



CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Historic District Landmarks Commission

Esplanade Ridge Historic District



Designated 1979

*Jurisdiction: New Orleans
Historic District Landmarks
Commission*

*The Esplanade Ridge local
Historic District is the area
generally bounded by Orleans
Avenue, the rear property
lines of the properties along
the river side of Moss Street,
around St. Louis Cemetery #3,
St. Vincent Street, Fortin
Street, Onzaga Street, St.
Bernard Avenue, N. Claiborne
Avenue, the rear property
lines of the buildings on the
uptown side of Esplanade
Avenue, and N. Broad Street.
(This is a general description,
for a legal description refer to
City Ordinance #7044 M.C.S.)*

*The section of the District
along the full length of
Esplanade Avenue is subject to
the full control of the HDLC.
The areas flanking either side
of the Avenue are subject only
to control of demolition and
demolition by neglect.*

Once the most prestigious Creole neighborhoods in the city, the Esplanade Ridge Historic District boasts one of the largest and most impressive concentrations of historic buildings in the nation. Esplanade Avenue, with its great width, is the spine of this District and contains its largest houses. In 1807, an act of Congress gave the City of New Orleans title to a strip of land that would become Esplanade Avenue, located on a ridge between the Mississippi River and Bayou St. John. This ridge was the site of an ancient Native American portage. The Esplanade Ridge Historic District illustrates the development along this ridge from Claiborne Avenue to Bayou St. John.

Esplanade Ridge is generally residential with scattered neighborhood commercial strips. Major boulevards, such as Esplanade Avenue and Ursulines Avenue, are wide and generally tree-lined with park-like neutral grounds in the center. By the 1850s, numerous fine homes had been

constructed. The great double galleried homes along the avenue reached their peak at the end of the antebellum period. In the second half of the 19th century, Italianate, Queen Anne, Second Empire and other Victorian styles became popular. In the area above Broad Street, there is a strong concentration of residences in early 20th century styles.

The Esplanade Ridge Historic District terminates at Bayou St. John, just across from City Park and the New Orleans Museum of Art. The neighborhood plays host to thousands of people every year as they stream through the neighborhood to the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, which takes place at the New Orleans Fairgrounds, just to the east of the District.¹

¹ Information taken from the National Register of Historic Places, materials of the HDLC, and *New Orleans Architecture Volume VI: Faubourg Treme and the Bayou Road*.



The Second Empire Dunbar House was once one of a pair



Esplanade Avenue is lined with trees and several grand homes



The Luling Mansion was briefly the Jockey Club

LOCAL CULTURE

- The older structures in the District represent the development of the city's French social and architectural heritage in the same period as the development of the American Sector

- The c. 1873 Dunbar House on Esplanade Avenue, was originally one of a pair of Second Empire mansions
- The Luling Mansion, a 3-story Italianate mansion (with a moat) on Leda Street, was the most elaborate of architect James Gallier, Jr.'s projects



Smaller homes set close together line secondary streets in the District



Raised doubles are scattered throughout the District



Cast iron fencing still edges the small front yards of many homes

URBAN FORM

Setting/Landscape

- Many of the larger homes on Esplanade have substantial lots, but only a few possess the kind of expansive grounds or gardens seen in the Garden District or other Uptown neighborhoods
- The grand buildings along Esplanade Avenue are usually set back from the street by relatively modest front lawns
- Houses on narrower secondary streets were often built very close together and at, or near, the front property line
- The area was developed as a series of different faubourgs without coordination of street grids, causing a number of irregularly shaped blocks
- Above Broad Street, many residences on Esplanade Avenue are set on diagonal lots, and thus face the street at an angle

Massing/Form

- Residences are typically 1- or 1½-story buildings, with some 2-story, especially along major boulevards; the majority of which are of wood frame construction

Styles/Types

- Popular building types and styles in the area include single, double, camelback, and side hall or side galleried shotguns in Greek Revival, Victorian, Italianate and Arts and Crafts styles; Bungalows, Creole Cottages, Queen Anne, Italiante, Greek Revival and Neoclassical styles
- Many noted architects worked in the area, including Henry Howard, James Gallier, Sr., James Gallier Jr., William Freret and James Freret

Public Spaces

- Gayarre Park (Bayou Rd. at Esplanade Ave.), is one of several small triangular parks formed when Esplanade Avenue was intersected at acute angles – Its monument, depicting the goddess of history, was created for the New Orleans World's Fair at Audubon Park, and relocated to its present location in honor of Charles Gayarre, a prominent 19th century Louisiana historian

Commercial/Industrial

- The community is served by a collection of shops and restaurants in the 3000-3200 blocks of Esplanade Avenue, some in historic commercial buildings and others in converted residential buildings

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