

THE BOGART-FILSON HOUSE
1020 Fourth Street

Architectural Rating: Blue
Construction Date: 1849-1850
Architect: George Purves, Robertson & Shaw, Builders

Nomination Information

Date: October 15, 1981
Nominated by: Camille Strachan
Seconded by: Eugene Cizek, John Ernst
Recommended by: Staff

Site Description

Square 149, Lot: Undesignated
4th M.D., 11th A.D.
Zoning: RM-2
Lot Size: 38'9" x 128'10"6'''

Owner: Mr. & Mrs. Ronald C. Filson

The nomination of this property was based upon its architectural significance, and the fact that it was designed by a noted architect and builder. Each of the four areas of criteria used in determining landmark qualification, and outlined in City Ordinance No. 5992 M.C.S., will be examined on an individual basis in order to produce information upon which a final decision will be made whether or not to designate the property.

Architectural Significance

In two separate property transactions, Isaac Bogart acquired the land on which this house stands in 1847. On March 18th, Bogart purchased lots 3,4,5 & 6 from Clara Coolidge, these lots each measuring slightly more than 26 feet in width on Fourth Street. These lots were supplemented on November 5th when Bogart acquired another lot numbered 5 from George Botts, which would form most of the house's present site. Bogart would later purchase the lots forming the corner of Fourth and Constance, thus owning most of the blockface, but would sell off the frontage starting at Constance Street, and extending along Fourth Street for slightly more than 75 feet, keeping the remaining 88 feet along Fourth Street for his residence.

On August 9, 1849, Bogart entered into a building contract with the firm of Robertson and Shaw, Builders, of the City of Lafayette, to erect a house on Bogart's property according to the plans prepared by the architect George Purves. The house was to cost \$2,000 and was to be delivered to Bogart on or before July 1, 1850. Unfortunately, no plans or specifications were filed with the contract. Real estate assessment records for the City of Lafayette, the independent municipality whose boundaries encompassed this block from 1833 to 1855, indicate some improvements on the property in 1850, with a substantial raise in the value of the improvements in 1851. Assuming that the assessment records were filed early in each year, it appears that the house was under construction in 1850, but not completed. Further proof of the completion of the house can be found in the 1850 edition of Cohen's New Orleans and Lafayette Directory, which lists Isaac Bogart as residing on Fourth Street between Magazine and Live Oak, then the name for Constance Street

The house which George Purves designed for Isaac Bogart is a small but beautifully detailed one and a half story Greek Revival style residence with a two story service wing, the entire structure being of wood frame construction set on a series of low brick foundation piers. The house is three bays in width, with the front entrance set to the left of the facade as one faces the house. The main facade is covered with stucco, which is scored so as to imitate large cut blocks of stone. The front porch is framed by a series of four columns. The outermost columns are square and rather heavy, with an inset panel running down the column face. The inner pair of columns are round and fluted, with capitals derived from the Tower of the Winds in Athens, one of the most copied of all Ancient Greek buildings during the Greek Revival. The four columns support a substantial and simply detailed entablature with a dentiled cornice. A low parapet surmounts the facade. The porch railings are extremely beautiful and reflect the austerity of the best Greek Revival design work. Made of pieces of both wrought and cast iron, the railings feature crossed members with rosettes as ornaments at the crossing points as decorative elements. The framework of these railings forms two large square panels bordered by small rectangular panels. The panels set atop the railings are embellished by a continuous row of scrollwork. At either end of the railing panels is a small rounded projection which enframes a single anthemion, or honeysuckle blossom, a favorite decorative element of both Greek and Greek Revival architecture. The rectangular panels to the sides and beneath the larger square panels imitate their design, with crossed bars and rosettes fitted to the crossing points of the bars. These railings are related both stylistically and technically to some of the finer funerary ironwork located in the city's ante-bellum cemeteries.

Each of the three facade openings is set within an eared or crosssette enframement, the most popular treatment of major openings on Greek Revival style residences. The front door is divided into six recessed panels, an unusual and effective treatment. The two full length window openings retain their louvered shutters, which are closed, obscuring the view of the original double hung sash in place behind them.

The Constance Street side of the house features an open side gallery which is completely screened by louvered shutters. Access to this side gallery is provided by the front door, which opens directly into the gallery, not into any interior space. Projecting out from, and serving to further shade the gallery, is an S-shaped metal canopy supported on ornamental hammer beam brackets. This canopy is clearly much more recent than the rest of the house, and most likely dates from the 1890s, after which time the house had been sold by the sons of Isaac Bogart, with the large side yard of the Bogart house being sold off by the new owners and the large double house at 1016-18 Fourth constructed in its place. The Magazine Street elevation of the house is clad in asbestos siding over the original weatherboards. This modern siding has not resulted in the destruction of any of the original window openings. The original chimney stacks of the house have been cut down to the roof line and sealed over.

Architect

George Purves, the architect of the Isaac Bogart residence, was one of the most active architect-builders in New Orleans in the 1850s. He was responsible for both the design and construction of the Odd fellows Hall at Camp and Lafayette Streets, south of Lafayette Square, erected in 1852 and destroyed by fire in 1866

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Purves also designed and built Trinity Episcopal Church at 1329 Jackson Avenue in 1852-53. The church was extensively remodeled by the architect Charles Lewis Hillger in 1873, virtually destroying all evidence of Purves' original design. In 1855 Purves was selected by Henry Howard to erect the new First Presbyterian Church facing Lafayette Square, which cost \$73,500 and represented one of the largest construction contracts of the 1850s. Purves was also involved in the construction of the second St. Charles Hotel, both as a builder and as a supervisory architect. Following the Civil War, Purves seems to have abandoned the practice of architecture, and was listed in the city directories as the proprietor of a sash, blind and door factory at St. Charles Avenue and Clio Street. Purves died in 1883, as the listing for his factory in 1884 came under the heading of the estate of George Purves. No published obituary for Purves has been located so as to pinpoint the exact date of his death or birth.

Historic Personages

Isaac Bogart, the client for this house, was listed in the city directories as a merchandise broker with an office at 25 Gravier Street. The house at 1020 Fourth Street is the only residential address which was shown for Bogart in these directories. Bogart died in October of 1860, at the age of 48, which would have made him 38 at the time he moved into the house that George Purves had designed for him.

Social, Cultural, Economic and Political History

None

STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON LANDMARK NOMINATIONS

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This superbly detailed Greek Revival residence was designed by one of the most prominent architect-builders of ante-bellum New Orleans, George Purves. One of the most original Greek Revival designs in the city, the house features very elegant decorative ironwork, and an unusual side gallery entry. The staff recommends the designation of this property, which has been under nomination for almost eight years. The owner of the property for most of this period wished to have the final decision on the designation deferred for an indefinite period of time, and the Commission agreed to the request. The property has recently sold, and the new owners have expressed their support of the possible designation of the property.