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Restoring cultural capital through preservation in the Holy Cross Historic District

Jennifer Ann Hay

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, ajenny@gmail.com

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RESTORING CULTURAL CAPITAL
THROUGH PRESERVATION
IN THE HOLY CROSS HISTORIC DISTRICT

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Geography and Anthropology

by

Jennifer Ann Hay

B.A., University of Texas at Austin, 2006

M.S., Texas State University-San Marcos, 2008

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ABSTRACT

This research analyses the social construction of a neighborhood's history through the architectural narrative visible in its housing stock, critically engaging with modern practices of evaluation and interpretation of historic significance espoused by preservationists. Physical manifestations of the application of the National Historic Preservation Act and local regulations, in conjunction with efforts of preservationists as agents of recovery targeting the Holy Cross Historic District in New Orleans after the hazard events of 2005 reveal new and altered perceptions of the neighborhood through changes in space and structure. Methods include quantitative analysis of property values and demographics, (economic capital), and documenting of qualitative expressions of value, through sociopolitical characteristics such as historic significance, age, and access to resources through social networks including expertise and sweat equity (cultural and social capital). Physical evidence of change within the built environment, gathered through aerial and ground-level photography, as well as data from archival sources including tax rolls, local commission files, and property surveys, provided information on construction, demolition, and valuation of structures in relation to their age and assigned level of historic significance. The spatial nature of recovery is evident from the infusion of economic capital as related to the location of cultural and social capital, and the role of the district in enhancing this recovery is seen in not only return rates but also property values, decreased demolitions, and increased investment from organizations within and outside of the Holy Cross neighborhood. Results suggest that property values within the historic district rose on average 15 percent higher than properties outside its bounds within fifteen years of designation; additionally, higher ratings of significance correlated with lower demolition rates for blocks within the district. Historic designation can be an effective tool in the construction of a cohesive community

identity through the preservation and interpretation of a shared social memory; however, without the embodied cultural capital to support the claim of historic significance, the benefits of preservation are limited to the institutionalized and objectified material culture acting as repositories of capital and thus reproducers of social stratification.

CHAPTER 1 CROSS THE CANAL

Like a neighborhood monogram, the spray-painted letters “CTC” mark doorways, corners, street signs, and clothing-in the Lower Ninth Ward. “Cross The Canal” identifies the neighborhood in relation to the body of water on its western edge, the Inner Harbor Navigational Canal (IHNC). Completed in 1923, the IHNC is commonly known as the Industrial Canal, and only two bridges span the waters to connect the Lower Ninth Ward with the rest of New Orleans. Part of the Lower Ninth Ward, the Holy Cross neighborhood boasts a largely intact historic housing stock and stunning views of downtown New Orleans from the levee along the Mississippi River. Street names recall the owners of long-disappeared sugar plantations, grown-over railroad tracks mark the old streetcar routes, and enormous oak trees peek over the brick fence surrounding Jackson Barracks, now a Louisiana National Guard installation. But reading the landscape of the historic built environment in the Holy Cross neighborhood cannot tell all the myriad stories contained in the space over its thousands of years of inhabitation. The rows of nineteenth and early twentieth century cottages, shotguns, and camelbacks reiterate the vernacular nature of the architectural narrative, but without interpretation the builders and residents remain invisible. No physical remnants attest to the historic presence of slaves that planted and harvested the sugar in the plantations, laborers in the sugar refinery and the slaughterhouses, or soldiers headed to and from Jackson Barracks. Even the neighborhood’s namesake, the Holy Cross School, bears little witness to the priests, brothers, and students it shepherded through a parochial education program since 1871; all that remains of the once-thriving three block campus is a single administrative building.



Figure 1.1: Google Street View shows the boarded door of 5200 Dauphine emblazoned with the words "New Orleans PRC" and a fleur de lis.

More traumatic histories find expression in the empty lots and water marks left by floodwaters after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, emphasized by spray-painted notes from first responders still fixed on doors and walls. Ephemera related to construction and renovations litter the streetscape: dumpsters, advertisements for contractors, banners celebrating a returned resident, cones blocking street repair work, plywood and temporary fencing, permits taped on windows. On one corner, a sign on a new building covered in shiny silver insulation board calls itself “a sustainable community center” and the plywood blocking the doorway boasts “New Orleans PRC” in red spray paint, accented by a large fleur de lis (figure 1.1). This site, 5200 Dauphine, is the recipient of donated expertise, materials, labor, and monies from several organizations including not only the Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans (PRC) but also the nonprofits Historic Green, the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, among others. Its renaissance as a community center and headquarters for two local organizations, the Lower Ninth Ward Center for Sustainable

Engagement and Development (CSED) and the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association, follows years of decline and blight with a bright future – not just because of its silver insulation paneling, either. Designed to be a model for future development projects in the neighborhood, 5200 Dauphine anchors a small area of relative prosperity with most homes repaired and occupied and several businesses in operation. Other blocks in the Holy Cross neighborhood have seen lower levels of resident return and recovery in the nearly nine years following Hurricane Katrina; empty houses and weed-filled lots become more prevalent as one moves away from the Mississippi River. North of the Holy Cross neighborhood, debris from illegal dumping still blocks some of the neglected streets filled with potholes.

The Lower Ninth Ward attracted national media attention after Hurricane Katrina as hundreds of residents died, houses washed off their foundations, and streets filled with floodwater several feet deep from the breaches in the levees along the Industrial Canal. Coverage continues to track the area's slow progress toward recovery, in some instances acknowledging the multifaceted marginalization of the community in planning processes that labeled their neighborhoods as optimal green space. Residents accustomed to living Cross the Canal soon saw a new barrier emerge along St. Claude Avenue, a large street that roughly divides the Holy Cross neighborhood from the larger Lower Ninth Ward. Unlike the rest of the area, the Holy Cross neighborhood has received designation as a historic district, providing property owners access to funding sources unavailable to their neighbors just a few blocks away. While the boundaries of the Holy Cross Historic District are not visibly marked in the neighborhood, residents outside the perimeter struggled with the perception that their neighbors were somehow more able to return, repair, and recover with the help of preservation-related organizations' labor, expertise, and funding.

Research Questions

The built environment of the Holy Cross Historic District, the southernmost portion of the Lower Ninth Ward adjacent to the Mississippi River and east of the Vieux Carré (French Quarter), now reflects enormous efforts of recent renovation, restoration, and reconstruction. After Hurricane Katrina made landfall August 29, 2005, first responders worked in New Orleans to extract survivors before beginning to consider the long-term damage the floodwaters might have on the architectural integrity of homes.¹ Although residents could make short visits to their properties, officials prohibited their return until May of 2006; by this time, another major hurricane and almost nine months of neglect led to mud, mold, and vegetation colonizing the spaces formerly inhabited by people.² More than three years passed before half of the residents had returned, and many found themselves wading through piles of debris and bureaucracy in an attempt to secure necessary assistance to restore their lives and properties to some semblance of normalcy.

For residents of Holy Cross and the other nine historic districts in New Orleans who returned to find their homes still standing, cooperation with historic preservation agencies became an important element of their recovery. The official recognition of these neighborhoods as “historic” by both local authorities – the Historic District Landmarks Commission (HDLC) – and federal agencies – the National Parks Service (NPS) through the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), specifically the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) – obligated residents, homeowners, local and federal emergency responders, and other recovery agents to abide by local and federal regulations governing modifications to historic structures. Through the application of these legal requirements and the attention of preservationists, local, state, and federal officials, volunteer organizations, foundations, and others focused on saving

the historic significance of New Orleans, the recovery process in Holy Cross differed substantially from elsewhere in the city in both form and result. This research seeks to find social, political, and cultural implications of the built environment of the Holy Cross Historic District as a function of the regulations and perceptions afforded by its official recognition as a site of historic significance. By examining physical manifestations of the application of the National Historic Preservation Act and efforts of hazard recovery agents specifically targeting historic sites in New Orleans, the research reveals new and altered perceptions of the neighborhood through changes in space and structure. Methodologies from architectural geography, history, and hazards studies enable the consideration of the impact of historic preservation, specifically as prescribed by government entities, on Bourdieu's forms of capital (social, cultural, economic) in a post-disaster context.³

This research considers how historic districts undergo changes in social, cultural, and economic capital after a hazard event. Over its 150 year history, the Holy Cross neighborhood has endured hazard events such as the hurricane season of 2005 that brought significant changes. Physical evidence of change within the built environment, gathered, through aerial and ground-level photography, as well as information from archival sources, provided information on community responses and valuation of structures as they age and eventually acquire the "historic" label. Although no measured shortage of local community-based organizations existed before the storm, Stephen Verderber notes that "dozens of new groups sprang up virtually overnight after Katrina."⁴ These groups, some focused on preservation, made an impact in Holy Cross as "resources that can be mobilized in pursuit of their interests" – in other words, social capital.⁵ Additionally, by tracing the use and/or disregard of legal regulations including Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and local ordinances governed by the

HDLC, directly related to the neighborhood's status as a recognized historic district, this work reconstructed and evaluated the outcomes of historic preservation recovery efforts in Holy Cross by documenting investments in reconstruction and rehabilitation as well as demolition and abandonment.

Empirically, the following questions will be answered: Through the permitting process governed locally by the HDLC, how did the homeowners experience recovery? Did local or federal regulations affect the survival of damaged properties deemed historic? What specific opportunities directed funds toward historic properties, and how did these programs affect the landscape in Holy Cross? Through the collection of empirical data from the large number of sources in order to question the effect of historic designation on patterns of change and recovery in a neighborhood, this research contributes to the ongoing consideration by geographers of meaning inscribed in and on the landscape. Additionally, this research analyses the social construction of a neighborhood's history through the architectural narrative visible in its housing stock, critically engaging with modern practices of evaluation and interpretation of significance espoused by preservationists in public and private institutions. Its study of policy initiatives intended to privilege historic preservation also reveals the impact of legislation on hazard recovery, bringing to the fore the spatial distribution of funding and regulatory jurisdiction as they affect change in the built environment.

Theoretical Framework

The social construction of "property" in this research is a material manifestation of cultural, economic, and social capital. Informed by material culture studies, this work theorizes that "architecture brings meaning to the spatial dimension" and "must be realized in materials."⁶ Specifically, this research continues to answer Jon Goss' call for geographers "to explain

architecture as a social product, as the spatial configuration of the built environment incorporating economic, political, and ideological dimensions.”⁷

Landscape studies in geography, beginning with Carl Sauer and the Berkeley School, embraced an innovative approach that included consideration of historic context when examining new spaces.⁸ Fred Kniffen and Wilber Zelinsky, both students of Sauer, carefully explored pieces of historic landscapes that explored preservation issues through housing and settlement patterns.⁹ Kniffen’s work maintains particular import for this research; his influence on the Department of Geography and Anthropology at LSU cannot be overstated. Geographers reached to historic preservation more directly in the aftermath of the passing of the NHPA.¹⁰ Anne Buttimer brought the idea of social space and its positioning of the “internal subjective...and external spatial order, within an urban milieu” into the narrative so that we could better incorporate the concepts of human perception and participation in society and space.¹¹ Edward Relph endeavored to understand this meaning constructed by people by exploring the relationship between humans and place through a spatial perspective.¹² In the negotiation between people and their surroundings occurs the valuing of these places in which we dwell, and so we inscribe some portion of our identities within and onto the landscape.¹³ More recently, David Lowenthal expanded upon the inherent connections among humans, space, and time: “History concerns Americans because it still vitally affects them: the past remains an anachronistic, living presence.”¹⁴ The implicit significance of space in his statement underscores the importance of spatial perspectives in examining human connection with history through the landscape, and more specifically the built environment. These endeavors served to invigorate urban and regional studies to consider historic preservation in their analyses. In addition, geographers formulated new directions for geographic inquiry into the broader concept of

preservation as it continued to gain popularity through its use in economic revitalization projects throughout the United States.¹⁵

While Kniffen's work stressed the spatial relationship between culture and house types, later scholars refined his ideas to avoid reifying culture and produced a useful conceptualization of the production of the built environment, specifically vernacular homes. Milton Newton, Jr. and Linda Pulliam-Di Napoli took into consideration the public event and consolidated effort that predicated home construction during the early settling of the United States, including Louisiana.¹⁶ They found that although variations in house type could be related to some degree to the knowledge of the homeowner, in fact "the house actually built represents the enactment of a complex enthymeme under which the greater the list of settled beliefs the more the agreement among the party as to the final form of their intended project."¹⁷ More broadly, landscape architect V. Frank Chaffin drew an intellectual thread between the phenomenological concept of space as theorized by Anne Buttimer and Edward Relph and the physicality of place through human alteration – in other words, the construction of the built environment.¹⁸ Working within a small community in northwest Louisiana, Chaffin explicitly describes the value of place as articulated by this community along the Red River by "experiencing the spatial rhythm of a place."¹⁹ Space, then, can be considered by an outsider through examination of the built environment because "meaning is derived from...and is imposed, in this case gracefully and benignly, on a specific location."²⁰ Geographer Richard Francaviglia directly considered the incorporation of cultural values into the built environment in his work on Main Streets in the United States, directing attention not only to physical changes within the landscape but also the associated increase in social and cultural complexity that can accompany these visible or structural changes.²¹ This research builds upon the work of Newton and Pulliam-Di Napoli,

Chaffin, and Francaviglia by relating changes within the historic built environment to the cultural and social landscape.

Despite the growing geographic literature on historic preservation, the lack of theoretical analysis regarding architecture bothered geographer John Goss. He notes, “architecture should be treated as a complex function: as a cultural artifact, as an object of economic value, as a sign, and as a spatial system. The interrelationships among these categories deserve greater theoretical and empirical research.”²² Perceived value holds particular importance in the “constantly redefined...selective process” of historic preservation.²³ Over a decade later, Loretta Lees responded to Goss, writing a refreshing piece on a new building in Canada based on an old Roman design.²⁴ Lees moves beyond the critical social theory that Goss advocated in analyzing spaces, “approaching them differently, as an active and engaged process of understanding rather than as a product to be read off retrospectively from its social and historical context.”²⁵ In response to Lees, Mark Llewellyn proposed an intuitive approach to studying preserved spaces: “By giving voice to residents and inhabitants of architectural spaces, we not only develop a ‘polyvocal’ narrative, but also formulate a methodology for critically engaging with historical built environments, rather than passively analyzing them in their contemporary setting.”²⁶

A geographic perspective of historic preservation began in the exploration of landscape in the early twentieth century; however, few geographers explicitly researched the topic until after the NHPA passed through Congress in 1966. Out of these various inquiries emerged a more critical perspective in the late twenty-first century, which enabled geographers to delve into more specialized connections to historic preservation including memorialization and social memory.²⁷

Research blending the field-based approach of Lees with the concentration on inclusivity advocated by Llewellyn offers the audience grounded empirical data to consider in both specific

and general contexts. Geographic literature can grow in many ways to enhance consideration of historic spaces. Room remains for applied pieces on participation in community historic preservation processes, as well as theoretical understandings of the prioritization of preservation projects. Geographers also can offer a nuanced understanding of space as it functions as a normative force; in the context of historic structures the idea of humans conforming to the demands of their spaces and vice versa becomes very intriguing.

In New Orleans, this geographic work considers a broad, neighborhood-based consideration of meaning and value embodied in and represented by the historic built environment. The theoretical underpinnings of this study rely on three of Pierre Bourdieu's terms of capital – social, cultural, and economic – in order to conceptualize change in the landscape as a result of official designation of historic significance.²⁸ This framework employs a dualistic conceptualization of the built environment, first as a cultural resource closely relating with cultural capital as defined and utilized by preservationists, and second as the physical environment in which culture is (re)produced. Cultural capital, then, embodies both vulnerability to environmental risk and community resilience through its intrinsic connection to economic capital.²⁹ Social capital as a concept emerged from the work of Pierre Bourdieu as one of four distinct capitals, distinctively identified as being “made up of social obligations.”³⁰ Although Glenn Loury used the term previously in reference to networking, neither author gained much attention until James Coleman suggested it as a connection between “social structure” and “human capital”.³¹ The vague and adaptable definition given by Bourdieu made it susceptible to procurement by other fields without concern for maintaining a clear and logical definition. Vinay Gidwani identifies three concurrent meanings of social capital within the social sciences: first, a manifestation of trust that facilitates economic activity; second, social connections that combine

to create community resiliency; and finally, relationships that can produce actual economic capital gains.³² These meanings emerge from the juxtaposition of a struggling economic dialogue resting upon the use of the term by the World Bank and social science research focusing on resilience in disaster-stricken communities. Geographers may still find some value in the concept of social capital if the term can be clearly conceived and defined in the context of a valid theoretical foundation.³³

Despite its well-intentioned beginnings in the work of Bourdieu, Loury, and Coleman, the concept of social capital became saturated with meaning derived from economics. Contending that social capital extends not only on an individual level but also on a community, national, and international scale, Robert Putnam expanded the concept to include networking, group activities, and community organizations without a strict definition of any of these elements.³⁴ Alejandro Portes evaluated the discrepancies in meaning throughout the literature, and concluded that although easily applicable to larger scales, the value of the concept of social capital lay largely at the individual level.³⁵ Portes' warning that social capital at community, national, and international scales became both cause and effect did not deter the World Bank from continuing to use the term to direct funding initiatives. Stephen Samuel Smith and Jessica Kulynych suggested changing the terminology to "social capacity" in order to reflect a more succinct and transparent meaning.³⁶ The debate on social capital as a tool for economic directives continues in political science, policy, and economics³⁷

In geography, Sarah Radcliffe synthesized the literature on social capital in order to identify its limitations while endorsing further theoretical conceptualization.³⁸ Her conclusion grounds the usefulness of the term in its applicability to development geography, while advocating geography's potential contribution since "the literature within development studies

has often failed to examine in depth the sociospatial relations which constitute ‘scaling up’.”³⁹

The geographic concept of scale remains vital to the concept of social capital. Nevertheless, social capital and its myriad connotations stigmatized interested researchers and so geographers hesitate to fully engage. This research will rely on the definition of social capital expressed by Russell Dynes: “the aspects of social structure, which are of value to social actors as resources that can be mobilized in pursuit of their interests,” expanding it based on geographer Linda Naughton’s challenge to “explore social capital as a set of relations, processes, practices and subjectivities that affect and are affected by, the contexts and spaces in which they operate.”⁴⁰

Following Giles Mohan and John Mohan, this research respects the spatiality of social capital by locating its effects within and outside of intended places.⁴¹ While access to resources may be made available through organizations and individuals within and outside of the Holy Cross Historic District, “the presence of a network and the existence of relationships between actors do not predetermine the socio-spatial outcomes” and thus the identification of social capital at work in the neighborhood by this research is limited to only circumstance; further exploration of intent, relationships, and application will reveal the full extent of the preservation network’s impact on the landscape.⁴² Recently, some preservationists have harnessed the language of social capital to support their relevance in the communities in which they work.⁴³ These arguments draw heavily from neoliberal ideals of urban development and creativity forwarded by Richard Florida and others who have earned sharp critiques from geographer Jamie Peck among others.⁴⁴

Perhaps some truth lies in the claims of the preservationists, though, as they constitute actors in space and place that can provide access to resources including expertise and funding.

Additionally, groups are subverting the historic district’s hegemonic definition of significance through multiple processes, including renewing interest in sites related to the Civil Rights

Movement and public school integration, nominating the levee breaches for inclusion in the NRHP, and installing signs welcoming drivers to the “Historic Lower Ninth Ward” far outside the bounds of the districts. These examples, further discussed in chapter six, reveal potential unintended, some negative, forms of social capital, and mark an important contribution of this research to a context-driven conceptualization of social capital.

Cultural capital seems to receive less scholarly attention than its sibling social capital, but this does not lessen the import of its application to this study. Bourdieu does not conceptualize social capital in a vacuum, but rather places it relatively within a collection of capitals harnessed by humans to (re)produce their cultural environment. Sharon Zukin discusses cultural capital in the context of the process of gentrification and the creation of Disney landscapes, contending that it “plays a real, i.e. material, role in moving financial capital through both the economic and cultural circuits.”⁴⁵ This holds relevance in this context in that the cultural capital of the historic built environment both attracts and stages investment of social and economic capital. Often implicated in the process of gentrification, cultural capital is characterized by Bourdieu as something to be desired and consumed by high society: opera, fine art, museums, and knowledge. Geographer Joanna Waters recounts Bourdieu’s classification of cultural capital as embodied, objectified, or institutionalized, and David Ley suggests that artists, as cultural producers, lend their embodied cultural capital to a neighborhood characterized by its affordability, or low economic capital, thereby increasing the cultural capital, desirability, and value of the neighborhood by their presence in that space.⁴⁶ This research departs from that assignment of embodied cultural capital by postulating that cultural capital can exist in space without being brought or created by artists or other agents of cultural production.

This research employs a definition of cultural capital drawing from meanings assigned by both preservationists and sociologists, complicating the concept and questioning its utility in the comprehension of the broader effects of historic designation. Bourdieu suggested that in order to appropriate objectified cultural capital, a person must also possess related embodied cultural capital; a fine painting could not be enjoyed by a person without the person's comprehension of its significance in relation to the esteem of high society.⁴⁷ Aged buildings designated as historic defy Bourdieu's original concept because the possession of the structure does not require the owner to embody any related knowledge, education, or other form of cultural capital related to the acquisition and activation of the objectified cultural capital. Embodied cultural capital thus affords "individual dispositions and competencies that give privileged access to such capital in its "objectified" form of cultural artefacts."⁴⁸ While Bourdieu's concept is limited in a number of ways because of "incompatibilities between the functions and forms of cultural capital," the term has nevertheless found its way into historic preservation literature.⁴⁹

Preservationists, often part of the elite class in American society, espouse a value system in which the old or aged, also called traditional or classic, are worthy of attention and thus valuable resources. Their belief that "buildings deserve to exist in their authentic state" privileges these landscapes protected in historic districts, with little or no attention given to the sociocultural significance or meaning of the structures, spaces, or sites.⁵⁰ For preservationists, value is an inherent characteristic of an old building, a form of objectified cultural capital. G.J. Ashworth defines cultural capital as "accumulated cultural productivity of society and also the criteria of taste for the selection and evaluation of such products;" later scholars of historic preservation would complicate the dichotomy of legitimate/dominated culture by considering that the historical narrative is vulnerable to exploitation by any number of interpreters, not

confined to the legitimate or dominant class.⁵¹ This research intends to employ the concept of cultural capital in a rather experimental way, based on its use by preservationists to assign values to their wards. By using age to determine the level of cultural capital objectified within a structure, this research questions whether the intention of preservationists to keep the built environment intact actually meets any success through established policies and accepted practices.

Using the terminology of cultural capital not only references familiar jargon for preservationists but also draws upon the original intent of Bourdieu in employing the concept as social critique for the reproduction of a dominant, elite class. As suggested by sociologist Sharon Zukin, this definition of cultural capital assumes both production and consumption; that is, the material composition of the architecture must be followed by the consumption of the significance of the structure by those individuals or communities possessing the embodied cultural capital to comprehend and appreciate associated meanings, including its historical significance and integrity. Zukin points out that these consumers “know enough to appreciate historic architectural style and imported cheese; on the other hand, they help to support, at least symbolically, the city's middle-class tax base.”⁵² Buildings thus can be assigned institutionalized cultural capital; that is, the HDLC and the NPS through their designations as contributing structures, landmarks, or other levels of significance transfer cultural capital to the properties in the historic district.

The establishment of legally-protected landmark historic districts confirms the selective construction of spatial narratives. While the legal definition of distinction relies on architectural or 'historical' value, there is no objective standard for it, and selection committees' decisions are often influenced by which social groups will consume the district in a landmark guise.⁵³

Negotiating the process of recovery through permits and reviews by various technical and political commissions requires some additional form of cultural capital, whether embodied by a

homeowner as knowledge of both preservation and bureaucratic practices or acquired through social capital. In conjunction with economic and social capital, cultural capital allows this research to examine the agency of historic preservation as a tool of landscape control, economic development, and recovery.

Methods

The research methodology employed by this project draws from the strengths of both quantitative analysis, through simple compilation of data including property values and demographic characteristics (economic capital), and qualitative expressions of value, through sociopolitical characteristics such as historic significance, age, and access to resources through social networks including expertise and sweat equity (cultural and social capital). The value of a mixed methods program such as this in geographic research rests upon its ability to integrate the interdisciplinary nature of the field into a relevant and accessible language of results.⁵⁴ In order to identify the levels of cultural, economic, and social capital potentially present in each block, I followed a careful procedure of analysis, layering the data gathered from each source in a spatial chronology. Cultural capital resides within historic properties, physically remembering the investment of economic and social capital, in two forms: objectified and institutionalized. Objectified cultural capital relies on the historic value of the property related solely to its age, independent of condition or designation. Institutionalized cultural capital is imbued by the HDLC and the NPS through designations, ratings, listings, and districts. Three specific methods inform the results: visual landscape analysis through photographic, satellite, and field-based sources; historical analysis through archival sources including maps, tax rolls, architectural surveys, and media reports; and participant observation including volunteer work, community

meetings, and informal interaction with residents, former residents, neighbors, preservationists, and others in and near the Holy Cross Historic District.

Identifying objectified cultural capital requires a determination of the approximate build date, and thus age, of a structure. The earliest detailed documentation of properties in the downriver neighborhoods of New Orleans were insurance maps published by E. Robinson and later the Sanborn Company beginning in 1886, although the 1852 map of Maurice Harrison and earlier maps related to the Battle of New Orleans in 1814 provide some evidence of the plantations that predate the subdivision of these lands. The Robinson and Sanborn maps are used to identify the date of construction for the earliest structures in the Holy Cross Historic District. Aerial photographs provide an overhead perspective comparable to the aforementioned maps, although with less detail regarding street names and construction types.⁵⁵ Aerial photos still provide a visual inventory of the structures in place on a particular day, and can offer some information regarding housing type and relationship to surrounding buildings and transportation networks. I compare the first aerial photograph, taken in 1933, with the last Sanborn map, published in 1937; after the 1937 Sanborn map, aerial photographs and later satellite images document the lifespan of the properties. Neighborhood surveys in 1991 for the HDLC and in 2002 for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) photographed most extant structures, and some empty lots, in the Holy Cross Historic District. These images are particularly useful in determining the survival of structures through the city's blight eradication programs in the late twentieth century. Digital images captured and curated by Google Street View, an online mapping platform introduced in 2007, provided an extended visual record into the post-Katrina years that helped determine specific demolition dates.⁵⁶ Finally, windshield and street-level surveys conducted by the author provide the latest verification of a property's survival.⁵⁷ For the

purposes of this study, those properties constructed prior to 1883 hold the highest level of cultural capital, and those constructed after 1976 hold the lowest.

When a structure disappears from the visual record, I use tax records and the HDLC files (beginning in 1952 and 1991, respectively) to verify demolition dates. Tax records indicate whether an improvement on the property has any value; surveys occur at least every three years, so the decade of demolition can be ascertained with a three-to-six year margin of certainty when compared to the visual record. The HDLC, as the office of enforcement for regulations related to local historic districts, maintains files on each property that has undergone some external alteration since the establishment of the district.⁵⁸ The HDLC requires a Certificate of Appropriateness (CA) for changes affecting “exterior architectural features” of contributing structures, that is, any building considered historically significant within a locally designated district.⁵⁹ A demolished structure represents a total loss of objectified cultural capital to the property, but if someone erects a new structure on the lot prior to 1976, I assign the property is assigned a level of significance according to its decade of construction (table 1.1). The total level of cultural capital contained in each block is determined by adding the scores of each property then dividing this total by the number of properties contained within the block. This creates a variable that can be compared between blocks, leading to a better understanding of how objectified cultural capital is or is not effectively saved by preservation regulations.

Table 1.1: Scoring system for assigning value to objectified cultural capital based on estimated building construction date

Built before...	Assigned Cultural Capital Score
1883	7
1909	6
1933	5
1945	4
1950	3
1960	2
1976	1

Identifying institutionalized cultural capital relies on fewer sources than its objectified counterpart. Two institutions hold the ability to grant or deny this form of cultural capital: the HDLC and the NPS. Three types of designation occur within the Holy Cross neighborhood: local historic district, NRHP historic district, and local landmark. Inclusion in historic districts was determined by consulting maps available from the HDLC and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The HDLC website lists local landmarks.⁶⁰

Both local designations (district and landmark) fall under the regulatory jurisdiction of the HDLC, but inclusion in the NRHP historic district also brings the potential for additional bureaucratic oversight through the SHPO. It is important to note that the SHPO only becomes involved when federal funds are spent or a federal permit is required for a project in a NRHP historic district. After the hurricanes in 2005, federal funding through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) required city-wide windshield surveys to document the condition of structures damaged by the storms and floods. First responders conducted these surveys in conjunction with SHPO and HDLC officials, collecting data that would eventually not only determine the eligibility of structures for designation in the NRHP but also mitigate the loss of historic resources through the establishment of a digital database. These initial surveys often took place after little, if any, training in the field, leading to inconsistencies in the analyses of housing styles among the neighborhoods. Survey results also provided important context for the thousands of FEMA-funded demolitions that took place over the next five years, which triggered the Section 106 process for those properties deemed eligible for the NRHP.⁶¹ Section 106 reviews, archived at the SHPO office, provide determinations of eligibility for those properties outside of the local historic district.

The rating system of the HDLC rests on the initial architectural survey of the Holy Cross neighborhood in 1979 by Koch and Wilson Architects.⁶² Later surveys conducted by the HDLC, including one completed in 1995 and present in nearly every property's file in the HDLC office, failed to establish dates of construction and did not adhere to accepted definitions of vernacular housing types such as the shotguns ubiquitous in the Holy Cross neighborhood. The HDLC prior to 2011 discriminated between properties that held varying levels of significance through a seven-tiered color-coded rating system. No such system is in place for the NRHP historic district; however, only thirteen properties fall outside of the boundaries of the local district and inside those of the NRHP district. Due to their proximity to the local historic district, all thirteen of these NRHP-only properties were rated using the same seven-tiered system as those inside the local district, so the same scoring system will be applied to them. This research assumes that the SHPO and NPS would provide the same level of protection as the HDLC does based on the ratings of the properties. The same survey used by the HDLC to inform the local historic district ratings was used by the SHPO in determining the NRHP boundaries. The discrepancies between the boundaries of the two districts can be explained by the inclination of the HDLC to have more regular edges that do not include or exclude partial blocks, and the more stringent standards by which the NRHP considers integrity and significance. While they might contain objectified cultural capital, properties outside of both historic districts contain no institutionalized cultural capital. The inconsistencies of the aforementioned surveys in assessing architectural styles and types present in the Holy Cross neighborhood do not render the HDLC's rating system useless, but rather serve to draw out the subjectivities inherent in the ongoing analysis of the historic significance in designated properties. This research will not compare the value of a particular housing type or architectural style within the historic district (although perhaps another study in

the future might use that sort of analysis to inform research revealing the effects of these inconsistencies). Instead, I will identify the institutionalized cultural capital assigned through the HDLC rating system to houses designated historic, as well as the age of these structures to argue that preservationists see inherent value increase as buildings grow older.

Tax assessment values indicate the level of economic capital present in the built environment. A large number of studies exist to test the effects of historic designation on property values, owing to the common oppositional assertion that the regulation that accompanies designation will diminish the market value of the property. While many studies use sales prices to determine the effects of historic districts on the value of buildings, several have successfully used tax assessment values to measure the effects of historic designation.⁶³ In the case of this study, a combination of the advantages of data availability and standardization noted by Rypkema, Cheong, and Mason and a distinct disruption caused by the housing market crash of 2008 make tax assessment values the best choice for comparison.⁶⁴

The tax assessment values were adjusted to reflect the percentage of actual value used by the assessors in their estimates. On the New Orleans tax rolls prior to 1976, the assessed value represented 85 percent of actual value.⁶⁵ With the passage of a new state constitution, however, the city of New Orleans joined all other Louisiana municipalities in recording new tax assessments that represented only 10 percent of a property's actual value.⁶⁶ Two comparisons provide insight into the experience of recovery for residents. For each decade after 1950, I compare the average value of lots containing improvements, called "properties" in this manuscript, in each block with the average from the decade prior and the average for all properties in the Holy Cross East and West assessment areas in that decade. These comparisons provide documentation of the trend of values, whether increasing or decreasing, among the

blocks over the past sixty years, as well as the differences among the blocks in each decade. The chronological comparison will inform the discussion of the effects of hazard events as well as historic designation over time, while the geographical comparison relates the levels of economic capital with the levels of cultural capital in each block.

The final form of capital to be considered by this research is social, defined as “the aspects of social structure, which are of value to social actors as resources that can be mobilized in pursuit of their interests.”⁶⁷ The value of social capital is not quantified by this study and is not evenly distributed throughout the neighborhood (see chapter six for suggested future research projects related to this work) but its existence is noted in relation to historic preservation efforts in a number of ways. First, the presence of community organizations constitute social networks available to residents and property owners in the Holy Cross neighborhood. These organizations interact with preservationists in their efforts to increase social cohesion, increase and facilitate recovery efforts, and sometimes preserve the built environment.⁶⁸ Next, the efforts of volunteer groups to provide free labor and materials to the Holy Cross neighborhood signifies the activation of resources through social networks, and thus is an indicator of social capital.⁶⁹ Finally, design expertise through not only restorations and reconstruction projects but also facilitation of community “design charrettes” to give residents a voice in the future development plans for their neighborhood represents another resource made available through the preservation-related social capital in the Holy Cross neighborhood. These data were collected through newspaper accounts, conversations with preservationists and members of local community organizations, and participant observation through attendance at meetings regarding planning, development proposals, and other community matters and through volunteering with Historic Green, a nonprofit based in Kansas City with an ongoing commitment to the Lower

Ninth Ward. My role as volunteer within the neighborhood provided access to residents, community leaders, and other volunteers; it also grounded my perspective in the work of preservationists underway within the Holy Cross neighborhood.

Chapters

This research seeks to find social, political, and cultural implications of the built environment of the Holy Cross Historic District as a function of the regulations and perceptions afforded by its official recognition as a site of historic significance. Physical manifestations of the application of the National Historic Preservation Act and efforts of preservationists as agents of recovery targeting historic sites in New Orleans reveal new and altered perceptions of the neighborhood through changes in space and structure. This work begins with an introduction to historic districts and site designations which grew out of the American Preservation Movement, led by philanthropic women working to preserve sites associated with military heroes of the American Revolution and the Civil War. In the early twentieth century, the federal government began to formalize its conservation efforts in programs such as the Antiquities Act, the National Park Service, and the New Deal, which led to the establishment of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1949 and then the National Historic Preservation Acts of 1966. Two conflicts, the destruction of Pennsylvania Station in New York City and the proposed Riverfront Expressway through the Vieux Carré in New Orleans, galvanized preservationists and validated the new federal regulations. As SHPOs negotiated their roles in conjunction with local regulating commissions like the New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission, legislators layered policy initiatives to designate and protect historic resources. Chapter two recounts the history of the Preservation Movement in the United States as it relates to New Orleans and the regulations controlling historic spaces. Historic districts function as memorials to a particular version of the

past, creating highly ordered landscapes whose meaning is interpreted by preservationists rather than residents. This is evidenced in the Holy Cross Historic District, which privileges the vernacular architecture built in the mid-nineteenth century in the riverside portion of the Lower Ninth Ward.

Following the discussion of the American Preservation Movement, a brief chronicle of the Holy Cross neighborhood grounds its historic significance within the context of the evolution of the Lower Ninth Ward, which relied heavily on the industries that functioned within its bounds beginning in the early nineteenth century. From sugar refineries to slaughter houses, large-scale production took advantage of the affordable property on the margins of the city and brought workers downriver along the streetcar lines. Houses for working-class European immigrants reflected the common vernacular forms of the time: small Creole cottages built from barge wood and shotgun houses, narrow structures typically one room wide and several rooms deep, with detached kitchens in the back. As the city fought to regain its economic advantage after the Civil War, its attention fell on the shipping industry and efforts to improve infrastructure such as docks and connectivity with the Gulf of Mexico resulted in the creation of the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal. More commonly known as the Industrial Canal, the body of water effectively severed the connection of the Lower Ninth Ward with the rest of the city. Institutions for marginalized communities including orphans and the infirm found space in this neighborhood. Residents of this area found their existence denied in official reports about their home and began to organize in order to demand basic infrastructure and amenities from the city. Decades later, white residents left the neighborhood motivated by the racial stigma of integration and increased mobility related to interstate expansion, and the abandonment was catalyzed by two major hurricanes in the 1960s. The built environment reflects the dynamic history of the

Lower Ninth Ward, but the designation of the Holy Cross Historic District and associated regulations of aesthetic changes do not recognize significance outside of the architectural narrative of the vernacular house types and styles. This chapter concludes by relating the preservation of structures in the Holy Cross Historic District with the emergency response and recovery after the 2005 hurricane season.

Chapters four and five divide the Holy Cross Historic District into eight zones based on the uses, development, and recovery evident in clusters of blocks. The data collected through the methods explained in this introduction reconstruct the dynamic landscape of the Holy Cross neighborhood over the past 130 years. The effects of permitting, regulations, and funding on the built environment are considered through a decennial progression of landscape change, incorporating the sociocultural history narrated in chapter three. The locations of cultural, economic, and social capital within the Holy Cross neighborhood reveal that concentrated areas of recovery lie within the bounds of the designated historic districts as opposed to blocks outside its perimeter. The power of the HDLC to prevent demolitions as well as the limits to local regulation reveal the effect of preservation policy on the neighborhood. The spatial nature of recovery is evident from the infusion of economic capital as related to the location of cultural and social capital, and the role of the district in enhancing this recovery is seen in not only return rates but also property values, decreased demolitions, and increased investment from organizations within and outside of the Holy Cross neighborhood.

Finally, this research will conclude by critically engaging with the preservation ethic of the Holy Cross neighborhood, identifying whose heritage is preserved and interpreted and who controls the landscape of the built environment moving forward. A process of memorialization is being negotiated by residents along with the National Park Service, State Historic Preservation

Office, HDLC, and local organizations like the PRC. While the ongoing reestablishment of a community identity is drawing from the rhetoric of preservationists, access to social and cultural capital remains constrained to those within the bounds of the historic district. Tension between the Holy Cross neighborhood and the rest of the Lower Ninth Ward residents reflects continued social stratification, suggesting that preservation cannot fully bridge the divide between the elitist definition of historic significance and integrity and the messy reality of community memory embodied in the built environment.

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⁵⁷ Fred Kniffen, “The American Covered Bridge,” *Geographical Review* 41, no. 1 (January 1951): 114–123; Fred Kniffen, “Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 55, no. 4 (December 1, 1965): 549–576.; Terry G. Jordan, “Perceptual Regions in Texas,” *Geographical Review* 68, no. 3 (July 1978): 293–307; Terry G. Jordan, *Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy*, The Elma Deill Russell Spencer Foundation 13 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982).

⁵⁸ The official role of the HDLC is more thoroughly explained and critiqued in chapter 2.

⁵⁹ New Orleans, Louisiana, Municipal Code No. 5992.

⁶⁰ “HDLC - Historic Landmarks - City of New Orleans,” accessed March 9, 2014, <http://www.nola.gov/hdlc/historic-landmarks/>.

⁶¹ Chapter 2 provides more in-depth discussion of this process and the meaning of a determination of eligibility.

⁶² Koch and Wilson Architects and Urban Transportation and Planning Associates, *A Survey of Community Development Neighborhoods to Identify Potential National Register Historic Districts and Individual National Register Properties, August 1978-December 1979* (New Orleans: Historic District Landmarks Commission, 1979).

⁶³ Robin Leichenko, Edward Coulson, and D. Listokin, “Historic Preservation and Residential Property Values: An Analysis of Texas Cities,” *Urban Studies* 38, no. 11 (2001): 1973–1987; Jonathan Mabry, *Benefits of Residential Historic District Designation for Property Owners* (Tucson: Tucson Department of Planning and Design, June 7, 2007).

⁶⁴ Donovan Rypkema, Caroline Cheong, and Randall Mason, *Measuring Economic Impacts of Historic Preservation* (Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, November 2011), <http://www.achp.gov/docs/economic-impacts-of-historic-preservation-study.pdf>. The 2008 disruption caused the real estate market in the United States to fluctuate dramatically, resulting in residential property values falling in an unprecedented and unpredictable manner.

⁶⁵ Editorial, “Property Tax Inequities Grow More Dangerous,” *The Times-Picayune*, March 17, 1957, sec. 2.

⁶⁶ Anita Schrodt, “St. Bernard Assessments Hike Is Seen,” *The Times-Picayune*, August 20, 1976, sec. 1.

⁶⁷ Dynes, *Community Social Capital as the Primary Basis for Resilience*, 2.

⁶⁸ Milligan, “Buildings as History: The Place of Collective Memory in the Study of Historic Preservation.”

⁶⁹ Diane Pierce O’Brien, “Measuring the Full Economic Impacts of Local Historic District Designations” (Columbia University, 2013).

CHAPTER 2 AMERICAN PRESERVATION AND THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Public History in the Landscape

The Holy Cross Historic District, site of this research, is a portion of the Lower Ninth Ward neighborhood on the lower side of New Orleans. Before recounting the historical development of this working-class residential space on the margins of the city, I will discuss the meaning and history of the historic district designation, which emerged out of the tradition of historic preservation. Along with scholars Max Page and Randall Mason, I consider preservation to be part of the “broad efforts of American society to come to terms with the politics of memory in the modern world.”¹ While one can argue that preservation in America began with the explicit, purposeful saving of structures deemed worthy of preservation due to their pasts, I situate the subject more broadly within the development of public history. Museums, conservatories, archives, memorials, cemeteries, pageants, parades, festivals, and a number of other sites, events, and performances that mark cultural identity through their connection with the past intersect with historic preservation in this realm of public history. Just as historians have played a significant role in the development of the field, so too have architects, anthropologists, geographers, engineers, politicians, economists, and non-professionals – the field is inherently multidisciplinary. Within the bounds of this project, I give special attention to geographic scholarship in light of the spatial focus of the research and my chosen academic specialty. Thus, the background discussion presented here provides a context for the specific research questions of this project, rather than a comprehensive history of the development of historic preservation as a social movement and profession in America.² I will briefly chronicle the history of historic preservation in the United States, Louisiana, and New Orleans from its roots in elite philanthropic endeavors and the conservation movement ideals reflected in the New Deal in the

1930s. The first efforts to legislate the government's role in historic preservation will emerge from this context, which culminate in a dramatic political conflict set in New Orleans in the 1960s. Then I will analyze the official designations of historic value at the state and local levels, administered by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission (HDLC), respectively, to determine their intended or stated effects on the built environment. Finally, I will turn to existing geographic scholarship regarding the ways in which historic preservation affects communities and the built environment, specifically through the designation of historic districts. Topics well known to geographers such as material culture, landscape, gentrification, and public memory will inform this consideration of the effect of preservation on communities, especially as it pertains to those affected by disaster.

Preserving Patriotism

In the decades following the Civil War, veterans along with their families and descendants began to commemorate the battlefields and cemeteries across the country through ephemeral events such as parades and reenactments and static memorials such as mausoleums and monuments. These practices are rooted in patriotism, a foundational characteristic of the American civil religion that encouraged ancestor worship therefore finding value in places associated with revolutionary, military, or political heroes.³ The acquisition and subsequent preservation of Mount Vernon, home of George Washington, is credited to Ann Pamela Cunningham, regent of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union, an all-female organization begun in 1853.⁴ Large battlefields and cemeteries, such as those in Vicksburg, Mississippi and Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, attracted the attention of numerous veterans' organizations and states that sent statues, obelisks, busts, plaques, and other monuments for

display. Initially, the War Department preserved America's historic battlefields and national cemeteries, being tasked with the creation of national military parks.⁵ Outside of the national cemeteries, however, care for these objects initially fell to local populations. Fortunately, groups of elite citizens, often female, had organized beginning in the mid-nineteenth century in order to save residences and other structures that could inform the search for a national identity.⁶ The preservation movement spread across the country over the next fifty years, defined by the success at Mount Vernon as a private venture funded and led by the upper echelons of local society. Citizens built "shrines to historic personages," looking not to architectural detail but patriotic contribution for significance; as the American population swelled with immigrants in the early twentieth century, this performance of civic identity through memorialization gained in importance.⁷ Through events such as the Centennial Exposition of 1876 in Philadelphia, society inscribed "early American architecture with high moral purpose," and styles such as the colonial revival grew in popularity.⁸ Organizations sprang up to protect America's heritage on the local level, and attention shifted from the ancestor worship marking early preservation efforts to an aesthetic approach bolstered by institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City and the Philadelphia Museum of Art nearby in Pennsylvania.⁹ Philanthropists J.D. Rockefeller, Jr. and Henry Ford both took on enormous projects in historic preservation, at Williamsburg, Virginia in 1926 and Dearborn, Michigan in 1929.¹⁰

As efforts in the private sector continued to grow geographically and financially, local governments also began to engage with historic preservation through the designation of historic districts. This progression allied closely with boosterism in these cities, looking to attract investment and new residents through place promotion. Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., respected historian of the preservation movement, identifies the automobile as "the revolutionary element

in the preservation picture.”¹¹ With the novel mobility afforded by private transportation, families began to travel across the country, visiting places like Colonial Williamsburg and Greenfield Village. The local government of Charleston, South Carolina established the “Old and Historic District” in 1931, led by Susan Frost and the Society for the Preservation of Old Dwellings in combination with Mayor Thomas B. Stoney.¹² A Board of Architectural Review, peopled by “an architect, an engineer, a real estate broker, and a member of the Carolina Art Association,” reviewed plans for any work on the exterior of structures in the District, issuing certificates of appropriateness as approval.¹³ San Antonio experienced a similar surge in preservation efforts, also led by influential women and strong local leadership. Adina De Zavala, granddaughter of the first vice president of Texas, founded the Texas Historical and Landmarks Association in 1912 and Emily Edwards along with a number of De Zavala’s colleagues began the San Antonio Conservation Society in 1924.¹⁴ Along with the mayor, these groups utilized funds from the Works Progress Administration to forward the preservation of important sites around the city. Hosmer points out that most of the women identified as artists, so although they lacked formal training in architecture and history, their holistic perspective of the community lent legitimacy to their projects that included elements of aesthetic as well as social appeal.¹⁵

Nearly synchronously with these movements in Charleston and San Antonio, the city of New Orleans saw a burst of preservation interest beginning in the early twentieth century.¹⁶ The city created the Vieux Carré Commission (VCC) in 1925 to provide advice regarding preservation in the oldest portion of the city, whose landscape still represented the original French street grid and the Spanish colonial architectural.¹⁷ An organization of the residents, property owners, and business people of the neighborhood called the Vieux Carré Society supported the creation of the VCC in order to facilitate the continued preservation and

enhancement of the area as both a tourist magnet and commercial hub.¹⁸ Initially, the VCC lacked adequate authority to prevent intrusions from new construction; this changed after two separate threats were turned away in 1926. A group of elite men and women deemed “patriots” by the *Times-Picayune* saved the former home of the late Confederate General P.G.T. Beauregard by raising funds to purchase the home instead of watching it destroyed for construction of a macaroni factory.¹⁹ When a clothing manufacturer attempted to construct a factory in the lower end of the Vieux Carré, the City Council refused the factory permission to build, purposefully delaying “until the council has had an opportunity to pass legislation which will properly safeguard that section from such as invasion.”²⁰ In 1931, Charles A. Favrot, chair of the New Orleans Planning and Zoning Commission, proposed just such legislation, stating “the preservation of this old historic section is an obligation of the city government.”²¹ The city, however, did not possess the legal power to create such a district to be governed by its own commission; the state amended its constitution in 1936 to accommodate such a situation.²² The amendment provided the city with the means “to exempt property from taxation providing the owners pledge themselves and their heirs not to alter or demolish buildings considered by the commission to be worth preserving.”²³ The ordinance survived legal challenge in 1939, and despite the city’s inability to attract any substantial funding from the NPS for a historic study of the Vieux Carré, the historic district maintained its protected status.²⁴ In 1949, the VCC revised the ordinance and funded the historical study of the district itself, which Hosmer marks as “the point Charleston had reached in the fall of 1930.”²⁵ Delayed though it was, New Orleans’ historic preservation movement had achieved institutionalization, establishing a precedent upon which the Historic District Landmarks Commission would rely a quarter century later.

Organizations dedicated to preserving Louisiana's historic built environment continued to evolve. In the late 1940s, citizens of New Orleans came together in order to oppose the destruction of the Olivier House, an impressive two-story residence built in 1820 and later used to house an orphanage.²⁶ Although the group vocally contested the demolition of this iconic French plantation house, the structure was in terrible condition and state proceeded to raze the building. The experience solidified the citizens' resolve, however, and the Louisiana Landmarks Society was born from the struggle in 1950. Less dramatic were the origin stories of the Louisiana Genealogical and Historical Society in 1953 and the Foundation for Historical Louisiana a decade later; the former supports the exploration of family histories by Louisiana residents, while the latter operates almost exclusively in the Baton Rouge area as a preservation advocacy and educational organization. The work of these groups remains important today as the state and federal efforts to preserve Louisiana's historic built environment struggles with financial constraints.

The Influence of the Conservation Movement

The local efforts in places like Charleston, San Antonio, and New Orleans predicated an important development in American cultural history that buoyed the preservation movement and spurred its entrance into the domain of the federal government. As Frederick Jackson Turner declared the end of the frontier era, a vocal group of Americans began speaking out about conserving the rich resources that fueled economic growth and ensured the survival of the country.²⁷ Conservationists sought "the wise and efficient use of natural resources," and gained footing under the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt.²⁸ Drawing inspiration from transcendentalists such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and John Muir, popular sentiment embraced the concept of wilderness as untrammeled spaces in which "the American

character” could develop and flourish, and advocated wilderness preservation.²⁹ Preservation, as opposed to conservation, purposefully sets aside sites deemed worthy due to their inherent value to remain undeveloped and unexploited. The legislation establishing the first of America’s National Parks in the late nineteenth century, however, sought to protect natural features of the environment valued for their recreational, rather than historical, value, favoring conservation over preservation. The parks predated the National Park Service by more than forty years. Not until passage of the Antiquities Act of 1906 did Americans empower the President to authorize the preservation of “historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest” through their designation as National Monuments.³⁰ A slew of nominations by President Theodore Roosevelt followed the Antiquities Act, and historian Hal Rothman notes the advantage afforded by the flexible language of the law: “as accepted ideas about what constituted important parts of America’s cultural and natural heritage changed, the Antiquities Act remained a malleable tool to fulfill new objectives.”³¹ In other words, the sites designated by this legislation could accommodate shifting public opinions that transitioned from valuing the preservation of wilderness to historic homes to battlefields to internment camps. Once the NPS received its sanction from Congress in 1916, it inherited the responsibility of caring for these National Monuments, numbering thirty-five at the time.³² The Organic Act that established the NPS did reflect preservation ideals, despite its position as only one of three federal agencies tasked with protecting historic sites at the time.

The NPS’s charge of preserving America’s historic heritage expanded again in 1933 as a result of two separate events. First, President Franklin D. Roosevelt shifted the responsibility of caring for several dozen National Monuments and parks from the Departments of Agriculture and War to the NPS.³³ This solidified the institutionalization of the NPS as main guardian of

historic sites in the United States. Second, architect and NPS Eastern Division Chief Charles E. Peterson created the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), funded first by the Civil Works Administration (CWA) and then later by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), both pieces of President Roosevelt's New Deal, in order to document significant sites throughout the country while jumpstarting the stagnant economy through government employment programs.³⁴ In Louisiana this same year, architect Richard Koch became the HABS District Officer and proceeded to carefully document, measure, and photograph buildings all across the state. As a result of increasing pressure on the federal government to provide adequate legislation and funding to support a fully functional historic preservation program within the NPS, J. Thomas Schneider conducted a survey on both national and international efforts to this end in 1934 and 1935. Before its completion, Schneider acted as facilitator within the NPS for the development of appropriate legislation, and in the fall of 1935, the Historic Sites Act was signed into law.³⁵ This legislation imbued the NPS with the explicit responsibility of researching, collecting, and curating the country's cultural heritage.³⁶

New Deal programs such as HABS faded in scope as America's focus turned to World War II. Further development of the federal historic preservation agenda lagged during this time; the economic realities of the country during war did not favor the increased cultural engagement with local and national heritage that marked the previous decades.³⁷ Despite the dwindling public interest during this time, the professionals employed by the NPS in the Historic Sites and Buildings Department continued their work without the benefit of the New Deal dollars and labor force. By the end of the war, a new organization emerged to promote preservation in the United States with a very specific agenda: to create a National Trust. They succeeded in 1949, when President Harry Truman signed the charter for this quasi-public institution.³⁸ The National

Trust, based on the models presented by its British counterpart as well as the San Antonio Conservation Society, coordinated with the NPS extensively.³⁹ The purpose of the institution initially revolved around the caretaking and interpretation of historic sites in need of more attention than that given by the NPS.⁴⁰ A lack of financial stability frustrated efforts to transition the proposed national landmarks program from the NPS to the jurisdiction of the National Trust.⁴¹ Less than two decades later, however, the federal government stepped in to provide funding to enhance the private donations of money and property, greatly extending the reach of the National Trust.

Legislating Preservation

The legislation that enabled the appropriation of tax dollars to the National Trust is the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA). Congress enacted NHPA in order to protect the cultural heritage of America from the destruction virtually promised by projects of the urban renewal programs and continued interstate construction across the country. James A. Glass recounts the passing of this legislation, identifying the convergence of a number of preservation endeavors that led to the NHPA. The reinstatement of New Deal-era programs the HABS and the Historic Sites Survey through President Dwight D. Eisenhower's public highways projects and lobbying by the National Trust in response to demolition of the historic built environment by urban renewal predicated three legislative "impulses" beginning in 1963.⁴² First, President Lyndon B. Johnson's wife, Lady Bird Johnson, successfully advocated for the passage of a number of bills related to environmental preservation.⁴³ Next, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, NPS Director George B. Hartzog, Jr., Northeast Regional Director Ronald F. Lee, and Division of Historic Studies Chief Robert M. Utley drafted several bills to fund both a comprehensive directory of historic sites and funds in the form of grants to support preservation

efforts by the National Trust.⁴⁴ Finally, the United States Conference of Mayors and the Ford Foundation sent a delegation called the Special Committee on Historic Preservation to Europe on a grand tour of Europe in 1965.⁴⁵ This trip resulted in the seminal publication *With Heritage So Rich*, which advocated policy that would “acknowledge the importance of architecture, design, and aesthetics and emphasize the conservation of areas and districts that contained special meaning for each community.”⁴⁶ The following year, these parties joined together to compose and pass the NHPA. Important elements of the bill include the creation of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) managed by the NPS, the establishment of an Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) headed by the NPS Director, and the requirement (Section 106) that any project involving federal funds or licensing consider and mitigate negative effects on historic sites. The NHPA is the legal foundation upon which historic preservation in modern American exists today, and its emphasis on the NPS as authoritative leader reinforced the agency’s commitment to national preservation efforts.

In addition to the NRHP, ACHP, and Section 106, the NHPA called on states to create their own historic preservation offices.⁴⁷ In Louisiana, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is located in the Office of Cultural Development, within the Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism, which is under the jurisdiction of the Lieutenant Governor. The SHPO retains authority to determine what, if any, effect a federal project might have on historic property through the Section 106 process. Like the ACHP, its role is advisory in that its determination does not preclude a project’s completion, but rather directs federal agencies to mitigate adverse effects on historic resources and to consider alternatives that might avoid or minimize those affects.⁴⁸ Projects involving federal agencies and/or federal monies are best served by frontloading the Section 106 process, moving forward as though there are mitigation

responsibilities until proven otherwise and remembering that federal determination of historical significance may trigger state and/or local regulations.⁴⁹ In situations that demand expedience in the release of funding, such as disasters, agreements between the SHPO and the federal agency (such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA) dictate an expedited Section 106 process. These agreements do not preclude the full implementation of Section 106, but rather facilitate improved communication and cooperation in a time of urgent need. The burden of Section 106 reviews has increased dramatically since the creation of the SHPO, but Louisiana had established a commission as early as 1960 to consider issues of preservation. Louisiana Congressman Anthony J. Vesich of New Orleans authored the bill to create the Louisiana Commission on Cultural Resources, made up of appointees from each of the state's eight congressional districts plus the state archivist.⁵⁰ The Chairman of the Commission, Norman Fletcher, held extensive expertise in radio broadcasting but none in preservation. The Commission's abilities were severely strained by funding shortages, a situation that would not be permanently remedied after the passage of the NHPA in 1966.

The first challenges to the state's new preservation legislation brought before the commission for mediation came out of New Orleans. In 1961, the Orleans Opera House Association proposed renovating the Wildlife and Fisheries building in the 200 block of Royal Street in order to house its performances.⁵¹ The structure held the natural history collection of the Louisiana State Museum at the time, but originally housed the New Orleans Civil Courts at its construction in 1908.⁵² The regional division of the Commission on Cultural Resources approved the conversion late that year, but the state legislature refused to act on a request by the mayor of New Orleans for funds to cover a feasibility study.⁵³ State legislators funded the study in 1964, but the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce allied with legislators from outside of the city and

thwarted the efforts of the Orleans Opera House Association by defeating the bill that would have allowed the renovations to occur.⁵⁴

The Commission struggled each year to draw enough state funds to continue to survive, and by 1964 legislators had written it out of the proposed budget altogether.⁵⁵ In spite of its inactivity, necessitated by its desolate economic state, the Commission survived until 1967, when federal funding brought the group back to life and the responsibilities modified to satisfy the stipulations of the NHPA.⁵⁶ In 1968, the state renamed the group the Louisiana Historical Preservation and Cultural Resources Commission, expanded its membership to fourteen designees, and eliminated the regional representation efforts.⁵⁷ Instead, the members originated from the personnel of four state agencies, the faculties of five state universities, and the appointees of five preservation-related philanthropic groups. The board returned to nine members in 1971 with the creation of the official Historic Preservation Office.⁵⁸ During the 1970s, the Louisiana SHPO again provided funding for six regional district offices with a 50 percent local match requirement; this mimicked the relationship between the state office and the Department of the Interior.⁵⁹ Grants available to property owners from the Louisiana SHPO funded the preparatory research and design as well as some renovations/rehabilitations, commonly called “bricks and mortar” projects.⁶⁰ Private properties took on restrictive covenants that ensured the preservation of the site for at least five years in addition to public access, even if the work took place on the interior of a structure.⁶¹ In this way, Louisiana endeavored to provide the means alleviate financial constraints that might encourage demolition of historic buildings, and through the Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism began promoting the history of the state to both its citizens and visitors from around the world. While state support for preservation seemed to have returned, a larger controversy surrounding the Vieux Carré brought

into question the federal government's responsibility for ensuring the survival of historic resources.

The Riverfront Expressway

Just as local and state preservation regulations encountered legal challenges in the 1960s, soon after the passage of the NHPA preservationists struggled to enforce the protections they believed the legislation had authorized. In New York City, the futile battle to save Penn Station brought historic preservationists together in a highly public conflict with developers seeking to demolish the enormous fifty-three year old structure. While this was not the first skirmish over a historic structure in the city, the visibility afforded to the clash and eventual demolition is widely viewed as a key moment in the American Preservation Movement, solidifying proponents and laying the groundwork for the formation of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.⁶² In New Orleans, a proposal to construct a portion of the interstate through the Vieux Carré and along the Mississippi River set the New Orleans City Council, Chamber of Commerce, and others against preservationists in a struggle that would help define a precedent for the involvement of the ACHP in federally-funded projects and unite advocates for preservation of New Orleans' historic resources.

In 1962, the *Times-Picayune* covered the opposition of the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce to the transformation of the Civil Courts building into an opera house, noting it "reaffirmed its earlier position approving in principle the demolition of the building and redevelopment of its site," and itemized the Chamber's rationale. The third reason listed in the Chamber's report, which objects to committing city or state funds to maintaining the site, ends with this emphatic statement: "It seems totally inappropriate to initiate any action which might conflict or interfere with the availability of city funds to accomplish the exhibition-convention

facility at the head of Canal st., widening of Poydras st, and the Riverside Expressway.”⁶³ The New Orleans Chamber of Commerce had a different vision in mind for not only the development of this particular site, but also the use of state and local funds in the future. In mentioning these particular projects in the nearby Central Business District (CBD), however, the Chamber purposefully brought forward a controversial issue at the time between preservationists and city leaders: the Riverfront Expressway. Imagined in 1946 by none other than Robert Moses, famed (or in some circles, infamous) urban planner of New York City, the Riverfront Expressway first came to life in a transportation report entitled “Arterial Plan for New Orleans.”⁶⁴ Moses defined the elevated Riverfront Expressway as both necessary and progressive in order “to prevent the Vieux Carré from becoming a sterile museum without vital associations with the stream of life around it.”⁶⁵ The plan earned mention in *Time* magazine’s 1947 article on Mayor de Lesseps “Chep” Morrison’s cleanup of New Orleans, but this coverage failed to propel its successful implementation.⁶⁶ Another plan in 1951 revived the roadway, but placed it at grade instead of high above the Vieux Carré.⁶⁷ By 1958, the Riverfront Expressway earned official hearings before the New Orleans City Council, which placed it on the docket for construction.⁶⁸ At this point, the Vieux Carré Property Owners and Associates recorded their support for the thoroughfare, while the Louisiana Landmarks Society could make no definitive statement for or against the roadway without first knowing whether it would sit at or above grade.⁶⁹ As plans surfaced for an elevated highway through the French Quarter, both organizations spoke out against the Riverfront Expressway along with the French Quarter Preservation Society.⁷⁰

The City Council, however, seemed deaf to the protests of preservationists, residents, and business owners in the Vieux Carré. In a daring move, they voted in 1964 to fund the construction of an enormous tunnel under the Mississippi River, at a cost of \$1 million,

connecting the CBD with the West Bank of the city.⁷¹ Later that year, U.S. Representative Hale Boggs of Louisiana proclaimed that the Riverfront Expressway would make up part of the new interstate system, dramatically increasing the federal funding available for the project.⁷²

Preservationists lost no time in responding; within the first two months of 1965, they organized a protest that accommodated over 700 people and brought the Vieux Carré Commission into the fold of those opposing to the project.⁷³ Their efforts succeeded in stalling the progress of the interstate into the city and finally attracted the attention of the Secretary of the Interior, Stewart L. Udall, who suggested that the Vieux Carré might be eligible for listing as a National Historic Landmark.⁷⁴ Secretary Udall made the determination that indeed, the Vieux Carré deserved that designation on 21 December 1965.⁷⁵

The controversy began to play on the national stage, with editorial arguments in the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, as well as the *Times-Picayune* directed at the New Orleans City Council, preservationists, and the heads of the federal agencies involved.⁷⁶ When the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approved the route along the Vieux Carré, the National Trust convinced the FHWA director, Rex M. Whitton, to revise this approval, asking for the construction to take place at grade.⁷⁷ Opponents of the Riverfront Expressway decked the Vieux Carré in funeral garb for the Mardi Gras of 1966, gaining exposure for their cause in national media.⁷⁸ The drama peaked in June of 1966, when the New Orleans City Council held a twelve-hour hearing, the longest ever, to consider requesting an additional study of the projected route.⁷⁹ While the New Orleans City Council rejected the call for further study that day, they had failed to defeat the preservationists. In September, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) promised funding for an environmental impact study on the Riverfront

Expressway, and the Bureau of Governmental Research published the study in December of 1966 stating:

The elevated expressway, because of its great massiveness and length through the Vieux Carré, will create a visual and physical barrier that will separate the historic core from the river. This “barrier effect” will tend to thwart future efforts to redefine the river once more as the natural physical boundary of the Vieux Carré. The size and prominence of the elevated expressway structures will present a serious visual and physical intrusion, hindering long-range possibilities for redeveloping the Riverfront Area as a coherent unit.⁸⁰

Not to be discouraged, the Louisiana Highway Department refused to yield. Preservationists took their complaint to court; a number of local leaders including the head of the Louisiana Landmarks Society, architects, authors, and residents joined with the San Antonio Conservation Society, the Preservation Society of Charleston, and the Conference of California Historical Societies to halt the progress on the elevated road.⁸¹

In the midst of the politically-charged situation, the FHWA experienced a leadership change following Richard Nixon’s election as president in November of 1968. The director of the FHWA from 1967 until 1969, Lowell K. Bridwell, seemed likely to allow the Riverfront Expressway to be built at grade, and the *New York Times* reported on 17 January 1969 that Bridwell had, in fact, officially approved the project.⁸² The *Times-Picayune*, however, remained silent about the Riverfront Expressway until 29 January 1969, when Edgar Poe reported that new Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe withdrew the approval.⁸³ Apparently, the FHWA had not allowed the infant ACHP to comment on the Riverfront Expressway as required by the NHPA, therefore nullifying any approval.⁸⁴ The ACHP visited New Orleans in March of 1969, marking only the second site visit the group had ever made.⁸⁵ The Central Area Council of the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce, an outspoken proponent of the Riverfront Expressway, visited the Vieux Carré on the same day to conduct an experiment to prove that the proposed

highway “would present a negligible obstruction to viewers.”⁸⁶ The ACHP did not agree. Acting on precedent set in New York State in 1968, the ACHP addressed the indirect effects of the Riverfront Expressway, and decided that it should be either depressed into a tunnel or relocated entirely to avoid conflict with the Vieux Carré National Historic Landmark.⁸⁷ Due in no small part to the dedication of preservationists in New Orleans and across the country, the Riverfront Expressway never came to be, and no part of the interstate system crosses through the Vieux Carré National Historic Landmark.

State and Local Preservation Solutions

The state of Louisiana acted in 1975 “to consolidate similar government agencies” by bringing together the Commission, the Louisiana State Museum, the Old Arsenal Museum, the Old State Capitol Memorial Commission, the Orleans Parish Landmarks Commission, and the Confederate Memorial Hall under the auspices of the State Art, Historical, and Cultural Preservation Agency.⁸⁸ The consolidation would later be renamed the Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism, and Sandra S. Thompson became its first leader in 1976.⁸⁹ At this time, the Louisiana SHPO only had four full-time employees, and lacked both an archaeologist and an architectural historian.⁹⁰ The budget for the SHPO in Louisiana in 1975 was half of the amount allocated for the South Carolina SHPO.⁹¹ Unfortunately, this situation did not improve over the following decades, and the Louisiana SHPO struggled to keep up with its responsibilities assigned by the NHPA.

While it explicitly called for the creation of SHPOs, the NHPA neglected to make any obligation for local government participation in historic preservation. However, another federal agency stepped in to promote local engagement: the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Through the implementation of its Community Development Block Grants

(CDBG), HUD required local governments to satisfy the environmental regulations (per the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, or NEPA) as well as the NHPA stipulations in order to move forward with CDBG projects.⁹² Considering that New Orleans received over \$14 million in CDBG funds in 1975, this requirement necessitated that a branch of local government comply with NHPA.⁹³ In addition, the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce teamed up with Mayor “Moon” Landrieu to fund the Growth Management Plan, published in 1975, which called for the creation of a city commission specifically dedicated to managing issues of historic preservation.⁹⁴ State law had yet to provide for such an entity outside of the VCC in New Orleans, so although the Historic Districts Landmarks Commission (HDLC) came into being in 1975 with the support of a number of local organizations including neighborhood-based and preservation-based groups, it began functioning in 1976.⁹⁵ Section 1 of the “enabling legislation” reads:

The Council of the City of New Orleans hereby ordains, that the purpose of this ordinance is to promote historic districts and landmarks for the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public through the preservation, protection, and regulation of buildings, sites, monuments, structures, and areas of historic interest or importance within the City of New Orleans; to safeguard the heritage of the City by preserving and regulating historic landmarks and districts which reflect elements of its cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history; to preserve and enhance the environmental quality of neighborhoods; to strengthen the City's economic base by the stimulation of the tourist industry; to establish and improve property values; to foster economic development; and to manage growth.⁹⁶

Two historic districts immediately came under the purview of the HDLC: the Lower Garden District Historic District and the St. Charles Avenue Historic District. The former received its NRHP designation in 1972, after which the HDLC designated and expanded the district in 1975 and 1976, respectively; the latter, however, is not listed on the NRHP, and received its designation as a local historic district by the HDLC in 1976.

Table 2.1: Historic Districts of New Orleans

<u>Name of Historic District</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Regulatory Body</u>
Algiers Point	1993	HDLC
Broadmoor	2003	SHPO
Bywater	1986/1993	SHPO/HDLC
Canal Street	1984	CBHDHLC
Carrollton	1987	SHPO
Central City	1982	SHPO
Esplanade Ridge	1980/1979	SHPO/HDLC
Faubourg Marigny	1974/1978	SHPO/HDLC
Garden District	1971/2007	SHPO/HDLC
Gentilly Terrace	1999	SHPO
Holy Cross	1986/1990	SHPO/HDLC
Irish Channel Area Architectural District	1976/2002	SHPO/HDLC
Lafayette Square	1978	CBHDHLC
Lower Garden District	1972/1975	SHPO/HDLC
Mid-City	1993	SHPO
New Marigny	1994	SHPO
New Orleans Lower Central Business	1991	SHPO
Parkview	1995	SHPO
Picayune Place	1978	CBHDHLC
South Lakeview	2002	SHPO
St. Charles	1976	HDLC
Vieux Carré	1966	VCC
Treme	1998	HDLC
Warehouse	1978	CBHDHLC

This contrast brings to light an important point regarding the jurisdiction of the HDLC over historic districts in New Orleans. Without local designation, the HDLC holds no control over the spaces contained inside of historic districts listed on the NRHP. Property owners must consult the SHPO, rather than the HDLC, when considering projects on structures within NRHP districts that lack local designation. Property owners within local historic districts that are also listed on the NHRP must consult the HDLC; although SHPO holds authority over the spaces by federal law, they defer the power to the local authority. In local historic districts such as the St. Charles Avenue Historic District, which holds only local designation, the HDLC is the sole authority. This can lead to significant confusion for property owners, contractors, neighborhood

associations, and preservationists, as today there are fourteen local historic districts, eight of which are also designated as historic districts on the NRHP, as well as eleven historic districts lacking local designation but listed on the NRHP.⁹⁷ In addition to the HDLC, two other local commissions exist to protect local historic districts: the aforementioned VCC, established in 1925, which governs the Vieux Carré Historic District; and the Central Business District Historic District Landmarks Commission (CBDHDLC), established in 1978, which governs four of the local, non-NRHP historic districts.

Enforcement Tools

As the local regulatory commission monitoring historic properties and districts in the city, the HDLC holds the two most powerful methods of visual control over local historic districts: the requirement that all projects affecting the exterior of properties visible to the public must first apply for and receive a Certificate of Appropriateness (CA); and the ability to charge a property owner with Demolition by Neglect (DN) when a property or structure is blighted, neglected, or otherwise in disrepair. The original ordinance establishing the HDLC contained both enforcement tools, modeling the commission's authority after that of the VCC.⁹⁸ While the CA is a ubiquitous method of control across the country in line with long-standing permitting processes in American cities, DN has received significantly more legal scrutiny since its inception in the early twentieth century.

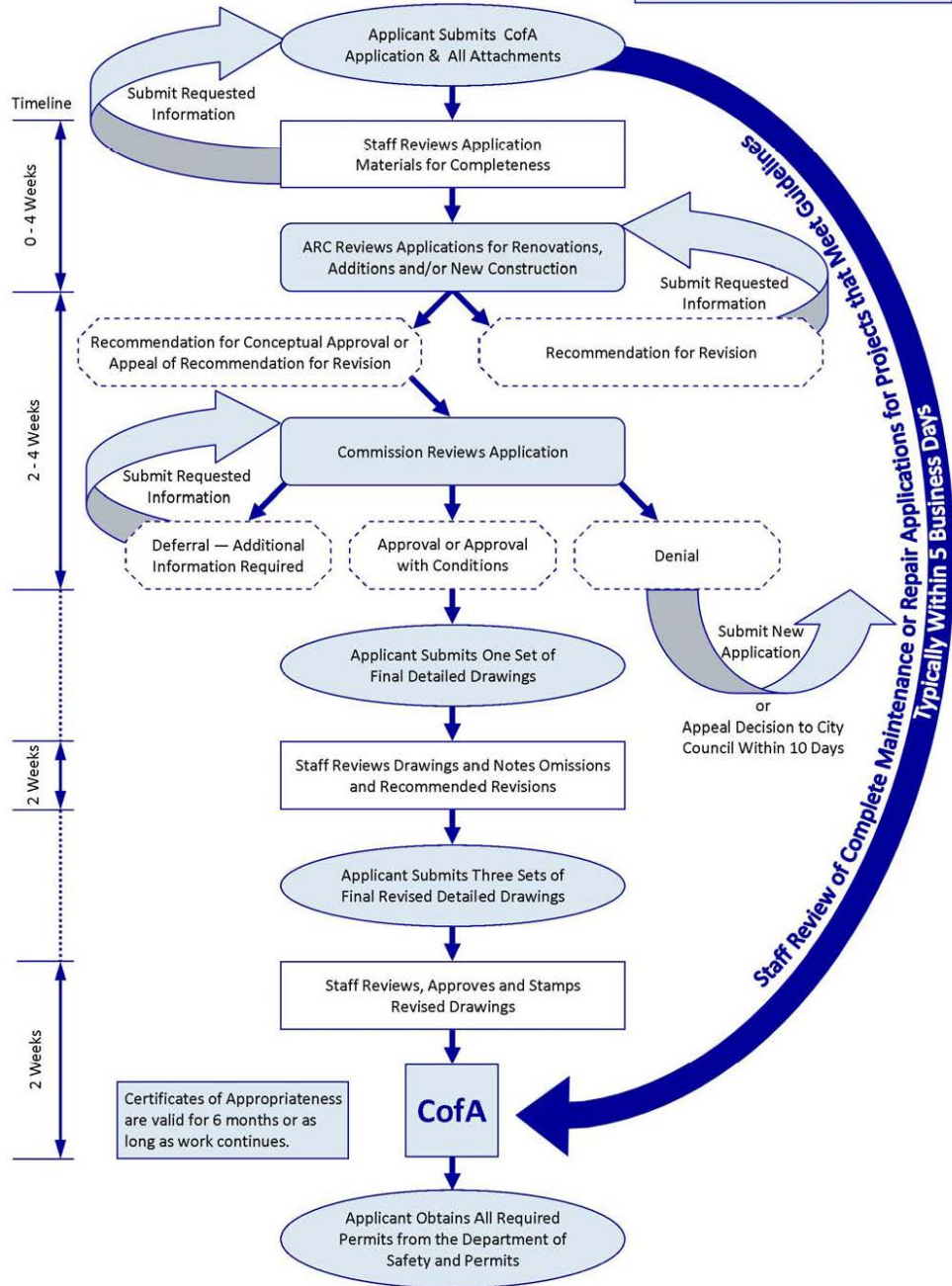
The process of obtaining a CA from the New Orleans HDLC involves a number of steps, depending upon the magnitude of the project. Prior to 2011, property owners and/or contractors could submit plans in person to the HDLC staff for immediate review, and the CA could be granted that same day in an "over the counter" fashion, subject to staff judgment and time. However, interrelated staff cuts and funding shortages combined with an increased volume of

applications made the over the counter service unfeasible. By 2012, the CA process requiring only HDLC staff approval could require up to six weeks.⁹⁹ While some CAs require public hearing before receiving HDLC approval, some less complex projects may receive staff approval and skip the hearing. Modifications and new construction must meet the guidelines adopted by the HDLC. Residents can access the guidelines, which were most recently revised in 2011, on the HDLC website or in the HDLC office.¹⁰⁰ The Commission defines five types of applications, based on the scope and scale of the project: in-kind repair/replacement, restoration, renovation, additions/new construction/relocation, and demolition.¹⁰¹ Figure 2.1, produced by the HDLC, demonstrates the potential complexity within this process.

Applicants that intend to make in-kind repairs or replacements are eligible for HDLC staff approval, foregoing the public hearing. For those applicants seeking to restore, renovate, or construct an addition or new building, there are three distinct approvals necessary to obtain the CA. First, the HDLC staff must consider the application complete, in that the documentation encompasses “regarding all visible exterior materials to be used,” including color choices.¹⁰² The application then proceeds to the Architectural Review Committee (ARC), which makes a judgment based on the project’s conformity to the official Guidelines. At this point, the application can be sent back to the applicant for revision or on to the HDLC for consideration at its next public hearing. Normally, the ARC meets on the third Tuesday of every month and the HDLC meets on the second Thursday of every month. The complexity of the process in combination with the schedule held by the approval committees often results in a more than twelve-week delay for projects in the city.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

All application materials and exhibits must be received by the submission deadline to be considered for an upcoming meeting.



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Figure 2.1: Visual aid for process of securing CA according to HDLC guidelines¹⁰³

The scenario described above assumes the initial existence of an applicant; that is, it assumes the property owner or contractor will begin their project only after receiving their CA. However, in the Holy Cross Historic District, this is clearly not commonly the case. As will be shown in the next chapter, early correspondence between the HDLC and residents soon after the District achieved designation revealed woefully uninformed homeowners who completed work without first consulting the HDLC as required by law. The HDLC employs inspectors to gather field data: photographs, progress reports on jobs, compliance with CA stipulations. If a project in a local historic district has failed to obtain the appropriate CA, inspectors place a “Stop Work” notice on site, and HDLC staff mail a certified letter to the property owner.¹⁰⁴

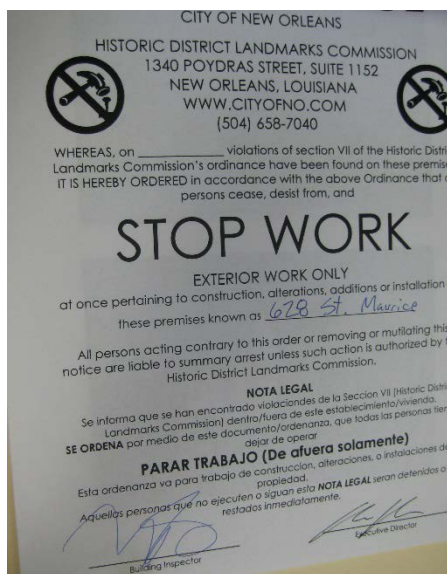


Figure 2.2: Stop Work notice¹⁰⁵

The HDLC staff relies upon property records from the New Orleans tax assessors to contact the appropriate owners, but often the addresses on file do not correspond with the person’s or business’s current mailing address, a situation that worsened significantly because of massive post-Hurricane Katrina displacement in 2005. The “Stop Work” notice then provides a powerful visual enforcement tool for the HDLC. Often homeowners were ignorant of the

regulations in place related to the historic district's designation; sometimes, the City of New Orleans Safety & Permits office gave work permits to contractors and homeowners without asking for the requisite CA. Once work had halted, the property owner had to start from the beginning with the HDLC and apply for a CA – likely an expensive pause of several weeks or months.

If work already completed was found to be out of compliance with the HDLC Guidelines, or if no CA exists for the work, the owner had to apply for retention of those alterations through a CA. It is important to note that owners inherit responsibility for all exterior work performed on a property, regardless of whether they owned the property at the time of the alterations. If the work falls within the HDLC guidelines, the HDLC staff can approve the CA for retention. However, if the alterations constitute a variance, the owner must appeal in person to the HDLC at the next meeting. The results of these retention requests vary, as will be shown in the next chapter.¹⁰⁶

The second legal tool utilized by the HDLC to enforce its guidelines and forward preservation in New Orleans is known as Demolition by Neglect DN, which gives the agency the ability to fine owners whose properties are unsafe or hazardous. DN legislation is not unique to New Orleans, but other American cities that incorporate DN into their preservation legislation vary in their enforcement rates, penalties, and outcomes.¹⁰⁷ From 1978 to 1991, the HDLC issued 547 DN citations to 386 buildings in total, which during this time constituted approximately 5 percent of buildings inside locally designated historic districts.¹⁰⁸ The number of citations substantially grew to approximately five to ten citations per week until Hurricane Katrina in 2005 caused the HDLC's attention to shift to recovery efforts.¹⁰⁹ The DN process begins with a preliminary finding that must be presented to and approved by the HDLC at a

public meeting, after which the owner has thirty days to acquire a CA and begin work to rectify the issues identified by the DN citation.¹¹⁰ Should the property owner fail to meet the thirty-day deadline, the HDLC summons the owner to appear at the next meeting, where the owner makes a defense against the DN citation and the board decides whether or not to formally issue the DN citation.¹¹¹ Upon issuance of the formal DN citation, the HDLC through certified mail gives the owner ten days to provide a rectification plan (through an application for a CA); if no plan is received, the owner is given five additional days to comply with the order.¹¹² If the owner refuses to apply for a CA, HDLC forwards the case to its attorney who begins adjudication in Civil Court.¹¹³ Before 1992, no case had ever progressed past this point, and in 2007 it was still unclear whether the Civil Court had actually levied any fines through property liens.¹¹⁴

Enforcement of restrictions intended to promote preservation ideals written into the design guidelines of the HDLC provided the regulatory body the authority to control landscape changes in local historic districts throughout New Orleans. Policy solutions such as the CA and DN maintain the definition of historic significance and, more importantly integrity, which preservationists utilize to maintain the visual statement of the built environment. These concepts as interventions within the landscape of the Holy Cross Historic District are further considered in chapters four and five as this research discusses the specific forms of capital – cultural, economic, and social – in relation to preservation efforts. In the following section, the progression of geographic thought in relation to preservation is traced through the concepts of material culture, landscape studies, and social memory.

Preservation through a Geographic Lens

The preservation of the historic built environment in New Orleans lends itself easily to geographic inquiry, spanning a variety of methods and theories.¹¹⁵ The research questions

presented earlier in this document revolve around the historic district as an agent of change – through controlling development and physical changes, tying legal requirements of mitigation to federal funding, and facilitating the collection and activation of social capital. As detailed above, the development of the historic district in America exposes some of the politics of historic designation. The district, like other NPS designations including cultural landscapes, relies on geographic concepts without incorporating the knowledge gained through decades of critical engagement by scholars. Historical contingencies remain vital to understanding historic districts due to the plurality and complexity, or messiness, inherent in considerations of human interaction with the built environment. Landscape scholar J.B. Jackson, as well as geographers D.W. Meinig, David Lowenthal, and Edward Relph explicitly recognized the fundamental reliance of the landscape upon historic processes. Jackson’s exploration of the vernacular provided a reminder of the importance of the everyday in the lives of humans, glorifying the mundane and sentimental. His conception of landscapes to be “no more than a collection, a system of man-made spaces” guides this research along with his critical view of the place of preservation within the production of American historic landscapes.¹¹⁶ Lowenthal and Relph challenged the tendency to package historic and cultural resources as palatable commodity at the expense of the dense and problematic histories informing these placeless, mass-produced relics and ruins.¹¹⁷ The NPS states that “a district possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.”¹¹⁸ The district must be identifiable, an inherently subjective condition based upon the prior knowledge of the viewer and their physical capabilities.¹¹⁹

In their study of cultural landscapes, Jackson, Lowenthal, and Relph made local observations and tied them with similar spaces over large expanses of the United States. Their

consideration is historically contingent upon the growing car culture in America, which rapidly changed patterns and processes of movement and mobility through the landscape. Americans' relationship with place changed as they celebrated the freedom offered by the open road and economic prosperity. Regional and national trips gave people access to new places, stories, and experiences. As Meinig states, "landscapes arise out of deep cultural processes as a society adapts to new environments, technologies, and opportunities."¹²⁰

Meinig's work identified more defined culture regions in three concentric units: core, domain, and sphere, building on the geographic study of material culture demonstrated by Fred Kniffen in the Department of Geography and Anthropology at Louisiana State University (LSU) beginning in the 1930s.¹²¹ Kniffen, inspired by his mentor at the University of California at Berkeley Alfred Kroeber, rebelled against the contemporary popularity of regionalism through his identification of culture areas in Louisiana based on folk, or vernacular, architecture, later growing his perspective to much larger areas of folk housing.¹²² Folklorist Henry Glassie took Kniffen's work further in the following decades, working to answer the call from art historian Frank Roos, Jr. in 1943 to explore the "sociological and critical accounts that placed architecture in its cultural context."¹²³

The concept of the historic district also falls within what Jon Goss called an architectural geography. Goss conceptualized "architecture as a social product" and thus as this research delves into preserved places, it lends particular recognition to the cultural significance of place-making through the (re)construction of history.¹²⁴ Peirce Lewis builds upon these understandings in the second edition of *New Orleans: The Making of an Urban Landscape*, in which he considers research of "local architecture and history...distinguished and entrancing" and makes particular note of the distinctive vernacular style, finding that "even the modest houses of

ordinary citizens (both white and black) were unusual.”¹²⁵ Historic districts themselves can be thought of as a result of memorialization, as they preserve “in the city’s collective memory” a certain collection of buildings, sites, structures, or objects.¹²⁶ Geographer Ken Foote, in his study of the forms and processes of memorialization in America, identifies four distinct treatments of spaces with histories of violence or tragedy: sanctification, designation, rectification, and obliteration.¹²⁷ Using this framework, I carefully consider the Holy Cross Historic District as an inextricable part of the Lower Ninth Ward with its long history of social strife and hazard events, which overlap to create disasters such as those seen after the flood of 1927, Hurricane Betsy in 1965, and more recently after the hurricanes of 2005. While the Holy Cross Historic District exists as a designated space, the processes of sanctification, rectification, and obliteration are actively recreating the landscape of the Lower Ninth Ward. With Owen Dwyer and Derek Alderman, I find that historic districts, like memorials, “express the common desire to (re)shape the built environment to celebrate a particular view of the past.”¹²⁸ The result of this process varies widely in America, as Dwyer and Alderman discovered in their study of Civil Rights memorials. They conclude, following Lewis, J.P. Jones III and Wolfgang Natter, that memorial landscapes are “open-ended, symbolic systems” that “can be interpreted like a text...are “authored” [and] are “read” by multiple audiences.”¹²⁹ As Dydia DeLyser recognizes in her consideration of authenticity in preserved spaces,

Historic sites and places of memory such as ghost towns are, ostensibly, landscapes of the past, but such landscapes, and the artifacts that are part of them, are seldom truly left to the ravages of time. Rather, they are more often expressly set up to be interpreted by visitors in the present.¹³⁰

Historic districts preserve a particular version of public memory that can be accessed through the visual landscape of the built environment. A collection of vernacular homes built over a span of two centuries, the Holy Cross Historic District holds meaning for the architectural, social, and

economic histories of the city of New Orleans. In the next chapter, I will trace the story of the Lower Ninth Ward to its beginnings in the early days of French Colonial settlement of the New World in order to understand the development of the built environment of the Holy Cross Historic District. This knowledge will then lead to the analysis of the effects of designation on this part of the neighborhood, especially in understanding change in the built environment related to the social, economic, and architectural histories of New Orleans.

Endnotes

¹ M. and Mason Page, *Giving Preservation a History : Histories of Historic Preservation in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 10–11.

² Melinda J. Milligan, “Buildings as History: The Place of Collective Memory in the Study of Historic Preservation.,” *Symbolic Interaction* 30 (2007): 105–123.

³ Walter Muir Whitehill, “Promoted to Glory...,” in *Readings in Historic Preservation: Why? What? How?* eds. Norman Williams, Jr., Edmund H. Kellogg, Frank B. Gilbert (New Brunswick, N.J.: Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers University, 1983), 51. Kenneth Foote, *Shadowed Ground : America’s Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 267; David Lowenthal, ed., “The Place of the Past in the American Landscape,” in *Geographies of the Mind: Essays in Historical Geosophy in Honor of John Kirtland Wright*, American Geographical Society 40 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 89–117. For more on American Civil Religion, see Robert Neelly Bellah, *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

⁴ William J. Murtagh, *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America*, Rev. ed (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997), 28.

⁵ Kenneth Foote, *Shadowed Ground : America’s Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 278.

⁶ Murtagh, *Keeping Time*, 28.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 32–33.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 34–35.

¹⁰ Ibid., 35–36. These two projects differ dramatically in methodology, for while Colonial Williamsburg attempted to recreate the eighteenth century community, Ford’s Greenfield Village actually brought buildings and artifacts from across the country to produce an educational experience rooted not in any real historic place but rather in a sort of imagined early America. Both outdoor museums were very popular.

¹¹ Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949*, vol. 1 (Charlottesville: Preservation Press, University Press of Virginia, 1981), 1.

¹² Ibid., 1:236–240.

¹³ Ibid., 1:240.

¹⁴ Ibid., 1:275.

¹⁵ Ibid., 1:289.

¹⁶ Two state-wide preservation-related organizations existed at this point, the Louisiana Historical Association founded in 1889 and the Louisiana Architects Association, founded in 1905. Their missions, however, did not explicitly lead them to battling for historic preservation but rather raised awareness of the significance of history and architecture in the state.

¹⁷ Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949*, 1:292; “Vieux Carre Seeking Special Commission,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, December 13, 1920).

¹⁸ “Council to Receive Vieux Carre Appeal,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, March 10, 1920). Later, another organization called the Vieux Carré Association would claim that there had existed hundreds of organizations like the Society in the past, and that the Association pulled them all together in the interest of the preservation of the Vieux Carré.

¹⁹ “General Beauregard’s Home Saved from Fate as Macaroni Factory by Patriot’s Efforts,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, July 8, 1926). This conflict reflected contemporary racial tensions in the Vieux Carré between the wealthy white elite living in the American Sector and the Italian working-class that now populated the Vieux Carré due to its affordability and proximity to manufacturing and shipping industry employment opportunities.

²⁰ “Council to Save Historic Marks,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, July 14, 1926).

²¹ “Auditorium Area Urged as Nucleus for Civic Center,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, April 13, 1931).

²² Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949*, 1:294.

²³ “Senate Enacts Administration Bills on Program,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, June 19, 1936).

²⁴ Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949*, 1:300.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:302.

²⁶ Friends of the Cabildo, *New Orleans Architecture*, vol. IV (Gretna [La.]: Pelican Pub. Co., 1974), 22. The Olivier House held St. Mary's Orphanage, which was the first home of the brothers of the Holy Cross from France before they purchased the land for what is now the Holy Cross School in the Lower Ninth Ward.

²⁷ Carolyn Merchant, *The Columbia Guide to American Environmental History*, The Columbia Guides to American History and Cultures (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 127.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 128.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 132–133. Merchant invokes the work of Roderick Nash to explain that “the American character” is inherently masculine and rejects the perceived weakness of the growing middle class.

³⁰ 16 U.S.C. § 431-433.

³¹ Hal Rothman, “The Antiquities Act and National Monuments: A Progressive Conservation Legacy,” *Cultural Resource Management* 22, no. 4 (1999): 17.

³² Jan Townsend, “The Department of Everything Else, Including Historic Preservation,” *Cultural Resource Management* 22, no. 4 (1999): 6.

³³ Barry Mackintosh, “The National Park Service and Cultural Resources,” *Cultural Resource Management* 22, no. 4 (n.d.): 42.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949*, 1:576.

³⁶ Barry Mackintosh, “The National Park Service and Cultural Resources,” 43.

³⁷ Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949*, 1:715–716; James A. Glass, *The Beginnings of a New National Historic Preservation Program, 1957 to 1969* (Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1990), xiii, http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/glass/glass.pdf; Barry Mackintosh, *The Historic Sites Survey and National Historic Landmarks Program: A History* (Washington, D.C.: History Division, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1985), 27–29, http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/mackintosh4/nhl.pdf.

³⁸ Murtagh, *Keeping Time*, 41–42; Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949*, vol. 2 (Charlottesville: Preservation Press, University Press of Virginia, 1981), 863.

³⁹ Murtagh, *Keeping Time*, 42.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 46–48.

⁴¹ Barry Mackintosh, *The Historic Sites Survey and National Historic Landmarks Program: A History*, 32.

⁴² James A. Glass, *The Beginnings of a New National Historic Preservation Program, 1957 to 1969*, 5–6.

⁴³ Michael Barnes, “Lady Bird’s Legend Still Soars,” *Austin American-Statesman* (Austin, July 26, 2012), sec. D.

⁴⁴ James A. Glass, *The Beginnings of a New National Historic Preservation Program, 1957 to 1969*, 8–9.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 12. Lady Bird Johnson composed the forward to the report.

⁴⁷ 16 U.S.C. § 470a Section 101(b)(3)

⁴⁸ Milford Wayne Donaldson, “Section 106: Responding Successfully to New Challenges,” *Forum Journal* 26 (2012): 10; Amos J. Loveday, “The Decision Maker’s Guide to Section 106,” *Forum Journal* 26 (2012): 17.

⁴⁹ Loveday, “The Decision Maker’s Guide to Section 106,” 17.

⁵⁰ “Louisiana Legislative Digest,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, June 21, 1960), sec. 3; Frank Gagnard, “New Commission,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, October 10, 1961), sec. 2.

⁵¹ Frank Gagnard, “New Commission.”

⁵² Louisiana Division, “Crescent City Memory - Online Version,” *New Orleans Public Library*, 1997, <http://nutrias.org/~nopl/exhibits/ccmem.htm>.

⁵³ Charles M. Hargroder, “Action on Civil Courts Study Request ‘Deferred’,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, March 28, 1962), sec. 3.

⁵⁴ Frank Gagnard, “Music Theater Move Advances,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, March 17, 1964), sec. 1; Charles M. Hargroder, “Opera House Bill Sent to La. Legislative Bureau,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, July 3, 1964), sec. 1; “FOP Speakers Hit Bondsmen,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, July 10, 1964), sec. 1.

⁵⁵ “Gov. Davis’ Proposed 1962-63 Budget,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, May 21, 1962), sec. 2; Charles M. Hargroder, “Louisiana Budget Seen \$964 Million,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, May 7, 1964), sec. 1.

⁵⁶ Bill Neikirk, “Censors Board Ousters Sought,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, May 4, 1967), sec. 3; “La. Legislative Digest,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, July 26, 1968), sec. 1.

⁵⁷ Louisiana Revised Statutes § 25:521.

⁵⁸ Paul B. Hartwig, “Preservation in Louisiana,” *North Louisiana Historical Association Journal* IX, no. 3 (1978): 166.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Anthony C. Wood, *Preserving New York: Winning the Right to Protect a City’s Landmarks* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

⁶³ “Plan for Opera House Opposed,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, March 28, 1962), sec. 3.

⁶⁴ Richard O. Baumbach and William E. Borah, *The Second Battle of New Orleans: A History of the Vieux Carré Riverfront-Expressway Controversy* (University: The University of Alabama Press, 1981), 30; Robert Moses, *Arterial Plan for New Orleans* (New York: Steidinger Press, Inc., 1946).

⁶⁵ Moses, *Arterial Plan for New Orleans*, 8.

⁶⁶ “Old Girl’s New Boy,” *Time*, November 24, 1947.

⁶⁷ Richard O. Baumbach and William E. Borah, *The Second Battle of New Orleans: a History of the Vieux Carré Riverfront-Expressway Controversy*, 33.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 41, 43.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 48; “International Center Boost,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, July 25, 1962), sec. 1.

⁷² Richard O. Baumbach and William E. Borah, *The Second Battle of New Orleans: a History of the Vieux Carré Riverfront-Expressway Controversy*, 49.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 51–52.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 62, 64. This is just before the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act, but after the National Historic Landmarks had been moved into the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the

Interior under the National Park Service in 1960. It is likely that Secretary Udall gave the New Orleans visitors a good idea of what was coming, and he expressed his support in the form of a press conference the next day.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 63–68.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 76, 78.

⁷⁸ *New Orleans in the '60s* VHS (New Orleans: WYES-TV, 1995).

⁷⁹ Richard O. Baumbach and William E. Borah, *The Second Battle of New Orleans: a History of the Vieux Carré Riverfront-Expressway Controversy*, 90–100.

⁸⁰ Marcou, O'Leary and Associates, *An Evaluation of the Effects of the Proposed Riverfront Expressway on the Vieux Carre, New Orleans, Louisiana* (New Orleans: Bureau of Governmental Research, 1968).

⁸¹ Richard O. Baumbach and William E. Borah, *The Second Battle of New Orleans: a History of the Vieux Carré Riverfront-Expressway Controversy*, 131.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 174.

⁸³ Edgar A. Poe, "Proposed Expressway Is Canceled by Volpe," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, July 2, 1969).

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⁸⁵ Charles Boggs, "Preservation Unit Probe of Proposed Route Slated," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, March 1, 1969), sec. 1.

⁸⁶ Frank Schneider, "River View Obstruction Is Tested in Experiment," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, March 1, 1969), sec. 1.

⁸⁷ Richard O. Baumbach and William E. Borah, *The Second Battle of New Orleans: a History of the Vieux Carré Riverfront-Expressway Controversy*, 175–176; Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, *Twenty Years of the National Historic Preservation Act*, Report to the President and Congress of the United States (Washington, D.C., 1986), 114.

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⁸⁹ “Woman Heads Culture Office,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, November 4, 1976), sec. 4.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 174–175.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 175, 400.

⁹² Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, *Twenty Years of the National Historic Preservation Act*, 28.

⁹³ “Housing Money for N.O.,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, September 5, 1974).

⁹⁴ Jane S. Brooks and Alma H. Young, “Revitalizing the central business district in the face of decline: the case of New Orleans, 1970-1990” (1991). College of Urban and Public Affairs (CUPA) Working Papers, 1991-2000. Paper 19.

⁹⁵ Paul Atkinson, “‘Historic’ Panel Action Delayed,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, March 5, 1976), sec. 1; City Archives, “New Orleans (La.) Historic Districts Landmarks Commission,” *New Orleans Public Library*, 2000, <http://nutrias.org/inv/hdlc.htm>. The Louisiana State Legislature passed State Act 804, which expressly provided for the establishment of both commissions and districts dedicated to preserving Louisiana’s heritage, and authorizing them to create protective guidelines.

⁹⁶ Historic Districts Landmark Commission, “New Orleans Ordinance,” *The City of New Orleans*, September 16, 2010, <http://www.nola.gov/RESIDENTS/HDLC/New-Orleans-Ordinance/>. M.C.S., Ordinance No. 5992. 1976. Revised 21 August 1980.

⁹⁷ “LA Historic Preservation - National Register of Historic Places Database,” accessed November 16, 2012, <http://www.crt.state.la.us/hp/nationalregister/historicplacesdatabase.aspx>; “The City of New Orleans: Districts and Maps,” accessed November 16, 2012, <http://www.nola.gov/RESIDENTS/HDLC/Districts-and-Maps/Districts-and-Maps/>.

⁹⁸ Diane Ancker Broussard, “An Analysis of the Demolition by Neglect Citation Process of the New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission” (University of New Orleans, 1992).

⁹⁹ Michelle Kimball, “Budgeting For Outcomes Meetings Conclude Sept. 24th. Speak up in Favor of Funding for CNO Preservation & Planning Departments!,” PRC Blog, September 20, 2012, <http://blog.prcno.org/2012/09/20/budgeting-for-outcomes-meetings-conclude-sept-24th-speak-up-in-favor-of-funding-for-cno-preservation-planning-departments/>.

¹⁰⁰ The guidelines are also available bound in manuscript form from an online publishing company, CreateSpace.

¹⁰¹ City of New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission, “Guidelines Introduction,” May 2011, 01–8, <http://www.nola.gov/~media/Files/HDLC/Guidelines/01%20Introduction.ashx>.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 01–6.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 01–7.

¹⁰⁴ The HDLC does not maintain a record of how they learned of a violation – anecdotally, it seems that neighbors report one another to the HDLC more often than the inspector just happens to notice a violation.

¹⁰⁵ “Stop Work notice,” December 5, 2007, 628 St. Maurice file, Holy Cross drawer, HDLC records. Photo by author.

¹⁰⁶ A last option for the property owner is to apply for a Hardship Variance, which would approve non-compliant alterations in two cases: topographic oddities, or extenuating circumstances affecting only the lot in question.

¹⁰⁷ Anna Martin, “Demolition by Neglect: Repairing Buildings by Repairing Legislation” (presented at the Historic Preservation Seminar, Georgetown, 2007), 3–21, http://scholarship.law.georgetown.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1016&context=hpps_papers.

¹⁰⁸ Broussard, “An Analysis of the Demolition by Neglect Citation Process of the New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission,” 85. This calculation excludes the properties contained within the Holy Cross Historic District, which was not designated until 1991 and thus would not have supplied any DN citations during the 14 years of enforcement considered in this thesis.

¹⁰⁹ Anna Martin, “Demolition by Neglect: Repairing Buildings by Repairing Legislation,” 8.

¹¹⁰ Broussard, “An Analysis of the Demolition by Neglect Citation Process of the New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission,” 15–16.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 17.

¹¹² Ibid., 18.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 19; Anna Martin, “Demolition by Neglect: Repairing Buildings by Repairing Legislation,” 9. Although this research did not purport to determine whether DN liens were being placed on non-compliant properties, HDLC files revealed that liens had, in fact, been placed on the properties in some instances within the Holy Cross Historic District.

¹¹⁵ Allen R.H. Baker and Mark Billinge, *Period and Place, Research Methods in Historical Geography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

¹¹⁶ J.B. Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984), 156.

¹¹⁷ David Lowenthal, ed., “The Place of the Past in the American Landscape,” *American Geographical Society* 40 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 89–117; E. C. Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976).

¹¹⁸ “Section IV: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, National Register of Historic Places Bulletin (NRB 15),” accessed March 11, 2014, http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15_4.htm#district.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.; Dydia DeLyser, “Authenticity on the Ground: Engaging the Past in a California Ghost Town,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 89, no. 4 (1999): 602–633.

¹²⁰ D.W. Meinig, *The Interpretations of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 184.

¹²¹ D. W. Meinig, “The Mormon Culture Region: Strategies and Patterns in the Geography of the American West, 1847-1964,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 55, no. 2 (June 1, 1965): 191–220, doi:10.2307/2561754.

¹²² Fred B. Kniffen, “Louisiana House Types,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 26 (1936): 179–193; Fred B. Kniffen, “Why Folk Housing?,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69, no. 1 (1979): 59–63.

¹²³ Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949*, vol. 2 (Charlottesville: Preservation Press, University Press of Virginia, 1981), 1049–1050; Henry Glassie, *Vernacular Architecture, Material Culture 2* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

¹²⁴ Jon Goss, “The Built Environment and Social Theory: Towards an Architectural Geography,” *The Professional Geographer* 40 (1988): 394; Don Mitchell, “New Axioms for Reading the Landscape: Paying Attention to Political Economy and Social Justice,” in *Political Economies of Landscape Change: Places of Integrative Power*, ed. J. Wescoat and D. Johnston (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), 29–50.

¹²⁵ Peirce F. Lewis, *New Orleans: The Making of an Urban Landscape*, 2nd ed (Santa Fe, N.M.: Center for American Places ; Charlottesville, Va. : distributed by the University of Virginia Press, 2003), 4–5, 8.

¹²⁶ Owen J. Dwyer and Derek H. Alderman, *Civil Rights Memorials and the Geography of Memory* (Chicago: The Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago, 2008), 96.

¹²⁷ Kenneth Foote, *Shadowed Ground : America’s Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 7.

¹²⁸ Dwyer and Alderman, *Civil Rights Memorials and the Geography of Memory*, 96.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 99, 100, 102, 104.

¹³⁰ DeLyser, “Authenticity on the Ground: Engaging the Past in a California Ghost Town,” 606.

CHAPTER 3

A HISTORY OF THE HOLY CROSS HISTORIC DISTRICT

New Orleans' Ninth Ward

The Holy Cross Historic District is a small residential section of eighty blocks carved out of the Ninth Ward of New Orleans (figure 3.1),¹ contained generally by St. Claude Avenue toward the lake, the Mississippi River, Jackson Barracks and the Orleans Parish line to the east (downriver), and the Industrial Canal to the west (upriver).² This chapter, however, will not confine its discussion to these official geographic boundaries but rather will include a broader historic consideration of the Ninth Ward and, when relevant, New Orleans. The city of New Orleans, founded by Jean Baptiste Le Moyne, sieur de Bienville in 1718, organized into wards in 1805; the Ninth Ward did not exist, however, until the city redrew the wards in 1852.³ This “mega-ward,” made up of mostly rural lands in the Third Municipality, drew in a number of plantations that stretched along the Mississippi River several miles downstream from the French Quarter.⁴ Today, neighborhoods in New Orleans often trace their identities from the faubourgs, or suburbs, subdivided during this time and bearing the names of former plantation owners—Marigny and Tremé serve as nearby examples. However, this part of the Ninth Ward does not mark its modern identity as an historic French or Creole plantation, nor does its architecture date from this time period. In the mid-nineteenth century, European immigrants built vernacular houses in popular aesthetics – Creole cottages and double shotguns in Italianate styles – that today make up the oldest surviving structures in the Holy Cross neighborhood.

This chapter will provide a broad sociocultural context for the development of the historic built environment and eventual designation of the Holy Cross Historic District, paying special attention to the residents that define the identity of the neighborhood today and their

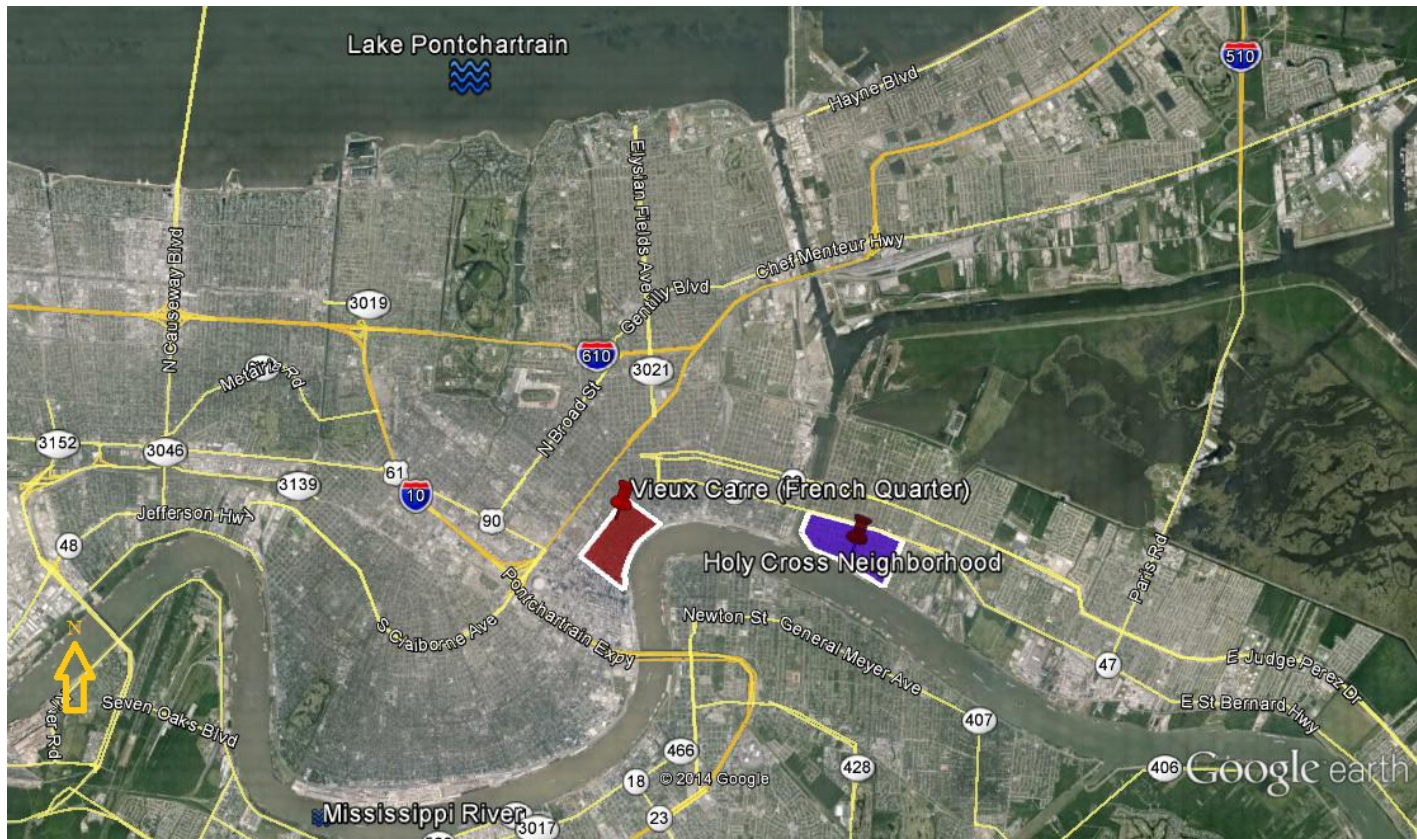


Figure 3.1: New Orleans, featuring the Holy Cross neighborhood in blue

relationship to the District's past. I will frame the chronological progression by using the evolution of commerce in the area because, as this chapter will show, the geography of the neighborhood is closely related to the sugar plantations, manufacturing, shipping, and the tourist and service industries that have made and continue to make a visible mark on the Ninth Ward. Within this commercial framework, I will also document significant events as well as social and cultural trends, especially as related to schools, environmental justice, and historic preservation efforts as they provide critical details for the understanding of the landscape change analyzed at the block level in the following chapters. Finally, I will bring the story of the Holy Cross Historic District to the present through a discussion of twenty-first century gentrification and recovery following Hurricane Katrina, both of which profoundly altered the community and are still visible in the contemporary landscape.

Early Occupants: Plantations, Convents, and Slaughterhouses, 1820-1918

Most of the initial urban expansion into the Holy Cross Historic District dates to the mid-nineteenth century, a decade or two after the development of the properties on both the upper and lower edges of the District: the old Ursuline Convent upriver, and Jackson Barracks downriver. The Ursuline Convent, constructed in the 1820s, served as a new home to the Ursuline Sisters formerly housed at Chartres Street. The property formerly belonged to Francois Duplessis, who bought three arpents (a French unit of measurement, approx. 192 feet) from John McDonogh in 1812.⁵ The Duplessis plantation house likely survived the sale and continued in use by the convent, along with new residential structures and a distinctive chapel.⁶ All of these structures suffered total destruction just before construction began on the Industrial Canal in 1918.



Figure 3.2: Second Ursuline Convent, The Historic New Orleans Collection, accession no. 1960.28



Figure 3.3: Ursuline Convent, New Orleans, LA [ca. 1910] Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Detroit Publishing Company Collection, [LC-D4-71886].

At the lower end of the Ninth Ward, which today is the edge of Orleans Parish bordering St. Bernard Parish, the U.S. Army completed the brick walls of the New Orleans Barracks in 1835.⁷ The fortified grounds held a number of residential structures as well as a parade ground, to which the government added a hospital in the 1850s for wounded soldiers of the Mexican War.⁸ During the Civil War, the Confederate Army controlled the base until 1862, when the Northern Army captured the city.⁹ Today Jackson Barracks houses the Louisiana National Guard and holds a place on the National Register of Historic Places, but it is not considered a part of the Holy Cross Historic District.

After the political rendering of the geography of the Ninth Ward in 1852, large landowners slowly subdivided their properties as it became increasingly profitable to sell property for development rather than planting for harvests. Street names still reflect the names of many of these men, and the grid follows the arpent lines of the old plantations.¹⁰ While some of these original plantation-era structures survived into the early twentieth century, the early built environment of the French Colonial period has since disappeared. Maps of the residences of the Holy Cross Historic District only through the 1930s show buildings that stretch awkwardly over multiple lots, not adequately contained by the new property lines. These structures likely predate the division of properties in this part of the Ninth Ward. Following the subdivision of the old plantations, most of which were platted between 1834 and 1845,¹¹ blocks began to fill in slowly, beginning with the upriver blocks closest to the banks of the Mississippi, moving steadily toward the lake and downriver.¹²

Settlement patterns in the city followed waterways – specifically the Mississippi River and its higher natural levees, along with other bayous and associated ridges – and in the Holy Cross Historic District, this is no exception. This locus of residential development on the high ground along the river creates the first of the historic fabric preserved in the community today. These structures took full advantage of the elevation provided by the natural levee, created by millennia of periodic flooding and deposition along the banks of the Mississippi.¹³ Laws dating to the mid-eighteenth century required the plantation owners along the bank to construct their own levees in order to protect the “thriving agricultural hinterland” that ensured survival for the burgeoning metropolis just upriver.¹⁴ Floodwaters threatened various portions of the city throughout the nineteenth century, but levees finally reached a pivotal point of success around 1890 that prevented further inundation from the river.¹⁵

While properties along the highest elevations closest to the river filled in first, much of the Ninth Ward generally had low, undesirable property in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Donald W. Davis noted that a process called reclamation built this land through the draining of ephemeral marshes and bayous, which “extended the cultivated or settled land beyond the natural levees down the slope into the backswamps.”¹⁶ This process that often involved dumping of wastes to build up the land led to the attraction of a less affluent population – in other words, lower class and immigrant populations – that could legally own property but could not afford a home on higher ground closer to the city. Some of the nineteenth century property owners in the Ninth Ward descended from free people of color, slaves, and immigrant families – which are not mutually exclusive categories – that struggled to found the Crescent City in the eighteenth century.¹⁷

The ward contained within it several of the so-called Creole faubourgs, a collection of downtown neighborhoods occupied by a diverse set of communities including Creoles, free people of color, and immigrants, labels that held specific legal meanings that changed as political control of New Orleans transitioned from French to Spanish to American hands. The term “Creole” emerged in the Colonial period to describe a person not born in the motherland, but lacked a single cogent definition; it could mean a child born in a colony of two parents from Europe, or an escaped slave. In New Orleans, two distinct communities claimed Creole as an identity-marker: Louisiana-born children of French parents, and gens de couleur libres, or free people of color. In the nineteenth century, free people of color constituted an entirely different class that was geographically relegated to a separate portion of the city than the white residents and slaves, which included Faubourg Marigny.¹⁸ Many members of this community owned businesses and property, including slaves. Today, free people of color are slowly being

recognized for their distinct mark on New Orleans. Construction crews managed by free women of color often provided highly skilled labor necessary to create untold numbers of the structures in these Creole faubourgs and beyond after the great fires in 1788 and 1794 that destroyed the majority of the French colonial architecture in the Vieux Carré, now called the French Quarter. However, the structures in the Holy Cross Historic District typically date to the 1850s at the earliest, and so do not share in this Creole construction heritage with the earlier-populated faubourgs upriver.

While the Holy Cross Historic District may not have enjoyed the work of these skilled building crews, architecturally the landscape closely resembles these nearby neighborhoods. Like much of the surviving built environment in the Creole faubourgs, most of the buildings in the Holy Cross Historic District today are shotgun houses or camelbacks. There are also a few Creole cottages, bungalows, side-hall plan houses, and commercial structures that maintain some significance. Shotgun houses represent a building type that originated in West Africa, proliferated through the Colonies in the West Indies, and thus arrived in Louisiana as a byproduct of the forced migration of slaves. These homes are long and narrow, just a single room wide, and often three to five rooms deep. Kitchens and outhouses initially were constructed independently of the sleeping and social spaces in the shotgun house, and remnants of these ephemeral structures can be seen in the archaeological record in the Holy Cross Historic District.¹⁹ In many cases, however, the main structure survives and contributes to the District's significance, and more importantly, to its sense of place, through their human-scale construction and other features common to this vernacular architecture.

Outside of the vernacular style common to the majority of contributing structures, the Holy Cross Historic District contains three distinct landmarks, recognized as such by the local

government agency Historic District Landmarks Commission (HDLC): the St. Maurice Catholic Church, the Holy Cross School building, and the two Doullut steamboat-style houses. The Jesuits, present in New Orleans since the 1720s²⁰ constructed the St. Maurice Catholic Church in 1857.²¹ Its architectural statement changed with major modifications several times in the twentieth century, but the exterior of the “neighborhood focal point” today represents the Romanesque Revival style, which is congruent with the mid-nineteenth century construction date.²²

Within two decades of the founding of the St. Maurice Catholic Church, another Catholic institution took hold nearby. Just downriver of the new Ursuline Convent, the Brothers of the Holy Cross purchased property in order to open a new orphanage on what had formerly been the Reynes Plantation, bordered below by the Sugar Refinery.²³ The namesake of the District opened in 1859 as a male boarding school. None of the original buildings of the Holy Cross School survives today, but residents recognize the extant Main Building, a large brick structure in the Italianate style built by the Brothers in 1895, as a local landmark. The application of the name of this institution to the District accurately represents the importance of the Catholic Church in New Orleans as well as the architectural significance of this imposing building in the neighborhood. On the community level, however, it seems inadequate due to the exclusion of most of the neighborhood’s low- and working-class population from attending the school. Unlike public schools, parochial institutions charged tuition for students, thereby excluding those families without adequate financial resources to gain entrance.²⁴

A separate school board functioned in each municipal district in the antebellum period; in the Third District, which included the Ninth Ward, the Macarty School provided education to only white students beginning in 1861.²⁵ After the Civil War, Louisiana’s new constitution

created an integrated school system that functioned until the mid-1870s, when violent protests from white citizens worked to “forcibly eject black students from integrated schools.”²⁶ When Reconstruction failed and troops left the state in 1877, officials lost no time in returning the schools to a segregated status desired by this vocal portion of the population.²⁷ Black students did not receive the equal treatment mandated by *Plessy v. Ferguson*, however, and until 1917, no high school was open to non-whites.²⁸ Parochial schools, some established in order to avoid the public school integration of the 1870s, succeeded in New Orleans after the Civil War, but the few open to blacks were located far uptown (upriver) from the Ninth Ward.²⁹ While the Catholic Church in particular initially held an “ameliorative influence” over the southern portion of the state with regard to race relations, eventually segregation took hold inside and outside of churches across the region.³⁰ In 1884, the consolidated school board opened a school in the lowest corner of the Lower Ninth Ward, one of thirty schools built between 1860 and 1890 with funds from the McDonogh estate.³¹ The state mandate for segregated schools became part of the state constitution in 1898, although this policy had been in place in New Orleans for over two decades.³² The Catholic schools of New Orleans, including Holy Cross, did not integrate until 1962, despite the Archbishops’ call for desegregation of the churches in 1953.³³ Even after the official integration, some resistance to the order found its way into the Ninth Ward, where the St. Maurice School reportedly had no room for two black students.³⁴

An eccentric addition to the Ninth Ward arrived in 1905 with the construction of a pair of residences for the Doullut family. The father, Paul, made a living as a Mississippi River steamboat captain during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He purchased two lots near the river in the Ninth Ward and built a home in 1905 for his wife and himself, and then followed less than a decade later with a strikingly similar structure for his son.³⁵ The houses bear

incredible resemblance to both the steamboats that all three of them piloted on the Mississippi River and the Japanese pagodas on display at the World's Fair in St. Louis in 1904.³⁶ Both buildings, situated on some of the highest ground available in the Ninth Ward, towered above the roofs of the mostly single story shotguns and creole cottages and offered a uniquely advantageous view up and downriver along the wharfs and across to the West Bank. Descendants of the Doullut family still own the older of the two Steamboat Houses today.³⁷

The inclusion of these unusual and distinctive homes serves as a reminder of the importance of commerce to the continued development of the Ninth Ward and surrounding areas. While the geographic distribution of streets and lots relied upon the historic layout of plantations based upon a slave economy, later residents (including the ancestors of the slaves) worked in the Ninth Ward for businesses including sugar refining, shipping, and manufacturing.

The Louisiana Sugar Refining Company built its large complex just downriver from the property owned by the Brothers of the Holy Cross in 1831.³⁸ The property had access to the river at one end, and at the other, the Mexican-Gulf Railroad crossed through on its way between the Central Business District (CBD) of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast beginning in 1850.³⁹ Other commercial ventures emerged in the following decades, mostly related to the enormous slaughterhouse operation settled between Lamanche and Alabo Streets. These included a soap factory on Douglass Street between Forstall and Lizardi Streets, as well as cattle yards bordered by rail lines and bankside holding pens.⁴⁰ The gargantuan slaughterhouse, a consolidation of all such businesses uptown, moved to the Ninth Ward in the 1870s after being banished by law from placement upriver of the city's water intake.⁴¹ The structures themselves have been demolished, but their legacy in the layout of the streets and railways endures through the present.

As commerce downriver from the city continued to expand, the subdivided plantations began to fill in with homes, beginning with the higher (drier) lands on the natural levee. As population and thus demand increased, the streetcar finally reached this distant neighborhood in 1872 in order to transport laborers from the slaughterhouse and soldiers from the barracks.⁴² In the last decade of the nineteenth century, the mule-powered streetcar system of nearly thirty lines all across the city transitioned to electrified lines with brand new cars.⁴³ The first of these came to the Ninth Ward on December 22, 1894, when the Barracks and Slaughter House line merged with the Dauphine line; in 1910, the Dauphine line extended to provide access from Canal all the way to the new American Sugar Refinery in Chalmette.⁴⁴ In 1911, the Levee-Barracks lines followed suit by eliminating its previous terminus at Elysian Fields, but the amplified service was short-lived due to the excavation of the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal.⁴⁵ After 1926, the Dauphine line became the St. Claude line, with no reduction in service to the Ninth Ward.⁴⁶ The riverside portion of the neighborhood enjoyed consistent streetcar access from 1894 through 1949 when buses replaced the downriver portion of the historic system.⁴⁷ Even though the streetcar no longer visits the Holy Cross Historic District, the wide St. Claude thoroughfare bordering the District and the double bridge crossing the Industrial Canal speak to the former life of this particular form of mass transit.

Disconnected: Industrial Canal Begets the Lower Ninth Ward, 1918-1965

While public transportation changed patterns of movement through the Ninth Ward, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers made extraordinary plans for a new canal that would drastically alter the ward's landscape, growth, connectivity, and safety. The Industrial Canal appeared conceptually in the earliest days of the city as a link between Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi River, resurfacing in the early 1900s as New Orleans fought to regain its status as a

premier port.⁴⁸ In the Ninth Ward, it brought opportunity and destruction. While new jobs in both the construction and the shipping industry brought by the massive waterway offered employment to residents, the noise and transportation impacts of the project certainly made the Ninth Ward an unpleasant place for living at least temporarily.⁴⁹ The Industrial Canal dealt an enormous blow to the built environment of the Ninth Ward, and severed the connection of the neighborhood with the larger city of New Orleans.

Until the first pilings were driven, residents of the Ninth Ward had no indication that theirs was to be the chosen path of the new waterway. Less than three months before the start of construction in May of 1918, *The Times-Picayune* reported that “speculation is rife” regarding the canal’s track.⁵⁰ The land finally chosen for the Industrial Canal previously housed the Ursuline Convent, and so ran from the lower corner of the Holy Cross College up Convent to Florida Walk, now known as Florida Avenue.⁵¹ The Ursuline Sisters, after having moved to the Ninth Ward in the early nineteenth century, had once again relocated uptown in 1912.⁵² The Dock Board purchased the property from the nuns in 1918 for \$400,000, and moved forward with property acquisition along the canal’s path through the summer of that year, eventually spending nearly \$1.5 million.⁵³ When the Dock Board encountered some resistance to property acquisition, they portrayed the offending property owners as villains and unpatriotic, even accusing one property owner of “pro-German sentiment” as motivation for holding up the project.⁵⁴

The Industrial Canal’s path cut straight through the heart of the Ninth Ward, in effect dividing it into two separate pieces with new names: the Upper and the Lower. The engineers hired by the Dock Board to complete feasibility studies for various siting options around the city stated that “cutting [] the city in half...would not only interfere with urban traffic, but would so

impair the operation of traffic on the canal as to make the projects impracticable.”⁵⁵ At this point in the early twentieth century, the Ninth Ward was sparsely populated in relation to the uptown residential neighborhoods. The burden of the city’s economic future seemed to rest only on displacing “cows that grazed where the grazing was good” rather than the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of residents already living, working, and farming this edge of New Orleans.⁵⁶ Thomas Ewing Dabney, New Orleans native and longtime journalist of the South, chronicled the construction of the canal in his book *The Industrial Canal and Inner Harbor of New Orleans* and described the nearly 900 acres as “virtually uninhabited.”⁵⁷ Within a month of the start of construction, the size of the canal more than doubled from the originally approved eighteen foot depth and seventy foot width to thirty feet in depth and three hundred feet across.⁵⁸ The United States was at war during the construction of the Industrial Canal, so Congress granted special permission had to be granted for the project’s steel supply.⁵⁹ The Dock Board also intended to build three bridges to cross the Industrial Canal, at St. Claude Avenue, Florida Walk, and Gentilly Road.⁶⁰ A number of industry representatives had already committed to investing in enormous manufacturing and shipbuilding facilities along the waterway; in the coming months, the U.S. Army would join them, constructing warehouses along the riverbank that would “double the port storage capacity of New Orleans when...finally completed in June, 1919.”⁶¹ The formal dedication ceremony took place Monday, 2 May 1921, with water filling the lock the very next day.⁶² Mere months later, the formerly unrecognized “Ninth Warders” began to speak publicly about the inconveniences caused by the construction, as well as their needs in infrastructure and utilities as the city taxed all its residents for the \$20 million canal.⁶³ This discourse decrying the perceived dysfunction of the city in matters concerning the Lower Ninth Ward continued through the twentieth century and into the present.

The blocks on the riverside of St. Claude, in the general area of today's Holy Cross Historic District, filled in quickly in the decades following the opening of the Industrial Canal. For the whole Ninth Ward, residents poured in, raising the population from 28,306 in 1920 to 46,562 in 1940.⁶⁴ The population on this, the river side of the Lower Ninth Ward consisted of a diverse, mostly white group of working class New Orleanians of immigrant background – “Irish, German, Sicilian, French, Creole, or Latino stock” according to Richard Campanella.⁶⁵ The blocks behind St. Claude reaching to Florida Walk filled in less quickly, and just as with the relocation of the slaughterhouse to this perceived empty space, the city continued to place nuisance industries in the Lower Ninth Ward. Additionally, the city neglected to invest in basic infrastructure such as properly functioning water, sewage, and drainage systems, as well as streetlights and roads for the Lower Ninth Ward.⁶⁶ As late as the 1960s, 86 percent of the Lower Ninth Ward “lacked adequate paving and drainage.”⁶⁷ Without these basic utilities, the Lower Ninth Ward could not support construction of amenities like additional schools to ease overcrowding and improve facilities.

Injustice: Social, Environmental, and Economic, 1962-1990

School Integration

The troubles with schools in the Lower Ninth Ward extended beyond the unbalanced ratio of students to classrooms. While this chapter will not attempt to detail the entire, somewhat incredible saga of desegregation in Louisiana, a general understanding will illuminate the relationship between public school integration and the population of the Lower Ninth Ward as it affects the historic built environment.

As in other southern states, Louisiana residents brought legal challenges to school segregation in the post-World War II era; in New Orleans, these disputes became especially

visible in the Ninth Ward. In 1950, Louisiana attorney A.P. Tureaud and other lawyers of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) successfully fought segregation at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge; Tureaud's son became the first black student in the university's undergraduate program.⁶⁸ With the Supreme Court's decision on *Brown v. The Board of Education* in 1954, segregation's hold on New Orleans had a limited lifespan, but the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) continued to enforce the separate but equal paradigm.⁶⁹ Louisiana politicians in the aftermath of *Brown v. Board* reflected the segregationist stand of many of their white constituents, and a state congressional committee in 1955 secured \$100,000 for legal fees associated with contesting any lawsuits challenging segregation in the state.⁷⁰ The OPSB resisted integration through continued appeals and countersuits in the court system; in 1960, Judge Skelly Wright finally ordered that the fall matriculation of first graders in Orleans Parish public schools must allow for students of all races to attend the closest or second closest school to their homes.⁷¹ Judge Wright combatted the resulting onslaught of state legislation passed in attempt to nullify the order; however, on 14 November 1960, only four black students, all female, entered two New Orleans schools, both located in the Ninth Ward.⁷² For an entire year, three black students were the entire student body of McDonogh No. 19, a school building constructed in 1929 with funds from the McDonogh Committee –white students boycotted the school.⁷³ The Louisiana state legislature, through its law-making spree earlier in the year, had established a financial barrier to integration: schools containing both black and white students would not receive state funding, and so the OPSB struggled each month to issue paychecks to the two integrated campuses.⁷⁴ Each day, a crowd of white protestors screamed threats at the students as they walked in and out of McDonogh No. 19, and Leander Perez, the president of nearby St. Bernard Parish, sent buses into the Lower Ninth

Ward to carry white students next door into the segregated elementary school in Arabi.⁷⁵ The Ninth Ward Cooperative School formed to house the white students unwilling to attend integrated schools.⁷⁶ The following year, the student screening process enforced by the OPSB, supposedly ensuring an even distribution of intellect in newly integrated schools, prevented all but twelve black students from entering formerly segregated elementary schools.⁷⁷ McDonogh No. 19, which in 1960 enrolled 467 white students, had nine students in the 1961-1962 school year.⁷⁸ In 1962, the OPSB decided to restrict enrollment in McDonogh No. 19 to black students, and moved the three students that had first integrated the school to previously all-white T.J. Semmes Elementary, as their parents refused to enroll their children in a re-segregated school.⁷⁹ T.J. Semmes is also located in the Lower Ninth Ward, in the area closest to the Industrial Canal in the modern-day Holy Cross Historic District. The Catholic school system integrated in 1962, although as previously noted, the Catholic school located in the Lower Ninth Ward found no room for black students.⁸⁰

Hurricanes of the 1960s: Betsy and Camille

The social conflict fueled by the integration of schools in the Lower Ninth Ward had hardly been resolved before a tragedy again brought into focus social inequity in the city of New Orleans. On 9 September 1965, Hurricane Betsy brought 100 mph winds and torrential rainfall directly over the Crescent City, robbing residents of utilities and forcing evacuations of hundreds of thousands of residents of southeast Louisiana.⁸¹ While the destruction across the region was extreme, the Lower Ninth Ward suffered particularly severe damage due to breaches in the Industrial Canal.⁸² While the deepest waters were in the back corner bounded by the Industrial Canal and Florida Avenue Canal, homes on the riverside of St. Claude and downriver into St. Bernard Parish also took on water.⁸³ In the Lower Ninth Ward “some 6,285 homes and 175

commercial establishments suffered generally severe flood damages.”⁸⁴ Residents reported never receiving notice of the mandatory evacuation and related this lack of communication to the high loss of life in the neighborhood.⁸⁵

Water once again breached the levees when Hurricane Camille brought water into the Ninth Ward from the Industrial Canal in August 1969.⁸⁶ Between the intense social uproar instigated by integration and the disaster conditions endured after Hurricanes Betsy and Camille, the pressures on the residents of the Lower Ninth Ward caused some to abandon the neighborhood.⁸⁷ Urban renewal, a force backed by large amounts of federal funding across the country in the 1960s, never arrived in New Orleans due to state legislation drafted by a New Orleans tax assessor in 1954.⁸⁸ While in hindsight this may have precluded the destruction of dilapidated historic structures, at the time residents desired access to the billions of federal dollars allocated to other American cities, especially in the aftermath of Hurricane Betsy; in 1968, the state modified the law and urban renewal funds started flowing into Louisiana.⁸⁹ By 1971, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) sent \$7.4 million to the Lower Ninth Ward for home repairs, street paving, sewer line burial, canal coverage, and other infrastructure projects.⁹⁰

Key to the attainment of the HUD funding was a group claiming to represent Ninth Ward residents called the Southern Organization for Unified Leadership (SOUL).⁹¹ This “confederation of Ninth Ward community groups” had roots in the War on Poverty begun by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964.⁹² The organization enjoyed unprecedented access to bureaucratic power, but it was not the first grassroots organization to spring from the Lower Ninth Ward. During Reconstruction, black residents of the Ninth Ward joined mutual-aid societies, as few city services existed for black citizens of New Orleans and no government-

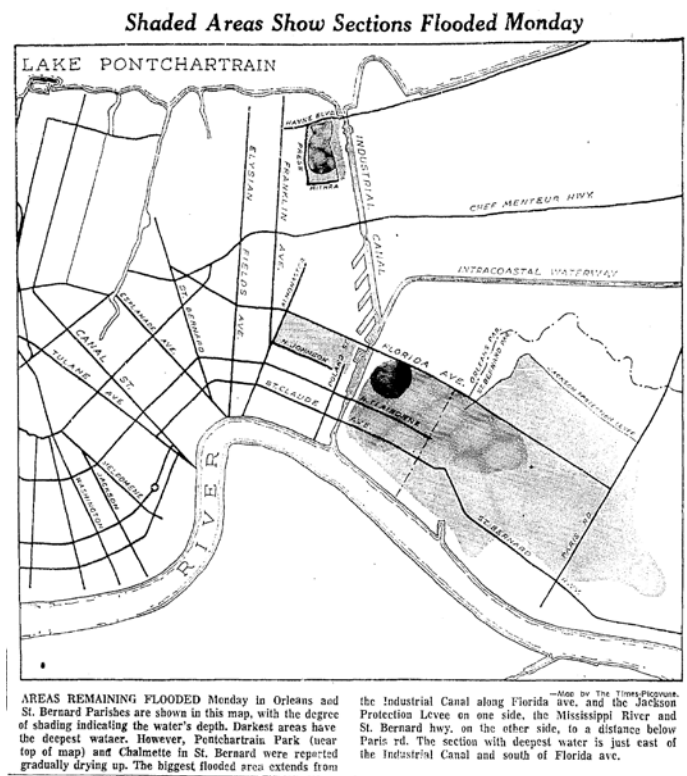


Figure 3.4: “Shaded Areas Show Sections Flooded Monday,” September 14, 1965, the *Times-Picayune* © 2014 NOLA Media Group, L.L.C. All rights reserved. Used with permission of The Times-Picayune and NOLA.com.⁹³

sponsored relief fund.⁹⁴ A white social organization begun in 1905, the Ninth Ward Improvement and Protective Association led residents of what would become the Upper Ninth Ward to call for greater investment in infrastructure, schools, and amenities.⁹⁵ The group restricted enrollment to any “man of the Aryan race, a property holder or a dweller in the Ninth Ward”, but allowed women to join a few months later.⁹⁶ The more inclusive Ninth Ward Civic League, founded in 1921, worked in the 1930s to secure a black school in the Upper Ninth Ward, and continued to bring residents together through the 1960s.⁹⁷ The Ninth Ward Civic and Improvement League, an organization of black residents, formed in 1945 to bring political attention by registering black citizens to vote.⁹⁸ Citywide attempts to organize and end racial inequality included the Urban League, Human Relations Committee, and the local chapter of the NAACP. At the conclusion of the War on Poverty in the 1970s, however, residents recognized

that the overall impact of the organization had brought little gain, except perhaps the election of Mayor Moon Landrieu.⁹⁹ While the new leader held a decidedly progressive stance on issues of race relations, he turned the economic focus of the city from the directives of the failed War on Poverty – “housing, job training, and recreation drives” – to investment in large-scale projects to attract commerce back to the city.¹⁰⁰

While activism provided a clear purpose around which community organizers could rally residents, much older cultural practices in New Orleans drew people together in supportive, creative, and performative outlets. Rachel Breunlin, a cultural anthropologist, and Ronald W. Lewis, longtime New Orleanian and cultural museum curator, define these “street cultures of New Orleans” as “a network of grassroots, working class African American organizations called Mardi Gras Indians and social aid and pleasure clubs.”¹⁰¹ These groups engaged with tradition and ritual through activities such as masking, parading, and the design and sewing of elaborate costumes. Breunlin traces the story of the Mardi Gras Indian back into the early days of statehood for Louisiana, despite others relating the practice to the visit of “Buffalo Bill” Cody with his traveling show in the 1880s.¹⁰² She also notes that most participants in this cultural tradition draw inspiration and make direct reference to Native Americans, tying the repression of the slaves and other black people in North America to the similar subjugation of indigenous cultures.¹⁰³ The costumes themselves speak to a much older time and ascribe to similar traditional art forms in the Caribbean and West Africa.¹⁰⁴ Mardi Gras Indians organize into place-based tribes, although members do not necessarily live in the territory of the tribe with which they mask. Tribes, or gangs, can also move depending on the wishes of the Big Chief, who holds top authority.¹⁰⁵ Indians sew costumes and rehearse songs and chants as a tribe before Mardi Gras, and then on the holiday they take to the streets in a carefully choreographed display

through their territory.¹⁰⁶ The largest event for Mardi Gras Indians falls on Super Sunday, which occurs annually near the Catholic holiday celebrating the feast of St. Joseph on March 19. This event features meetings between tribes on the streets of New Orleans, beginning and ending at a park in Central City, a neighborhood uptown of the French Quarter and Central Business District. Other participants in Super Sunday include social aid and pleasure clubs, whose members dress, dance, and sing to a band that accompanies them in what are commonly called second line parades. Second line parades also occur throughout the year in New Orleans, and some clubs do not participate in Super Sunday. Most clubs honor a royal court each year and members carry signs, staffs, umbrellas and wear highly decorative clothing.

Mardi Gras Indians, social aid and pleasure clubs, and other such cultural phenomena may have little effect on the built environment, but three characteristics of these social organizations deserve attention in this context. First, the neighborhoods out of which these groups emerged and in which they continue to thrive are only in New Orleans, predominantly populated by working class African-Americans, and include the Lower Ninth Ward. Second, the parades themselves move through neighborhoods deliberately, making official stops at particular locations – often bars, or corner stores – advertised on their route sheet, which is passed around and posted before the date of the parade. In this way, participants honor local businesses and attract a large patronage for these venues. Finally, as previously stated, Mardi Gras Indian Tribes and some social aid and pleasure clubs sometimes recognize and represent a particular space, typically a neighborhood, as their home. This representation takes on tangible form in participants’ costumes and accessories. Several of these organizations utilize the letters “CTC,” which stand for “Cross The Canal,” as an emblem on staffs, headdresses, parasols, sashes, and other forms of performative art. This display of identity through location, proclaiming allegiance

to neighborhoods that require one to “Cross the Canal,” reflects the cultural significance that the Industrial Canal plays for residents of the Lower Ninth Ward. These three characteristics exemplify the importance of place to the communities inhabiting the historic spaces contained within the Lower Ninth Ward, evidence of social capital rooted in these neighborhoods.

Urban Abandonment and Suburban Expansion

Beginning in the 1960s, changes in the region’s transportation system combined with the socially volatile integration process and Hurricanes Betsy and Camille proved transformative for the population and eventually the built environment of the Lower Ninth Ward. The interstate system spread across the country under President Eisenhower and subsequent administrations, and New Orleans lay in the corridor for the future Interstate 10. During the planning stages for the roadway, the potential route of the thoroughfare shifted considerably through and around the city, and planners worked with city leaders to decide how to best connect the interstate to arterials that would cross the Mississippi River. In addition to funding all but a fraction of the construction costs of the interstate, the federal government offered monies to build a loop around the cities, a route for the suburban commuters. Prior to the entrance of Interstate 10 and its associates, Highway 90 provided the east-west transportation route for private automobiles and trucks, but in the early 1960s, construction began on the interstate in Orleans Parish.¹⁰⁷ The route took the elevated roadway over the Old Basin Canal, covered by the 1950s, to the bridge over the Mississippi River called the Crescent City Connection connecting the CBD with the West Bank, completed in 1958.¹⁰⁸ The interstate officially opened in 1968, but drivers could not successfully drive the roadway from Laplace, Louisiana, across the eastern corner of Lake Pontchartrain to Slidell, Louisiana and on to the Mississippi state line until December of



Figure 3.5: Big Chief Keith "Ke Ke" Gibson of the Ninth Ward's Comanche Hunters preparing to parade on Super Sunday, an annual event in which Mardi Gras Indian Tribes from around the city perform. Photo by author.

1972.¹⁰⁹ Mayor Moon Landrieu related the growth of the suburbs after World War II directly to the construction of the interstate system, saying “now you could live outside the city, and still go to your job inside the city.”¹¹⁰ This convenience facilitated the steady out-migration of white families to suburban areas outside of New Orleans over the following decade.

As recounted above, the Orleans Parish public school system tried every conceivable method to prevent, and then delay, integration. Media recounted stories of hatred and threats of

violence against the young black students for nearly a decade, and newspapers predicted “white flight” as an immediate result of desegregation as it had been during Reconstruction. While some outmigration occurred during the 1960s, the school system did not experience a significant drop in the number of white students enrolled until the following decade. Between 1960 and 1970, fewer than 2,500 white students left the Orleans Parish public school system; beginning in the 1970-1971 school year, however, and every following year until 1980, over 2,000 white students on average left the system *each year*.¹¹¹ The suburban parishes surrounding New Orleans, including Jefferson, St. Charles, St. Tammany, and Tangipahoa grew rapidly in population during this same decade.¹¹² While some of this suburban growth can be related to migration from rural parishes as jobs centralized in urban areas, a large portion is attributed to the outmigration of white, middle-class families from New Orleans.¹¹³ Census data show a clear trend of urban abandonment during the 1970s, and local media reported on its detrimental effects to the school system and built environment as the former tax base of the city evaporated into the suburban fringe. White students in the Orleans Parish School District dropped from 42 percent of total enrollment in 1960-61 to 15.5 percent in 1980-81.¹¹⁴ Orleans Parish itself reflected a similar, but not identical, trend in the racial makeup of its population over the same period; in 1960, 62.6 percent of the population was white, while by 1980, that number had fallen to 40.3 percent white.¹¹⁵

The failure of the social welfare programs of the 1960s to alleviate the hardships thousands of impoverished New Orleanians combined with the completion of the integration of the public school system and a sudden expansion of transportation options for commuters led to a broad exodus of middle-class white families to the suburbs. In the Lower Ninth Ward, the destruction caused by Hurricane Betsy in 1965 and Hurricane Camille in 1969 catalyzed this

process, causing a drastic demographic shift in a single decade. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, between 1960 and 1970 the net-migration of whites from Orleans Parish was -23.3 percent, while the black population change was -4.5 percent.¹¹⁶ The city followed the pattern of neglect established in the previous century, leaving the neighborhood without access to basic utilities and without the political power to motivate government intervention. In 1970, the neighborhood would face forces of environmental injustice as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proposed an expansion of the Industrial Canal without soliciting input from residents.

Canal Expansion Threatens to Consume Parts of the Lower Ninth Ward

The theme of rebuilding in New Orleans is prevalent throughout the history of the city. From Reconstruction to the Industrial Canal, from Urban Renewal to Centroport, U.S.A, the city seems constantly in the business of remaking itself. In 1986, the Dock Board spent several hundred thousand dollars to study ways in which to “restore prosperity to the Port of New Orleans.”¹¹⁷ Alexandra Giancarlo detailed the ensuing battle between the residents organized as community activists and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and their supporters. The proposal to expand the canal was rooted in the perception that the state of Louisiana had lost its prominence as a leader in shipping and related industries due to the decrepit, outdated infrastructure of the waterways and docking facilities. Originally, developers sought a site outside of the city in St. Bernard Parish, but local residents opposed the connection with the Mississippi River – Gulf Outlet (MR-GO) that many felt had resulted in more intense flooding during Hurricane Betsy.¹¹⁸ The decision instead to expand the Industrial Canal was quickly followed by site tests and the provision of funding for initial planning, forgoing any dialogue with local residents of the Lower Ninth Ward sure to be affected by the project.¹¹⁹ Residents vocalized serious concerns with the potential expansion, “including the relocation of families, traffic jams during construction,

damage to streets, and environmental dangers associated with increased industry in the area” – concerns remarkably similar to those voiced during the initial construction of the canal over half a century earlier.¹²⁰ Progress slowed, and eventually the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers relented and created an office to address these concerns.¹²¹ In 1990, a commission formed to consider how to accommodate both the improvement and expansion of the lock and residents’ concerns about the proposed demolition of 200 homes inside the Holy Cross Historic District.¹²² Funding for the project was finalized in 1998, at which point the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began purchasing and developing adjacent properties.¹²³ However, in 2003, several organizations came together to legally block the project from moving forward, and the expansion project remains incomplete in 2012.¹²⁴ One of the organizations involved in the suit was the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association, formed in 1981, and as late as 2010 continued to oppose expansion of the Industrial Canal.

Economic Transitions to Tourist, Service Industries

Employment in industries such as manufacturing, energy, and service experienced dramatic shifts from the 1960s through the 1980s. The shipping industry, choosing larger and recently modernized ports in Texas and Florida, demanded far fewer laborers, forcing their mostly black employees out of their careers.¹²⁵ While the shipping and manufacturing industries shrank due to the increase in container vessels and mechanization, the oil and gas industry brought enormous capital, investment, and job opportunities to New Orleans. However, the majority of these energy sector jobs required skilled labor, leaving the unskilled, uneducated working-class out of the boom.¹²⁶ As Arnold R. Hirsch points out, many of the marginalized and impoverished residents of New Orleans continued to be excluded from this new source of wealth and privilege.¹²⁷ Unfortunately, over dependence on the oil boom fed into the sharp decline in

the New Orleans economy in the 1980s, amplified by the savings and loan crisis. Employment in manufacturing had begun to fall as early as the 1950s, and by 1978 only 10 percent of the city's workers had employment in this sector despite the massive NASA Michoud Assembly Facility operating in New Orleans East by NASA.¹²⁸ Much of urban America during this time struggled through the loss or decentralization of industry and the associated emptying of city centers; New Orleans sought to temper these shared economic troubles with a revitalized tourism industry. The lack of intensive industrial development after World War II in the city resulted in the retention of much of the historic built environment, much to the delight of preservationists. Tourism developed as a viable economic driver almost by default; as J. Mark Souther demonstrates, the city invested few resources into attracting recreational visitors, opting instead to make improvements to infrastructure and continue supporting traditional events including the Sugar Bowl, Mardi Gras, and Spring Fiesta.¹²⁹ Relying heavily upon oil and gas industry for the revitalization of the CBD, Mayor Moon Landrieu poured money into projects like the Superdome, a renovated French Market, and later the World's Fair that would finally come to New Orleans in 1984. These developments provided renewed demand for an unskilled, low-wage labor force that would work in the service sector and come almost exclusively from the city's African-American communities.

The 1980s brought economic decline to much of the country, including New Orleans, but the decade also showcased the city on a global stage during the 1984 World's Fair. City officials and local business owners worked diligently with the federal government and politicians to gather sufficient funding and attract interest from prospective exhibitionists. Financial troubles plagued the fair, and some of the decorative infrastructure sat incomplete throughout the duration of the celebration. Mayor Dutch Morial, the first African-American mayor elected in 1978,

publicly asked fair organizers to hire locals, “especially minorities and those living in low-income housing projects.”¹³⁰ While it is doubtful that the financially-beleaguered organizers actually heeded Morial’s demand, the long term effects of the World’s Fair did impact the employment opportunities for African-Americans and other low-income New Orleanians. The infrastructure changes brought by the fair resulted in an enormous increase in hotel rooms, from approximately 3,500 in 1984 to over 35,000 in 1994, as well as in other tourist industry services.¹³¹ In 1988, over 40 percent of the city’s workers worked in the service sector, but weekly wages were 20 percent lower for these employees than the average.¹³² By 1992, *The Times-Picayune* proclaimed that the city was “moving inexorably toward a service economy” with higher employment rates but lower wages for residents.¹³³ By 2002, over 50 percent of workers living in the Holy Cross neighborhood worked in the retail and service sector; while the relative abundance of these jobs kept residents employed, the seasonal variations in availability and low wages hindered residents’ ability to maintain their aging homes.¹³⁴

In the 1990s, as New Orleans fought to recover from the economic downturn carrying over from the previous decade, the city government worked to bring business investments and tourist dollars back into the region. Mayor Marc Morial, the son of the city’s first African-American mayor, was elected in 1994 and touted that together, residents could “Rebuild New Orleans Now” and take back their city through reforms and reinvestment programs.¹³⁵ He supported and successfully passed bond projects labeled with this slogan that offered long-overdue repairs and improvements to the city’s infrastructure. The city’s population loss, which had started after the peak in 1960, slowed to a trickle in the 1990s; by 2000, the Census registered a mere 3 percent loss from the prior decade.

Designation of the Holy Cross Historic District, 1986-2005

In 1978, the Historic District Landmarks Commission of New Orleans, an agency like the VCC tasked with protecting and preserving the historic integrity of the city, hired Koch and Wilson, a well-known local architectural firm, to conduct a survey of neighborhoods that held potential sites or districts that might be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The contractor surveyed and documented structures across the city and provided an opinion regarding their significance and integrity. One of the neighborhoods listed in this 1978 study was Holy Cross, an area the surveyors said “contained sufficient quantities of old buildings to be inventoried.”¹³⁶ While the original survey did not recommend the neighborhood for nomination as an historic district, the authors stated that individual sites held enough significance and maintained their integrity to be eligible. The intrusion of non-contributing structures, those buildings that lacked both significance and integrity and did not adequately represent the historic fabric of the neighborhood, brought about their conclusion. Despite this lack of support, however, in 1986, the Holy Cross Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and in 1990 the HDLC recognized it as a local historic district as well.¹³⁷ The nomination form identified a number of house types and styles that pull together the neighborhood into a cohesive unit, and only 26 percent of the structures in the chosen blocks qualified as non-contributing or intrusions.¹³⁸ The period of significance identified for the district encompasses a broad span of time, from 1850 to 1936, and as a “tout ensemble,” it is inclusive of any structure dating from this period, provided alterations have not rendered it unrecognizable.¹³⁹ Its significance falls under Criterion C, which means the built environment represents a distinctive collection of architecture that draws significance at the state as well as regional levels. Recognition of the Holy Cross Historic District provides benefits to property owners in the form

of tax incentives for residences and businesses interested in repairing or renovating. It also protects the historic value of the neighborhood by requiring projects funded with federal monies to undergo the process defined in Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (see previous chapter for a detailed explanation of this legislation). However, these benefits do not extend beyond the boundaries of the historic district; despite deep cultural and historic ties to the remainder of the Lower Ninth Ward, becoming both a local and a national historic district set the landscape of Holy Cross apart from the rest of the neighborhood. This division became increasingly apparent in the beginning of the twenty-first century, as gentrification and the disastrous 2005 hurricane season would again draw out social conflict based on historic inequities.

The legacy of the 1970s remained visible in the built environment of New Orleans through the next three decades. Blight, a buzzword for city leaders and developers, and continued abandonment marred the city's aesthetic, but also kept neighborhoods and housing affordable for working class families and the destructive process of urban renewal stayed minimally active. Several preservation organizations and agencies were born in the 1970s: Louisiana's State Historic Preservation Office, the New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission, and the Preservation Resource Center, also based in New Orleans. As early as the 1950s, New Orleans accused property owners of "demolition by neglect," which involved a fine leading to adjudication.¹⁴⁰ While this regulation did not necessarily ensure survival or optimal maintenance, it provided the city with a mechanism to stimulate some property owners to make repairs or to sell. The legislation did nothing, however, to solve the problems that were causing the blighted properties to decay, such as high unemployment and low wages, a shrinking population, and crumbling city infrastructure that discouraged investment. Avoiding fines meant

owners had to attend a court date and then satisfy city officials by making approved repairs to the structure. This legislative power in combination with the foundation of preservation related organizations keen on retaining the historic integrity of New Orleans' built heritage created a place ripe for gentrification, especially after the economic downturn of the 1980s depressed real estate values in the city. The Preservation Resource Center defended its work in the city in 1992 against accusations of residents that the organization encouraged gentrification, inflating property values and effectively removing homeowners from their neighborhoods.¹⁴¹ The trend continued into the early twenty-first century, spreading through historic neighborhoods like Marigny and Bywater traditionally inhabited by working class African Americans. By 2002, the New Orleans *CityBusiness* claimed that Marigny no longer had a problem with blight, but qualified this statement by noting the “gentrification that has pushed lower-income residents out of the neighborhood.”¹⁴² John Welch and Craig Colten suggest that the Bywater neighborhood experienced a similar reversal in housing trends resulting in increased property values that “accelerated after the successful nomination of the neighborhood to National Register Status” in 1986.¹⁴³ Suzanne Leckert noted that between 1993 and 2002, housing sales in the Bywater Historic District more than doubled, as did home values during the same period.¹⁴⁴ During the 1990s, both the Marigny and Bywater neighborhoods lost population but saw the percentage of white residents in the neighborhood rise.¹⁴⁵ The Preservation Resource Center and the Historic District Landmarks Commission worked diligently in the late 1990s and early 2000s to improve the housing stock and maintain the historical integrity through homeowner education programs. In 1996, the Delery Street Riverfront Playground opened in the corner farthest downriver in the District as a response to the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association's movement for better neighborhood facilities.¹⁴⁶ The Greater New Orleans Community Data Center described the

District as readily moving toward revitalization in the twenty-first century.¹⁴⁷ These trends hinted at a future of gentrification for the Holy Cross Historic District; however, the hurricane season of 2005 drastically altered the timeline and trajectory of this trend through destruction and unprecedented displacement.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and Recovery, 2005-present

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina made landfall on the Louisiana coast in Plaquemines Parish. The storm struck as a Category 3, with sustained winds of approximately 125 miles per hour and a storm surge of 20 to 30 feet, and left behind over \$100 billion in damages, making it the most expensive hurricane ever to hit the United States.¹⁴⁸ Initial media reports indicated that New Orleans had been spared a direct hit due to the storm's track, but reports soon surfaced of catastrophic flooding in the downriver portion of the city.¹⁴⁹ Numerous levee breaches caused floodwaters to spill into residential areas like the Lower Ninth Ward so quickly that those sheltering in place were forced to climb into attics and trees to escape the deluge.¹⁵⁰ The Industrial Canal levee failed in two separate locations in the Lower Ninth Ward; water poured through both a breach of approximately 250 feet in length on the backside of the neighborhood, as well as a giant gash, over 900 feet in length, farther to the riverside.¹⁵¹ The latter breach actually allowed for the wind and water to push an enormous barge through the opening and into the neighborhood, destroying most anything in its path.¹⁵² Richard Campanella noted that flood "water levels stabilized at three to four feet deep in the highest areas of the Lower Ninth Ward, and ten to twelve feet or deeper in the lowest sections."¹⁵³ Homeowners that survived were rescued from rooftops, but lack of coordination among first responders resulted in the forced dispersal of this community across dozens of cities and states all over the country.¹⁵⁴ While the hazard event that was Hurricane Katrina brought the storm, the mismanaged response

and ensuing social conflict over the right to return and rebuild resulted in an unprecedented disaster scenario for the Lower Ninth Ward.

The flooding experienced by much of New Orleans as well as the surrounding parishes was not the last inundation for the year. In October, Hurricane Rita delivered another eight-foot storm surge into New Orleans as it tracked toward a landfall near the Texas-Louisiana border.¹⁵⁵ The levees, not yet fully repaired, opened again to allow high waters to penetrate into the Lower Ninth Ward.¹⁵⁶ Juliette Landphair describes the dismal situation in which Lower Ninth Ward residents found themselves after the storm had ended, aptly pointing out that they “came to represent the convergence of destructive forces on a society: the hurricane; the geographical vulnerability of New Orleans; government neglect; and urban poverty and racial polarization.”¹⁵⁷ Those fortunate enough to find the means to return to the city could not go home; in the Holy Cross Historic District, the city enforced a “look and leave” policy beginning in October but did not allow residents to stay overnight until May of the next year.¹⁵⁸ According to the Preservation Resource Center, all buildings in the Lower Ninth Ward suffered some damage from these storms, but the District fared better due to its location on generally higher ground near the old natural levee.¹⁵⁹ The community’s rate of return also reflects the damage pattern; by summer of 2012, the population in the Holy Cross Historic District reached approximately 68 percent of its 2005 level, but the portion of the Lower Ninth Ward behind St. Claude Avenue had regained only about 30 percent of its 2005 number.¹⁶⁰

Recovery Planning

Once the extent of damages in the Lower Ninth Ward became evident in the immediate aftermath of the storm, media attention on this community and its plight erupted. The neighborhood emerged in this new national consciousness as representative of a number of

societal ills. In the late months of 2005, planning began for the recovery of the neighborhood despite the continued closure of the Lower Ninth Ward, in addition to economic, safety, and social concerns (lack of housing, hospitals, and schools), preventing the return of residents. Funding from the federal government depended upon these plans.¹⁶¹ This section will focus on the potential effects of the numerous plans produced by various agencies and conglomerations in the three years following Hurricane Katrina.

Mayor Ray Nagin, who had been in office since 2002, established the Bring New Orleans Back (BNOB) Commission just a month after the storm, on September 30, 2005, which consisted of several committees tasked with providing expert advice for the city's recovery.¹⁶² Page two of the plan's executive summary calls explicitly for the preservation of the city's historic districts. The Cultural Committee, reporting in January of 2006, produced five objectives that would result from strategic investments in what they called the "creative economy" over three years.¹⁶³ The committee noted architecture as a strength of the city, but in identifying only famous architects rather than significant vernacular contributions as pertinent, failed to implicate the Lower Ninth Ward in this recovery effort. The Cultural Committee did choose to include the Mardi Gras Indian tribes as well as social aid and pleasure clubs as victims of the storm worthy of recovery dollars.¹⁶⁴ Most controversial about this particular planning process was the Land Use Committee's report, revealed in early 2006 by *The Times-Picayune*, which included the Lower Ninth Ward in the "parts of town that will have to prove their viability to rebuild."¹⁶⁵ This problematic language lacked specificity but implied that somehow, the city would measure neighborhoods in the coming months, and failure meant that blocks formerly full of houses and people would become open space, and what residents had hoped was temporary displacement would become permanent.

From the diaspora, communities struggled to respond to this plan; few residents had even been allowed back to survey the damage of their own properties. The president of the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association, Pam Dashiell, spoke on a public radio news show on October 4, 2005, asking for a more objective assessment of the possibilities for rebuilding in her neighborhood.¹⁶⁶ While Dashiell carefully expressed concerns about the members of the mayor's BNOB Commission, residents of New Orleans called in to voice support for the Lower Ninth Ward and ask why other neighborhoods that had been severely flooded were not also on the table for demolition. One of the members of the BNOB Commission, James Reiss, was quoted in the *Wall Street Journal* as seeking fundamental change in a rebuilt New Orleans, "demographically, geographically and politically."¹⁶⁷ Dashiell would later join the BNOB committee as co-chair of the Sustainability Sub-committee.¹⁶⁸ The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), based in New Orleans, also spoke out against this plan. Walter Rathke, ACORN co-founder and Ninth Ward resident, wrote extensively about the bias of the BNOB Commission, focusing mostly on Joseph Canizaro.¹⁶⁹ Canizaro, a real estate developer active in New Orleans planning before the storm, led the BNOB Commission that hired the Urban Land Institute (ULI), a nonprofit professing "to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide."¹⁷⁰ Rathke viewed Canizaro's role as both chair of the BNOB Commission and a former president of the ULI as problematic, suggesting that Canizaro may have also personally paid for the work done by ULI.¹⁷¹

Less than a month after revealing the plans created by the BNOB Commission, Mayor Nagin publicly rejected its suggestion of a four-month moratorium on building permits.¹⁷² The City Council, excluded from the BNOB Commission, hired Lambert Consulting of Miami in February of 2006, and in April added SHEDO, LLC, a New Orleans-based housing and

development firm, to produce the “New Orleans Neighborhoods Rebuilding Plan.”¹⁷³ More commonly known as the Lambert Plans, the reports divided the Lower Ninth Ward, Planning District 8, into two distinct neighborhoods called “Holy Cross” and “Lower Ninth Ward” but still held combined meetings accommodating the whole district.¹⁷⁴ The final Lambert Plan for Holy Cross, however, indicated that the authors did indeed understand the area’s role in the larger context of the district, calling Holy Cross “essential as a symbol of the impending rebirth of the entire Lower Ninth Ward.”¹⁷⁵ The Lambert Plan for Holy Cross included consideration of a number of previously produced plans, and avoided the controversy surrounding the “viability” of the neighborhood. However, the Lambert Plans failed to meet the requirements of federal funding sources by only including neighborhoods that had been partially or totally flooded, and neglecting to engage the City Planning Commission in the process.¹⁷⁶ The Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA), the statewide institution that determined which plan would eventually receive funding, directed its attention toward another process before the Lambert Plans had even been finalized.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the plan that attracted the LRA away from the Lambert Plans was its broad support base that expanded to include not only Mayor Nagin, the City Council, and BNOB Commission members, but also community organization ACORN and the New Urbanist Andrés Duany.¹⁷⁷ The Unified New Orleans Plan (UNOP) drew funding from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Greater New Orleans Foundation, and the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund.¹⁷⁸ The UNOP promised to build upon the work accomplished by the BNOB Commission and the Lambert Plans through a more holistic approach including all areas of the city in a detailed, neighborhood-level plan informed by citizens at every opportunity.¹⁷⁹ ACORN eventually lost its contract with the UNOP as a planner, reportedly due to conflicts of interest

based upon their ownership of potential property developments in the area.¹⁸⁰ Competition between the Lambert Plans, which had never officially been abandoned or accepted, and the UNOP persisted even as the City Council finally endorsed and approved the UNOP in the summer of 2007.¹⁸¹ The LRA accepted a plan called the New Orleans Strategic Recovery and Redevelopment Plan presented by “recovery czar Ed Blakely,” and finally released approximately \$117 million for recovery efforts in New Orleans.¹⁸²

The effect of the government-led, drawn out planning process is debatable and varies on the neighborhood level. Several organizations produced their own plans throughout the arduous process of city-wide recovery planning. The Tulane/Xavier Center for Bioenvironmental Research, the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, and the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association produced their plan, *Sustainable Restoration: Holy Cross Historic District & Lower 9th Ward*, in June of 2006 as a guide for future efforts throughout the recovery process. ACORN, barred from participating as a planner in the UNOP process, published *The People’s Plan* in early 2007, which focused on the entire Ninth Ward (on both sides of the Industrial Canal). Additionally, within weeks of the City Council’s acceptance of the UNOP, the City Planning Commission called for bids from consultants to compose a master plan for the city.¹⁸³ Goody Clancy, one of the firms hired as a planner during the UNOP process, won the bid and proceeded to lead a number of community-based workshops and town hall meetings for the next two years. Residents actually voted to amend the New Orleans City Charter in order to give the city the legal right to enforce the Master Plan in 2008.¹⁸⁴ The firm presented its version of the New Orleans Master Plan in 2010, and the City Council approved it in August that year.¹⁸⁵

A number of organizations began operating or increased their presence in the Lower Ninth Ward after the storm (table 3.1). In the Holy Cross Historic District, major players

Table 3.1: Nonprofit organizations working in the Holy Cross neighborhood post-Katrina

Common Ground Relief	Our School at Blair Grocery
Center for Sustainable Design & Engagement	GroundWork NOLA
Youth Orchestra of the Lower Ninth Ward	Backyard Gardeners Network
Neighborhood Empowerment Network Association	L9 Center for the Arts
Tekrema Center for Arts and Culture	Lower Ninth Ward Village
LowerNine.org	House of Dance and Feathers
National Trust for Historic Preservation	U.S. Green Building Council
Association for Preservation Technology	Urban Land Institute
CAPSTONE	Historic Green
Make It Right	Bayou Rebirth
Global Green USA	Sierra Club

included the Preservation Resource Center, Global Green, Historic Green, the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association, ACORN, the Center for Sustainable Engagement and Development, and Rebuilding Together New Orleans. The effect of these and other organizations shows through signage in yards, on porches and on the t-shirts of volunteers, but more importantly through the decreased vacancy evident within the District today. I will more fully engage with the direct effects of these organizations in the next two chapters.

The built environment of the Holy Cross Historic District represents over a century of inhabitation by a broad variety of people that inscribed their experiences, good and bad, onto the landscape. As I move into the next chapter of this project, it will be important to recall the myriad ways this history remains visible in the landscape. The Holy Cross Historic District continues to reflect the dynamic nature it has embraced since its beginnings. Through a block-by-block analysis of the changing built environment of the District, I will relate the story of the structures and residents to show the effects of the labeling of this area as historic in the twentieth century on the recovery and trajectory of the community.

Endnotes

¹ Dominique M. Hawkins and Catherine E. Barrier, “Holy Cross Historic District” (Historic District Landmarks Commission, City of New Orleans, May 2011),

<http://www.nola.gov/~media/Files/HDLC/Historic%20Districts/HolyCross.ashx>; National Register of Historic Places, *Holy Cross Historic District* (New Orleans, Orleans Parish, Louisiana, n.d.). The variation in the number of blocks included is dependent upon which agency's boundaries are used. The original boundaries of the historic district drew from two separate surveys from the 1970s and 1980s, and the staff of the National Register defined them in order to maximize the inclusion of contributing structures while minimizing the intrusions of non-contributing structures. The governing agency in New Orleans, the HDLC, designated the District locally in 1990, and relaxed the boundaries to include half or full blocks rather than using the jagged edges of the National Register map.

² It is worth noting here that New Orleans maintains its own special set of cardinal directions. The current of the Mississippi River dictates what is "uptown" or upriver, versus what is "downtown" or downriver. The city's downtown – or Central Business District (CBD), is actually "uptown" from the Ninth Ward. Places "downriver" can also be described as "lower." These directions have no relationship whatsoever to the cardinal directions recognized in the rest of the world. Residents also place themselves in relation to their proximity to the Mississippi River or Lake Pontchartrain, describing places as "lakeside" or "riverside" and also "to the lake" or "to the river." In this dissertation, I will make use of these colloquial terms rather than the more traditional cardinal directions in order to clearly place my discussion of sites within the city.

³ Richard Campanella, *Bienville's Dilemma: A Historical Geography of New Orleans* (Lafayette, Louisiana: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2008), 110, 150. The wards had been redrawn a number of times prior to this iteration, but none of these older divisions included the Ninth Ward.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 150. New Orleans was divided into three self-governing municipalities between 1836 and 1852. The first constituted the Vieux Carré, the second the uptown American Sector, and the "Poor Third" the downtown neighborhoods. This system effectively protected the Americans in the Second Municipality from having to compete socially and politically with the French, Creoles, and immigrants in the First and Third. The municipality system was abandoned in 1852, though, and the Third Municipality was renamed the Third Municipal District. *Ibid.*, 162-163.

⁵ Friends of the Cabildo, *New Orleans Architecture*, vol. IV (Gretna [La.]: Pelican Pub. Co., 1974), 22.

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¹⁰ Campanella, *Bienville's Dilemma: A Historical Geography of New Orleans*, 150.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

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¹³ Craig Colten, *An Unnatural Metropolis: Wrestling New Orleans from Nature* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006), 3.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁶ Donald W. Davis, "Historical Perspective on Crevasses, Levees, and the Mississippi River," in *Transforming New Orleans and Its Environs: Centuries of Change*, ed. Craig E. Colten (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000), 99.

¹⁷ Peirce Lewis, *New Orleans: The Making of an Urban Landscape* (Santa Fe: Center for American Places, 2003), 51–52; Juliette Landphair, "'The Forgotten People of New Orleans': Community, Vulnerability, and the Lower Ninth Ward," *Journal of American History* 94 (December 2007): 839.

¹⁸ Friends of the Cabildo, *New Orleans Architecture*, IV:27.

¹⁹ R. Christopher Goodwin et al., *Architectural and Archeological Investigations in and Adjacent to the Bywater Historic District, New Orleans, Louisiana* (New Orleans, La.: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, 1994), 51–52. The information provided regarding the history of Creoles and Free People of Color in New Orleans comes from lectures in Jay D. Edwards course titled "Vernacular Architecture and Material Culture," Anthropology 4440, taught in the Spring of 2010 at Louisiana State University – Baton Rouge.

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²¹ Friends of the Cabildo, *New Orleans Architecture*, IV:172.

²² *Ibid.*; Hawkins and Barrier, "Holy Cross Historic District," 02–2. The church closed after suffering damage during the 2005 hurricane season and so the Diocese put the property on the market in 2011. John Pope, "Archdiocese of New Orleans Will Sell or Lease 13 Empty Properties, Including 7 Churches," *The Times-Picayune*, January 25, 2011, http://www.nola.com/religion/index.ssf/2011/01/archdiocese_of_new_orleans_will_sell_or_lease_13_empty_properties_including_7_churches.html.

²³ Campanella, *Bienville's Dilemma: A Historical Geography of New Orleans*, 150; Friends of the Cabildo, *New Orleans Architecture*, IV:24, 163.

²⁴ Lewis, *New Orleans: The Making of an Urban Landscape*, 127.

²⁵ G. Leighton Ciravolo, *The Legacy of John McDonogh*, Louisiana Life Series 12 (Lafayette, Louisiana: Center for Louisiana Studies, 2002), 21.

²⁶ The Scott S. Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives at Tulane University, *New Orleans Public Schools History: A Brief Overview*, 2007, <http://www.coweninstitute.com/our-work/applied-research/education-archive/education-transformation-archive/new-orleans-public-school-history/>.

²⁷ Ibid.; Adam Fairclough, *Race & Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915-1972* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 5.

²⁸ The Scott S. Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives at Tulane University, *New Orleans Public Schools History: A Brief Overview*; *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896).

²⁹ Henry Rightor, *Standard History of New Orleans, Louisiana: Giving a Description of the Natural Advantages, Natural History, Settlement, Indians, Creoles, Municipal and Military History, Mercantile and Commercial Interests, Banking, Transportation, Struggles Against High Water, the Press, Educational ...* (Lewis Publishing Company, 1900), 240–242. In fact, the Superintendent in New Orleans, William O. Rogers, resigned and led the new parochial system. He returned to his former role in 1877, when the “‘the Carpet Bag’ government ceased to exist in Louisiana.” Ibid., 241.

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³² Jackson, *New Orleans in the Gilded Age: Politics and Urban Progress, 1880-1896*, 318.

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³⁴ Fairclough, *Race & Democracy*, 260.

³⁵ “Living with History in New Orleans’ Neighborhoods: Holy Cross” (Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans, n.d.), <http://www.prcno.org/neighborhoods/brochures/HolyCross.pdf>.

³⁶ Friends of the Cabildo, *New Orleans Architecture*, IV:129.

³⁷ Angela Raymond Timberlake, “Special PRC Members-Only Revitalization Tour,” *Preservation in Print* 36, no. 2 (March 16, 2009): 16.

³⁸ Friends of the Cabildo, *New Orleans Architecture*, IV:24.

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⁴⁰ Sanborn Map Company, “New Orleans 1895-1896 Vol. 4, 1896, Sheet 357” (Pelham, NY, 1896), Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1867-1970 - Louisiana; Sanborn Map Company, “New Orleans

1895-1896 Vol. 4, 1896, Sheet 356” (Pelham, NY, 1896), Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1867-1970 - Louisiana.

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⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 214.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 226.

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⁴⁸ Campanella, *Bienville’s Dilemma: A Historical Geography of New Orleans*, 124.

⁴⁹ “Big Canal Lock Work Is Started and Route Named; 4000 Jobs Open,” *The Times-Picayune*, May 9, 1918.

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⁵¹ “New Industrial Canal Will Run Out Convent St.,” *The Times-Picayune*, May 10, 1918.

⁵² Richard Campanella, *Time and Place in New Orleans: Past Geographies in the Present Day* (Gretna, La.: Pelican Pub., 2002), 74.

⁵³ “Port Board Buys Ursuline Tract,” *The Times-Picayune*, July 13, 1918; Thomas Ewing Dabney, *The Industrial Canal and Inner Harbor of New Orleans: History, Description and Economic Aspects of Giant Facility Created to Encourage Industrial Expansion and Develop Commerce* (New Orleans: Board of Commissioners of the Port of Orleans, 1921), <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/31383/31383-h/31383-h.htm>; “Court Appraises Land For Canal,” *The Times-Picayune*, July 30, 1918; Campanella, *Time and Place in New Orleans*, 74; Goodwin et al., *Architectural and Archeological Investigations in and Adjacent to the Bywater Historic District, New Orleans, Louisiana*; Fredrick J. Dobney et al., *Evaluation of the National Register Eligibility of the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Lock in Orleans Parish, Louisiana*, Cultural Resources Series CELMN/PD-93/04 (New Orleans, La.: US Army Corps of Engineers New Orleans District, 1987); “People Are Entitled To Vote Somewhere,” *The Times-Picayune*, July 22, 1911. Campanella claims that the land was donated to the City by the Ursuline Sisters in 1911. Unfortunately, he relies on a document that cited a faulty source (Goodwin et al. 1994 citing Dobney et al. 1987). Dobney et al. relies upon an article from *The Times-Picayune* dated 22 July 1911, but takes the mayor’s opinion regarding the “large strip of land” out of context. In fact, the strip of land to which the mayor referred was an 80-foot right-of-way that the Ursuline Sisters did indeed donate to the city while maintaining ownership of all of the surrounding property. This is clearly stated in the article’s final sub-headline: “Ursulines Give 80-Foot

Avenue Through Their Tract for Belt Road.” The avenue was intended to bring a great deal of profit to the Ursuline Sisters as it would surely facilitate rampant industrial growth while saving the city untold thousands of dollars in procuring a similar strip for the placement of a large thoroughfare for rail, auto, and pedestrian use. The error is pervasive, spanning a number of publications as well as National Register nominations.

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⁵⁸ Ibid.

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⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Dabney, *The Industrial Canal and Inner Harbor of New Orleans: History, Description and Economic Aspects of Giant Facility Created to Encourage Industrial Expansion and Develop Commerce*.

⁶² “Industrial Canal Dedicated to Cause of Greater Trade,” *The Times-Picayune*, May 2, 1921.

⁶³ “Ninth Warders Want Boulevard Constructed,” *The Times-Picayune*, March 20, 1921; “Industrial Canal Dedicated to Cause of Greater Trade.”

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⁶⁶ “Help Promised By Councilmen,” *The Times-Picayune*, November 9, 1955; Juliette Landphair, “Sewerage, Sidewalks, and Schools: The New Orleans Ninth Ward and Public School Desegregation,” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 40, no. 1 (January 1, 1999): 35, 39.

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- ⁷⁰ “Move Is Hinted on Segregation,” *The Times-Picayune*, November 4, 1955.
- ⁷¹ Fairclough, *Race & Democracy*, 234.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*, 244.
- ⁷³ Margaret Foster, “New Life for New Orleans School and Civil Rights Landmark?,” *Preservation*, March 17, 2009, http://www.preservationnation.org/magazine/2009/todays-news/new-life-for-new-orleans.html?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=like&utm_campaign=New Life for New Orleans School and Civil Rights Landmark?; Fairclough, *Race & Democracy*, 248.
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- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 261.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 255.
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*; Fritz Harsdorff, “Desegregation of Public Schools Is Carried Out Without Violence,” *The Times-Picayune*, November 15, 1960, 1.
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- ⁸⁰ Fairclough, *Race & Democracy*, 260.
- ⁸¹ Clarence Doucet, “Thousands Flee Flood Threat as Hurricane Slams into N.O.,” *The Times-Picayune*, September 10, 1965.
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⁹¹ Ibid., 191.

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- ¹⁷⁷ Coleman Warner, “Teams OK’d for Recovery Plan - N.O. Neighborhoods to Get Tech Support,” *The Times-Picayune*, July 22, 2006.
- ¹⁷⁸ Jed Horne and Brendan Nee, “Detailed Description of UNOP,” *NOLAplans.com :: New Orleans Plan Database*, accessed October 24, 2012, http://www.nolaplans.com/unop_detail/.
- ¹⁷⁹ Molly Reid, “Together At Last? - A Recap of the City’s Rebuilding Plans,” *The Times-Picayune*, October 7, 2006.

¹⁸⁰ Coleman Warner, "ACORN Loses N.O. Recovery Consulting Jobs - Intent to Develop Properties Seen as Potential Conflict of Interest," *The Times-Picayune*, October 19, 2006; Rathke, *The Battle for the Ninth Ward*.

¹⁸¹ Bruce Egger, "UNOP Citywide Plan Wins Approval - City Council Expected to OK It next Week," *The Times-Picayune*, June 14, 2007; Bruce Egger, "Council Endorses Recovery Blueprint - Move Could Unlock \$117 Million in Aid," *The Times-Picayune*, June 22, 2007.

¹⁸² Michelle Krupa, "N.O.'s Plan for Rebuilding Passes Muster with LRA - Action Will Free up Federal Money; St. Bernard Proposal Also OK'd," *The Times-Picayune*, June 26, 2007.

¹⁸³ Bruce Egger, "Six Bid to Revise Zoning Laws - Firm Also to Finish City's Master Plan," *The Times-Picayune*, August 25, 2007.

¹⁸⁴ "Master Plan With the Force of Law: Planning and Zoning in New Orleans," *New Orleans City Council*, accessed October 25, 2012, http://nolacitycouncil.com/resources/resources_masterplan.asp.

¹⁸⁵ Bruce Egger, "New Orleans Master Plan Approved by City Council," *The Times-Picayune*, August 12, 2010, http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2010/08/new_orleans_master_plan_approv.html.

CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS

Historic preservation practices and policies in New Orleans and the United States reported in chapter 2, in combination with the recounting of the history of the Holy Cross Historic District in the Lower Ninth Ward in chapter 3, inform the following analysis. The purpose of this analysis is to reveal the changes in social, cultural, and economic capital after a hazard event related to the historic designation of a site. A number of sources will contribute data in the quest to answer the research questions, and so this chapter will begin with a careful chronicling of each source including a proposal for each source's classification as an indicator for one of Bourdieu's four capitals. Following a brief catalog of sources, I describe the neighborhood as a collection of eight zones, each made up of blocks related by thematic affiliation. I will examine each zone in the context of the Holy Cross neighborhood, looking for evidence in the landscape of changes in cultural, economic, and social capital for each block decennially. Tracing fluctuations of these values in each zone in relation to local hazard events and the advent of historical designations reveals that the former seems to accelerate preexistent trends while the latter provides a mechanism for increased property values in the district. The chapter will conclude with a chronological synthesis of neighborhood-wide changes related to each form of capital, leading to the discussion in the next chapter of the visible impact of the preservation agenda embodied by government institutions and community organizations through their recovery efforts.

Sources of Capital

The framework of this study draws from Bourdieu's forms of capital, specifically social, cultural, and economic. Indicators for each form (table 4.1) will inform the discussion and

Table 4.1: Source revealing forms of capital

Cultural	Social	Economic
HDLC Category of Significance	Sweat equity	Tax Assessment Values
Date of Construction	Recovery sources	Date of Demolition

analysis of the effects of historic designation on the recovery process and their contribution to a community’s resilience. Each indicator, or source, will relate to one particular form of capital.

Cultural capital exists in two types: institutionalized and objectified. Cultural institutions assign institutionalized cultural capital, which is assumed to be unambiguous, objective, and measurable, found for the purposes of this study in the historic designation assigned by the HDLC and the NPS through the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Institutionalized cultural capital indicators appear in the HDLC and SHPO records, as well as in the National Register nomination for the Holy Cross Historic District. The HDLC designates local historic districts, assigning institutionalized cultural capital to structures within their boundaries; structures outside the local district but inside the NRHP Historic District receive institutionalized cultural capital from the SHPO. While the NPS defers to local and state controls, ultimately their regulations govern these spaces. Prior to 2011, the HDLC recognized six different levels of historic significance and shared this information with the public through color-coded maps (table 4.2). The HDLC consolidated these levels in 2011 to fit within three broad categories: significant (purple and blue); contributing (green, red, and gold); and non-contributing (grey/black). This study will use the older, more detailed categorization strategy since it was in place during the initial recovery process after the 2005 hurricane season.

Following Joanna Waters’ definition the actual structures inside the historic districts are objectified cultural capital: that is, transferrable artifacts that are possessed and coveted.¹ The

subjective desirability of tangible objects underlines the fact that cultural capital exists as a potent force only insofar as wider society gives it meaning and value – which is certainly the case in the Holy Cross neighborhood. The age of the structure will indicate objectified cultural capital, relying upon the premise in historic preservation literature that buildings increase in value as they age.² This form of capital utilizes a number of sources as indicators, including not only the HDLC and SHPO documentation but also the historic maps and aerial photographs in conjunction with tax assessment records when necessary.

Table 4.2: HDLC Categories of Structural Significance

Rating	Description
Purple	Buildings of national importance
Blue	Buildings of major architectural importance
Green	Buildings of architectural or historical importance
Red	Important buildings that have been altered
Gold	Buildings that contribute to the scene
Grey/Black	Unrated buildings

Sweat equity, or the work of volunteers, and investment of recovery programs mostly led by the Preservation Resource Center (PRC) represent valued resources that can be mobilized in pursuit of social actors’ interest, or social capital. It is important to note that this analysis makes no attempt and claims no success at discovering, documenting, or analyzing all the social capital present in the Holy Cross neighborhood. Rather, this analysis intends to reveal the social capital inherent in the connection between the labeling of a property as historic and its recovery.³ Although it may seem duplicative to consider institutionalized cultural capital as well as social capital resulting from historic designations, the latter actually requires activation by the property

owner, where the former is an assigned value not related to any action on the part of the owner. Thus human agency, which is sometimes disregarded by scholars considering recovery and resilience, plays a vital role in the activation of social capital.⁴ Sources indicating social capital include the PRC's records as well as those of volunteer organizations including Historic Green and Global Green. Social capital in this analysis will not be quantified beyond noting the number of properties in each zone that received recovery assistance from organizations that targeted historic structures and neighborhoods.

Finally, economic capital will be found in the actual values of the structures, calculated from the assessment values produced by the Tax Assessor for the Third Municipal District.⁵ The use of the data from the tax assessor's office comes with two important caveats. First, on the New Orleans tax rolls prior to 1976, the assessed value represented 85 percent of actual value – although residents regularly questioned the objectivity of assessments.⁶ With the passage of a new state constitution, however, the city of New Orleans joined all other Louisiana municipalities in recording new tax assessments that represented only 10 percent of a property's actual value.⁷ In St. Bernard Parish, this translated to a dramatic rise in values, largely due to the additional legal requirement that the 1977 property tax collection not exceed the 1976 revenue, a provision inserted to protect property owners from exorbitant tax bills.⁸ The data discussed in this chapter reveal that this pattern of rapid surge in values also affected the Holy Cross neighborhood, making comparisons between the 1975 and 1984 property values irrelevant and futile. The second condition for the use of the tax assessor's data is that market values are not commensurate with the actual values of properties. Properties in the Lower Ninth Ward sold for more than three times the actual value per the tax rolls in 1958; by 2000, the vacancy rate in

Holy Cross exceeded 15 percent, and in 2010 still hovered above 40 percent, revealing low demand likely accompanied by deteriorating structural conditions in housing stock.⁹

Geographical Zones of Analysis

No single definition of the “Holy Cross” neighborhood exists in principle or practice. The Holy Cross Neighborhood Association welcomes members from any part of the Lower Ninth Ward. The New Orleans Tax Assessor’s office recognizes “Holy Cross East” and “Holy Cross West” as the neighborhood bounded roughly by St. Claude Avenue, the Mississippi River, the Industrial Canal, and Jackson Barracks; Alabo Street divides downriver from upriver. The local Holy Cross Historic District, defined by the HDLC, does not match the nationally-recognized Historic District, defined in the National Register of Historic Places. Residents resist separating Holy Cross from the Lower Ninth Ward but community meetings reveal a fissure founded upon whether the front of town is more deserving of the attention of political figures instrumental in the recovery of the neighborhood. While recognizing the isolation of the Lower Ninth Ward from the rest of the city of New Orleans and remaining averse to reifying the social fracture evident in the community, this research seeks to identify differences in the landscape related to historic designation. To enable comparisons of the blocks within as well as outside the local and NRHP historic districts, this study partitions the blocks on the riverside of St. Claude Avenue, referred to as the “Holy Cross neighborhood,” into eight zones based on date and type of development, historic designation (or lack thereof), and relationships to major features such as the docks and the canal (table 4.3 and figure 4.1).

Table 4.3: Zones of Analysis

Zone Number		
1	Excluded	Blocks outside of both local and national historic districts
2	Margin	Blocks bordering either local or national historic district
3	Institution	Blocks containing churches, schools, and hospitals
4	Recovery	Blocks with high levels of recovery dollars invested
5	Early Development	Blocks developed prior to 1860
6	Late Development	Blocks developed after 1860
7	Canal	Blocks bordering the Industrial Canal
8	Industry	Blocks containing industrial features related to the Mississippi River

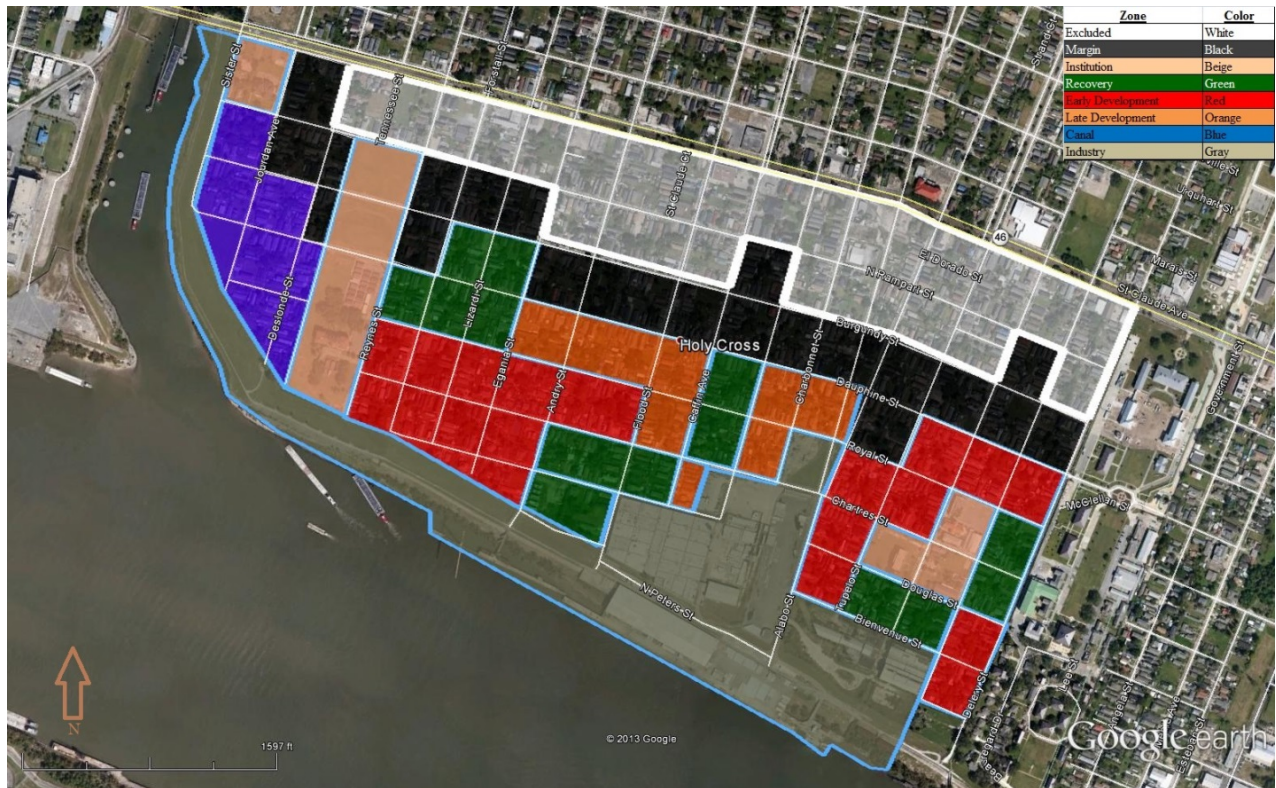


Figure 4.1: Zones for analysis: Holy Cross Neighborhood

Excluded Zone

The Excluded Zone is made up of twenty-five blocks along St. Claude Avenue, the periphery of the Holy Cross portion of the Lower Ninth Ward neighborhood. The blocks within this contiguous zone share a number of cohesive properties: a tendency towards commercial land use; higher levels of mid-twentieth century development; and most importantly, exclusion from the historic designations assigned to the majority of the blocks on the river side of St. Claude Avenue. This final component changed the process of recovery for property owners in the Excluded Zone as compared to those inside the nationally and locally recognized historic districts after the hurricanes of 2005. The recovery process for structures within the Excluded Zone often failed to save the original structures, despite their historic significance. However, the Excluded Zone witnessed high levels of landscape change over the past half-century through property consolidations, dramatic shifts in industry, demolitions, and infill.

Although the HDLC did not recognize these blocks as belonging within a recognized historic district, their survey of historic resources did include them and even went so far as to assign levels of significance to individual buildings in the Excluded Zone.¹⁰ Although just 10 percent of structures fall within the red or green categories, over half of the buildings in the Excluded Zone in 1979 met the gold level of significance, meaning that they contributed to the overall character of the neighborhood. Because these blocks do not fall within the designated districts, however, neither the HDLC nor the SHPO maintain survey data regarding the structures, requiring use of maps and aerial photographs to identify cultural capital in this zone. This part of the neighborhood experienced the most recent development, with the majority of construction taking place in the twentieth century.¹¹ Only half a dozen of the structures built prior to the 1883 Robinson Atlas remains extant here, making up less than 2 percent of the

buildings in the Excluded Zone. Since 1950, fifty-six structures of potential historic significance were demolished; forty-four of these demolitions occurred between 1979 and 2012.¹² A large number of the structures remaining in the Excluded Zone are considered non-contributing, or have been built in the past four decades. The distribution of the remaining objectified cultural capital exists in pockets, mainly along the lake-to-river streets on the downriver side of this zone.

In order to evaluate the change in economic capital within the Excluded Zone over the last sixty years, I compared the average actual values of each block's lots containing improvements in 1958, 1968, 1975, 1984, 1995, 2004, and 2010 (table 4.4).¹³ The apparent jump in values between 1975 and 1984 reflects new constitutional requirement in Louisiana that standardized tax assessments at 10 percent of actual value, as well as a high rate of inflation.¹⁴ The property values dating to 1975 and earlier will not be compared with the 1984 and later values. Much of the infill experienced between 1968 and 1975 failed to hold its value, leaving these blocks sprinkled with ranch style homes and industrial warehouses in the subdivided former truck farms. Property values in this area remained nearly stagnant from 1958 through 1975, with a few exceptions related to commercial developments including a doctor's office, a drug store, small groceries, restaurants, and bars.¹⁵ Between 1985 and 1995, however, property values of most of the blocks in the Excluded Zone increased despite a city-wide decline.¹⁶ In 1995 and 2004, only three blocks saw a decline in their values as compared to the prior decade.¹⁷

Table 4.4: Excluded Zone average actual values of property since 1958

Year	Average Property Value (\$)
1958 ¹⁸	4,870
1968 ¹⁹	4,890
1975 ²⁰	4,780
1984 ²¹	40,840
1995 ²²	54,430
2004 ²³	67,900
2010 ²⁴	68,000

The Excluded Zone saw increases in economic capital contained within the commercial zones that had no relation to the properties' objectified cultural capital. Additionally, a high number of demolitions left large gaps in the landscape here. These lots, while not presenting a public nuisance due to blighted structures, represent spaces of danger that lend to the characterization of the Lower Ninth Ward as a wilderness in the New York Times Magazine's 2012 cover story, "Jungleland."²⁵ The Excluded Zone provides the context for the next chapter's discussion of how objectified cultural capital, independent of institutionalized cultural capital, might not affect the survival or economic capital of structures.

Margin Zone

The Margin Zone is made up of twenty-two blocks mostly located between Dauphine and Rampart Streets that form the perimeter of the historic districts in Holy Cross. Only three of the blocks are either partially or entirely excluded from the locally designated (HDLC) Holy Cross Historic District; fifteen are partially or fully contained within both the HDLC and nationally designated (National Register) Holy Cross Historic District. While these blocks share a higher concentration of historic properties than the Excluded Zone, their varying inclusion can seem almost capricious. Adjacent houses might be subject to different legal restrictions based on their location relative to the perimeter of the historic district, resulting in divergent bureaucratic processes for recovery efforts in close proximity.

The objectified cultural capital of the Margin Zone reaches a higher level than that of the Excluded Zone, with nearly every block containing extant shotguns and Creole cottages dating to 1909 and earlier. Gordon Street delineates the boundary between nineteenth- and twentieth-century development, evident in a high density of arts & crafts style single and double shotguns on the downriver end as opposed to the upper end's prevalence of ranch style infill. A few Creole

and Edwardian style structures also remain downriver of Gordon Street. One exception to this geographic divide is the structure at 832 Flood, notable for its age and design (figure 4.2). The Creole cottage exemplifies the vernacular architecture of the Gulf Coast from the early to mid-nineteenth century, which drew from diverse cultural influences including Colonial French and West African by way of Haiti. This vacant structure sits in the local historic district but not the NRHP District, and the City cited the property owner for blight in 2008.²⁶



Figure 4.2: 832 Flood Street in 2002 and again in 2007²⁷

Institutionalized cultural capital has an experiential element in the Margin Zone where buildings are not only labeled with a color indicating their level of historic significance, but also receive notices of non-compliance when owners undertake exterior construction (or demolition) projects without the required Certificate of Appropriateness (CAs).²⁸ The majority of properties qualify as Gold, or Contributing, structures; whether they are within the HDLC or National Register Historic District, the HDLC maintains authority and requires the CA. The blocks upriver of Gordon Street contained 211 properties and received on average 1.5 CAs per property, fewer than blocks downriver from Gordon, which had eighty-four properties and received on average 1.74 CAs per property over the twenty-two year history of HDLC's authority in the District. Between 1991, the first year the HDLC recognized the District and thus required CAs for exterior work completed within its bounds, and 2005, there were 149 CAs produced for the

upper portion of the Margin Zone; only forty-one of these were the result of a violation such as a Stop Work notice or a Demolition by Neglect citation.²⁹ After the hurricanes in 2005, the upriver blocks received 168 CAs, fifty resulting from violation. Properties in the lower portion received sixty-two CAs before 2005, twenty-seven stemming from violations; after the hurricanes in 2005, the HDLC issued eighty-four, and thirty-one resulted from violations.

This upper-lower divide also materializes in the consideration of social capital for the Margin Zone. Blocks upriver of Gordon Street were twice as likely to have a Road Home, Rebuilding Together New Orleans (RTNO), or Operation Comeback project as those blocks downriver. This reflects the vacancy rate on this end of the Margin Zone, which is substantially higher than the upriver blocks.³⁰

The values of the Margin Zone are, on average, lower than those in the Excluded Zone. Two factors likely contributed to this decrease: the Excluded Zone contained higher levels of commercial development that typically held higher property values than residential uses; and the Margin Zone's back of town location is the least desirable for residential uses. In order to consider the potential effects of hazard events and social changes on the economic capital in this zone, I will compare the changes in the assessment values between 1962 and 1975 (pre- and post-Hurricane Betsy) with those found between 2004 and 2011 (pre- and post-Hurricane Katrina). In 1962, nearly a third of the blocks had lost value from the previous decade.³¹ The loss in value became more dramatic between 1962 and 1975; ten out of the twenty-two blocks in the Margin Zone lost value. The average value in 1975 was less than 3 percent greater than the average in 1962. The spatial distribution of the losses reveals two clusters of loss. Of the seven adjacent lots surrounding the Holy Cross School property, five experienced decreased assessment values between 1962 and 1975. Three blocks between Caffin and Alabo Streets also

exhibit a clustering effect, as all three lost value during this time. Although records can document neither the damage from Hurricane Betsy nor the race of property owners selling their homes at the individual property or block level, the loss of economic capital in Holy Cross suggests the beginning of the process of neighborhood abandonment that led to the blight of the 1990s and early 2000s. The situation in 2004 differed greatly from that of 1962. None of the blocks lost value from the assessment in the previous decade; on average, properties increased nearly \$10,000 in value between 1995 and 2004. The following decade, however, saw an increase in average value of over 10 percent; less than one third of blocks fell in value between 2004 and 2011. Only one cluster of loss stands out in this instance: three blocks between Charbonnet and Tupelo Streets lost value after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Of the thirty-nine structures in these three lots, seven were demolished after 2004, including two green-rated and four gold-rated structures. The final noteworthy transitional period regarding changes in economic value falls between 1984 and 1995, pre- and post-designation for both the locally and federally recognized historic districts. The average lot value rose by slightly less than 4 percent, while less than 15 percent of lots lost value.³² Neither the blocks contained within the local district nor those enveloped by both local and national boundaries held higher values than the average in 1995. By 2004, however, the average values of blocks contained within both districts had risen to about 6 percent above the Margin Zone average.

Though the levels of institutionalized cultural capital varied even within these blocks, properties inside the protected historic district still suffered demolition before and after the 2005 hurricane season. However, the number of properties demolished fell far below the Excluded Zone's total: only twelve properties, or 3.7 percent, were demolished after the 2005 hurricane

season in the former, while the latter saw thirty-four, or 8.6 percent of the properties extant in 2004.

Institutional Zone

One of the smallest zones, the Institutional Zone includes those blocks containing churches, schools, and hospitals and provides an interesting study of the potential impotence of historic designations in the face of the rights afforded to private property owners. The institutions contained in these blocks are not the only churches, schools, and hospitals in operation in the Holy Cross neighborhood, but they are the oldest; these were all established in the nineteenth century, most under the auspices of a Catholic parish (table 4.5 and figure 4.3). Two of the institutions, the Holy Cross College and the St. Maurice Catholic Church, earned recognition as local landmarks from the HDLC. The discussion of this zone will differ somewhat from the previous two due to the tax exempt status of these institutions which affects the indicator of economic capital utilized in this research.

Table 4.5: Churches, Schools, and Hospitals Present in the Institutional Zone

Name	Date of Establishment	Date of Closure
St. Maurice Catholic Church	1857 (1852) ³³	2008 ³⁴
McDonogh No. 19 ³⁵	1884 ³⁶	1929 ³⁷
Holy Cross College	1895 (1871) ³⁸	2007 ³⁹
Convent of Perpetual Adoration	1899 ⁴⁰	(1919) ⁴¹
St. Margaret's Daughters	1931 (1889) ⁴²	2005 ⁴³
T.J. Semmes School	1900 ⁴⁴	1978 ⁴⁵

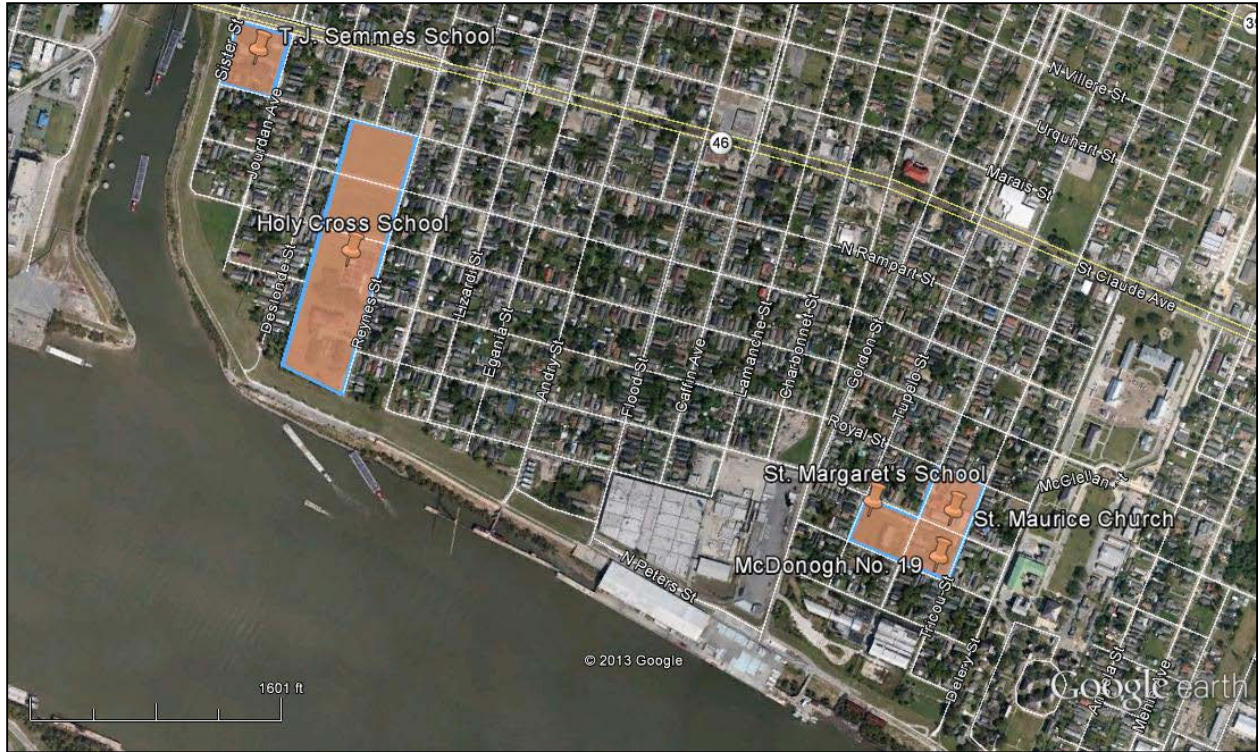


Figure 4.3: Locations of churches, schools, and hospitals in the Institutional Zone

The objectified cultural capital in the ten blocks of the Institutional Zone varies dramatically. Several of the blocks suffered enormous losses of integrity resulting from extensive demolitions after Hurricane Katrina, including several properties associated with the Catholic Diocese of New Orleans. St. Margaret's Daughters own a large portion of a block in this area of the Holy Cross Historic District. The lay organization acquired an existing building previously used for similar purposes built in the nineteenth century. The public school board constructed McDonogh No. 19 in 1884, a large frame five-bay building stretching upriver from Tricou halfway to Hancock Street, which would later be renamed St. Maurice Avenue (figure 4).⁴⁶ This facility fell into disrepair and by 1929, a new McDonogh No. 19 had been built on St. Claude Avenue to house the growing student population.⁴⁷ St. Margaret's Daughters acquired the building in 1931, opening a "Home for Unemployed and Unemployable Women" which would

eventually become a nursing home and remained open until 2005 (figure 5).⁴⁸ Despite secure funding for the reconstruction of its facility, the institution chose to relocate to an abandoned medical center in Mid-City rather than return to the Lower Ninth Ward, and the building remains vacant (figure 6).⁴⁹ In the adjacent block just above the Daughter's nursing home, the Villa St. Maurice offered affordable housing for the elderly until 2005. The lot originally housed the Convent of Perpetual Adoration; soon after constructing their home in 1899, the sisters opened the Holy Child Jesus Academy for girls.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, the convent and school burned in 1919, but the academy quickly regrouped and rebuilt bigger than before.⁵¹ The student population dwindled, however, and the institution merged with the St. Maurice parochial school just a block away.⁵² In 2012, the nearly century-old brick school stood vacant.

The elementary school at 1008 Jourdan Avenue opened in 1900 but remained nameless until 1901, when the school board officially dedicated the institution as the Thomas J. Semmes Elementary School. Semmes, a Louisiana statesman and "true son of the south," had passed away in 1899; many of his relatives were on site for the dedication ceremony. Originally open to white students only, the three black students that had integrated McDonogh No. 19 in 1961 moved to the T.J. Semmes Elementary School in 1962 after the school board decided to restrict the enrollment at the McDonogh No. 19 campus to black students only. The school continued to function until 1978, when the school district shuttered the institution due to a district-wide funding shortage. In 1985, the Orleans Parish School Board sold the property to the Ninth Ward Housing Development Corporation at auction. Headed by the brother of City Councilman Jon Johnson, the organization ran a daycare and hosted the New Orleans Health Corps in the space. Since his election, Johnson had led an aggressive drive to correct blight through increased city

NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(Photo by L. E. Cormier.)



McDONOGH, NO. 19, NO. 504 TRIGOU STREET.

Figure 4.4: McDonogh No. 19 in 1910



Figure 4.5: Old McDonogh No. 19 school being used as St. Margaret's Daughter's Home in 2002⁵³



Figure 4.6: Old McDonogh No. 19 school, abandoned and vacant in 2011⁵⁴

pressure, inspecting and citing hundreds of properties in New Orleans. His own properties in the Lower Ninth Ward, however, seemed suspiciously exempt from his critical eye. After a public exposé by a local investigate journal, Johnson served six months for misappropriating recovery dollars from the nonprofit, for which he served on the board, to his political campaign in 2007.⁵⁵ The institutionalized cultural capital maintains a tenuous hold in the Institutional Zone. The parish of the St. Maurice Catholic Church, a locally recognized HDLC landmark, is the oldest institution in this zone, established in 1852 with the original church built just five years later.⁵⁶ Seven local brickyards donated materials used in the construction of the building, and their stamps remain visible in exposed portions of the structure.⁵⁷ After undergoing several renovations the most recent version of the façade exemplifies Spanish Romanesque styling, but the original cruciform plan remains intact.⁵⁸ As previously mentioned, the parish hosted a school which was open until 1987, when the “mostly black” elementary institution was forced to close its doors due to parish-wide low enrollment.⁵⁹ The church remained in service until 2005, opening briefly after the storm before merging with the congregation at nearby St. David’s

Catholic Church.⁶⁰ The Archdiocese listed the St. Maurice Church for sale in 2011.⁶¹ The Holy Cross College, another local landmark, entirely cleared its three-block campus with the exception of the 1895 main building (a brick Italianate structure expanded in the early twentieth century) and several temporary units installed to accommodate remaining students in 2006. The property entered the market along with the St. Maurice Church in 2011. Unlike the church, Holy Cross College garnered significant interest leading to two separate development proposals; I will discuss them in more detail in relation to the social and economic capital of the sites.

Outside of the proposals for reuse of the Holy Cross College site, none of these sites has attracted investment of any sort. The low level of social capital evident in these blocks defies standards set by other New Orleans communities. In areas of the city strongly connected through Catholic churches, high levels of local bonding social capital enabled residents to return more quickly and in higher numbers; the church also served as conduit for bridging social capital, linking the parish with sources of recovery funding outside of their neighborhood.⁶² While the Catholic Church maintained a presence in the Holy Cross neighborhood, most parishioners no longer lived in the neighborhood but rather commuted in from the mostly-white suburbs. This lack of propinquity surely detracted from the bonding social capital available in other neighborhoods, and also diminished returns from the bridging social capital that might have attracted resources from the larger Catholic community at state, regional, or national levels. While both Holy Cross School and St. Maurice Catholic Church opened for a short time in 2006, they failed to remain functional in the critical months after the initial return of the Holy Cross neighborhood residents, despite the need for their services as schools, hospitals, and churches. After relocating to a new campus in Gentilly, the school formally placed the large property on the market in 2011 after working with the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association to reimagine

the site through a community planning exercise.⁶³ That same year, developers Green Coast Enterprises proposed converting the site to affordable housing for teachers and a grocery store, both recognized as urgent needs by neighborhood residents, but could not pull together adequate financing to complete the project.⁶⁴ The next summer New Orleans Baptist Ministries acquired the block farthest back, which had been used as sports fields for Holy Cross School since the mid-twentieth century, in order to establish a health clinic.⁶⁵ Most recently a new cadre of developers proposed a three-stage mixed-use project that would build a tiered apartment complex, thirteen stories at its peak, between the historic main building and the river.⁶⁶ The Holy Cross Neighborhood Association came out strongly against the proposal, which was moving through the HDLC process as of June 2013.

The loss of the Holy Cross School and its association with the powerful Catholic Diocese of New Orleans surely reflects a decrease in bridging and bonding social capital. However, the investment of time and attention through the community planning process led by the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association indicates that the historic significance of the site continues to draw on social capital present in the community. Advocacy for the redevelopment of this site grew from both the grassroots methods of community meetings, protests, and performances and the direct efforts of city and state officials, investors, celebrities, and preservation professionals in organizations such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation and universities from a number of different states. Although the initial proposal failed to garner enough investment to succeed, the community's response to a less-than-ideal second proposal did not lower the standards established during the planning process. Rather, the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association continues to communicate with the HDLC and City Council regarding its expectations for the developers and insists publicly through social media and traditional media that its demands be

met before the project receives city approval. It is unclear how this particular proposal will ultimately fare, but the trajectory of the community's involvement with the process indicates that the developer will need to make some concessions before expecting any local endorsement. The properties within the Institutional Zone are all privately owned, so while they are not subjected to property taxes, they are subject to the regulations enforced by the HDLC. Their economic capital is not comparable to properties in other zones, but their access to the cultural capital present in the properties can be considered in the same context. These institutions vary in their form of social capital, though. The bonding social capital for these properties is dependent upon the community (parish) they serve and that supports them. Even before the 2005 hurricane season, though, these institutions were serving communities largely outside of the Holy Cross neighborhood. The bridging social capital gave them access to resources that were not preservation-related; they held their own priorities, as is evident by the abandonment and demolition that characterizes the "recovery" of these properties. In the next chapter, the discussion will consider why the larger communities failed to cooperate in a way that met the preservation goals of the neighborhood while returning the institutions to functional status.

Recovery Zone

The Recovery Zone, another smaller section of the Holy Cross neighborhood, is made up of fourteen blocks roughly organized in three clusters: one in the east, one in the center, and one in the west (figure 4.7). A high level of recovery funding infused the properties in these blocks and remains evident in the landscape through lower levels of abandonment and demolition after 2005. Blocks earned a spot in the Recovery Zone by containing at least four properties that received recovery funding from one of six sources for repairs, rehabilitations, and in some cases reconstruction of structures: Rebuilding Together (RTNO), Home Again, Operation Comeback,

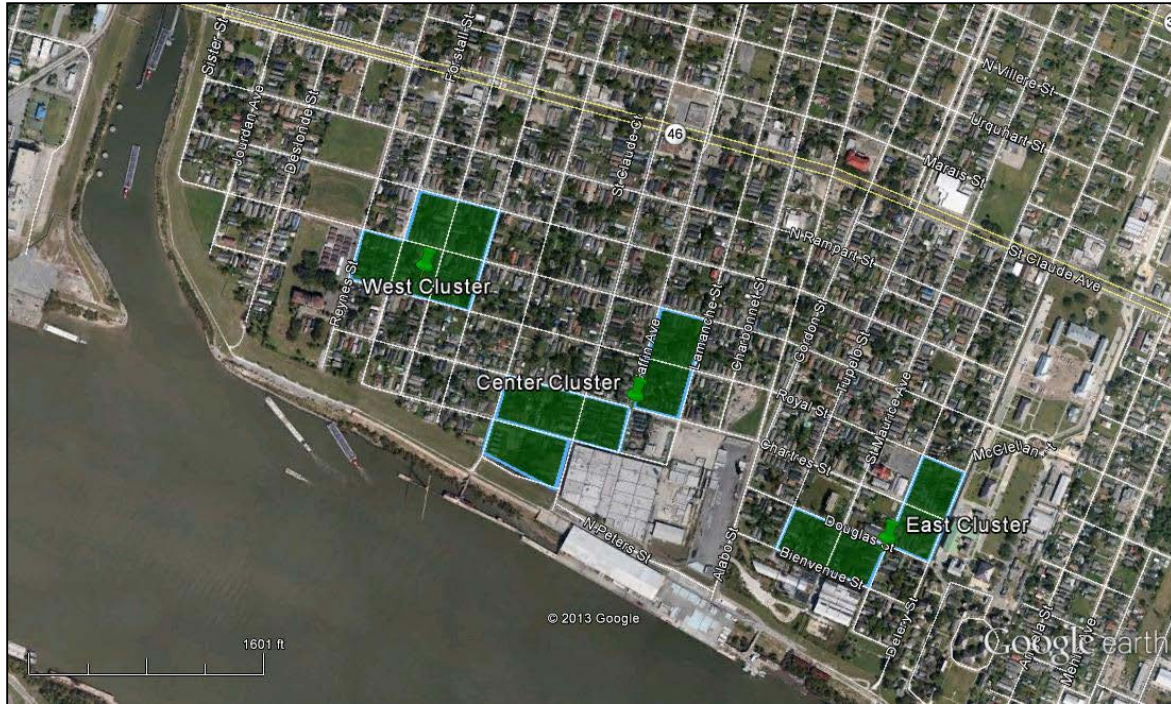


Figure 4.7: Recovery Zone showing West, Center, and East Clusters of blocks for analysis

Road Home, the Historic Building Recovery Grant Program (HBRGP), and Global Green. The Preservation Resource Center (PRC) administered the first three programs (RTNO, Home Again, and Operation Comeback). Funds came to Home Again through the National Trust for Historic Preservation, bringing seventeen homes in Holy Cross back as functional living spaces.⁶⁷ The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funded the programs under the Road Home umbrella; this research will consider only the homeowner-assistance program funds.⁶⁸ The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) administered the HBRGP, which received its funding from the Department of the Interior through the National Park Service.⁶⁹ Global Green, a multi-national nonprofit or nongovernmental organization (NGO), received its funding from a variety of donors revealed later in this section. The Recovery Zone contains over 40 percent of the properties that received recovery funds; the predominant funding source, HBRGP, supported

thirty-four homeowners, and nearly 32 percent of properties here accepted assistance from at least one of these programs.

The West Cluster, bounded roughly by Burgundy, Royal, Forstall, and Egania Streets, holds a significant level of historic integrity and thus a high level of objectified cultural capital. In these five blocks, over 50 percent of extant structures date to 1909 or earlier. Most of the structures are Victorian or Edwardian style shotguns, the former boasting ornate porches and the latter being simpler with geometric lines emphasized with simple gables and classical columns. In the Center Cluster, 42 percent of properties were built before 1909; 60 percent date to prior to 1937. A few blocks toward Jackson Barracks, 55 percent of the structures extant in the East Cluster are pre-1909, with only 31 percent constructed after 1933.

Table 4.6: Tabulation of the number of grants received in the Holy Cross neighborhood

Funding Source	Total Number of Recipients	Number of Recipients in Recovery Zone
Home Again!	17 ⁷⁰	7
Operation Comeback	40	26
RTNO	26	0
HBRGP	86	34
Global Green	5	5
Total	174	72

Table 4.7: Block numbers contained in the three "clusters" discussed in the Recovery Zone and the number of properties and lots with structures extant in 2012

West		Center		East	
Block number	Lots with structure	Block number	Lots with structure	Block number	Lots with structure
193	16	54	11	74	18
194	15	55	30	77	17
195	18	56	11	83	10
226	15	113	12	107	20
227	14	199	19		

Institutionalized cultural capital levels in the Recovery Zone are high. These fourteen blocks all fall within both the local and the NRHP historic districts with the exception of six properties along Burgundy Street in the West Cluster, which are not contained by the NRHP

district. All properties are within the jurisdiction of the HDLC, its ratings of significance, and its design guidelines. In the West Cluster, fifty-seven out of seventy-eight extant structures are ranked either gold, red, or green, indicating that they at least contribute to the scene although some have questionable historic integrity. Twenty-two of twenty-seven gold structures remained, nine of eleven red structures survived, and twenty-six of thirty historically significant structures retained their integrity in these five blocks; impressively, over 80 percent of the historic fabric evident in the built environment in 1980 still stands today. In the Center Cluster, twenty-two of the extant structures have a green rating, nine have a red rating, and eight remain with a gold rating indicating a high level of historic significance with very little loss of integrity due to alterations. It is important to note that block 54, which contains the new Global Green houses, was the only block to lose green-rated structures; the other four blocks in the Center Cluster retained all of their green-rated structures. Downriver, thirty-nine of sixty-five extant structures in the East Cluster earned gold, red, or green ratings in 1980. All but one of the gold structures remained, ten of the fourteen red structures survived, and twenty-two out of twenty-six green residences still stand; like the West Cluster, over 80 percent of the structures contributing to the historic district still remain today.

Along with the ratings of the structures, the HDLC issued CAs for exterior changes to the properties in the Recovery Zone. Of the three clusters, the West Cluster and East Cluster received the most CAs per property, averaging 2.6 and 2.5, respectively, over the 21 years of HDLC control; the East Cluster had the fewest at 2.0 CAs per property. The number of CAs issued per year predictably increased after 2005, reaching an average of thirteen per year over the six per year issued on average between 1991 and 2004. Another interesting comparison is the number of CAs resulting from violation. Prior to 2005, almost two out of five CAs issued came

after a property received notice of a violation. After 2005, however, only one out of five CAs could be traced to a violation.

As previously noted, blocks were included in the Recovery Zone because they contained at least four properties that received funding for repairs, rehabilitation, or new construction. Out of the seventy-eight properties within the West Cluster, fourteen received Operation Comeback funds, seven received Home Again! funds, and nine received HBRGP funds.⁷¹ A joint program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the television channel HGTV called the “Holy Cross Recovery Project” funded two of the Operation Comeback properties here.⁷² One of these required entirely new construction, and the design represented a “modern-day Creole Cottage” on the lot that had formerly held a three-bay camelback shotgun in the Eastlake style.⁷³

The Center Cluster contains five blocks, one of which differs dramatically from the others: block 54, situated adjacent to the levee of the Mississippi River. Although five extant structures with construction dates between 1883 and 1909 lie within block 54, the upper half of the block is entirely new construction. The American branch of Green Cross International, Global Green USA, constructed the Holy Cross Project, an affordable and sustainable housing project including several single family homes, a multi-family complex, and a community space. Global Green USA, a nonprofit based in Santa Monica, California, covered construction costs through donations, both monetary and in-kind, employing a post-Katrina start-up development firm to manage the construction projects and a local architectural firm to lead the design team.⁷⁴ An international contest championed by the celebrity Brad Pitt led the effort to design the structures, and the form of the single-family homes resembles a modern interpretation of the shotgun houses still prevalent in the neighborhood.⁷⁵ All new construction in a local historic district requires the approval of the HDLC, including not only approval from the Architectural Review Committee

(ARC) but also a hearing before the full Commission. Evidence of the negotiations between the developers and the HDLC present in the latter's files indicates that the developers first submitted the project for consideration in November of 2006, and met twice with the ARC before being placed on the Commission's March meeting agenda. In March, the HDLC voted to approve the concept "with the details to be worked out at the staff level."⁷⁶ Construction began on the first home at 401 Andry, and the project's celebrity backers continued to bring publicity to the area, which was labeled as a target for city recovery efforts.⁷⁷ Meetings between the ARC and the Global Green, USA team continued, as staff reviewed and returned the matter to the Commission's agenda in August, September, and again in February of 2008. At this meeting, however, "the Commission was unable to reach a majority decision on this application resulting in no action being taken," and Global Green, USA was forced to appeal the decision in order to move forward with their project. As prescribed in the local ordinance governing the HDLC, the appeal was heard by the City Council; this body voted to approve the appeal, overriding the decision of the HDLC and granting permission for the project to move forward. By July, Global Green, USA had secured CAs for all four single-family houses to be constructed on Andry Street. In December of 2010, the developer applied for approval to construct the community center at 5400 Douglass, and by late 2012 the project was underway.⁷⁸

Ten Operation Comeback projects were completed in the East Cluster, and eight properties received funds from the HBRGP.⁷⁹

The economic capital changes in the Recovery Zone range from moderate increases to dramatic upsurges. All three clusters (West, Center, and East) gained over 45 percent in value between 1984 and 2010.⁸⁰ The East Cluster lagged, however, between 2004 and 2010, gaining less than 10 percent in value while the West and Center Clusters rose over 31 percent and 24

percent, respectively, in the same decade.⁸¹ Block 54 represents an important study due to the new construction that took place along Andry Street after 2007. The number of residences in this single block doubled between 2007 and 2010; Global Green, USA touted its efforts to keep the new homes affordable, putting them on the market for only their appraised value: approximately \$125,000.⁸² However, the average value of Block 54 soared over the other blocks in the Center Cluster, jumping 80 percent between 2004 and 2012.⁸³ Without including the Global Green, USA project, the average value of the structures in Block 54 only rose about 25 percent, in line with the other blocks in this zone.⁸⁴ It is very apparent that, despite the best efforts of Global Green, USA to keep its products affordable and the work of other recovery agents to raise the value of homes in Holy Cross, the value of new construction dwarfed the value of existing homes in the neighborhood. Another overachiever is block 227 in the West Cluster, which rose sharply in value between 2004 and 2010 with an increase of 112 percent. While blocks 54 and 227 seem to represent outliers, preliminary results from 2013 tax assessment values indicate that the remaining Recovery Zone blocks share a similar trajectory. Perhaps blocks 54 and 227 are better described as harbingers in the context of the Recovery Zone's dynamic levels of economic capital.

In considering the initial effect of the historic designation on the economic capital in the Recovery Zone, it is important to note that the average value of blocks between 1984 and 1995 rose only 2.5 percent.⁸⁵ In 2010, the average value of the lots in the Recovery Zone was \$55,035, up from \$45,154 in 2004. This increase of approximately 22 percent in just six years contrasts sharply with the difference seen after Hurricane Betsy in 1965. The average value of a property in the Recovery Zone, \$3,426 in 1962, after the storm rose only to \$3,661 by 1975, an increase of only about 7 percent in over a decade.⁸⁶

Early Development Zone

The next segment consists of twenty blocks developed prior to 1860.⁸⁷ These blocks are organized into two clusters; for ease of reference (and in order not to confuse these clusters with those of the previous zone), the blocks bear the names of the closest landmarks: the Doullut Steamboat houses ('Steamboat') and the St. Maurice Church ('St. Maurice').⁸⁸ Each cluster has over 100 properties in fewer than a dozen square blocks (table 4.8). The blocks within the St. Maurice Cluster, while not contiguous, sit in similar proximity to both the Jackson Barracks downriver and the Industrial Zone to the riverside. Additionally, these nine blocks effectively surround the Institutional and Recovery Zones, forming a perimeter that also shares in its dissimilarity to the blocks contained within these other zones.

The objectified cultural capital present in the Steamboat Cluster has a broad range, with the highest levels found in the upriver, lakeside corner; many demolitions predating 2005, however, lower the levels in the rest of this Cluster. In total, nearly one quarter of properties in the Steamboat Cluster date to 1909 or earlier. Over 48 percent of the properties have construction

Table 4.8: Block numbers in each cluster in the Early Development Zone, with the number of properties and lots with extant structures

Steamboat Cluster		St. Maurice Cluster	
Block number	Lots with structure	Block number	Lots with structure
119	19	69	10
118	21	68	19
117	10	109	22
116	14	108	20
115	26	204	17
47	7	205	12
48	13	206	17
50	9	81	16
51	3	82	16
52	30		
53	6		

dates prior to 1940. Several blocks exemplify mid-century ranch style home developments, including two blocks in the upriver, lakeside corner where over 50 percent of the remaining properties date to the 1950s. The St. Maurice Cluster contains significantly higher levels of objectified cultural capital compared with the Steamboat Cluster. Only one out of every five properties in the St. Maurice Cluster was constructed after 1950, with over 70 percent of the extant built environment dating to the 1930s or earlier. This is likely related to the lower number of demolitions in these blocks prior to their inclusion in the historic district.

The institutionalized cultural capital in the Steamboat Cluster of the Early Development Zone is relatively high, based on the existence of the two Doullut Steamboat houses, designated as local landmarks by the HDLC. These houses, constructed in 1909 and 1915, hosted related families of steamboat captains for decades. Their unique architectural statements are reminiscent of both the nautical design related to their owners' careers and more unusual influences such as the pagoda-like roofs and tiled columns that likely stemmed from the Japanese Pavilion at the St. Louis World's Fair.⁸⁹ However, as compared with the St. Maurice Cluster, the Steamboat Cluster falls short with less than half of its properties designated as at least contributing features to the historic district. Over 75 percent of properties extant within the St. Maurice Cluster have received designation as contributing to the historic district by the HDLC.

The HDLC issued a total of 514 CAs for properties within the Early Development Zone, averaging about twenty-six each year. In the Steamboat Cluster, the HDLC provided an average of 1.7 CAs per property, which was nearly the same rate as in the St. Maurice Cluster which saw an average of 1.6 CAs per property. Both clusters experienced a significant increase in the number of CAs issued related to the return of residents after the 2005 hurricanes. Also in both clusters, about one out of every three CAs stemmed from a violation before 2005. After 2005,

this number fell to approximately one out of four. The Steamboat Cluster is partially bordered by the West and Central Clusters of the Recovery Zone but received significantly fewer CAs per property than those Recovery Zone Clusters. At 30 percent of CAs related to violations prior to 2005, the Steamboat Cluster also trailed the West and Central Clusters of the Recovery Zone which received approximately 44 percent of CAs as a result of some violation.

The social capital evident within the Early Development Zone is low, but does make a visible impact on the built environment. A total of eighteen properties received recovery funds from preservation-related sources, higher than the Late Development Zone. In the Steamboat Cluster, eight HBRGP grants helped preserve historic properties, the majority of which were in the upper lakeside corner. Two properties received funding from Operation Comeback. Interestingly, both recipients were mid-century bungalows in block 117, a block in which no other recovery agents sponsored renovations or reconstruction. In the St. Maurice Cluster, six properties received funding from the HBRGP and another two received Operation Comeback funds. Neither of the Operation Comeback properties were designated as contributing structures to the historic district.

The Steamboat Cluster holds higher levels of economic capital than the St. Maurice Cluster; this has been the case since 1955. The St. Maurice Cluster also saw substantially more instances of blocks losing value between decades than the Steamboat Cluster. Block 47 in the Steamboat Cluster struggled to maintain its levels of economic capital, however, losing value in 1962, 1975, 2004, and 2010.⁹⁰ In considering the effects of the hurricanes of 2005, the properties gained approximately 9 percent in value between 2004 and 2010.⁹¹ Values rose modestly between 1962 and 1975, gaining on average only 2 percent.⁹² Interestingly, Steamboat Cluster property values dropped more sharply between 1955 and 1962 than between 1962 and 1975.⁹³

The change between values in 1984 and 1995 was significantly higher in the Steamboat Cluster, where values per block rose an average increase of 15 percent as compared to 5 percent in the St. Maurice Cluster.⁹⁴ This is especially interesting given the higher level of objectified and institutionalized cultural capital in the St. Maurice Cluster.

Late Development Zone

The blocks in the Late Development Zone represent spaces that were subdivided for residential growth after 1860.⁹⁵ They lie a few blocks back from the river, which presented early transportation and employment options, but they also are bordered by Dauphine Street on the lakeside, which hosted the first mule-drawn streetcar lines in 1872 through the neighborhood to reach the slaughterhouse and later the sugar refinery in Chalmette.⁹⁶ Because of the close proximity and smaller number of blocks in this zone, it will not be further divided into clusters for discussion (table 4.9 and figure 4.8).

Table 4.9: List of all blocks in the Late Development Zone with the number of properties and number of lots with structure

Block number	Lots with Structure	Block number	Lots with Structure
196	9	201	11
197	22	202	3
198	14	112	11
200	12	114	11
61	8		

Objectified cultural capital remaining in the neighborhood is relatively high. Over 75 percent of extant properties have construction dates earlier than 1945. The lakeside and uppermost blocks, bordered by Egania and Flood Streets, held the highest levels of objectified cultural capital with over 50 percent of properties dating to 1909 or earlier.

The institutionalized cultural capital varies greatly among blocks, but overall the Late Development Zone retained 85 percent of its contributing properties identified in the original

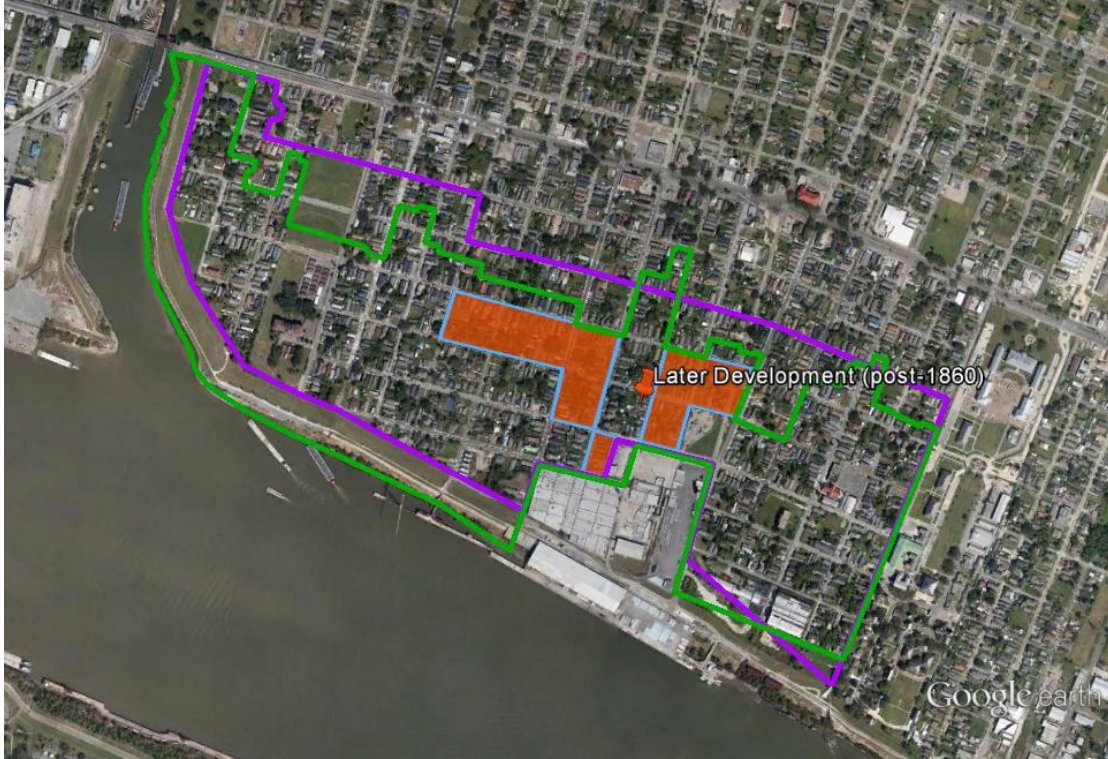


Figure 4.8: Late Development Zone within the historic districts

survey.⁹⁷ The lakeside and uppermost blocks held the highest number of green properties, and had a higher concentration of contributing properties at 73 percent to the lower ends' 62 percent.⁹⁸

The HDLC issued a total of 210 CAs to the properties in the Late Development Zone. On average, each property received two CAs over the 21 years of HDLC governance. Prior to 2005, this zone saw only five CAs per year, while after 2005 the HDLC issued an average of nineteen CAs per year. While the volume increased after 2005, so did the number of CAs resulting from violations; in the first 14 years about one in four CAs resulted from violations, but after 2005 this ratio jumped to one out of every three.

Receipt of eleven grants indicates social capital in these blocks: six grants came from the HBRGP, four from RTNO, and one Operation Comeback project.⁹⁹ Granting agencies awarded

funds mostly to properties in the blocks farthest back, and two-thirds of the blocks within the Late Development Zone contained at least one grant recipient.

The economic capital present in the Late Development Zone shows moderate gains in the most recent decade. Out of the nine blocks, average property values dropped in four blocks between 2004 and 2010, but value increases in the other five blocks far offset the losses as overall the average property value in the Late Development Zone grew by an average of 10 percent during the same period.¹⁰⁰ All of these blocks gained value in the previous decade, averaging a 27 percent increase between 1995 and 2004.¹⁰¹ When we compare the changes between 1962 and 1975, although the average gains were modest at about 3 percent, only one block lost value between 1962 and 1975.¹⁰² Significantly, the Late Development Zone lost about 17 percent in value between 1984 and 1995, indicating that any increase related to the historic designation was overcome by other factors.

Canal Zone

The streetscape of the blocks within the Canal Zone at one time appeared very similar to the few blocks below Poland Avenue in the Bywater neighborhood uptown from the Holy Cross Historic District; the construction of the Industrial Canal in the early twentieth century severed the human scale connection between them. The structures in this area suffered extensive damage during both Hurricane Betsy and the 2005 hurricanes and floods. Many of the adjacent blocks upriver developed prior to 1883 but actually disappeared under the Industrial Canal and the expanding levee system early in the twentieth century. Only a few blocks and properties remain in the Canal Zone (table 4.10).

Table 4.10: The blocks contained in the Canal Zone with the number of properties and lots with structures

Block number	Lots with structure	Block number	Lots with structure
301	13	190	16
232	14	122	10
231	19	121	12
191	9		

The objectified cultural capital in the Canal Zone is relatively high; over 80 percent of properties have pre-1940 construction dates. The highest levels are in block 190, where 81 percent of extant properties pre-date 1909. The lowest levels are in blocks 191 and 122, both adjacent to block 190. Block 301 in the upper lakeside corner experienced the highest level of post-World War II construction, with nearly half of its thirteen properties built as infill after 1945.

One of the most striking things about the Canal Zone is its high level of institutionalized cultural capital. No less than 80 percent of the extant structures extant within these seven blocks received ratings of contributing features to the historic district. Also remarkable is the low level of demolitions in these low-density blocks; only 11 percent of the rated properties extant in 1980 were razed, subsequently leaving a high level of the historic fabric intact.

The HDLC issued a total of 231 CAs in the Canal Zone, averaging 2.5 per property. The number of CAs received per year increased after 2005 to twenty; prior to 2005, the Canal Zone saw an average of six CAs issued each year. The number of violations remained fairly consistent, averaging 26 percent of the total CAs issued before 2005 and 27 percent of those issued after 2005.

Fourteen properties in the Canal Zone received recovery funds from one of the five grant programs considered by this research. Two Operation Comeback projects and one Home Again!

project occurred in the lower lakeside edge of the zone, while twelve HBRGP projects were completed throughout these seven blocks. Each block held at least one grant recipient.

The levels of economic capital in the Canal Zone fall to the lower end of the scale relative to the other zones. Four of the seven blocks actually lost value between 2004 and 2010. On average, however, tax assessment values during this time period were stagnant. This was also the case between 1955 and 1975; on average, the properties saw no increase in values but also saw only minimal losses after Hurricane Betsy. The Canal Zone saw modest gains between 1984 and 1995, but this area seemed to experience a turn soon after, with a leap of over 25 percent in value by 2004.

Industrial Zone

The remaining blocks are part of the Industrial Zone, which makes up the riverside perimeter of the Holy Cross neighborhood. These spaces received this classification based on their uses that reflect their proximity to the Mississippi River which serves as a transportation corridor. While some residential development took place within them through 1909, industrial construction led to the demolition of all houses by 1937. Removal opened the way for extensive industrial complexes accommodating a slaughterhouse, wharves, a cotton compress, and a large storage facility. While some of the structures may date to the early twentieth-century, HDLC or SHPO regulations do not govern these properties. No volunteer or other aid group arrived to assist the industry owners along this part of the river in the ways that similar organizations worked in the recovery effort in the residential blocks of the neighborhood. It might be worthwhile in future studies to determine whether structures might qualify for historic designation at the local, state, or national level, and then whether their values were affected by either a potential historic status or the recovery monies available after 2005. However, for the

purposes of this study, the Industrial Zone lacks relevance to the research questions at hand, and so a detailed analysis of the levels of cultural, social, and economic capital was excluded.

Forms of Capital over Time

Table 4.11: The average values in 2010 for each zone, and the percent increase between the 2004 and 2010 values.

Zone	<u>Excluded</u>	<u>Margin</u>	<u>Recovery</u>	<u>Early Development</u>	<u>Late Development</u>	<u>Canal</u>
Average Value, 2010	\$68,000	\$53,217	\$55,916	\$53,116	\$54,027	\$44,904
Percent increase from 2004	0.1	11	22	8.8	9.8	0.0

Cultural capital, both objectified and institutionalized, decreased sharply after the 2005 hurricane season that greatly affected the landscape of the historic built environment in the Holy Cross neighborhood. The rate of post-Katrina demolitions far exceeded those tallied after Hurricane Betsy in 1965, in spite of historical designations intended to preserve structures. A question to be considered in the next chapter will be how this loss of cultural capital might affect the Holy Cross neighborhood's trajectory toward gentrification, like its upriver neighbor, the Bywater. Economic capital, the most tangible of the three forms of capital discussed in this chapter, varied enormously over the neighborhood, with some dramatic increases seen after the 2005 hurricane season. While the highest values in 2010 existed in the Excluded Zone, the greatest increase between 2004 and 2010 actually occurred in the Recovery Zone, which saw an average increase of 22 percent (table 4.11). Social capital, present at different levels in each of the zones, made a large impact on the landscape through restorations and new construction buoyed by funding from private organizations and government institutions espousing preservation as a model for recovery. The number of CAs furnished by the HDLC increased after 2005 related to recovery work underway in the historic district. Additionally, the CAs issued by

the HDLC in the Recovery Zone were less likely to result from violations than those issued to other zones. This implies that the social capital activated to proceed through the grant application and implementation process also may have carried the properties through the HDLC permitting process with better efficiency, and thus less expense, than other properties in the neighborhood. This will be more fully considered in the next chapter, which will discuss the influence of active community organizations and volunteer groups that are pursuing preservation and community development goals in the neighborhood.

Endnotes

¹ J.L. Waters, "Cultural Capital," in *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, ed. Editors-in-Chief: Rob Kitchin and Nigel Thrift (Oxford: Elsevier, 2009), 404–406, <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780080449104009305>.

² Jeremy C. Wells, "Historic Preservation, Significance, and Phenomenology," *Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology Newsletter* 22, no. 1 (2011): 13–15. This analysis purposefully disregards the state of the structure for two reasons. First, it is outside of this research to determine whether a structure can or cannot be feasibly restored based on the amount of damage suffered from the hurricanes and flooding. Second, with unlimited economic capital, restoration of extreme damage is possible.

³ Christopher A. Airriess et al., "Church-based Social Capital, Networks and Geographical Scale: Katrina Evacuation, Relocation, and Recovery in a New Orleans Vietnamese American Community," *Geoforum* 39, no. 3 (2008): 1333–1346; Louise Holt, "Embodied Social Capital and Geographic Perspectives: Performing the Habitus," *Progress in Human Geography* 32, no. 2 (April 1, 2008): 227–246. Airriess et al. focus on "church-centered institutionalized social capital" and successfully reveal its activation on a variety of scales as experienced by the subject community (1334). This analysis mimics this isolation through its focus on preservation-centered social capital, which gave the community members access (if uneven) to resources through the local, state, national, and international communities of preservationists. Holt carefully sketches Bourdieu's theorization of social capital's recursive relationship with cultural capital. The ability of one to reinforce, enhance, or create the other is evident as social capital can give property owners access to agents of recovery with high levels of cultural and/or economic capital. However, the two cannot be conceptualized as mutually exclusive.

⁴ Craig E. Colten, Jenny Hay, and Alexandra Giancarlo, "Community Resilience and Oil Spills in Coastal Louisiana," *Ecology and Society* 17, no. 3 (2012).

⁵ Frank Donze, "Only-in-New Orleans Tradition Ends - City Has Had Multiple Assessors Since 19th Century," *The Times-Picayune*, January 2, 2011, sec. A. Until 2011, the city's property

taxes depended upon a district-specific assessor that spoke to the divisive political geography of nineteenth century New Orleans. The seven assessors held unparalleled power and often provided services outside of their legislated duties. Since 1985, Erroll Williams has served as Third Municipal District Tax Assessor; he was elected as the first ever city-wide assessor and took office in 2011.

⁶ Editorial, “Property Tax Inequities Grow More Dangerous,” *The Times-Picayune*, March 17, 1957, sec. 2.

⁷ Anita Schrodt, “St. Bernard Assessments Hike Is Seen,” *The Times-Picayune*, August 20, 1976, sec. 1.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Greater New Orleans Community Data Center, “Holy Cross Statistical Area,” <GNOCDC> *Holy Cross*, June 18, 2012, <http://www.gnocdc.org/NeighborhoodData/8/HolyCross/index.html>.

¹⁰ Koch and Wilson Architects and Urban Transportation and Planning Associates, *A Survey of Community Development Neighborhoods to Identify Potential National Register Historic Districts and Individual National Register Properties, August 1978-December 1979* (New Orleans: Historic District Landmarks Commission, 1979).

¹¹ Earth Search, Inc., *Historic Preservation Plan for Holy Cross Historic District* (New Orleans: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 2005).

¹² Structures demolished after 1979 had been surveyed for historic significance by the HDLC, but those destroyed prior to this survey can only be assumed to have potential significance. Since the consideration of cultural capital looks to the construction date of the structure, I assume that those buildings constructed prior to 1952, which might qualify them as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, would have potential historic significance if extant today.

¹³ New Orleans (La.) Board of Assessors, Tax Assessment Rolls, 1856-1975, [microfilm] CJ433 1957-1958, roll #69-101C, New Orleans Public Library. New Orleans (La.) Board of Assessors, Tax Assessment Rolls, 1856-1975, [microfilm] CJ433 1974-1975, roll #140, New Orleans Public Library. Department of Finance, Real Estate Tax Assessments, [microfilm] CB570 1984, roll #89-13, New Orleans Public Library. “Tax Assessment Values, 1995-2010, Holy Cross East and West” [spreadsheet] Orleans Parish Assessor’s Office, New Orleans, Louisiana, accessed 11 June 2012.

¹⁴ David Conroy, “Louisiana Constitution, Article VII: Significant Developments,” *Louisiana Law Review* 62, no. 1 (2001): 106.

¹⁵ New Orleans (La.) Board of Assessors. Tax Assessment Rolls, 1856-1975. [microfilm] CJ433 1968-1969, roll #108. New Orleans Public Library. New Orleans (La.) Board of Assessors, Tax Assessment Rolls, 1856-1975, [microfilm] CJ433 1974-1975, roll #140, New Orleans Public Library.

¹⁶ Charles Himmelberg, Christopher Mayer, and Todd Sinai, “Assessing High House Prices: Bubbles, Fundamentals and Misperceptions,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 19, no. 4 (Fall 2005): 67–92.

¹⁷ Block 332 lost value in 1995 and 2004; blocks 327 and 331 declined in 1995 and 2004, respectively.

¹⁸ New Orleans (La.) Board of Assessors, Tax Assessment Rolls, 1856-1975, [microfilm] CJ433 1957-1958, roll #69-101C, New Orleans Public Library.

¹⁹ New Orleans (La.) Board of Assessors, Tax Assessment Rolls, 1856-1975, [microfilm] CJ433 1968-1969, roll #108, New Orleans Public Library.

²⁰ New Orleans (La.) Board of Assessors, Tax Assessment Rolls, 1856-1975, [microfilm] CJ433 1974-1975, roll #140, New Orleans Public Library.

²¹ Department of Finance. Real Estate Tax Assessments. [microfilm] CB570 1984, roll #89-13. New Orleans Public Library.

²² “Tax Assessment Values, 1995-2010, Holy Cross East and West” [spreadsheet] Orleans Parish Assessor’s Office, New Orleans, Louisiana, accessed 11 June 2012.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Nathaniel Rich, “Jungleland,” *New York Times Magazine*, March 21, 2012.

²⁶ Michelle Kimball, “Administrative Adjudication (Blight) Hearing Notice, Nov 11, 9:15am,” *PRC, Yahoo Group*, October 22, 2008, <http://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/neighborhoodcouncilprcno/conversations/topics/1911>.

²⁷ Photo on left taken by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; photo on right captured from Google Street View in 2012.

²⁸ Records from the HDLC contain all CAs issued between 1991 and the present; however, data collection took place during the first half of 2012, so for the purposes of this analysis only those issued between 1991 and 2011 will be considered.

²⁹ Recalling the discussion of the CA process in chapter 2, if the HDLC cites a property for a violation – whether for conducting exterior work without acquiring a CA, expanding work beyond that approved by a CA, or demolition by neglect – the property owner must receive a CA to rectify the situation. The HDLC can prosecute property owners through the city court system, punishing them with fines that can be assigned to a property’s deed through tax lien. A violation leading to a CA indicates that the property owner, knowingly or in ignorance, failed to navigate the legislated process of maintaining their historic property.

³⁰ “<GNOCDC> Population Loss and Vacant Housing in New Orleans Neighborhoods,” accessed June 4, 2013, <http://www.gnocdc.org/PopulationLossAndVacantHousing/index.html>.

³¹ The assessment values used here were from the 1958 tax rolls.

³² Department of Finance, Real Estate Tax Assessments, [microfilm] CB570 1984, roll #89-13, New Orleans Public Library.

³³ Richard Campanella, *Bienville’s Dilemma: A Historical Geography of New Orleans* (Lafayette, Louisiana: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2008), 150.

³⁴ Christine Bordelon, “Catholic Church Reopens in New Orleans’ Katrina-damaged Ninth Ward,” *Catholic News Service*, March 24, 2009, <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0901372.htm>.

³⁵ Later reopened as the Home for the Unemployed and Unemployable Women, run by St. Margaret’s Daughters. “St. Margaret’s Daughters,” *The Times-Picayune*, February 28, 1932, sec. 2.

³⁶ Joy J. Jackson, *New Orleans in the Gilded Age: Politics and Urban Progress, 1880-1896* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), 196.

³⁷ “McDonogh No. 19 Pupils To Move,” *The Times-Picayune*, November 26, 1929.

³⁸ The orphanage established by the Brothers of the Holy Cross predated the College by more than two decades. Campanella, *Bienville’s Dilemma: A Historical Geography of New Orleans*, 150.

³⁹ “History of Holy Cross School,” *About Holy Cross*, accessed June 11, 2013, <http://www.holycrosstigers.com/History>.

⁴⁰ *The Catholic Church in the United States of America*, vol. II: The Religious Communities of Women (New York: The Catholic Editing Company, 1914), 418.

⁴¹ Although it is unclear when the school officially closed, the original structure burned in 1919. The St. Maurice parochial school absorbed this institution likely in the following decade. “Convent Sisters Plan To Rebuild,” *The Times-Picayune*, June 11, 1919.

⁴² Bill Barrow, “St. Margaret’s Daughters Pushes 2012 Opening of Nursing Home at Lindy Boggs Site,” *The Times-Picayune*, February 8, 2011, http://www.nola.com/health/index.ssf/2011/02/st_margarets_daughters_pushes.html.

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⁴⁴ “The Public School Named For Semmes,” *The Times-Picayune*, February 3, 1901.

⁴⁵ Arthur Roane, Jr., “18 Parents Lose School Court Fight,” *The Times-Picayune*, October 28, 1978, sec. 1.

⁴⁶ Jackson, *New Orleans in the Gilded Age: Politics and Urban Progress, 1880-1896*, 196.

⁴⁷ “McDonogh No. 19 Pupils To Move.”

⁴⁸ “St. Margaret’s Daughters”; Barrow, “St. Margaret’s Daughters Pushes 2012 Opening of Nursing Home at Lindy Boggs Site.”

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⁵⁰ *The Catholic Church in the United States of America, II: The Religious Communities of Women*:418; Cortez, “Diggin for Facts on Old Academy,” *The Times-Picayune*, November 28, 1977.

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⁵² “Sisters Will Be Honored by Mass of Thanksgiving,” *The Times-Picayune*, September 30, 1972, sec. 4.

⁵³ Photo by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

⁵⁴ Photo captured on Google Street View, 2012

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⁸⁵ In 1984, the average value was \$35,852; in 1995, it was \$35,389 in these eight lots. Department of Finance. Real Estate Tax Assessments. [microfilm] CB570 1984, roll #89-13. New Orleans Public Library. "Tax Assessment Values, 1995-2010, Holy Cross East and West" [spreadsheet] Orleans Parish Assessor's Office, New Orleans, Louisiana, accessed June 11, 2012.

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⁸⁷ Earth Search, Inc., *Historic Preservation Plan for Holy Cross Historic District*.

⁸⁸ The reader may note that, like the Holy Cross Historic District, the landmarks chosen as namesakes have little, if any, relevance to the development of blocks contained in their clusters, besides a geographic proximity. While others might have chosen names based on different features, such as the Delery Playground instead of the St. Maurice Catholic Church, or the

Greater Little Zion Baptist Church instead of the Doullut Steamboat houses, my intent through this research is to draw attention to the relationship, or lack thereof, between the historic designations and the landscape of the built environment. Thus the names of these areas will draw from designated historical sites present in the landscape.

⁸⁹ The 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis was actually called the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, and was originally intended to open in 1903 as a centennial celebration for the sale of these lands from France to the United States.

⁹⁰ New Orleans (La.) Board of Assessors. Tax Assessment Rolls, 1856-1975. [microfilm] CJ433 1974-1975, roll #140. New Orleans Public Library.

⁹¹ "Tax Assessment Values, 1995-2010, Holy Cross East and West" [spreadsheet] Orleans Parish Assessor's Office, New Orleans, Louisiana, accessed June 11, 2012.

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⁹³ New Orleans (La.) Board of Assessors, Tax Assessment Rolls, 1856-1975, [microfilm] CJ433 1957-1958, roll #69-101C, New Orleans Public Library. New Orleans (La.) Board of Assessors, Tax Assessment Rolls, 1856-1975, [microfilm] CJ433 1961-1962, roll #69-212C, New Orleans Public Library. New Orleans (La.) Board of Assessors. Tax Assessment Rolls, 1856-1975. [microfilm] CJ433 1974-1975, roll #140.

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⁹⁶ Louis C. Hennick, *The Streetcars of New Orleans* (Gretna, La.: Pelican Pub. Co., 1975), 220, 226.

⁹⁷ Koch and Wilson Architects and Urban Transportation and Planning Associates, *A Survey of Community Development Neighborhoods to Identify Potential National Register Historic Districts and Individual National Register Properties, August 1978-December 1979*.

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CHAPTER 5

FINDING SIGNIFICANCE IN THE HISTORY OF HOLY CROSS

In 2008, New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin issued an executive order in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Gustav which removed the authority of the Neighborhood Conservation District Commission (NCDC) to approve or deny demolition requests in historic neighborhoods that fell outside of the jurisdiction of the Historic District Landmarks Commission (HDLC).¹ While Nagin's order did not directly affect the Holy Cross Historic District because the HDLC oversees its demolition permitting, the order launched a public dialogue that revealed ongoing tensions over preservation's privileged status in the post-2005 hurricane recovery process in New Orleans. Preservationists characterized Nagin as "king of the wrecking ball" and at least five nonprofit organizations mobilized their members through emails and letters to protest the city condoning the demolition of potentially significant historic resources.² Within weeks, Mayor Nagin modified his edict to allow city councilpersons to determine whether the NCDC review was warranted in their districts.³ Questions continued to surface, however, about the impact of historic reviews on demolition rates in Orleans and St. Bernard parishes. Local media revealed a striking contrast between the recovery strategies espoused by each parish, inferring that the former expected returns and renovations on par with pre-storm populations, while the latter adopted a right-sizing approach that led to the demolition of over 7,000 residences. City employees in New Orleans related the disparity to the historic review requirement, saying "St. Bernard did not have to go through all of the historical processes. They didn't have preservation interests. They didn't have the stakeholders that we did because of our unique housing stock."⁴

Within the context of this public discourse about the implementation and outcome of historic preservation regulations in New Orleans, the research questions of this study critically explore the recovery process in terms of permitting, regulation, and funding. Using the analysis

from chapter 4 to inform these discussions, I first explain that after the 2005 hurricane season, homeowners took part in a formal negotiation of recovery with the HDLC through Certificates of Appropriateness (CAs). A comparison of the Excluded and Margin Zones with the remainder of the Holy Cross neighborhood (the part of the Lower Ninth Ward on the riverside of St. Claude Avenue) reveals that the cultural, social, and economic capital are concentrated in certain areas within the local historic district. The requests for CAs tended to cluster geographically based on the type of work proposed and corresponded with different levels of social, cultural, and economic capital. Next, I review the effects of regulation on demolition, blight, and preservation. While significantly fewer demolitions took place after Hurricane Betsy than after the 2005 hurricane season, analysis of the landscape of institutionalized cultural capital reveals the power of the HDLC to decelerate or halt the demolition process. The role of gentrification in Holy Cross intensified after the 2005 hurricane season, but the moderating effects of a persistent lack of amenities and perhaps the housing market crash of 2008 retarded its progress. Preservation successes and failures are not consistently aligned with levels of cultural capital, so this part of the chapter will focus on the messy reality of regulation and the limits of legal authority on the historic built environment. Finally, several specific funding opportunities existed for houses designated as historic, representing an activation of bonding and bridging social capital by homeowners in Holy Cross. As Sharon Zukin stated, “historic preservation is never just a cultural category: the mediation of aesthetic qualities by real estate markets has a strong impact on social communities.”⁵ The relationship between grants and the two forms of cultural capital indicates that age is more influential than rating, while an unsurprisingly direct relationship exists between grants and economic capital. The prevalence of volunteer and nonprofit organizations on a number of scales left a visible mark on the landscape through new

construction, renovations, community-based design charrettes, and headquarters scattered around the neighborhood. This research provides an “expanded form of context, including historical, political, social, economic, cultural, and spatial processes over the long term” that reveals social capital to be “embedded in the relational geometries of the connections between institutions, actors and networks” and activated in and through these organizations acting as recovery agents.⁶ The chapter concludes with the assertion that the cultural capital in Holy Cross gave access to social and economic capital to allow the neighborhood to experience recovery through different agents and with different goals. The local historic designation of the district played a role in enhancing the recovery of the Holy Cross neighborhood through decreased demolitions, higher property values, and assistance from a multitude of organizations that invested in recovery through grants, donations, and sweat equity.

Permitting Recovery

While the visible landscape of the Holy Cross neighborhood in 2010 by no means matches that of the same spaces surveyed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 2002, demolitions were limited to approximately 6.9 percent after the 2005 hurricane season. As discussed in chapter 4, the Holy Cross neighborhood contains two recognized, mostly overlapping historic districts: one locally designated, and the other federally designated in the National Register of Historic Places. In order to consider the differing experiences of homeowners inside and outside of the recognized historic districts, I compare the results discussed in chapter 4 of the Excluded Zone and the Margin Zone with the rest of the neighborhood. Because this structured comparison is common through the remainder of this chapter, for clarity I will refer to the Early Development, Later Development, Recovery, and

Canal Zones as “Included Zones” since they are all included in both the locally and nationally designated historic districts.

One of the methodological challenges faced by this research rested upon the inclusion of the human factor; that is, using the sources available to produce an explicit recognition that preservation and recovery only happen through the interaction of people with the built environment. The answer to how homeowners experienced recovery through the permitting process governed locally by the HDLC lies both in the landscape of the historic built environment and the files of the HDLC. Specifically, the extant properties in the Holy Cross neighborhood present visible evidence of how homeowners navigated the recovery process specific to historic places. The Certificates of Appropriateness approved by the HDLC and the correspondence with that body from the homeowners and property owners within the District tell the stories of the magnitude and nature of the recovery process undertaken by the Holy Cross residents. Additionally, the theoretical framework of cultural, social, and economic capital formalizes the inclusion of humans through the explicit recognition of societal value systems affecting the built environment.

Table 5.1: Changes in Cultural and Economic Capital

	Excluded Zone	Margin Zone	Included Zone
Rated properties extant in 1980 and 2010 (percent)	83	89.3	85.1
Increase (average) of property values, 1984 to 2010	60.0	68.8	71.4

Experiencing Preservation

Through the permitting process governed locally by the HDLC, how did homeowners experience recovery? The HDLC issues Certificates of Appropriateness (CAs) to property owners and/or contractors for exterior work that is visible from the public right of way in historic districts. In the Holy Cross Historic District, the HDLC produced an average of fifty-seven CAs

each year between 1991 and 2004, the first fourteen years after the establishment of the district. Between 2005 and 2011, this number increased to an average of 148 CAs each year due to the recovery work required to repair damages caused during the 2005 hurricane season.

While some homeowners initiated the process of application for their CAs by visiting or contacting the HDLC office, others received by mail notices of violation, including beginning work without a CA, deviating from a previously issued CA, or being accused of “demolition by neglect” (DN). Between 1991 and 2005, about 31 percent of CAs issued by the HDLC in the Holy Cross Historic District stemmed from recorded violations. After 2005, only 28 percent of CAs in the Holy Cross Historic District resulted from violations. The highest levels of violations after 2005 took place in the Late Development Zone, in which 35 percent of CAs resulted from violations; the lowest rate can be found in the Recovery Zone, where only 21 percent of CAs resulted from violations. This comparison reveals a potential relationship between the social capital brought by recovery funding and volunteer groups and the successful navigation of the HDLC permitting process. Three organizations were very active in the Recovery Zone: the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Make it Right / Global Green, and the Preservation Resource Center (PRC). Hurricane recovery grants managed by the SHPO in conjunction with the National Park Service (NPS) provided between \$5,000 and \$45,000 for homeowners to restore their homes with the requirement that the renovations meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards.⁷ By 2008, approximately seventy-five property owners had received one of these grants in the Holy Cross Historic District, resulting in five-year preservation easements on these properties.

While it is possible that the HDLC looked favorably on those areas with high levels of recovery fund investments, this seems unlikely for two reasons. First, violations issued by the

HDLC for work done without a CA, modifications incompatible with the design guidelines, or alterations made outside of or in opposition to those permitted by a CA often stemmed from the reports of neighbors rather than from random inspections by HDLC staff due to severe staff shortages and funding cuts. Neighbors within the Recovery Zone were at least as likely as neighbors in other zones to report violations. Second, the HDLC files indicate that even those homes that received grants from the SHPO and NTHP received citations.

Within the Early Development Zone, property owners appealed to the HDLC to help them overcome their difficulties with process and funding and allow them to retain features altered in violation. One resident wrote, “I am grateful that the Commissions [sic] has given me the go ahead to keep those rails. I can assure you, I’ll have no more problems.” Insurance companies prescribed the installation of handrails despite being unnecessary according to city code and outside HDLC’s guidelines allowable modifications. Another homeowner explained, “I also told you that my job have [sic] a slow down time of the year all hotel is just like this. I have been here 25 years this is my home my house and I will do everything I can to maintenance it...If you all know something about grants that I don’t. Let me know.” These communications to the HDLC reveal the efforts of homeowners to recognize the authority of the commission while maintaining their progress toward recovery. In the Late Development Zone, a handwritten letter describes personal tragedy and suffering. The head of household, previously coordinating repairs and renovations, had a stroke just before the family received a violation notice related to a new roof and windows. The author explains her lack of knowledge about the code and historic design guidelines, and closes with “P.S. Where do I get a certificate of appropriateness.” A neighbor in the same zone stated in a phone conversation with HDLC staff that she “had never heard of HDLC until 2008,” but had already installed roof, doors, windows, and gutters in violation. This

lack of knowledge about the historic district pervades the HDLC files, as seen in this letter from 1992:

I am writing because of the fact I want to do my home in vinyl siding. Paint will not hold up on my home, and I can't afford a paint job every three or four years. I lost my legs Mar. 18 1990, and I am only 41 yrs. old. God has help me this far. My fix income is not much, I have two children and two grandkids that live with me. Both my kids are still in school. But however I will make a sacrifice to fix my home. I did not know I lived in a historic area, but I am glad to be a part of it. N.O. is my home, all my life. I ask the committee to please think about this matter. And I hope they make the right decision on this matter. I want my home to look good, some don't care. But I do. If I could attend the meeting I would. Transportation for me is not good. Thank you for reading my plead on this matter.

The HDLC voted unanimously to grant this last homeowner a hardship variance, allowing her to retain the siding that violated the design guidelines in place for the Holy Cross Historic District. In the Recovery Zone, homeowners expressed their attempts to work with the HDLC's demands. One wrote, "Complied with order to move TV dish farther from front of house...I am 85 years old therefore I'm not able to climb on the roof to remove the wind turbine and not able to pay anyone to do it and since I was not aware that was not a code violation the house next door has a wind turbine on the roof." Another mentioned that "we have also had Preservation Resource out to help give direction in repairing the home" but still received a notice that city code compliance wanted to demolish their home. Others in the Recovery Zone found themselves indebted to the HDLC in their struggle to recovery. "Words cannot express my appreciation for your willingness to help in these difficult times," wrote one homeowner on a FedEx packing slip sent to the HDLC offices. In the Canal Zone, CA violations plagued residents as they attempted to return home after the storm. One homeowner wrote, "I find it oddly perverse that the HDLC is ordering me to make repairs but then makes me wait while the house continues to deteriorate." His application for a CA pointed out that the "first phase is to undo bad work done by crooked contractor and secure house w/new roofing & house wrap." Other homeowners who had

successfully navigated the CA process prior to 2005 failed to comply with requirements to apply after the 2005 hurricane season, and received violations before returning to acquire the appropriate permits. Not all homeowners struggled with these issues, however; a grant recipient of the SHPO hazard mitigation program funds was able to pass through the recovery process with no violations at all.

A comparison of the Margin Zone with the Included Zones reveal that while CAs in blocks included within both the NRHP Historic District and the local historic district saw a decrease in the percentage of CAs resulting from violation, those blocks in the Margin Zone remained consistent with pre-2005 levels. Included Zones fell from 33 percent to 26 percent of CAs resulting from violations, but the Margin Zone only decreased from 32.2 percent to 32.1 percent. The acquisition of CAs for recovery work after the 2005 hurricane season increased dramatically within the Holy Cross Historic District, from an average of 47 to 129 annually. This trend was most extreme in the Canal and Later Development Zones, which received an average of 6 and 4.9 CAs respectively per year before 2005; after 2005, these blocks received an average of 23 and 22 CAs per year.

Table 5.2: Comparison of CAs received in each of the Included Zones with two forms of cultural capital

Zone	CAs per property per year after 2005	Properties built before 1933 (percent)	Extant rated properties (percent)
Recovery	0.20	71	82.3
Early	0.13	68	85.6
Late	0.22	72	86.3
Canal	0.25	83	88.6

A comparison between the number of CAs and the level of objectified cultural capital, the age of the properties, reveals that the higher the percentage of pre-1933 properties in the zone, the steeper the increase in the number of CAs received. Comparing the CAs with extant institutionalized cultural capital shows similar results, although the Recovery and Early

Development Zones have switched positions. This can be explained by considering the divergent patterns of development in these two zones. Between 2004 and 2010, the Recovery Zone grew 5.7 percent from 209 properties to 221 properties; the Early Development Zone, conversely, lost six properties, shrinking by 2 percent.⁸ New construction in the locally designated Holy Cross Historic District requires at least one CA from the HDLC, and often requires several CAs to account for changes in design and later work such as landscaping and the installation of solar panels. Demolition, on the other hand, typically only requires one CA. The Recovery Zone received more CAs despite having a lower rate of extant institutionalized cultural capital because of the new construction, mostly in the center cluster.

Regulating Recovery

Four years after the 2005 hurricane season, almost a third of residential structures in St. Bernard parish were razed in comparison to about 5 percent of Orleans Parish housing.⁹ This number continued to grow, reaching 37 percent by 2010.¹⁰ Just uptown in the Holy Cross neighborhood, census data indicate that about 75 percent of housing units survived the first decade of the twenty-first century.¹¹ However, the return rates in St. Bernard Parish exceeded those in the Holy Cross neighborhood, 53 percent to 49 percent, respectively, which contrasts with the demolition rates and calls into question the forces at work to save properties in each place.¹² As postulated by Kirkham and Krupa, reporters for *The Times-Picayune*, the total lack of historic districts in St. Bernard may have played a role in the increased demolitions there.¹³ Although properties deemed historic through the Section 106 review (see chapter 2) would have required mitigation of adverse impact as prescribed by the National Historic Preservation Act if federal funds were spent, less than 10 percent of residences were built before 1960.¹⁴ In Orleans

Parish, only 44 percent of residences were built after 1960, and in the Holy Cross neighborhood this number shrinks to 18.7 percent.¹⁵

Forty years before Hurricanes Katrina and Rita wrought their destruction on the Gulf Coast, the Holy Cross neighborhood survived Hurricane Betsy and an ensuing levee break on the Inner Harbor Navigation (Industrial) Canal. Hurricane Betsy, a category four storm, brought eight feet of floodwater into the Lower Ninth Ward in early September of 1965.¹⁶ While homes sat abandoned for years after the storm, the tax rolls reveal that property owners resisted demolition as a recovery option.¹⁷ In fact, between 1962 and 1975, the Holy Cross neighborhood saw a 3 percent increase in the number of properties in its bounds.¹⁸ Only the Recovery Zone saw a loss, and even then it was minimal at approximately 5 percent, or 11 properties.¹⁹ After the 2005 hurricane season, however, the Holy Cross neighborhood experienced a loss of approximately 6.9 percent of its properties. What caused this considerable difference in response? Perhaps those homes that suffered damage from Hurricane Betsy decades earlier did not fare well after the damage of two additional major storms and the floodwaters of 2005. Two factors serve to complicate this argument. First, the entrance of recovery agents focused on right sizing and green space, as demonstrated through the contentious master plans presented in the years after the storms, actively encouraged demolition in the Lower Ninth Ward. This socioeconomic context, presented in chapter 3, creates an environment that enables expedient and fully funded demolition as opposed to an extended and expensive route to recovery through renovation. Second, the historic designation of a large portion of the Holy Cross neighborhood necessitated an additional layer of bureaucratic process prior to demolition. In the next few paragraphs, I unpack some of the details about the effects of these local and federal regulations on the survival of properties in the Holy Cross neighborhoods.

In 1979, the architectural survey by Koch and Wilson established the recommended boundaries for a number of previously undesignated historic districts in New Orleans.²⁰ Their survey included several blocks beyond the present-day boundaries of both the national and local Holy Cross Historic Districts, ending at the lakeside of St. Claude bounded by the Industrial Canal and Jackson Barracks on the upriver and downriver edges, respectively. Each structure received a rating of purple (nationally important), blue (major architectural importance), green (architecturally or historically important), red (important but altered), gold (contribute to scene), or grey (unrated), despite the authors did not recommend designating these blocks as a historic district. The significance of these ratings to the individual properties, as well as to the residents of these districts, can be framed by considering the institutionalized cultural capital assigned through these ranked ratings.

Geographers have critically engaged with historic preservation through their studies of gentrification and the production of the heritage economy for consumption by tourists and others through the framework of cultural capital for decades. Brian Graham, G.J. Ashworth, and J.E. Turnbridge explain that “heritage can be visualized as a duality – a resource of economic and cultural capital. This is less a dialectic than a continuous tension, these broad domains generally being in conflict with each other. To put it succinctly, heritage can be visualized as a commodity” and thus its monetary value is but one way to market a property.²¹ Considering an architecturally or historically important property as a more desirable commodity than a contributing property assigns value based on the value of historic preservation, or heritage. “The cultural commodification of heritage embraces state-sponsored allegories of identity expressed through an iconography that is congruent with processes of legitimation of structures of power, but also more localized renditions of identity, which in their appeal to the popular and resistance

to the centre, may be subversive of state power. Tension and conflict are thus inherent qualities of heritage, whatever its form.”²² Chapter 6 will further consider the issues of identity and collective memory raised in the privileging of historic preservation through public policy. In this section, we will follow geographer Joanna Waters in her employment of Pierre Bourdieu’s classification of cultural capital as embodied, objectified, or institutionalized.²³ Bourdieu characterized cultural capital in terms of the elite: high society appreciated the value of and thus consumed cultural capital such as opera, fine art, museums, and knowledge. Other geographers studying gentrification often implicate cultural capital as an agent of the process. David Ley considered not “whether economic or cultural arguments prevail, but rather how they work together to produce gentrification as an outcome.”²⁴ However, Ley’s research lends agency not to the historic structures themselves but to artists as cultural producers, suggesting that their embodied cultural capital brought to a neighborhood characterized by its affordability, or low economic capital, increases the cultural capital, thus increasing the desirability and value of the neighborhood by their presence in that space. This research departs from that assignment of embodied cultural capital by postulating that cultural capital can exist in space without being created by artist-gentrifiers but instead being (re)produced by societal value systems that privilege particular forms of architecture and history as expressed through material culture. Similarly, sociologist Sharon Zukin introduces a complex relationship between developers, government agencies, and residents of spaces being “revitalized” into lofts in New York City, with a focus on historic preservation that provides interesting parallels to the work of the Preservation Resource Center (PRC) and the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP), among others, in the Holy Cross neighborhood.²⁵ While ostensibly the “commitment to historic preservation also implies a commitment to neighborhood preservation,” in practice the

neighborhood may find itself left out of the process in a number of ways.²⁶ As Zukin describes the push to save the Federal Archive Building in New York City, the local community board fought for (re)production of its goals and ideals in the revitalized space, including affordable housing and public access to the historic structure. Some parallels can be drawn from Zukin's case study to the ongoing struggle to redevelop the Holy Cross School site in the Holy Cross Historic District. Key differences, however, include the school's private ownership as opposed to the public ownership of the Federal Archive Building and the lack of potential economic gain on a site made inaccessible on two sides by the Mississippi River and the Industrial Canal, situated in a neighborhood with low amenities.

In speaking of cultural capital as either institutionalized or objectified, there is a danger in removing the human agent from the latter category. While objectified cultural capital relies on a characteristic of a structure rather than an assignment by a human, it is impossible for that building to exist without human agency through construction, ownership, and likely but not always maintenance. Additionally, cultural capital cannot exist without human value systems incorporating that resource as a desirable object of some worth. In this case, historic preservationists espouse a value system in which the old or aged, also called traditional or classic, are worthy of attention and thus valuable resources.

Considering the importance of cultural capital as a separate, but related, factor in landscape change along with economic and social capital, allows this research to unpack the many impacts of historic preservation on the Holy Cross neighborhood and its recovery. Each of the research questions must consider the importance of cultural capital in its answer. However, this research did not attempt to verify the validity of the institutionalized cultural capital. Properties that lost historic integrity after 1980 may have also lost their rating at the HDLC

office; this research assumed that any property rated in 1980 had equal potential to remain at or return to a state of historic integrity appropriate for its rated level.

Table 5.3: Excluded Zone - Institutionalized Cultural Capital

Rating	Number of Properties, 1980	Percentage of Properties	Percentage Extant, 1980 to 2010
Green	31	7.1	77.4
Red	12	2.7	50.0
Gold	210	47.8	85.7
Unrated	155	42.4	68.3

Table 5.4: Margin Zone - Institutionalized Cultural Capital

Rating	Number of Properties, 1980	Percentage of Properties	Percentage Extant, 1980 to 2010
Green	64	18.4	87.5
Red	44	12.7	84.1
Gold	136	39.2	91.2
Unrated	103	29.7	78.8

Table 5.5: Included Zone - Institutionalized Cultural Capital

Rating	Number of Properties, 1980	Percentage of Properties	Percentage Extant, 1980 to 2010
Green	238	44.2	87.0
Red	124	23.0	79.0
Gold	177	32.8	87.0
Unrated	179	33.2	74.3

Significance in Survival

Did local or federal regulations affect the survival of damaged properties deemed historic? Regulations stemming from historic designation protect institutionalized cultural capital by preventing demolition or destruction without some form of mitigation. Homeowners in the Holy Cross neighborhood likely had limited access to funding and expertise necessary to navigate the mitigation process in the immediate months following the storms in 2005, so a property's eligibility for listing on the National Register by the limited staff at the SHPO or the HDLC effectively precluded its demolition. In the years following the 2005 hurricane season, after the immediate emergency period, mitigation efforts would take precedence over

preservation as city leaders attempted to eradicate blighted vacant properties while avoiding demolition of historic structures.²⁷ Although the historic district boundaries did not include these properties in the Excluded Zone, they were still assigned a rating based on their historic and/or architectural significance in 1980, and would have triggered the Section 106 review process if federal funds were involved in a proposed demolition. The difference is in the body of review for the Section 106 process: for the Included Zones, it is the HDLC; for the Excluded Zone and those properties outside of the local historic district within the Margin Zone, it is the SHPO. In order to answer whether or not the regulations made a difference, we must compare the survival rate of these rated “historic” properties (lots containing buildings with high cultural capital) with those unrated properties.

In the Excluded Zone, 83 percent of rated properties survived, while 68.3 percent of unrated properties remained extant in 2010. Gold properties were most likely to survive, at 85.7 percent, while only 50 percent of red properties remained in 2010. Green properties, those rated as architecturally or historically important, saw a 77.4 percent survival rate.

In the Margin Zone, 89.3 percent of rated properties survived, while only 71.8 percent of unrated properties survived. As in the Excluded Zone, gold properties had the highest rates of survival, at 91.2 percent, while 88.9 percent of green properties and 84.1 percent of red properties were extant in 2010.

Finally, in the Included Zones, 85.1 percent of properties rated gold, red, or green by the HDLC survived between 1980 and 2010, as opposed to 74.3 percent of unrated properties. 87 percent of both green and gold properties survived, while 79 percent of red properties remained extant. The Canal Zone contains the highest concentration of extant rated properties at 88.6 percent, while the rated properties in the Recovery Zone had the lowest rate of survival: 82.3

percent. The Canal Zone also retained the highest percentage of its unrated properties, 84.6 percent, while the Later Development Zone had the lowest rate of survival for unrated properties at 69.6 percent.

These results suggest that the institutionalized cultural capital of a property is related to its chances of survival after a hazard event. Even those properties outside of the designated historic district benefited from their ratings; the boundaries of the districts have little effect in this regard. The limits of the power of institutionalized cultural capital are very clear in the landscape: rating a property as historically or architecturally significant or contributing cannot prevent vacancy or blight, nor can it preserve the community that resides in the neighborhood that contains the historic district. This is all too clear in the Holy Cross Historic District, where 41.1 percent of residences sat vacant in 2010; the number of vacant properties doubled in just ten years.²⁸

Funding Recovery

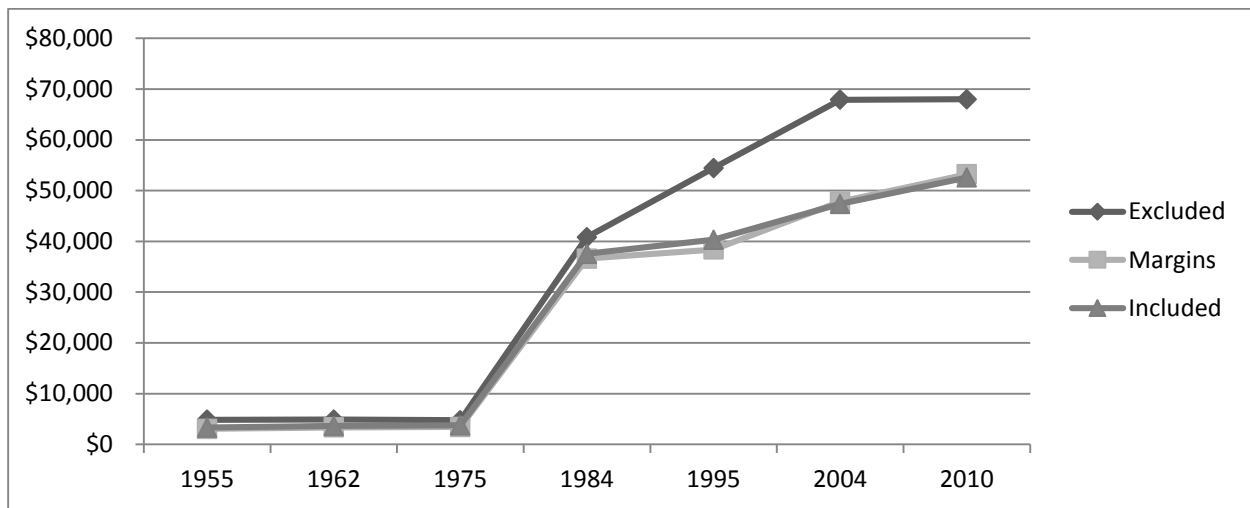


Figure 5.1: Change in value for properties in the Holy Cross neighborhood as defined by their proximity to the designated historic districts²⁹

Targeted Assistance for Historic Properties

What specific opportunities directed capital toward historic properties, and how did these programs and organizations affect the landscape? Empirical studies on the effect of historic district designation on neighborhoods in the United States typically find increased values in homes contained within these districts.³⁰ The majority of studies rely on simple comparisons in value, whether through market-based sales prices or tax assessment values, often based on availability of data. In *Partners in Prosperity*, researchers identified a weakness in the literature related to the lack of inter-neighborhood comparisons leading to an erasure of variance within historic districts.³¹ This research sought to avoid this pitfall by separating the Holy Cross neighborhood into numerous zones for comparison both within and outside of the historic district. This context provides a much richer discussion of the effects of designation despite not relying upon multiple regression analysis, as the age and rating of the properties in each zone can thus be compared to the changes in value over time.

The Holy Cross Historic District achieved its listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986. Not until 1991 did the local Historic District Landmarks Commission recognize the neighborhood as a local historic district. As Donovan Rypkema among others has noted, the local designation in combination with an NRHP-listed historic district tends to result in higher property value increases than national listing alone.³² The delay in local recognition by the HDLC likely contributed to its lack of significant property value increase between 1984 and 1995.³³ During this same time period, the blocks within the Holy Cross neighborhood that are excluded from both historic districts saw property values increase by an average of 33 percent. After 1995, however, the Included Zones saw an average property value increase of 40 percent, outperforming the property values in the Excluded Zone which increased on average 25 percent

over the same fifteen year period. It is worth noting that in addition to the hazard event and ensuing disaster following the 2005 hurricane season, the national economy slumped in relation to the housing market crash of 2008 and the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill caused significant detriment to local economic trends.³⁴ However, historic districts have been shown to provide insulation from sharp shifts in value, so while it is impossible to gauge a measurable impact of either of these two hazard events in isolation from the effects of the 2005 hurricane season, it is fair to postulate that the historical district may have provided some sort of mitigation.³⁵

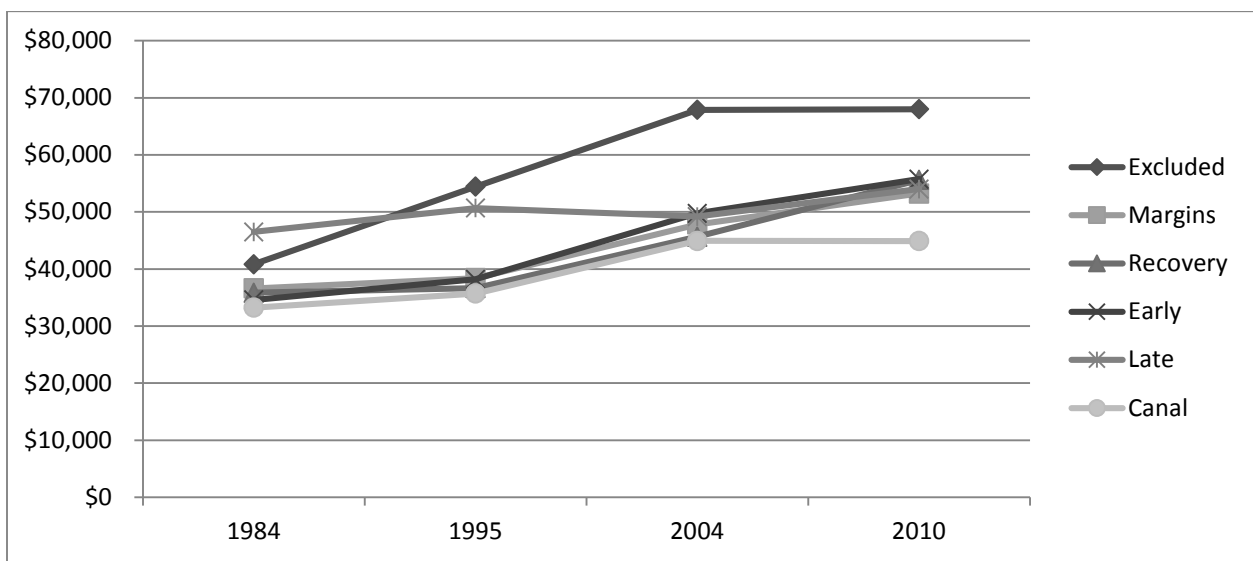


Figure 5.2: Changes in value for properties included in both the national and local historic districts³⁶

Responding to the call in preservation literature to more critically consider the effects of historic designation by reporting dynamic and spatially-varied changes in property values, this research relied on tax assessment values aggregated at the block level rather than the district level.³⁷ The individual consideration of blocks through multiple criteria revealed similarities that drew together the Zones discussed in the previous chapter. Comparison of these Zones reveals that not all experienced similar rates of increase in their property values. The Recovery Zone, named for its high level of investment by grants and other recovery related funding sources after

the 2005 hurricane season, witnessed an increase in property value of 22 percent between 2004 and 2010, while the Canal Zone (like the Excluded Zone) remained stagnant. In line with Coulson and Lahr, even the Late Development Zone experienced property value increases, reinforcing their finding that historic districts benefit properties with newer construction as well as those falling within the more traditional definition of historic.³⁸ Between 1995 and 2004, however, the Late Development Zone lost on average 3 percent in property value; strikingly, this is the only Zone that lost value after 1984, and it is clearly related to the sale of the Grace Christian Evangelical Lutheran Church on Caffin Avenue in 1990.³⁹

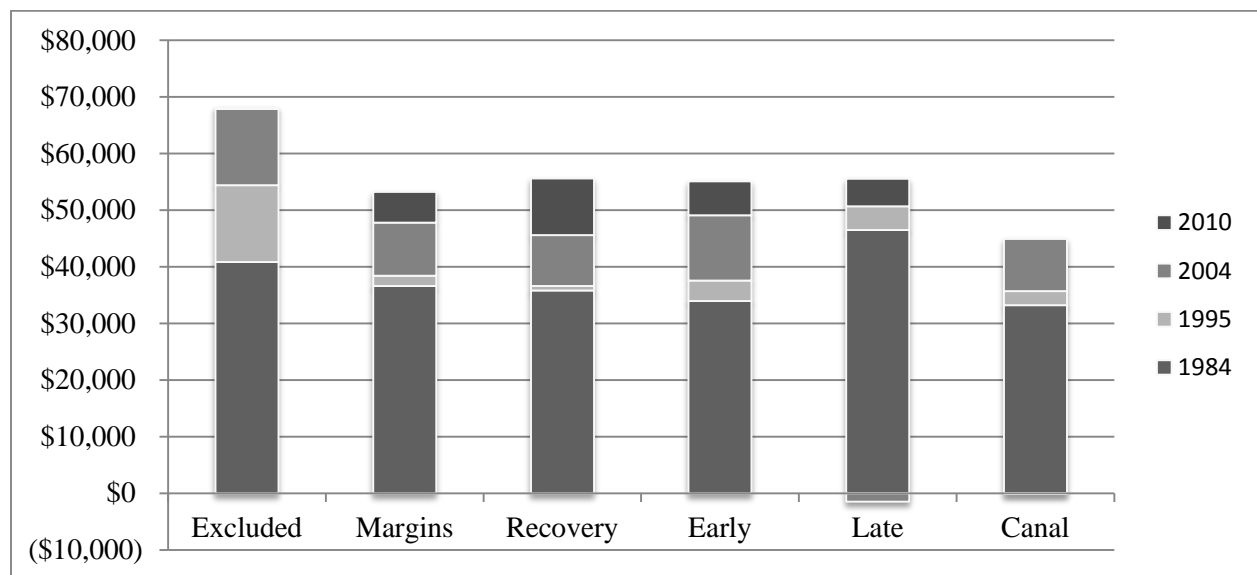


Figure 5.3: Average property value growth over time in the Holy Cross neighborhood⁴⁰

No relationship between the percentage of rated properties and increased property values emerged. However, the increase in property values between 2004 and 2010 in the Included Zone seems to be inversely related to the retention of rated properties between 1980 and 2010, the institutionalized cultural capital. That is, those zones with the highest levels of extant rated properties in 2010 also had the lowest increases in value between 2004 and 2010. This pattern does not hold under any other time period studied by this research. Institutionalized cultural

capital is highest in the Canal Zone, with 75.3 percent of extant properties rated as either gold, red, or green. However, these blocks had no economic growth between 2004 and 2010, which implies that no relationship exists between institutionalized cultural capital and the investment of recovery dollars into the neighborhood.

Accessing Resources through Social Networks

Although it may seem odd to include discussion of social capital under the “Funding Recovery” heading, social capital consists of those “aspects of social structures, which are of value to social actors as recourses that can be mobilized in pursuit of their interests.”⁴¹ While “aspects” may be difficult to measure, social capital actually can be “reconstructed as an emergent effect of the activated power relations within and between groups, as opposed to an individual asset or a public good.”⁴² Social capital, in the form of volunteer hours, sweat equity, and similar assistance by individuals and organizations played and continues to play an important role in the recovery of the Holy Cross neighborhood. While no direct valuation or identifier exists to measure social capital quantitatively, this research sought to reveal those networks or relationships that benefitted residents related to historic designations. Similar studies of the resilience of communities after a disaster considered social capital sources such as church-based networks, finding that the “the local bonding social capital based on the embedded social norms, place attachment, and characterized by a closed network (Coleman, 1988; Granovetter, 1985) of the church parish council were ideal for initial and specific rebuilding purposes; yet because it is tied to the local scale it also is somewhat of a liability in more complex and later stages of the rebuilding process that require the construction of bridging social capital and networks at larger geographical scales (Bridge, 2002).”⁴³ This research sought to incorporate the

strengths of place-based research in a consideration of how social capital might better frame the complex realities of a neighborhood's recovery process.

Geographers in “the field” are well placed to privilege this real-world setting for gathering narratives about what might be social capital. They can question the “how” of social interactions: how are networks established, maintained and disbanded; how are resources accessed, mobilized or denied; how does space, place and material physicality affect these processes; and how are power relations played out in these settings? The geographical starting point for social capital narratives thereby becomes precisely the observation of everyday practices where individuals and groups resolve their issues in messy and unanticipated ways, often using improvisations that are rarely captured by grand theory or abstract measures. Geographers can breathe life into a concept of social capital that need not serve the further constructions of dominant neoliberal discourse or be predicated on neoclassical economic theory.⁴⁴

In the Holy Cross neighborhood, the activities of organizations such as the Preservation Resource Center and Historic Green are visible in the landscape through construction, renovation, and property ownership. These organizations acted as recovery agents in and around the Holy Cross neighborhood, partnering with existing community organizations and government agencies to achieve goals not limited to recovery. The amount of time and money dedicated to properties can indicate the activation of social capital, as it has been noted in studies of neighborhood parks across the country.⁴⁵ As Naughton notes, “social capital continuously moves according to the intentions of actors exercising power through network relationships.”⁴⁶ How do the preservationists' intentions conflict (or potentially conflict) with the interests of homeowners, government agents, developers, or other agents of recovery? Two brief case studies of the aforementioned organizations will help reveal “social capital...as range of competing narratives of a recognizable phenomenon differentiated by the assumptions they made about society and space” rather than as a finite asset possessed by an individual.⁴⁷

The Preservation Resource Center, founded in 1974, purports “to promote the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of New Orleans historic architecture and

neighborhoods.”⁴⁸ Their activities in Holy Cross include the management of three different programs, Rebuilding Together (RTNO), Operation Comeback (OC), and HOME AGAIN!, that provide funding, materials, expertise, and/or volunteer labor for renovation, restoration, and reconstruction projects. At least eighty-three properties received assistance through one of these three PRC programs after 2005. The PRC along with the NTHP organized a conference in 2006 to gather preservation leaders as well as celebrity supporters in the city, raising awareness of the perceived danger of destruction threatening the historic resources of New Orleans.⁴⁹ Through the OC Revolving Fund, the PRC purchased over twenty properties in Holy Cross since 2006. The HOME AGAIN! program provided assistance to seventeen historic properties through a million-plus dollar grant from NTHP. By 2007, preservation recovery funds surpassed the \$5 million mark in the Holy Cross neighborhood, causing tension to build between those homeowners on the riverside of St. Claude and their neighbors to the back of town, in newer houses outside the bounds of the Holy Cross historic districts.⁵⁰ The work of the PRC exemplifies the power of bridging social capital, which allows networking beyond the local scale. Bringing the powerful and well-funded NTHP into the Holy Cross neighborhood amplified the effect of the PRC’s work while forwarding their common goals as preservationists. Neither the PRC nor the NTHP was able to assist the neighborhood in addressing its lack of amenities and local political influence, though. Additional negative consequences include the exacerbation of the growing rift between the Holy Cross neighborhood and the rest of the Lower Ninth Ward, which centered on the uneven distribution of recovery resources and disempowerment of residents through the planning processes after 2005 (see chapter 3).

The PRC and NTHP were not the only preservation groups to coordinate a meeting of preservationists in post-Katrina New Orleans; the Preservation Trades Network (PTN) brought

members directly into the Holy Cross neighborhood in 2006, and the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) in 2007 hosted a webcast viewed by over 10,000 people featuring Holy Cross. Leading experts in volunteer projects while teaching about the unique architectural and historical significance of the neighborhood, the PTN and USGBC meetings and workshops inspired several individuals to create a new nonprofit organization called Historic Green.⁵¹ Its mission, “to assist and lead in the transformation and restoration of under-resourced communities through education and service and with a focus on heritage conservation and sustainable design,” does not limit its activities to New Orleans, and the organization is actually based in Kansas City, Missouri.⁵² While Historic Green’s introduction to the Holy Cross neighborhood was predicated on the area’s historic designation, this group’s projects include locations behind St. Claude, including Our School at Blair Grocery and Bayou Bienvenue, both located far outside the bounds of the historic districts in the Lower Ninth Ward. The organization has partnered with community groups including the Lower Ninth Ward Neighborhood Empowerment Association (NENA), the Lower Ninth Ward Center for Sustainable Engagement & Development (CSED), the local Sierra Club chapter, and the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association (HCNA). These local groups, whose networks represent bonding social capital through which residents can connect and provide support and resources for one another, each have their own intentions as recovery agents. Their work with Historic Green exemplifies the power of bridging social capital to bring outside volunteers and investment into the neighborhood. Long-time volunteers reported that each year, at least one volunteer would move to the city because of their experiences with the organization. Property owners and residents recognized members of this organization at community events such as the annual crawfish boil and historic tour of the neighborhood. The social capital of these organizations is activated annually through the “Spring Greening,” a two-

week volunteer event that involves over a dozen projects each year to benefit residents of the Holy Cross neighborhood as well as the larger Lower Ninth Ward community.

Conclusion

This chapter purported to answer the three questions guiding this research by revealing the preservation-based networks through which cultural, social, and economic capital moved in the Holy Cross neighborhood. The experience, regulation, and funding of the recovery process as related to historic preservation in the Holy Cross neighborhood reveal the impact evidenced in the built environment. The forms of capital must be considered in a multi-scalar context, and this research considered networks that functioned on local, state, national, and international scales. The cultural capital in the historic built environment of the Holy Cross neighborhood opened access to preservation-based social capital that could be activated by property owners to increase their economic capital. The value of the cultural capital was reinforced through interaction with preservationist institutions, agencies, and organizations. Whether intentional or otherwise, the historic designation on the Holy Cross historic designation did affect the recovery process, leaving a visible mark on the built environment through decreased demolitions, higher property values, and a plethora of organizations acting as agents of recovery in the neighborhood.

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CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

Historic preservation can be an effective tool in the process of recovery from hazard events, leaving an enduring and highly visible mark on the landscape. Residents of the Holy Cross neighborhood came together under the banner of preservation in several key moments after the hurricane season of 2005, activating bonding social capital through their relationships with other property owners and bridging social capital through their network of preservationist organizations at a variety of scales. Notably, the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association remains active in the negotiation of the recovery process, monitoring the activities of the Historic District & Landmarks Commission (HDLC) and other city agencies and advocating for continued support for preservation and sustainable redevelopment of the Lower Ninth Ward. Other preservation organizations maintain a presence in the Holy Cross neighborhood; local nonprofits such as the Preservation Resource Center as well as national groups like Historic Green and the National Trust for Historic Preservation continue to pursue their missions here, sustaining the cultural capital of the historic built environment in New Orleans through investments of dollars and sweat equity, materials, and expertise. Their ongoing commitment to the Lower Ninth Ward is visible on the streets through signs on doors and in lawns, a testament to their achievements.

Benefits such as improved streetscapes, increased property values, and social cohesion dominate the rhetoric of historic preservationists and community organizations in the Holy Cross neighborhood. The perception of success proved so tangibly related to the historic designation of the built environment that in 2009 a sign appeared on Claiborne Avenue notifying travelers crossing the Industrial Canal that they had entered the “Historic Lower Ninth Ward.” As this research considered the residents’ experiences of recovery through preservation, the effects of regulation on the landscape, and resources targeting historic properties, it revealed that residents

and property owners relied upon the cultural capital of their historic structures to provide access to preservation-related social and economic capital. The effects of their access to and activation of capital are not limited to the individual household or property owner, however; the designation of space as historic implicitly devalues undesignated spaces, privileging the former over the latter for scarce recovery resources by preventing demolition and encouraging preservation of structures due to their “intrinsic” value as historic resources. The heritage economy being constructed in the Holy Cross Historic District excludes the undesignated spaces from the benefits of targeted revitalization efforts by recovery agents such as the Preservation Resource Center. While economic benefits of historic districts often spill over into neighboring blocks, the commercial nature of the St. Claude Avenue corridor establishes a hard barrier for property values to seep through. Public policy enforcing preservation principles ultimately affects the selection and interpretation of those character-defining elements of historic structures and sites. Efforts to encourage resident input often fall short of action, ending with the expiration of public comment periods rather than implementation. Preservationists overlook or forget sites with histories or aesthetics outside of the subjective bounds of periods of significance and levels of integrity defined by the National Park Service, State Historic Preservation Office, and HDLC. Identity and social memory take root in other forms of cultural preservation such as performances, oral traditions, and artwork, eschewing the architectural narrative carefully preserved in situ for alternative approaches to community vitality. As Sharon Zukin pointed out, “with preservation methods widely accepted, the question is which cultural heritage will be preserved and whose culture will control the designation.”¹ In the Lower Ninth Ward as in many communities across the country, this is an ongoing negotiation.



Figure 6.1: Sign on the neutral ground of Claiborne Avenue at the Industrial Canal bridge marking the “Historic Lower Ninth Ward”

This concluding chapter will extend the answers to the research questions of this study to broader themes in preservation and geography. As recovery efforts transition into long-term strategies of redevelopment in New Orleans, public policy is shifting away from bringing back residents, instead choosing to invest in approaches such as business incubators, the ever-present blight reduction, and more stringent regulation of tourist spaces. It is important to reflect on the progress made in the Lower Ninth Ward at this stage because the work begun in the Holy Cross Historic District serves to inform future recovery practices across the country. In the words of Morris Hylton III, Initiatives Manager of the World Monuments Fund, “We view the recovery of Holy Cross—its housing, its infrastructure, and its services—as a real resource for the rebuilding

of the Lower Ninth Ward, adjacent communities, and the City of New Orleans. We hope that this demonstration restoration project, and those that follow, will serve as a model and a resource for all New Orleanians struggling to address the particular needs of their own communities.”² Other organizations found themselves similarly situated to contribute to international models of recovery. Architecture Professor William Dupont spoke in 2009 at the International Council on Monuments and Sites Scientific Symposium, stating “Historic Green provides a model for engaging volunteers in rebuilding and recovery by emphasizing project-based, service learning tasks. The objectives of Historic Green include rebuilding with respect and foresight. Although a young organization, the work of Historic Green has successfully engaged people in green endeavors within a historic context. The organization’s work needs to be discussed in an international forum, critiqued and considered as a possible model for similar communities elsewhere with comparable goals.”³ While the individual consideration of the impact of these organizations is beyond the scope of this research project, the methods and data lend themselves to critically engaging with the effects of public policy on the preservation and recovery of the Holy Cross Historic District, as well as the role of preservation in the development and maintenance of the community’s social memory and identity. This chapter will conclude with a reminder of the limitations of this study, as well as some research trajectories that may warrant future scholarly attention.

Inherently Exclusive

The Preservation Movement in New Orleans refined innovations such as the historic district, local government regulation, and the understanding of “tout ensemble,” or all together, as a principle in neighborhood preservation. James Marston Finch understood “tout ensemble” to describe buildings whose “main aesthetic value will be in the role they play in the streetscape.”⁴

Tout ensemble acknowledges the contribution, and thus value, of structures with lower levels of significance or integrity by including them as agents in the construction of the visible historic built environment. David Hamer, recognizing the “risks in a historic district strategy,” finds that spaces “seen as nonhistoric may be neglected or even abandoned by historic preservationists.”⁵ By privileging the neighborhood’s tout ensemble, preservationists sought to maintain the sense of place established by the significance of the whole district rather than a select number of highly valued, individual structures. The establishment of historic districts then favors the preservation of not only those buildings rated most historically significant but also those contributing features that perhaps lend historical integrity to the creation of a sense of place unique to the district. Larry Ford expounded upon this relationship between preservation and sense of place, explaining that “a place is not simply architecture...but a congeries of settings both real and legendary. A place allows the imagination to revel in both what is known to have gone on there and what might have.”⁶ Outside of the district, however, structures may struggle to establish their value as historic sites worthy of preservation. Even within its official bounds, historic districts struggle to recognize significance outside of a narrowly defined architectural definition. Ford recognized this weakness, charging that “responsible preservationists must consider preserving functions as well as architecture for social as well as historic reasons.”⁷ Two conflicts are separately recognized by Hamer and Ford: first, that designating space as historic implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) devalues undesignated spaces; and second, that preservation affects not only the material culture (structural and aesthetic) but also the lives of the people who use and (re)produce those historic spaces, and the latter is often overlooked and ignored. Both call on preservationists as responsible parties to resolve these conflicts, but neither provides an answer for how to overcome them. Policy solutions, including local and federal regulations, exacerbated

the tension between designated and undesignated spaces in the Lower Ninth Ward but more adroitly negotiated high profile preservation dilemmas, such as the relocation of the Holy Cross School to a new campus in the Gentilly neighborhood of the Seventh Ward.

Privileging preservation in the recovery of the Holy Cross Historic District served to inform the neighborhood's rhetoric of recovery. The Holy Cross Neighborhood Association, led by a diverse group of homeowners and made up of residents inside and outside the official bounds of both historic districts, lines up with the push toward revitalization emanating from the neighborhoods below the French Quarter in the late 1970s and 1980s. Its establishment in 1981, led by the Holy Cross School headmaster, marked the efforts of residents "to make our community the best place in the city to live and raise a family."⁸ Across the Industrial Canal, similar endeavors have brought new vitality and investment to the downtown neighborhoods of Faubourg Marigny and the Bywater, raising property values and fears of gentrification. Richard Campanella, author of several books chronicling the historical geography of the city of New Orleans, identifies four rough phases of gentrification based on the population changes evidenced by waves of new residents of various stereotypes. Campanella implicates historic preservation in these processes by claiming that the spaces of interest to gentrifiers "must be historic." In her critique of Campanella's piece, Christine Horn points out that a more nuanced unpacking of gentrification prevents the creation of a false dichotomy between stagnation and progress, "boutique and slum." Horn points out that policy plays a huge role in the geography of gentrification, referring to the influential local nonprofit the Preservation Resource Center, founded in 1974. She does not, however, discuss the use of historic districting as a tool for gentrification-called-economic development, or the city's policing of space through selective enforcement of preservation-related code compliance. In their study of the Bywater

neighborhood, John Welch and Craig Colten interviewed the president of the Bywater Neighborhood Association in 2003, Daniel McElmurray in regard to the abandonment of the neighborhood followed by an in-migration of low-income renters: “this trend did not begin to reverse itself until the late 1980s. The reversal accelerated after the successful nomination of the neighborhood to National Register status.”⁹ Welch and Colten contend that “by attrition, neglect, and abandonment, the architectural stock of the neighborhood was left alone, mothballed so to speak, until the current gentrification of the neighborhood began to occur in the mid-1980s.”¹⁰ As these scholars assert, initial gentrification of the lower faubourgs began in the 1980s synchronously with historic designation, and commonalities exist between these neighborhoods and the Holy Cross Historic District that can be traced to local policy.

Within the locally recognized Holy Cross Historic District, the Historic District and Landmarks Commission (HDLC) controlled the actions of homeowners as they sought to repopulate their homes and neighborhoods. This situation, present long before the hurricane season of 2005, only accelerated after the storms, resulting in an increase of over 170 percent of Certificates of Appropriateness issued annually. Negotiations of repairs, demolitions, and construction required homeowners to comply with subjective bureaucracy, resulting in delays, additional expenses, and stress. Developers and displaced residents alike found themselves at odds with design guidelines. Despite a post-storm grace period of over twelve months, the ensuing work often failed to meet the expectations and requirements of the HDLC. This process, documented as arduous and unexpected for property owners, finds its roots in the preservation movement and its reliance on regulations at the local, state, and federal levels to enforce their standards on projects that potentially effect or alter the historic character of space. These standards are largely visual in nature, privileging the aesthetic over all other considerations

(material, process, location, etc.) in most cases. Additionally, the development of these regulations did not incorporate the potentiality of a hazard event that might damage properties beyond normal decay.

If repairs or alterations were invisible to neighbors and inspectors, they may not have garnered the attention of the HDLC. Funding considerations aside, even the simplest efforts to secure and protect property, such as the construction of fencing or covering of windows, attracted violations, even for spaces that no longer contained structures or that had been judged uninhabitable. Local regulations prohibited any exterior repairs or modifications visible from the public right-of-way, with the exception of painting and interior work. The intense monitoring of the behavior of residents during the “look and leave” phase perhaps carried into the watching of restoration, rehabilitation, repair, and demolition activities by neighbors and other interested parties. Not only did these activities attract responses from the HDLC, but also abandonment of properties earned violation notices including accusations of demolition by neglect on the part of the owners. Only property owners compliant (or complicit) with preservation regulations avoided the experience of appearing before the HDLC to protest a violation or request a variance to allow retention of noncompliant alterations. Certificates of Appropriateness represent a wide range of negotiation processes, from the straightforward to the complex, and even those projects with CAs were subject to scrutiny if found to be divergent from the HDLC’s approved activity.

The intense local scrutiny of the HDLC resulted in the enforcement of the city’s design guidelines on all exterior modifications, including alterations such as fences, demolitions, and new construction. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), along with Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) and National Park Service (NPS) officials, reviewed properties that fell outside of the city’s locally designated historic districts, taking public

comment and negotiating negative effects through mitigation in a variety of ways defined in a numerous Programmatic Agreements and Memoranda of Agreement. Blocks outside of the local districts and inside of the National Register Historic District did not differ substantially; although their exterior modifications did not require Certificates of Appropriateness, the application of federal recovery funds still necessitated the oversight of SHPO as well as the NPS and often FEMA. The relocation of the Holy Cross School provides an example of negotiations at the local, state, and national scales over historic and cultural preservation strategies and redevelopment priorities in New Orleans that contribute to processes of gentrification.

The Congregation of Holy Cross, owners of the Holy Cross School, began to search for a new campus in late 2005, a decision explained by the headmaster Charles DiGange in the *Times-Picayune*: "Even if we fixed the campus, we want to be viable," said DiGange. "And to do that, we need to attract students."¹¹ Enrollment of students living in the surrounding neighborhood had fallen to about 10 percent of the student body before 2005.¹² By 2009, Holy Cross School had demolished all buildings other than the 1895 administrative building, a three-story Italianate building facing the Mississippi River, and the Congregation of Holy Cross dedicated a new campus in 2010 in Gentilly. During this time, students attended class first in Baton Rouge, then at the old Cabrini High School, and finally in temporary buildings on the freshly cleared grounds of Holy Cross. The board vacillated between two new sites, one in neighboring Jefferson Parish and a closer location in the Seventh Ward in a neighborhood called Gentilly, prompting Holy Cross alumni and Gentilly residents who lived near the site to publicly petition the school to remain in New Orleans.¹³ The location in the Seventh Ward incorporated two separate properties owned by the Archdiocese of New Orleans: the St. Francis Xavier Cabrini Catholic Church built in 1964, and the Redeemer-Seton High School, which had merged on this campus in 1994.

Despite the efforts of the Jefferson Parish School Board and local officials in Kenner, the Board of the Congregation of Holy Cross voted to purchase the Seventh Ward property from the Archdiocese of New Orleans in October 2006.¹⁴

As the Holy Cross School revealed its plans to move to the Seventh Ward Cabrini-Redeemer site funded by “insurance settlements, FEMA money and proceeds from the sale of the Lower Ninth Ward property,” federal regulations triggered a Section 106 review of the project. The Redeemer-Seton High School, constructed in 1960-1961 to hold the now-defunct St. Joseph’s Academy, did not achieve eligibility for listing on the National Register; however, FEMA’s review of the St. Francis Xavier Cabrini Catholic Church revealed elements of historic architectural significance that qualified the structure for listing.¹⁵ Through the Section 106 process, several public forums gave residents, preservationists, and other interested parties the opportunity to comment on the proposed demolition. FEMA posted comments submitted on a website, including those submitted by mail and electronically; over 1,300 comments came in during a three week period in 2007.¹⁶ Because of the adverse effect on a historic property, FEMA invited the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) to take part in the process of mitigation in 2007.¹⁷ The mid-century modern style church, designed by a local architectural firm with a distinctive floating curved awning and juxtaposed materials such as brick, glass, and steel characteristic of the time, engendered little support for preserving.¹⁸ The ACHP, FEMA, and the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office signed a Memorandum of Agreement in 2007, agreeing to mitigate the adverse effect of demolition through “architectural and engineering documentation of the building; archival storage of historic records and materials related to the church; development of a plan for commemorating the history of Cabrini Church; and development of a plan for the re-use of architectural elements from the church at the

proposed Holy Cross School campus.”¹⁹ Just before the demolition of the church in June of 2007, the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association requested that FEMA revisit the Section 106 review for the St. Francis Xavier Cabrini Church, alleging that the initial review neglected to consider any potential adverse effect on the original Holy Cross School campus in the Lower Ninth Ward, a known historic property within the area of effect.²⁰ FEMA did not respond until after the demolition of the church, stating that any future funding for the Holy Cross School would require a Section 106 review of the Lower Ninth Ward property.²¹

In light of that stated requirement, the Congregation of Holy Cross did not request FEMA funds for the demolition of the buildings at the historic campus on Dauphine Street in the Holy Cross Historic District. The demolition permit required a Certificate of Appropriateness from the HDLC, granted on July 8, 2008.²² No public call for preservation of these structures, most dating to the mid-twentieth century, was evident, as even the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association submitted a letter in support of the demolition.²³

Since 2008, two serious proposals surfaced regarding the redevelopment of the Holy Cross School site. The first, brought by local firm Green Coast Enterprises in 2011, intended to build a grocery store, space for community organizations, retail and commercial rental space, and affordable multi-family housing.²⁴ The proposal, presented to the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association, had residents concerned about traffic, including parking and deliveries.²⁵ Ultimately, investors refused to back the project and the developers abandoned the purchase of the site altogether.²⁶ Although still under consideration, the neighborhood has soundly rejected the second proposal, which calls for mixed use including a high-rise apartment building and retail spaces facing the river. The project has been sent back to developers without approval from

the Architectural Review Commission and the HDLC several times in 2013, and residents continue to mobilize to prevent it from moving forward.²⁷

A large portion of the residents of the Lower Ninth Ward, including the Holy Cross neighborhood, is permanently displaced, but post-storm development does not seem to have contributed to the gentrification of the neighborhood. Recognizing that this research did not intend to definitively answer whether or not gentrification was happening in the Holy Cross neighborhood, the discussion of this phenomenon will remain appropriately brief. Tom Slater refers to the work of Sharon Zukin on the relationship between gentrification and historic preservation, stating “that culture and capital could be understood as complementary forces in driving the reinvestment and resultant middle-class conquest of urban neighborhoods.”²⁸ The middle class has not yet begun serious investment here; the percentage of residents living below the census-defined poverty level has not demonstrably decreased between 2006 and 2010 when compared with the population of the Holy Cross neighborhood in 2000.²⁹ However, the analysis in Chapter 5 revealed that the property values did increase in correlation with the designation of the historic district, and there is continued evidence of “skyrocketing prices, of both dilapidated and renovated houses, the presence of large scale real estate development interests, the departure of the original renters, and closure of neighborhood businesses.”³⁰ John O’Loughlin and Douglas Munki define this stage as “advanced rehabilitation,” and in their study of the gentrification of the Lower Marigny and Algiers Point neighborhoods predict that “both...will have finished their rehabilitation cycle within the next decade.”³¹ While the applicability of their linear, non-critical trajectory of “housing rehabilitation” in Holy Cross is outdated, the neighborhood continues to provide a reference point in local media as the next victim of the phenomenon as it slowly flows down the Mississippi River through the neighborhoods below the French Quarter.³²

Campanella's stages, admittedly based on stereotypes of the phased residential rotation he identifies in gentrifying spaces, match up with O'Loughlin and Munski's advanced rehabilitation; the "bourgeois bohemian," or bobo, is characterized by a number of behaviors including its affinity to be "skillfully employed, buy[] old houses and lovingly restore[] them, [and] engage[] tirelessly in civic affairs."³³ Community concern and activism notwithstanding, the Holy Cross neighborhood appears to be headed toward further gentrification. Hazard events tend to accelerate preexisting trends, such as the increases in property values evident in the Holy Cross neighborhood between 1995 and 2004.³⁴ A distinct lack of amenities, including public transit and park space, contributed to the neighborhood's sluggish progress toward gentrification as compared with uptown neighborhoods, but these disadvantages can find easy remedy through increased political influence brought by potential investors interested in inexpensive development opportunities in Holy Cross. Led by preservationists, new middle-class homeowners will diffuse from the Recovery Zones, bringing their social and economic capital to achieve goals of house renovation and neighborhood revitalization. The Holy Cross neighborhood will likely see rapidly increased gentrification over the coming decade as the population continues to change and developers pursue their interests in the empty space throughout the Lower Ninth Ward.

Did local or federal regulations affect the outcome of preservation efforts in the Holy Cross Historic District at all? This research showed that in several ways, regulations intervened in the recovery process to save historic properties. The Section 106 review prevented federal funding from being used to demolish structures eligible for listing on the National Register without some form of mitigation. The HDLC's review through its granting of Certificates of Appropriateness controlled repairs and alterations, demolitions and construction. Beyond the

maintenance of the tout ensemble in the Holy Cross Historic District, though, federal, state, and local preservation policy did little to affect things like economic recovery and cultural memory. While preservationists restored homes and residents moved back into the neighborhood, their work did not recognize the identity of the local community rooted in its heritage but excluded from the period of significance recorded in the historic district's designation. While anchors like the Holy Cross School and the Archdiocese of New Orleans disinvested, community activists worked to draw meaning from the social memory of the Lower Ninth Ward. Calling on the shared experiences of marginalization through the construction of the Industrial Canal and the removal of the streetcar lines, integration, and abandonment, the residents of the Holy Cross neighborhood grappled with the exclusionary nature of the historic district designation as they benefited from the cultural and social capital afforded to them but not their neighbors in the back of town.³⁵

Politics of Memory

Acknowledging the imperfect nature of historic preservation in representing and interpreting nuanced stories, this research also found that organizations in the Holy Cross neighborhood participated as active agents in the recovery efforts that rejected the narrative of an impoverished and marginalized neighborhood espoused by the media in its reporting on the Lower Ninth Ward. Residents embraced the complex cultural history of the neighborhood, celebrating their ties with displaced friends and family across the country (figure 6.2).

Additionally, these community organizations harnessed the language of preservation to support their recovery through signage, planning exercises, and multi-scalar social networks. This reliance on the rhetoric of preservation presents the neighborhood as a community whose



Figure 6.2: Map created by Lower Ninth Ward Village to represent the post-Katrina diaspora of community members³⁶

identity is rooted in the historic nature of its built environment. This carefully composed narrative encompassed a nuanced understanding of the designated historic value of the neighborhood as it related to the perceived significance of the community curated in its social memory.

When architectural periods of significance conflict or are not aligned with periods of significance perceived by current residents, or if further layers of significance exist in the neighborhood, how do residents interpret and represent their perceived history in relation to the designated history of the space? Two unmarked sites in the Lower Ninth Ward resonate with residents as spaces deserving historical designation: the levee breach sites and McDonogh No. 19. A group called Levees.org nominated the 2005 levee breaches on the lower bank of the Industrial Canal as National Register sites in 2010.³⁷ Kenneth Foote offers an evocative approach to remembering spaces such as these associated with destruction and tragedy. He

identifies four potential outcomes for sites such as the levee breaches with contentious histories: sanctification, designation, rectification, and obliteration.³⁸ The immediate safety of the neighborhood required the repair and reinforcement of the levees in the aftermath of the 2005 hurricane season. It should also be noted that in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, as displaced residents sought support and permission to return to their homes, planners from multiple institutions, public and private, proposed obliteration of the site through the “green dot” plan – or the ULI BNOB plan. Eventually, the rectification of the site resulted in not only the removal of the ruined houses but the construction of celebrity-sponsored homes. While the initial designation efforts failed, Foote notes that in some instances, “attention continues to focus on the site...where the tragedy claims many victims from a single group and induces a sense of community loss,” and so the rectification of the levee breaches may yet evolve into designation of the site.³⁹ Other temporary forms of remembering visible in the landscape include marks spray-painted on structures by first responders, handmade street signs to replace those washed away, and art installations such as Prospect New Orleans. Largely, renovations included the removal of physical marks made on historic structures by the storm and flood; abandoned properties and empty lots, some with stoops still intact, speak to the extent of the damage.

The second unmarked site, McDonogh No. 19, represents the long and turbulent history of education in the Lower Ninth Ward. The closure of the Holy Cross School only marked the culmination of a long trend of school closures in the neighborhood, beginning with the original McDonogh No. 19 in 1929, T.J. Semmes Elementary in 1978, St. Maurice Parochial School in 1987, the new McDonogh No. 19 (later renamed the Louis D. Armstrong Elementary School) in 2005, and then the Holy Cross School in 2007.⁴⁰ Although proposals for redevelopment include several of these institutions, none have broken ground and most sites remain abandoned and

unmarked. In 2009, Civil Rights activists and preservationists joined together to launch a nonprofit aimed at bringing Louis D. Armstrong Elementary School, one of the first two public schools to admit African-American children in New Orleans, back into some use and relevance for the community.⁴¹ Led by one of the three students that integrated the school in 1960, the Leona Tate Foundation for Change aims to “to preserve and conserve historical elements such as McDonogh No. 19 Elementary School and other structures” and even achieved the passing of a resolution by the Louisiana Legislature in 2009 directing the Orleans Parish School Board to avoid demolition or removal.⁴² Other than its continued presence on St. Claude Avenue, however, no visible progress in preserving the Civil Rights era landmark has been made, and the history of education in the Lower Ninth Ward remains conspicuously uninterpreted. The Holy Cross neighborhood holds a high density of extant historic educational institutions – the T.J. Semmes Elementary School, the Holy Cross administration building, the original McDonogh No. 19 on Tricou Street, and the Louis D. Armstrong Elementary School – but preservationists have paid no attention to collectively saving or interpreting their cultural significance, focusing instead on the buildings outside of locally-inscribed meanings.⁴³

While the location of the levee breaches falls outside the bounds of the Holy Cross Historic District, the water released by the damaged infrastructure resulted in the flooding of the majority of the Lower Ninth Ward.⁴⁴ The residents that returned to the neighborhood in 2006 commemorated the “Federal Flood” through art and performance, representing their identity as a strong and resilient community. McDonogh No. 19, also excluded from the Holy Cross Historic District, attracted the attention of national preservationists and sustainable building advocates as fodder for a “cleanup and brainstorming session” in 2009.⁴⁵ In the process of recovery, preserving cultural history emerged as a rallying point for organizations such as the Holy Cross

Neighborhood Association (HCNA), the Lower Ninth Ward Neighborhood Empowerment Network Association (NENA), and Historic Green. As agents of recovery including policymakers, volunteers, philanthropists, and activists actively respond to disasters, the role of historic preservation in the reproduction and representation of cultural memory and community identity must be critically considered. Can economic capital from recovery agents outside of the community support recovery and cultural preservation without warping or compromising authenticity or identity? In the Lower Ninth Ward, residents contested the ownership of the heritage being preserved in the Holy Cross Historic District, vying with organizations such as the Preservation Resource Center, the National Park Service, Global Green, and Urban Land Institute, for the right to define and recover their history.

The concepts of historical significance and integrity are hotly contested across preservation today, despite their use in policy for almost fifty years. The National Park Service definition of significance, the importance of a property to the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture of a community, state, or nation, is inherently subjective. “Historian Ludmilla Jordanova (1989:25) has pointed out that when we, as viewers, interpret objects in museums (or, by extension, in ghost towns) we both reify them and identify with them. Because we can identify with them we allow them to “generate memories, associations, [and] fantasies.” Through these objects, then, we experience or feel our constructions of the past.”⁴⁶ Geographer Dydia DeLyser recognizes not only the interpretation as formative in the visitor (consumer) experience, but also the preexisting knowledge of the subjects in their conceptualization of the site and its significance or realness.

The NPS defines integrity as “the ability of a site to convey its significance.”⁴⁷ In a panel discussion on integrity as a factor in the establishment of historical sites at the 2013 National

Trust for Historic Preservation Conference, historian Ray Rast challenged the language of preservation, accusing the movement of employing its jargon as an exclusionary tactic. Drawing from his experiences researching, documenting, and designating spaces related to Cesar Chavez, a Latin American leader in the Civil Rights Era, Rast rejected what he perceived as the high culture of architectural historians for notions of popular significance reliant on cultural meaning rather than style or design. Developer Irvin Henderson countered that the tension between preservation and utility or function was not harmful but rather served to keep in check the elite experts and the practitioners in the field. From this discussion, it seems policy must answer the question of whether buildings should be preserved as story-telling vehicles or as the stories themselves. However, interpretation with and of buildings takes place every day in historic spaces such as the Holy Cross Historic District, in which significance (meeting the definition of the National Park Service) can be found in the ubiquity of vernacular architectural forms as well as in the cultural history of the neighborhood not confined to the designated districts. The Historic District's official significance recorded in its National Register designation only includes the former. The historical development of the neighborhood in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries remains visible in the surviving shotgun, double shotgun, and camelback houses representing the most common styles and designs of residential structures in that era. Scattered Creole Cottages and the oldest shotgun houses reflect the earlier history of the New Orleans neighborhood, incorporating Spanish lineage with French street names and later American assimilation.

(In)Visible History

Parts of the visible landscape speak to a more nuanced historic significance in the Holy Cross Neighborhood. The McDonogh schools, including one of the first integrated schools in the

city, still stand, although neither is in use. The train tracks run toward the docks, turning from St. Claude Avenue to the river down Alabo Street; although the train no longer runs, trucks follow this historic shipping route, carrying cargo to and from enormous barges on the Mississippi River. Corner stores and bars, though few in number, host residents in leisure activities central to the construction of social networks in New Orleans.⁴⁸ In Bayou Bienvenue on the edge of the Lower Ninth Ward closest to Lake Pontchartrain, residents cast lines for fish. While the multicultural architectural heritage of the Holy Cross neighborhood reflects the transatlantic history of the city, as Don Mitchell points out, the celebrated past serves to erase the efforts of labor previously visible in the landscape.⁴⁹ This is true even in the recovery efforts in the Lower Ninth Ward, as empty lots fail to represent the demolition crews that tore down house after ruined house, those who mowed and trimmed the overgrowth in yards, and those who installed fences in the months and years following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Other sites of potential significance in the Holy Cross Historic District are no longer visible due to demolition. The Olivier House, the Ursuline Convent, the Bethlehem Orphan Asylum, the Cure D'Eau Kneipp resort, the Louisiana Sugar Refinery, and the Crescent City Livestock Landing and Slaughter House Company all met their demise before Hurricane Betsy in 1965. The new Global Green development, including single and multi-family homes as well as a community center, occupies the former location of the Bethlehem Orphan Asylum. As of yet, no historical marker or other interpretive information exists on the site. These sites speak to the nineteenth-century history of Holy Cross, during which religious organizations established schools and asylums for cast-off children and adults and industry flourished with access to transportation for goods along the Mississippi River and a labor force traveling along the functional streetcar transit lines. Little has been done to commemorate these important spaces,

and as institutions continue to sell their property and industrial sites are abandoned or redeveloped, the few remaining visible markers of this history will continue to decline.

As the NPS defines significance and integrity, and state and local agencies are left to interpret and apply its meaning, resulting designations carry the signature of the power of the federal government in determining historic value. Ashworth argues “that upon assuming power, each governmental regime must capture this capital, including heritage, through political structures, education, socialization, and media representations. In this reading, heritage remains central to assumptions that evocations of official collective memory can underpin the quintessential modernist constructs of nationalism and legitimacy.”⁵⁰ Reinforcing this relationship of power and heritage, Sharon Zukin asserts that “the issue of defining the “cultural significance” of a building is crucial to constructing narratives of political history.”⁵¹ The definition of significance imposed on the Lower Ninth Ward has excluded sites such as the levee breaches and McDonogh No. 19 school from listing, despite the attempts of advocates to legitimate their historic significance. The ruin and devastation still visible in the Holy Cross Historic District actively belies the architectural narrative carried by the preservation of the tout ensemble aesthetic. As Caitlin DeSilvey and Tim Edensor explain, “in an era when heritage has been a key ingredient in the regeneration of places and the consolidation of place identity, ruins present striking opportunities to cast a critical light on the glorification of some historical sites and the neglect of others.”⁵² In this way, the historic landscape can serve “as both material entity and symbolic meaning, as both persistent in form and changing in meaning, and thus as a key site for conflicts over memory, identity and justice.”⁵³

Scholars of material culture, including Fred Kniffen and Henry Glassie, might agree with this contention that buildings themselves represent the people that constructed them, their

societies, and their values as symbols. However, sites and structures designated as historic serve as more than reflections of societal values. While landscape can function to reproduce order and cultural stratification, the experience of encountering the historic built environment still affects participants that do not possess knowledge of architectural style that might enable them to recognize the characteristics of Queen Anne or Eastlake details. Even residents of neighboring areas lack the historical perspective, or embodied cultural capital, to frame the designated significance in the Holy Cross Historic District. The absence of interpretation of the diverse and dynamic elements of the history of the Lower Ninth Ward, especially those sites and events not contained within the narrowly defined period of significance carefully constructed by the NPS, Louisiana SHPO, and HDLC, contributes to the disconnect between the historic narrative relevant to the community's social memory and the officially maintained heritage economy. Historic districts as objects "unconsciously direct our footsteps, and are the landscapes of our imaginations, as well as the cultural environment to which we adapt."⁵⁴ Their affect finds an audience in not only architectural historians, preservationists, and other aficionados of the built environment, but also the uninformed resident, the tourist, and the casual passerby. This research establishes that historic designation has unintended consequences that vary over space and time, and reveals some of the complexity involved in the negotiation of preservation and representation of heritage. Next steps might include a more thorough investigation into the geographic imagination of these various populations. While the preservation ethic of the local, state, and federal entities has been proven through the recovery efforts in the Holy Cross Historic District, the perspective and comprehension of the historic significance by residents and visitors to the neighborhood remain unclear. An understanding of the neighborhood's affect, framed by its historic significance and integrity, as experienced by residents would speak to the efficacy of

preservation and interpretation efforts by institutions at a variety of scales. Additionally, this research could be expanded to include the residents' experience of the recovery process not only through the regulatory process governed by the HDLC but also in light of the monetary effects of the ongoing influx of economic capital in the neighborhood. While social capital served some residents in the recovery process, not everyone enjoyed the same access to the organizations offering assistance. Understanding the perception of residents and the varied access to forms of social capital throughout the dynamic process of recovery could inform future policy objectives related to emergency management, community identity, and preservation initiatives.

Designating spaces as historic reflects societal value systems and reproduces systems of capital accumulation, accomplished through institutional regulations. Enforcing these design controls privileges the aesthetic over other expressions of significance, and in this way institutions can exert power over residents in defining the historical narrative of a neighborhood. Designation acts as cultural capital, which affords property owners access to social networks of preservationists as well as economic opportunities for repairs, renovations, restoration, and other similar recovery activities. Excluding undesignated spaces from these opportunities, however, introduces social conflicts between neighborhoods. In the Holy Cross Historic District, the population changed dynamically in response to integration and white flight in the 1960s and 1970s and again after the forced displacement of the residents after the hurricane season of 2005. Residents returned to find themselves negotiating their recovery through a permitting process defined and controlled by the HDLC, the SHPO, and the NPS. Thousands of Certificates of Appropriateness and Determinations of Eligibility document the recovery efforts of property owners, volunteers, developers, and state and federal agencies. Access to specially allocated recovery funds was made possible by the designation of structures as historically significant,

based on their relationship to an architectural period and style as well as their absolute age. Institutionalized regulations, in addition to these funding opportunities, made a visible impact on the landscape of the Holy Cross Historic District, in pockets of preserved structures scattered around the neighborhood.

Historic preservation can impact not only the visual landscape of the historic built environment and the longevity of material culture, but also the ability of property owners to benefit from the cultural capital in their historic structures. The social networks within the Holy Cross neighborhood and between the neighborhood and other preservation-related organizations and individuals contributed to the recovery of residents in historic spaces. Despite efforts of others to harness the power of the historic narrative as a recovery device, these benefits of bonding and bridging social capital did not extend outside the bounds of the officially designated historic districts. The improved access to economic capital ostracized neighbors and fractured the community identity of the Lower Ninth Ward. This research also to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of social capital, especially as it is utilized in ongoing recovery efforts through initiatives promoting resilience in communities at risk of hazard events. The recognition of a negative outcome of social capital activation based on spatial distribution marks an important, if small, complication to the glossy narrative of the World Bank and other development agencies in promoting the production of social capital in hazard-prone communities. While historic districting as a strategy to promote economic development boasts spillover effects that positively impact property values and other quality of life characteristics in neighboring blocks, the negative impacts of exclusion from a district can deter the investment desired by recovery and development agents. Historic designation can be an effective tool in the construction of a cohesive community identity through the preservation and interpretation of a shared social

memory, without the cultural capital to support the claim of significance, the benefits of preservation are limited to the institutionalized and objectified material culture acting as repositories of capital and thus reproducers of social stratification. Combining geographic and historical methods, this research reveals the complicit behavior of preservationists in their capacity to control the landscape and narrate a history confined by their official designations; geographers should continue to critically engage with these practices, especially in light of their spatial nature. Their contribution to the development of preservation policy will prove invaluable as communities like the Holy Cross neighborhood and the Lower Ninth Ward negotiate their future within the framework of a history defined by exclusion.

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VITA

Jennifer Ann Hay, born in Austin, Texas, began her studies at the University of Texas at Austin in 2003. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Geography in 2006 and began work at a consulting firm implementing federal housing grants across the state. Before leaving the firm in 2008, she progressed from Environmental Specialist to HOME Program Coordinator, overseeing dozens of projects in rural counties across Texas as well as disaster response grants assisting areas affected by Hurricane Rita. In addition to this work, Jenny pursued a graduate degree at Texas State University-San Marcos under the direction of Dr. Kevin Romig. Her thesis, titled “Redeveloping the Urban Environment: Perceived Value in Historic Properties” explored perceptions of the landscape through a case study of a preservation and adaptive reuse project in Austin, Texas. She graduated in 2008, earning a Master of Science in Geography.

Jenny spent a year away from the academy applying to various PhD programs, getting married, and traveling. She entered the doctoral program of the Department of Geography and Anthropology at Louisiana State University in 2009, studying under the direction of Professor Craig Colten. During this time, she worked with colleague Gentry Hanks to assist with the grand opening of the Capt. Fletcher E. Adams 357th Fighter Group Museum in Ida, and interned at the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training in Natchitoches. Before graduating, Jenny began working for the San Antonio Conservation Society Foundation in 2013 as Preservation Outreach Manager. This position drew on her strengths as a researcher and writer while challenging her to apply the skills acquired in an academic setting to the challenges faced by nonprofits. Upon graduating, Jenny hopes to continue her work with the San Antonio Conservation Society Foundation, expanding the advocacy and development programs to support community-based preservation initiatives in her home state of Texas.