

Program Summary:

Previously placed on the Louisiana Landmarks Society's 2011 "Nine Most Endangered Sites" list, two blighted adjoining two-story wood structures dating from 1857 restored into a multi-use space.

Program Statement:

Along with the rehabilitation of the structures into a multi-use space with second floor commercial office and ground floor residential units, a new covered exterior stair and contemporary addition have been created at the rear of the property, increasing the functionality of the structures while also allowing for more of their historic fabric to be preserved. As the Louisiana Landmarks Society's 2011 "Nine Most Endangered Sites" list noted, "Coliseum Square residents have worked for 40 years to restore this once-blighted neighborhood." The two adjoining structures comprising the property at 1824 Sophie Wright Pl. had been the very visible holdouts to those restoration efforts until very recently. Originally constructed in 1857, the two structures were connected in 1879 by a German Baker looking to expand his business. A second floor balcony and projecting cornice were added to unify the front facades, and the front carriageway was used to access bake ovens located behind the building. The buildings have been mixed-use throughout their entire existence, with various iterations of bakeries, offices and residences taking up space within the structures. The second floor balcony was demolished in 1940. The property, which is located in the Lower Garden District Historic District, had been cited for "Demolition by Neglect" by the New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission since 2007.

RR-365.01

Building Area: (sf)
4,550 SF

Cost per Square Foot:
\$148

Construction Cost
\$674,000

Date of Completion:
January 2018

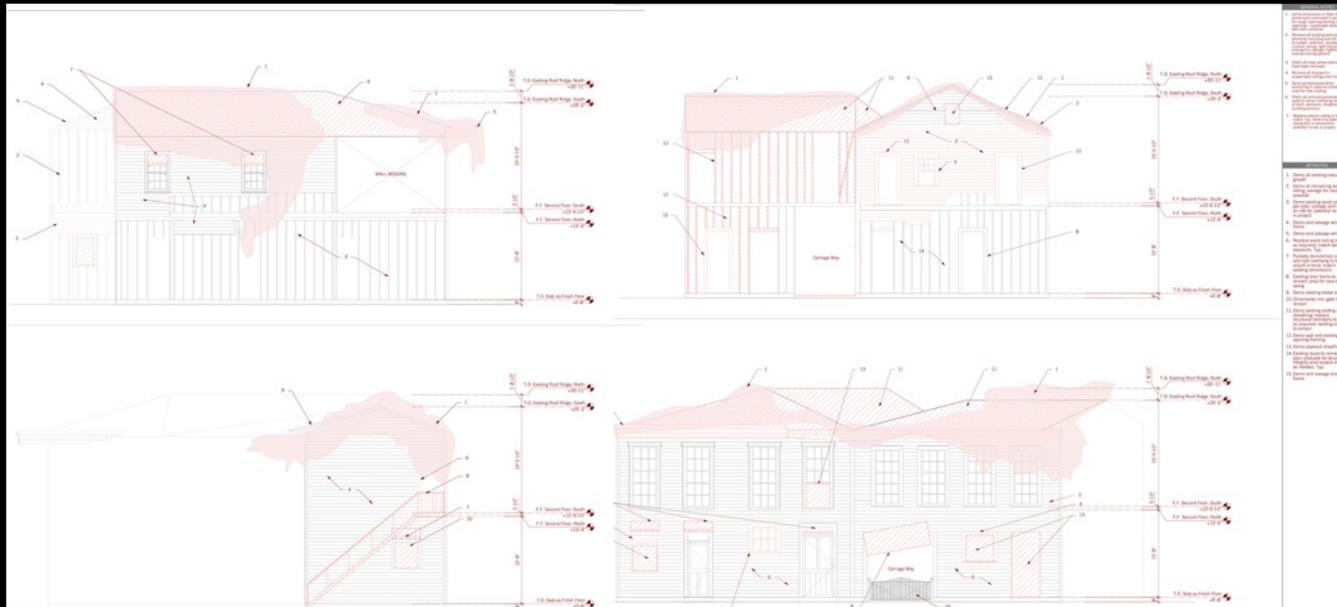


RR-365.02

The property was purchased by its current owners in 2015 and has been rehabilitated with the help of Federal and State Historic Tax Credits to house a commercial office spanning across both structures' second floors, with a residential unit located in each of the structures' ground floors. The foundations of both structures were in such bad shape (and in some locations did not even exist) as to require that an additional independent support structure be installed to hold the second floor and roof structures in place while the first floor walls were cut away from the existing foundations. The foundations for both structures were entirely rebuilt in concrete, and the second floor (which was in better shape and had retained many original details) was reconnected to the first floor walls and foundation once that work was completed.

RR-365.03

The demolition scope was carefully coordinated to ensure that the entire structure did not collapse, nor did we forfeit some of the key aspects of the building footprint, geometry, or character despite having to replace a very large percentage of framing, all the cladding, and much of the foundation.



RR-365.04



Rebuilding the foundation of both structures allowed for the implementation of a restoration strategy aimed at reducing any future damage brought on by flooding while maintaining the structures' original ground floor elevations. Along with new concrete foundations, concrete chain walls were erected at the base of all exterior walls and brought up 10" past the original ground floor elevation, effectively creating a barrier for flood water infiltration into the structures. The original exterior wood siding was then brought back down over the chain walls to terminate at its previous historic locations, making these new chain walls unnoticeable from the exterior. At the interior, all historic load-bearing and exterior walls at the ground-floor have an 8" concrete reveal at their bases denoting them as historic walls. Walls added during the rehabilitation feature a 1" reveal at their base, allowing for an immediate understanding in each space of the historic footprints of the structures.

RR-365.05

The ground level functions as two residential units. The commercial space upstairs is accessed through the carriageway to an open air staircase in the rear addition.



RR-365.06

All remaining historic windows and doors (including the 8 slip-head windows along the second floor of the front facades) were restored in-place, along with the reconstruction of those historic windows and doors that had gone missing along the side facades of the structures over time. The projecting cornice was entirely re-built along with a full restoration of the two structures' distinct roof forms. The new cornice's drainage was reconfigured to avoid another water damage related collapse, as had occurred in the past due to improper drainage. A balcony spanning across both facades at the second floor was restored below the cornice, and now once again provides covered exterior circulation throughout the second floor.



RR-365.07

A contemporary rear addition was designed and constructed so as to provide missing functionality to the historic spaces, and in doing so, to also allow for more of the historic fabric to be maintained.



RR-365.08

The addition includes bathrooms at both floors, a covered stairway to the second floor office, and a new entry room at the second floor. Placing circulation and plumbing within the new addition allowed for more of the historic floor plan of the two structures to be maintained and remain clearly understandable to those using the spaces. The addition is located within the footprint of previously demolished additions which are shown on Sanborn maps as dating from 1885.





RR-365.09

Placing the entry stair to the second floor office at the rear of the property re-engages the carriageway as the site of commercial traffic between the two structures. The stairs were designed as exterior covered stairs to take full advantage of the New Orleans climate while drastically reducing the energy consumption that would have been required to condition such a stairway, and also to experientially extend the exterior covered commercial traffic up to the second floor.



RR-365.10

Within the second floor office, the space above the carriageway is defined as an entry and social area, with office spaces off to either side. A new rear window within the entry large room mirrors and references the rear carriageway opening below.



RR-365.11

Windows throughout the addition reference the scale of the historic windows while fully engaging with the current advances in producing large sized glazing pieces. A new trimless window is located at the side of the new addition to provide a clear and easily understandable visual break between old and new. The use of trimless glazing at this location allows for the reading of the addition at this side as terminating below the second floor, a visual reference to the single story bake house structures erected in 1879.



RR-365.12

The retention of the carriageway required close collaboration with the State Fire Marshall to allow its use as an exterior exit passageway for both the residential and commercial uses. The structure, barely standing upon commencement of construction, required almost full replacement and careful planning to avoid collapse. The client's willingness to resurrect this quirky historic building from near demolition is a reflection of the spirit of New Orleans lasting architectural charm.



Project Name:
Sophie Wright

Project Location:
1824 Sophie Wright, New Orleans, LA

Owner/Client:
Spackman, Mossop, and Michaels

Architect(s) of Record:
(names and addresses)
Wayne Troyer
studioWTA
1119 Tchoupitoulas St. New Orleans, LA

Project Team:
Natan Diacon-Furtado
Wayne Troyer
Tracie Ashe

Landscape Architect:
Spackman, Mossop, and Michaels

Consultants:
Ashton Avengo (S)
Damien Serauskas (M+P)
Bruce Creighton (E)

General Contractor:
AJK Renovations

Photographer(s):
(please list which specific slides get credited to each
photographer(s) listed).

A.006, A.009, A.010– Neil Alexander

A.002,.007, .011, .012 – Natan Diacon-
Furtado

A.004, A.008 – Neil Alexander (Right), Natan
Diacon-Furtado (Left)

RR-365.x

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