

WARREN-ALLISON HOUSE
1529 Jackson Avenue

Architectural Rating: Red
Construction Date: circa 1860
Architect: James Gallier, Jr.

Nomination Information

Date: September 13, 1984
Nominated by: Camille Strachan
Seconded by: Jane Brooks, Ron Pursell

Site Description

Square 210, Lot "D"
Fourth Municipal District, Twelfth Assessment District
Zoning: C-1A
Lot Size: 85 ft. front on Jackson Avenue by 159'10"3"'' in depth
Owner: George Allison

Architectural Significance

This is another architecturally significant structure built along Jackson Avenue in the 19th century. This one is a two story masonry townhouse built in the early Italianate style. It has many characteristics of the typical American townhouse built in the Garden District and Lower Garden District in this era, and also exhibits the fine design details of James Gallier, Jr. We are fortunate in this instance to have a floor plan and watercolor elevation signed "Gallier-Esterbrook" for "J. J. Warren" in the care of the Southeast Architectural Archives at Tulane University. Using this resource, it is possible to tell exactly what the structure originally looked like. Also, despite the changes that have occurred, particularly the enclosure of a portion of the lower gallery, it is possible to see how much of the original does in fact remain and how effective a restoration could be. The building's preservation is important for these reasons.

Gallier's elevation shows a three-bay, two story arrangement with a classical denticulated entablature across the top. A handsome two story cast iron gallery completes the facade. This design is very similar to that of the Greek Revival Turpin-Kofler-Buja House at 2319 Magazine Street, designed by the James Gallier, Jr. and John Turpin firm in 1853. Concessions to the Italianate influence that was making itself felt when the Warren-Allison House was constructed, about 1860, can mainly be seen in the slight curves of the segmentally-arched hood moldings above the door and windows. The window frames remain slim and simple, and the door frame still displays the Greek Revival crossset shape. Those elements would become more elaborate in the mature Italianate style. The entablature has not yet taken on the additional brackets or deeper projection that would shortly develop. It was, in fact quite a refined plan. Any elaboration was saved for the ironwork, which was dense and curvilinear. The wooden door had eight decorative panels and a tripartite transom.

The Gallier and Esterbrook floorplans illustrate perfectly the characteristic layout of a building of this type. The front door led into an entry and stair-hall, with double parlors or drawing rooms beside it. Behind that was the dining room, with a semi-octagonal bay on the side. The service wing contained a small butler's pantry, kitchen, ironing room, storeroom, servants stairs and privy on the first floor. Upstairs, two bedrooms were situated above the

parlor, a sitting room and boudoir above the dining room, and four smaller bedrooms in the service wing. A bathroom and water closet, with tub and working toilet shown, were across from the boudoir.

The house was built for one J. J. Warren, about whom little is known. It remained in the possession of his family until at least 1883, when the Robinson Atlas indicates the property belonging to M. M. A. Warren. At that time this address was referred to as #263-65 Jackson Avenue. Early in the twentieth century the house was purchased by the Scheur family, who lost it in a sheriff sale in 1933 to Norman Mayer. Mayer sold it to Mrs. Genevieve McGrath for \$8,000 in April, 1937. In 1945 Mr. & Mrs. John McGrath sold it to Boyd Allison for \$16,500. It has remained in the Allison family's possession since 1945, being owned now by Mr. George Allison.

As mentioned previously, the lower two-thirds of the front gallery has been enclosed, mainly with glass. The enclosure was made without removing any of the ironwork of the gallery, and so seems to be a relatively reversible alteration. The front door and transom have also been changed; now they have elaborate beveled glass panes of a type which became popular after the simplicity of the Greek Revival. The exterior of the rest of the house seems relatively unaltered, with the upper gallery and full length windows in particularly good shape.

Architect

James Gallier, Jr. was born in England in 1827, and moved with his parents to New York in 1832 at the age of five. He attended the University of North Carolina, and then completed his architectural training with his father, James Gallier, Sr., who founded a successful firm in New Orleans in 1834. He worked in partnership with John Turpin from 1849-58. From 1858-68 he worked as Gallier and Esterbrook. It was during that time that he designed the Warren-Allison House.

Among his designs are some of New Orleans most outstanding structures, including the French Opera House, the Bank of America on Exchange Place, the Leeds Iron Foundry, the Luling Mansion, the Turpin-Kofler-Buja House at 2319 Magazine Street, and his own house at 1132 Royal Street.

Social, Political, or Economic Significance

None

Historic Personages

None

Staff Recommendation

For designation, based on architectural significance and association with a famous architect. The side hall American townhouse with double cast iron gallery across the front was a building type particularly important and influential in New Orleans Architectural history. This structure, though somewhat altered, exhibits most of the key characteristics of this building type. It also has the distinction of having been designed by James Gallier Jr. of the Gallier and Esterbrook firm, one of the best to practice in this area in the last century. The original floorplan and watercolor elevation for this project have been located, allowing comparisons with the present building, which retains many of its original elements and is deserving of protection and preservation, with hope for a future restoration based on the architect's own sketch.