornament in the front parapet. Unfortunately, the original Art Nouveau lettering has been removed. The Neo-Classical Revival style is represented by the former automobile dealership at 901-11 St. Charles Avenue. Although the doors and windows have been altered, this building retains its impressive boxed cornice with its modillions and frieze.

## **Boundaries**

The addition of the study area to the local historic districts would place the boundaries of the local districts in a more logical geographical location. When the original subdivision of the land in this area occurred, the boundary between developments was between Calliope and Clio Streets, which is the current Pontchartrain Expressway. This traditional bounding line sets up an appropriate historical reference for the proposed historic district boundary. Not only is the Expressway a strong visual boundary between the Central Business District and the adjacent residential districts, it is also the historic boundary line and thus the most logical point for the end of the downtown historic districts. Extending the lakeside boundary to O'Keefe Avenue ensures that the few remaining buildings at the edge of the district along Howard and O'Keefe Avenues will be protected, while having no impact on the expansive parking lots between O'Keefe and Loyola Avenues.

The current boundaries were reached more than twenty years ago, in the very early days of historic districts and preservation, through a process of compromise, propelled more by fear of a new regulatory process than by historic and architectural merit. The current boundaries did not recognize the potential for preservation planning in redevelopment, nor the importance of many twentieth century buildings. The current boundaries offer no protection for such important areas as Lee Circle and the lakeside of Convention Center Boulevard between Howard Avenue and the Expressway. The State Historic Preservation Office amended the boundaries of the Upper Central Business District National Register District in 1993 to more appropriately address these issues, but the boundaries of the local historic districts have not yet been adjusted. Including the study area in the local historic districts will also avoid confusion by bringing the local boundaries in line with those of the National Register Historic District.

## **Conclusion**

The CBD study area retains much of its historic building stock and offers an important glimpse of the history of development in downtown New Orleans. Along with the adjacent local historic districts, the Warehouse District and Lafayette Square, it helps tell the story of transition from riverfront batture to residential subdivision to industrial area, then returning to residential, with new tourism-based development. The study area contains a number of landmarks in the community and offers great potential for continued development. The streetscapes contain some of the oldest residential buildings in the area, as well as outstanding commercial and industrial buildings. The area shares the rich and varied history of the surrounding local historic districts, along with their clearly definable architectural and cultural character. The Study Committee recommends that the local historic district boundaries be adjusted to include the lakeside of Convention Center Boulevard, from Higgins Avenue to the Pontchartrain Expressway, the downtown side of the Pontchartrain Expressway up to the riverside of Baronne Street (excluding the building and parking lot associated with WDSU at 846 Howard Avenue), the downtown side of Howard Avenue from Baronne Street to O'Keefe Avenue, and the riverside of O'Keefe Avenue from Howard Avenue to Lafayette Street. This will expand both the Warehouse District and the Lafayette Square local historic districts, make them equivalent to the National Register Historic District, and place the boundaries in a more clear and easily understandable location.