

THE FRENCH HOSPITAL-KNIGHTS OF PETER CLAVER HALL
1821 Orleans Avenue

Architectural Rating: Blue

Construction Date: 1860-61; wing added 1914

Architect: None attributed to original building; wing designed
by Andry & Banderagel

Nomination Information

Date: December 6, 1978

Nominated by: William Pitts

Second by: Don Theriot, Jane Ferguson

Recommended by: Staff

Site Description

Square 224, Lot 5
2nd M.D., 7th A.D.

Zoning: C-1

Lot Size: 151'1'0" , 262'10"1" , 257'5"7" , 149'10"2"

Accessory Buildings & 20th Century Construction excluded from this nomination
Owner

The Knights of Peter Claver

The nomination of this building was based upon its architectural significance, its associations with local historic personages, and its importance to the cultural, economic and social history of this city.

Architectural Significance

According to records in the Office of Conveyance, the property on which this building stands was donated to the French Benevolent and Mutual Aid Association of New Orleans in 1859 by Oliver Blineau, the President of the above mentioned Association.

The original French Hospital building, facing St. Ann Street, was built in 1860-61. The "T" shaped three-story masonry structure is a late example of the Greek Revival style of architecture. The rusticated ground floor serves as a base for the giant pilasters that rise through the second and third floors to support the parapet, which is broken by a low pediment above the original entrance facing St. Ann Street.

In 1914 the hospital expanded, erecting a two-story addition on the Orleans Avenue side of the original hospital building. The new construction was designed in the Italian Renaissance style by the firm of Andry and Banderagel. The new building features round arched windows on the first floor, each highlighted by a decorative keystone. A simple iron balcony on brackets is placed above the Orleans Avenue entrance. The addition, although done in a different style, harmonizes with the original hospital building. The use of rustication on the first floor is carried over from the 1860's structure, as is the simple parapet above the second story. The reliance of both Greek Revival and Italian Renaissance styles on motifs from classical antiquity accounts in a large part for the similarities between the two styles.

Architect

While no documentation has been found regarding an architect for the 1860-61 French Hospital building, the firm of Andry and Banderagel were the architects of record for the two-story addition facing Orleans Avenue. One of the most productive firms in New Orleans from 1900-1920, Andry and Banderagel are best known for their Beaux Arts style commercial buildings. Among their works are the Norman Mayer Memorial Building at 211 Camp, built in 1900, which housed the firms offices, and the New Orleans Stock Exchange that stood until recently at 740 Gravier. The facade of this outstanding building was salvaged and used as part of the new Home Savings & Loan Association at 3625 Canal Street.

CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY

Founded in 1843, the French Benevolent and Mutual Aid Association of New Orleans operated the French Hospital on the site from 1861 to 1951. At that time, the building was sold to the Knights of Peter Claver, a black Catholic fraternal society. The French Hospital had an outstanding reputation in a city noted for the quality of its medical facilities. Throughout the 1960's and into the early 1970's, the building was the center of civil rights activities in New Orleans, housing the local headquarters of both the NAACP and the Urban League and the offices of several black attorneys. It also served as the 1977 campaign headquarters for Ernest "Dutch" Morial, the city's first black mayor.

HISTORIC PERSONAGES

When the building served as center of civil rights activities in New Orleans, it housed the law offices of two prominent black attorneys who became nationally known figures: A.P. Tureaud, the highly regarded civil rights leader active in the NAACP, and Mayor Ernest "Dutch" Morial. Morial's 1977 campaign headquarters were also located in the building.