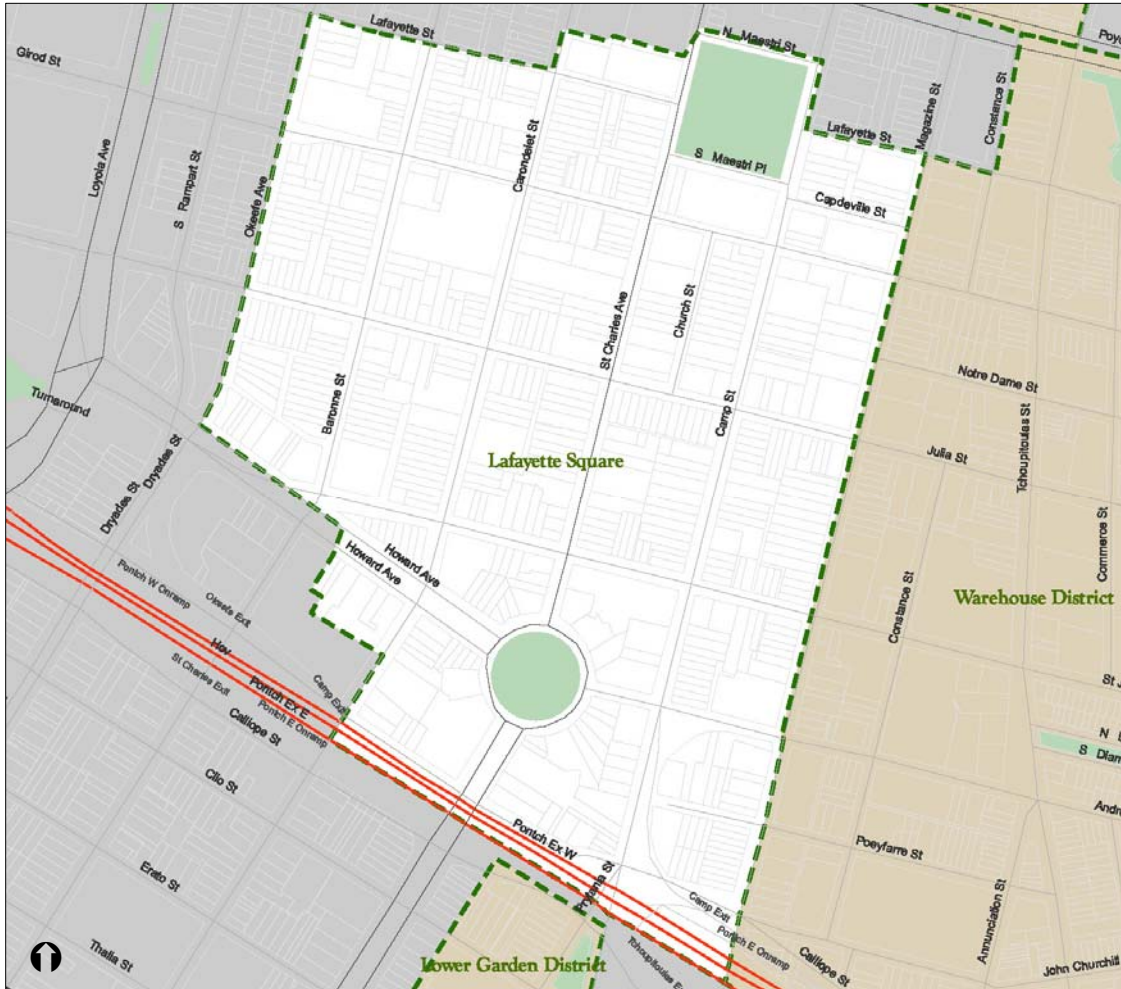




CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Historic District Landmarks Commission

Lafayette Square Historic District



*Designated 1978;
Expanded 2007*
*Jurisdiction: Central Business District
Historic District Landmarks Commission*
The Lafayette Square Historic District is roughly bounded by Magazine Street, the Pontchartrain Expressway, Howard Avenue, O'Keefe Avenue, and Lafayette Street.

The Lafayette Square Historic District encompasses the area that served as the original residential section of the city's American downtown in the 19th century. The street plan dates from the late 18th century, including the placement of its public park, originally named Place Gravier and renamed in 1824 in honor of the Marquis de Lafayette.

Major construction of new residences started in the 1820s. In this period, speculative developers constructed rows of townhouses. The most noted surviving example is Julia Row, the 13 residences on the 600 block of Julia. The 1840s saw a continuation of residential construction, with the Greek Revival style becoming dominant. The District also contains significant public buildings from the antebellum period. The most prominent of these is Gallier Hall, built c. 1853 as City Hall, located at 545 St. Charles Avenue. The late 19th century saw a slow change in the

area's development, with commercial activities concentrated along Magazine Street. It was in this period that Lee Circle on St. Charles Avenue attained its current form. It consists of a grassy knoll topped with a statue of Robert E. Lee on a 110 foot plinth. St. Charles Avenue, and the St. Charles Avenue streetcar, bisect the District and connect it to the more residential areas uptown.

The shift from residential to commercial use in the District accelerated greatly at the beginning of the 20th century. A large number of former residences were demolished and replaced with new commercial buildings. The coming of the automobile also led to the demolition of early buildings for service stations and parking lots. The 1980 World's Fair marked the return of residential and service uses.¹

¹ Information taken from the Lower Central Business District National Register of Historic Places nomination and HDLC files.



Lee Circle is a major District focal point



Julia Row includes several Federal style buildings



Gallier Hall was the former seat of city government

LOCAL CULTURE

- Lee Circle is a major landmark in the District
- St. Charles Avenue and the St. Charles Avenue Streetcar, bisect the district and provide linkages to both the Central Business District, Canal Street and uptown neighborhoods
- The earliest remaining houses in the District were constructed in 1832 by John Green on Julia Street
- Lafayette Square, originally Place Gravier, was a gathering place in the early days of the neighborhood

- Julia Row, 13 identical Federal style buildings built c. 1833 in the 600 block of Julia Street and designed by James Dakin, is a rare intact example of an early Lafayette Square block front
- The former La Belle Creole Cigar Factory is an impressive late 19th century building constructed in 1882
- Gallier Hall, which overlooks Lafayette Square, is a masterwork of architect James Gallier, Sr., built in 1853
- Local museums include The Ogden Museum of Southern Art and The National WWII Museum



Townhouses are a prevalent building type in the District



Lafayette Square was originally called Place Gravier



710 Baronne Street incorporates large storefront display windows

URBAN FORM

Setting/Landscape

- A large percentage of buildings in the District are built on the front property line
- Some 20th century buildings are set back slightly off of the property line
- Most antebellum structures were built to the side lot lines, often directly abutting their neighbors
- Historic buildings either predated the automobile or relied on street parking, so off-street parking in the District is typically confined to surface parking lots or parking structures that have taken the place of older buildings

Massing/Form

- Most buildings in the District are at least 2 stories in height

Styles/Types

- Early residential buildings in the District exhibit characteristics of the Federal style, relatively uncommon in New Orleans
- As a result of contrasting periods of development, the District is a mixture of 19th and 20th century building types
- Buildings in the District are typically constructed of or clad in masonry materials

Public Spaces

- Lafayette Square, originally created in 1788 and named Place Gravier, is a large park that hosts concerts and other public events

Commercial/Industrial

- Some early 20th century commercial buildings were designed to display merchandise through large glass shop windows

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