

NEW ORLEANS HISTORIC DISTRICT LANDMARKS COMMISSION

DESIGNATION REPORT



1531 SOUTH CARROLLTON AVENUE

THE SULLY-WORMUTH HOUSE

CONSTRUCTED 1901

THOMAS SULLY, ARCHITECT

SEPTEMBER 14, 2004

1531 South Carrollton Avenue
Landmark Designation Report

Architectural Rating:	Blue
Construction Date:	1901
Architect:	Thomas Sully

Site Description

Square 193
56' 4"4" front on S. Carrollton Avenue x 120' b.pl.
16th Assessment District
7th Municipal District,
Zoning: Residential
Owner: Christopher and Lorna Wormuth

Nomination Information

Date Nominated: July 14, 1998
Recommended by: Rick Fifield
Nominated by: Camille Strachan
Seconded by: Robert Cannon, Lansen Barrow



1531 S. Carrollton Ave

The nomination of this property was based upon its architectural and historical significance. Each of the four areas of criteria used in determining whether a property is worthy of or meets the qualifications for landmark status, as outlined in City Ordinance #5992 M.C.S., will be examined.

History of the Property

In 1874 the City of Carrollton, which had previously been part of Jefferson Parish, was annexed to the City of New Orleans. In May of this same year, Marsilla Tabor, widow of John Tabor, sold Square 63B bounded by Carrollton Avenue, Sixth Street, Short Street and Jeanette Street along with other properties in New Orleans to Joseph Olivier for \$1,000. In August of 1880, Olivier donated Square 63B to his mother, Louise Duconge, widow of Francois Pierre Duconge, the owner of a syrup manufacturing company. Upon her death in August of 1885, her children inherited the square. In October of 1885 Louise Duconge's son, Francois Edgar Duconge died and in 1887 his wife and children inherited 12 lots in square 63B numbered 6-17. (see figure 1). Marie Duconge, Francois' widow, through two documented family meetings, donated her interest in the twelve properties to the children and the twelve lots were put up for auction.



Figure 1. 1920 Survey of Square 63B

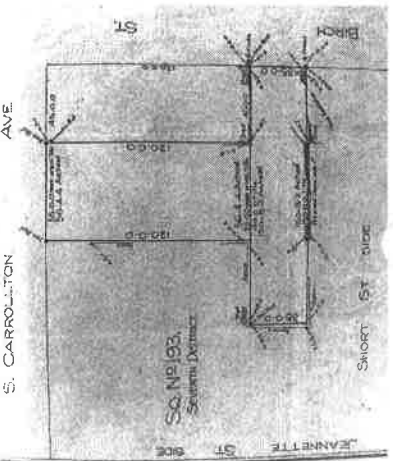


Figure 2. Survey of 1531 S. Carrollton

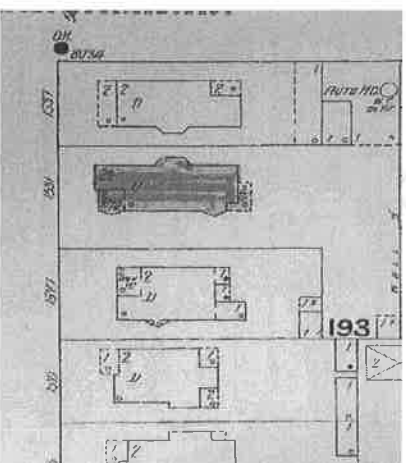


Figure 3: 1908-1909 Sanborn map

The twelve lots changed hands several times over the next three years until they were purchased by Thomas Sully, a well-noted architect and resident of New Orleans, in 1890 for \$1,275. Sully resubdivided the twelve lots, keeping two lots facing Birch Street and Carrollton Avenue and selling the rest. (Figure 2) He designed and built the house at 1531 S. Carrollton in 1901 and lived there until 1915. A footprint of the house can be seen on the 1908-1909 Sanborn map. (Figure 2)

In March of 1920 Sully sold the house to Frank and Alma Hemenway for \$15,227. The Hemenways only owned the house for three months before selling it to Emma Tomes and her husband Charles Tomes, the manager of Myles Salt Company. The Tomes' lived in the house from June of 1920 until March of 1926. During these six years, the Tomes' refinanced the house twice before selling it to Frank Leovy, a vice-president and director for the Gulf Refining Company, for \$17,250. Census records indicate that in the 23 years that Frank Leovy owned the house he never resided there. In 1949, Frank Leovy died and left Lot 21 with the house to his daughter, Augusta Leovy, in 1951. (Figure 3)

Over the next 52 years, the house changed hands many times. Today the home is owned by Christopher and Lorna Wormuth, who purchased the home in August 2003 for \$650,000.

Architectural Significance

Thomas Sully purchased the lot of ground at 1531 S. Carrollton Ave. in February of 1892. The tax assessment records indicate that he built the two-and-a-half story, Queen Anne style residence in 1901. According to city directories he lived in the house from 1902 until 1915. This house represents an important period in Thomas Sully's career. It is designed primarily in the Queen Anne style but with distinct Craftsman style elements incorporated. The roof of the house has two cross gables, one facing the front of the house, toward S. Carrollton, and one facing the side of the house toward Jeanette Street. Nestled between these two gables is a dormer that provides access to a small balcony that is located on the west corner of the house, complimenting the front porch located two stories below on that same corner. The gables are decorated with simple, clean-lined half-timbering and centered windows placed in stucco. The two



Figure 4. Detail of cross gables

chimneys that penetrate the roof add to the quaint, cottage-like feel of the house. One of the chimneys runs up through the center of the home, while the other runs on the exterior wall, next to the side-facing gable.

Each level of the house stands out distinctly. The first and second story of the house are distinguished with a small overhang that protrudes over the first story and is supported with small, decorative brackets. These windows feature diamond pained lites. There is a small bay window below the overhang next to the front porch facing S. Carrollton. There is also a large, two-story bay on the north-east side of the house and another smaller two-story bay that shares the south corner of the house with a two-story screened porch.

The material on the exterior of the house varies with each story. The first floor of the house is in 6 inch weatherboard, while the material on the second story is wood shingles with a diamond patterned band that wraps around the house giving it some decorative intrigue. The front porch also provides decoration with three short, Craftsman style box columns that provide support for the upper story.

The interior of the home provides valuable insight into Sully's transition into Craftsman style based designs. It utilizes stylistic elements from both periods, giving the home character. There are many decorative features of the home that stay true to the Queen Anne style, however, the overall atmosphere is that of the Craftsman style. Sully's combination of decorative objects and simple, clean lines provides a unique sense of beauty and openness.

Architect

After completing apprenticeships in Austin and New York, Thomas Sully moved to New Orleans and opened his first office in 1892. (Figure 5) He started immediately designing some of New Orleans' more notable buildings. In 1893, Sully designed the Harris House, his first big project, which provided New Orleans with its first Queen Anne style house. The house was destroyed years later. (Figure 6)

In 1888-89, Thomas Sully's company, Sully and Toledano, built one of the first skyscrapers in New Orleans. This modern seven story, Chicago style building was named the Morris building after it's owner, John A Morris, a horsebreeder and shipper. It was located on Canal Street and housed Thomas Sully's firm until it was destroyed by fire. In 1890, Morris commissioned Sully and Toledano to design his personal residence at 2525 St. Charles Ave. And in 1895 he commissioned them once again to design the Hennen building at 201-211 Carondelet Street. This eleven story, steel and brick commercial building named after John Morris' father-in-law, Alfred Hennen, a prominent New Orleansian. Today the Hennen building is known as the Maritime building. (Figure 7)



Figure 5. Thomas Sully

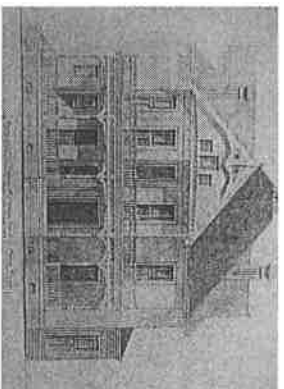


Figure 6: Harris House

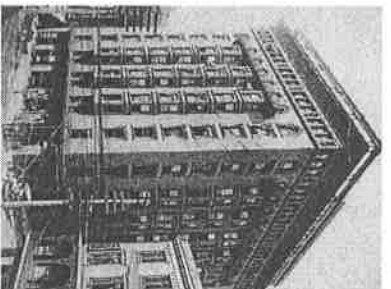


Figure 7: Hennen Building

Later in 1895, Thomas Sully and Co., Ltd. designed the St. Charles Hotel at 223 St. Charles Avenue. This building, built for two million dollars, was considered innovative at the time of construction. The seven story hotel provided guests with luxuries that were unusual for many hotels in New Orleans. It provided suites with private bathrooms, the building was heated and cooled, electric lighting was installed, the building was claimed to be extremely fireproof, and there were dining rooms, cafes, and a roof garden for leisure. The St. Charles Hotel was demolished in 1974.

By the end of his highly successful career as an architect, Sully had been the head of four different architectural firms and been self-employed twice. He is responsible for the designs of many houses, churches, hospitals, banks, convents, factories and warehouses, and several other business buildings and hotels, and even a U.S. mint. The Southeastern Architectural Archives has a collection of around 200 sets of Thomas Sully drawings that date from 1882-1923. These drawings include residential and commercial buildings in New Orleans and throughout the United States. In addition, his role as Commodore of the Southern Yacht Club led him to develop several yacht designs, some of which are also stored at the Southeastern Architectural Archives.

Thomas Sully designed the Queen Anne style residence at 1531 S. Carrollton during the last phase of his career before his retirement in 1923. According to city directories, Sully and his wife, Eugenie Rocci Sully, lived in this house from 1902 until 1915, after which they moved to 7 Richmond Place, another home he designed. This would be the last home in which Sully and his wife would reside. She died in 1928 at the age of 69 and he died in 1939 at the age of 83.

Thomas Sully	1882-1884
Thomas Sully and Company	1885-1887
Sully and Toledano	1888-1892
Thomas Sully and Company	1893-1895
Sully, Burton & Stone Co. Ltd.	1896-1898
Thomas Sully	1899-1923

*(Provided by the Southeastern Architectural Archive Collection)

Historic Personages

Thomas Sully- New Orleans architect

Social, Economic and Political History

This building was not only a residence of one of New Orleans' most influential architects, but it also stands as an example of Thomas Sully's work. This home, built toward the end of Sully's career, was designed and built after many years of experience as an architect and, therefore, can be viewed as symbolic of his life's work. The home's design, which documents a period of transition in architecture from the Queen Anne style to the Craftsman style, reflects Sully's personal stylistic tastes and preferences.

Staff Recommendation

The staff recommends that this building be designated as a landmark based on its architectural and historical significance.