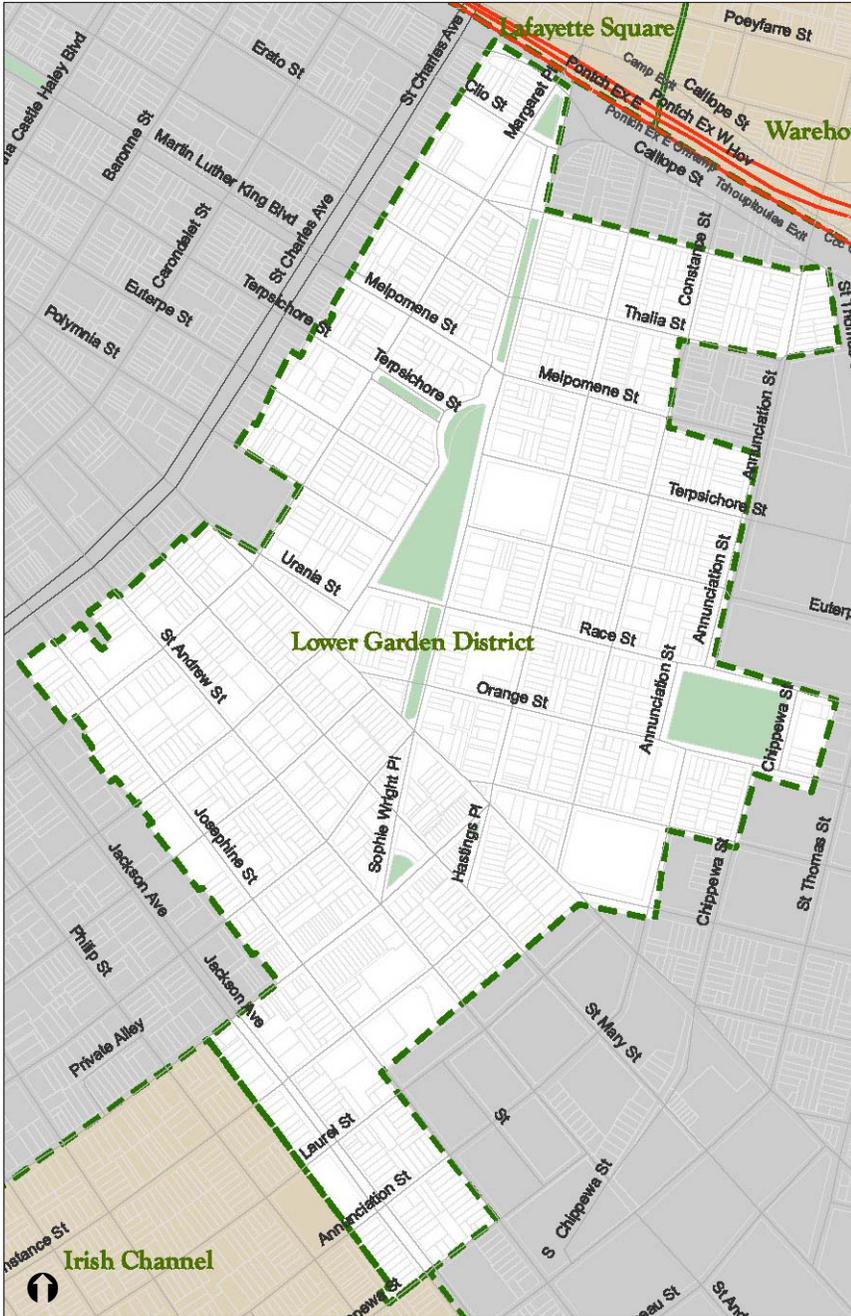




CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Historic District Landmarks Commission

Lower Garden Historic District



The Lower Garden District has a rich and varied architectural character that reflects over a century of development. The District was laid out as streets and city blocks in 1809 by surveyor Barthelemy Lafon. Lafon had grand plans for the area that are still reflected in some street and park names. Coliseum Square, a three block long park in the center of the District, was intended as the site of a coliseum, and Annunciation Square as the site of a great cathedral. Prytania Street was intended as home to the prytaneum, or town hall. The primary streets running perpendicular to the river are named for the nine ancient Greek muses—Calliope, Clio, Erato, Thalia, Melpomene, Terpsichore, Euterpe, Polymnia and Urania—another result of Lafon’s grand classical aspirations. Lafon’s street layout of this area reflects the curve of the Mississippi River, with streets intersecting at angles to older streets plotted in what is now the Central Business District.

The District is a mix of building types, primarily single and double shotguns, double gallery houses and commercial structures. These are predominately 19th century buildings, many constructed in the first half of the 19th century. The scale of most of the houses in the District is substantial, with the majority being 2 stories in height. Double gallery side halls with Greek Revival temple fronts began appearing in the 1840s.

Many smaller scale houses are located in the District. A few early Creole-style residences remain, but most of the low-scale housing is composed of single and double shotgun type buildings, many along Constance and Annunciation Streets. The 1800 through 2000 blocks of Magazine Street feature a number of masonry commercial buildings with deep galleries housing small shops, bars and restaurants.¹

Designated 1975; Expanded 1976

Jurisdiction: New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission

The Lower Garden District Historic District is roughly bounded by Jackson Avenue, Prytania Street, Erato Street and Chippewa Street.

¹ Information taken from the Lower Garden District National Register of Historic Places nomination, HDLC materials and *New Orleans Architecture, Volume I: The Lower Garden District*.



Coliseum Square is central to the area's urban fabric



St. Mary's Assumption and St. Alphonsus Churches are local icons



The Grace King House is a good example of the Greek Revival style

LOCAL CULTURE

- The heart of the district is Coliseum Square, a 3 block long wedge shaped park graced by shady live oaks, winding paths and a fountain
- The German Baroque Revival St. Mary's Assumption Church (c. 1858) is also home to the Shrine of the Blessed Francis X. Seelos, who died in a yellow fever epidemic in 1867

- The Grace King House, on Coliseum Street, was named for the Louisiana historian and author who lived there from 1905 to 1932. It was built in 1847 by banker Frederick Rodewald and features both Ionic and Corinthian columns
- The 1847 Wilson House on Coliseum Street has Doric and Ionic columns and is a good example of the Greek Revival style



Double gallery houses, like these on Magazine, are common in the District



Shotgun residences are common on streets closer to the river



Commercial buildings along Magazine Street form a continuous streetscape

URBAN FORM

Setting/Landscape

- Much of the District has a distinctive irregular plan resulting from many streets laid out perpendicular to the crescent of the river creating a large number of irregular blocks
- Most residences are set back from the sidewalk behind ornamental fences of wood or cast iron
- Commercial buildings are typically built to both the front and side lot lines, with no setbacks
- Many service buildings and other residential dependencies or outbuildings are still intact
- While many residences in the District are quite large in scale, smaller shotgun houses are located on Constance, Assumption and Annunciation Streets
- Parking in both residential and commercial areas tends to be primarily on-street

Massing/Form

- The District is primarily composed of 2-story residential buildings with some 1-story shotguns

Styles/Types

- The District's character is defined by the comparatively large scale of its residential and commercial buildings
- A row of nearly identical double gallery houses built in the late 1860s is located along Magazine Street
- Architectural styles found in the area range from Greek Revival and Italianate to Queen Anne and eclectically styled shotguns
- Double galleries and substantial porches are prevalent on commercial and residential buildings in the District
- A number of the multi-story residential buildings in the District are built of brick, distinguishing this area from the majority of New Orleans' neighborhoods

Public Spaces

- Coliseum and Annunciation Squares are public features

Commercial/Industrial

- 2- story commercial buildings along Magazine Street usually feature storefronts with large display windows and iron galleries on the first level, with housing above

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