



CITY OF NEW ORLEANS Historic District Landmarks Commission

Picayune Place Historic District



*Designated 1978
Jurisdiction: Central Business District Historic District Landmarks Commission
The Picayune Place Historic District is roughly bounded by Camp, Common, Tchoupitoulas and Poydras Streets.*

The Picayune Place Historic District is noted for its unparalleled collection of intact 19th century commercial buildings, predominantly in the Greek Revival style. The Picayune Place District itself is very small in area, covering approximately six and a half city blocks.

In 1803, the area was the fledgling “American Sector,” an area where Americans newly arrived after the Louisiana Purchase settled across Canal Street from the primarily Creole areas downriver. In this period, most buildings were residential but the area quickly became a center of commerce. By the 1830s, various trades had developed their own sectors. The area on Magazine Street became “banker’s row,” and later banking institutions shifted towards Camp Street. By the 1850s, Carondelet Street had become the center of cotton trading.

The District derives its name from the block-long street running between Gravier and Natchez that backs the 300 block of Camp Street. Along with other printing and newspaper businesses, the original offices of the Daily Picayune newspaper were located in this block, at 326-328 Camp Street. The narrow alley behind it, first called Banks Alley, was later named Picayune Place because of the traffic onto it from the back entrances of the Daily Picayune.

The early 20th century saw remarkably little change in the District. Beginning in the 1990s, the conversion of office buildings into condominiums and small hotels was prevalent in the District.¹

¹ Information taken from the Upper Central Business District National Register Nomination and *New Orleans Architecture Volume II: The American Sector*.



The Board of Trade Plaza is at 316 Magazine Street



301 Magazine Street is a fine example of the Greek Revival style



211 Camp Street features some of the city's finest ornamental terra cotta

LOCAL CULTURE

- The Board of Trade Plaza showcases the remnants of the 1833 Banks Arcade, one of the first buildings in the District, constructed for the commercial operations associated with trading, publishing and banking
- The Board of Trade Building, adjacent to the Banks Arcade, was designed by James Freret in 1883 as the Produce Exchange building
- Perhaps the finest example of the Greek Revival style in the District is the monumental, granite faced building at 301 Magazine Street
- A Landmark of outstanding quality is 211 Camp Street, which features some of the finest ornamental terra-cotta in the city
- The Whitney National Bank on Gravier, designed by Sully & Toledano in 1888, has a striking red granite façade
- The Daily Picayune newspaper was published in a building on Camp Street from 1837 until its merger with the New Orleans Times-Democrat in 1914



Storefronts with granite posts and lintels are common in the District



3- to 4-story masonry building streetscapes are typical in the area



Greek Revival commercial buildings are prevalent in the District

URBAN FORM

Setting/Landscape

- The District is a very dense environment, with minimal open space and no setbacks from the property lines
- Buildings typically fill most or all of their lot areas
- Most buildings are attached to their neighbors to each side, and are constructed directly on the sidewalk
- Most properties rely on street parking

Massing/Form

- Brick buildings typically include a granite base with a decorative cornice
- The character of the District is defined by block faces of 3- to 4-story masonry buildings

- Most 19th century buildings in the District are one or two lots wide

Styles/Types

- Greek Revival and Italianate commercial styles are dominate in the District
- Most historic commercial and mixed use buildings in the District are composed in three horizontal sections: a first floor of storefronts or more highly decorated façade elements; a second section of upper stories; all capped by a unifying, decorative cornice
- Second story windows tend to be very tall, with smaller windows at the third and fourth floors

Commercial/Industrial

- Virtually all buildings have commercial uses

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© Prepared by Dominique M. Hawkins, AIA, LEED AP of Preservation Design Partnership, LLC in Philadelphia, PA, and Catherine E. Barrier.