

VIEUX CARRE COMMISSION

Mitchell J. Landrieu  
MAYOR

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Bryan Block  
DIRECTOR

Minutes of the **Vieux Carré Commission** meeting of **Wednesday, April 4, 2018 - 1:30 P.M.**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Nicholas S. Musso, Chairman  
Daniel C. Taylor, Vice-Chairman  
Leslie S. Stokes, Secretary  
Mamie Gasperecz  
Rick Fifield  
Angela King  
Adrienne Thomas

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Bill Keck  
Patricia C. Denechaud

**STAFF PRESENT:** Bryan D. Block, Director; Renée Bourgogne, Architectural Historian;  
Nicholas G. Albrecht, Building Plans Examiner; Erin Vogt, Building Plans  
Examiner; Melissa Quigley, Assistant City Attorney

**STAFF ABSENT:** Tony Whitfield, Inspector

**I. ROLL CALL**

Chairman Musso called the meeting to order at approximately 1:30 PM. A quorum was established with the presence of six (6) of the nine (9) seated Commissioners present.

**[Commissioner King would arrive after the Roll Call]**

**II. REVIEW OF MINUTES**

Mr. Taylor moved, Ms. Gasperecz seconded, that the minutes of the Vieux Carré Commission meeting of February 7, 2018 be approved as previously circulated. The motion passed unanimously.

**[Note: No Commission meeting was held in March, 2018]**

**III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Mr. Musso noted the problems that had plagued the initial phases of the Bourbon St. repaving project. Mr. Musso noted the need for better barriers and elevated walk-overs and that he would be inviting the acting director of Public Works to discuss the procedure.

**IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Block gave the following Director's Report:

As of December 1, 2017, thanks to the efforts of the Historic District Landmarks Commission staff, New Orleans has been approved to be a Certified Local Government (CLG) under the provision of Section 101 (c) of the National Historic Preservation Act. The City has been added to their database which can be accessed, along with additional information on the CLG program at [www.nps.gov/clg](http://www.nps.gov/clg). One of the Commission's responsibilities as a Certified Local Government (CLG) is to review pending National Register Nominations of properties within the Vieux Carre. This is required, in part, to detect any errors in fact, but also provide local insight or knowledge concerning the property.

The National Register of Historic Places is the federal government's official list of historic properties worthy of preservation. Listing on the National Register provides recognition and assists in preserving our Nation's heritage. Listing of a property provides recognition of its historic significance and assures protective review of federal projects that might adversely affect the character of the historic property. If the property is listed on the National Register, tax credits for rehabilitation and other beneficial provisions may apply. The entire Vieux Carré was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1965.

Staff reached out to the National Historic Landmarks Program (NHL) for additional information whether individual buildings could potentially seek listing as the entire district is registered. The NHL program would only consider individual contributing resources within an existing NHL historic district if the resource is also nationally significant for a different reason, otherwise individual designation is considered redundant. Furthermore, there is no additional benefit to individually listing a resource that already contributes to a historic district. As such, VCC should not be called upon frequently to review nominations.

I forwarded information to all commissioners regarding a nomination to update the “French Quarter Revival style” to the Vieux Carré National Register Historic District along with a survey of 48 buildings in question . The Vieux Carré was last updated in 2011 to add the French Quarter Revival architectural style with the period of significance covering buildings constructed 1934-1961. At that time the buildings in question were considered to be contributing elements to the Vieux Carré “because they exemplify an approach to historic preservation dominant at the time: the use of the French Quarter Style to be ‘in character’ with, and preserve the feeling of, the old quarter”.

This proposal further updates that period of significance to 1968 for buildings classified under this style, as described in the survey. By updating the period of significance to 1968, 16 buildings are being proposed to be added to the Vieux Carré as contributing for their significance. It is also being requested that an additional 32 buildings would become contributing buildings once an age of 50 years is reached.

NHL defines Period of Significance as the length of time when a property was associated with important events, activities, or persons, or attained the characteristics which qualify for National Register listing. Period of significance usually begins with the date when significant activities or events began giving the property its historic significance; this is often a date of construction.

The following guidelines have been provided for selecting the periods of significance:

- Criterion A: For the site of an important event, the period of significance is the time when the event occurred. For properties associated with historic trends, such as commercial development, the period of significance is the span of time when the property actively contributed to the trend (i.e. building in the revival style instead of in the more typical Modern and International styles prevalent at the time).
- Criterion B: The length of time the property was associated with an important person
- Criterion C: For architecturally significant properties, the period of significance is the date of construction and/or the dates of any significant alterations and additions.

Additional guidelines were also provided as follows:

- The property must possess historic integrity for all periods of significance
- Continued use or activity does not necessarily justify continuing the period of significance. The period of significance is based upon the time when the property made the contributions or achieved the character on which significance is based.
- Fifty years ago is used as the closing date for periods of significance where activities began historically, continued to have importance and no more specific date can be defined to end the historic period. Events and activities occurring within the last 50 years must be exceptionally important to be recognized as “historic” and to justify extending a period of significance beyond the limit of 50 years ago.

We will have a new section on our Commission agendas entitled National Register of Historic Places Nomination Review whenever such a nomination is requested. The staff will forward the Commission’s comments from the meeting to the State Historic Preservation Office and the National Register Review Committee for consideration along with the Nomination.

The nomination is scheduled to be presented to the National Register Review Committee on Thursday, April 12, 2018. However, if a recommendation cannot be forwarded to the SHPO by that date or if the commission would prefer to examine this matter in more depth, the nomination process will continue and be presented at a later date.

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As part of the on-going file digitization project, we have become aware that there are currently 354 structures rated as “Gray”. These structures are either new construction or additions and mostly, but not entirely, accessory buildings, dependencies or other types of outbuildings. They are not on any historic maps including the Color Map currently in use, but are visible on recent satellite images. In addition to the previously mentioned structures (which are the bulk of these gray structures), here are some examples of why these buildings are gray:

- Possible removal of brown structures/courtyard infills
- New construction and needs a color-rating (Ex. 1220 Dauphine)
- Staff does not know what is happening in the courtyard, but something is there that doesn't match the previously documented information. (Ex. 409 Bourbon)
- Facade-ectomies of previously rated structures, but behind the facade is surface parking. (Ex. 320 and 324 Burgundy)
- Additions that connect previously unconnected dependencies with their main buildings (Ex. 829-837 Burgundy)
- Unrated park spaces/performance structures/park structures
- Enclosed passageway being used as commercial space.

We do not intend to hold release of the website until they have been addressed. Rather, they will remain gray. We need to tweak the definition of gray. Staff proposes defining as "Rating pending review by VCC". This review would occur at the AC level unless the commission would prefer this be handled by staff.



VCC staff is requesting a discussion regarding the possible modification of the current definition of the "Orange" rating. The current definition reads, "Unrated 20<sup>th</sup> century construction (since 1946)." It seems to be problematic that a rating states it being "unrated" whereas "Non-contributing" might be more descriptive. As we are now well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the description should also be so modified. These changes in definition would require commission approval.

In response to the need to rate buildings and structures currently noted as gray, Mr. Taylor moved to allow staff to determine the ratings of these buildings with consultation from the Architecture Committee if needed.

In response to the last item on the Director's Report (redefining the "Orange" rating), Mr. Musso requested that the staff submit in writing a revised definition to discuss at the next meeting.

**V. OTHER BUSINESS**

Discussion and possible modification of current definition of "orange-rated" in regards to the VCC's color rating of buildings. The current definition reads, "Unrated 20<sup>th</sup> Century Construction (Since 1946)."

Possible modification of the definition of "orange-rated" was discussed during the Director's Report.

**VI. OLD BUSINESS**

**211-15 Royal St. & 217-19 Royal St: 17-22503-VCGEN**; John Guarnieri, applicant; Royal Condominium Developments LLC, owner; Proposal to construct rooftop penthouse and roof decks, in conjunction with renovation of historic buildings and **change of use** from *vacant* to *commercial (mixed use)*, per application & materials received 06/28/17 & 03/20/18, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=722226>

Ms. Vogt presented the staff report with Ms. Garrett present on behalf of the application. Mr. Musso stated that the project went through a significant design review process with the Architectural Committee, and that the context was very important in their consideration. Mr. Taylor moved for **approval** of the proposal, and Ms. Stokes seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

**828 Toulouse St: 18-04926-VCGEN**: John C. Williams, applicant; 828 Toulouse Street LLC, owner; Proposal to demolish portions of courtyard infill in conjunction with a proposal to renovate rear buildings damaged by fire, per application & materials received 02/09/18 & 03/20/18, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=748621>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Williams present on behalf of the application. Mr. Musso noted that this application had been scrutinized by the Architecture Committee. Mr. Taylor moved for approval of the proposed demolitions and to waive the 30-day layover period. Ms. Gasperecz seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**VIII. RATIFICATION** of Architectural Committee and Staff actions since the Wednesday, February 7, 2018 VCC meeting.

Mr. Taylor moved to ratify the Architecture Committee and Staff actions since February 7, 2018. Ms. Stokes seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

With no other business to discuss, Mr. Taylor moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Gasperecz seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:10 pm.