



# CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

## Historic District Landmarks Commission

### St. Charles Avenue Historic District



*Designated 1976 – Jurisdiction: New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission*

*The St. Charles Avenue Historic District encompasses all properties fronting on St. Charles Avenue between Jackson Avenue and Jena Street, with the exception of the properties that form the corner of Jackson and St. Charles Avenues.*

St. Charles Avenue is one of the most important residential thoroughfares in New Orleans. The Avenue's wide neutral ground, with its graceful live oaks and busy streetcar line, is a widely recognized symbol of New Orleans. The St. Charles Streetcar has been designated a National Historic Landmark by the Department of the Interior. St. Charles Avenue is also the backdrop of New Orleans' most famous tradition, Mardi Gras. Most New Orleans Mardi Gras parades have routes that begin on Napoleon Avenue, and then roll down St. Charles Avenue towards Canal Street.

The early development of St. Charles Avenue was linked to the presence of the streetcar line, originally known as the New Orleans and Carrollton Railroad, which was installed in the 1830s to link Carrollton, then a separate municipality, downriver from New Orleans.

While the majority of the buildings in the District are of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century vintage, some antebellum residences survive. The earliest houses in the District are concentrated near Jackson Avenue. These homes can be

easily recognized by their double galleried facades and Greek Revival and Italianate details.

More intense development of the Avenue began in the 1880s, when numerous significant Queen Anne style houses were built. Many of these were designed by the prominent architect Thomas Sully. Architect Thomas Sully's residence at 4010 St. Charles Avenue, built in 1886, is an outstanding example of Queen Anne-style design.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, apartment buildings began to make an appearance, with the Emlah Court at 3829 St. Charles Avenue, built 1912, being one of the first examples. As the century progressed, many of the larger houses were demolished and replaced by large-scale apartment buildings and commercial buildings in non-contributing styles. The intersections of Louisiana and Napoleon Avenues with St. Charles are the nodes containing most of the commercial buildings in the District.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Information extracted from the *Garden District National Register of Historic Places nominations* and materials of the HDLC.



*The Hershheim House, Thomas Sully, Architect, built 1883*



*Emlah Court was the first large scale apartment building in the District*



*St. Charles Streetcar is located in the neutral ground*

## LOCAL CULTURE

- Two good examples of antebellum houses in the District include the double galleried Greek Revival style Dabney House and the Dameron House, a Greek Revival style center hall cottage, both on St. Charles Avenue
- The Classical Revival Hershheim House, now the Columns Hotel, is a good example of the work of local architect Thomas Sully

- Emlah Court, built 1912, was the first large scale apartment building in the District
- The former Bultman Funeral Home Building with its preserved façade and rear parking, is a good example of the adaptive commercial reuse of an historic building
- The St. Charles Streetcar has been designated a National Historic Landmark by the Department of the Interior



*St. Charles features a variety of iron fences bordering the sidewalk*



*The Dameron House is an early center hall cottage in the District*



*Fine double galleried homes are common in the District*

## URBAN FORM

### Setting/Landscape

- Historic residences were typically set on large lots, with comparatively large front yards edged with iron fences
- The separation of the houses from one another and from the sidewalks adds to the apparent width of the street and provides more land for landscaping, making St. Charles Avenue one of the greenest corridors in New Orleans
- Although some properties rely on on-street parking, many of the residences are set on large lots, have driveways and garages for off-street parking

### Massing/Form

- The character of the St. Charles Avenue Historic District is defined by large-scale residential construction 2-stories in height
- Hipped roofs often add to the vertical mass of residences, making them appear even larger

### Styles/Types

- Most of the historic residences in the District are of wood frame construction
- Earlier buildings are usually double galleried building types featuring Greek Revival and Italianate architectural details
- After 1880, a large number of Queen Anne style residences were built
- After 1900, larger-scale apartment buildings, often in the Revival styles, began to make an appearance on the Avenue

### Public Spaces

- The Avenue's wide neutral ground, with its graceful live oaks and busy streetcar lines, is a widely recognized symbol of New Orleans

### Commercial/Industrial

- Commercial buildings including small hotels, bed and breakfasts, restaurants, stores and banks are scattered along the Avenue, most constructed to be similar in scale, mass form and style to their residential neighbors

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