

## Introduction

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*“We shall never have genuinely civilized cities, communities or houses, without our first seeking to understand the true function of architecture, and its relation to the realization of individual potentialities and the achievement of man’s goal in society.”*

—Clifford D. Moller, *Architectural Environment and Our Mental Health*, 1968

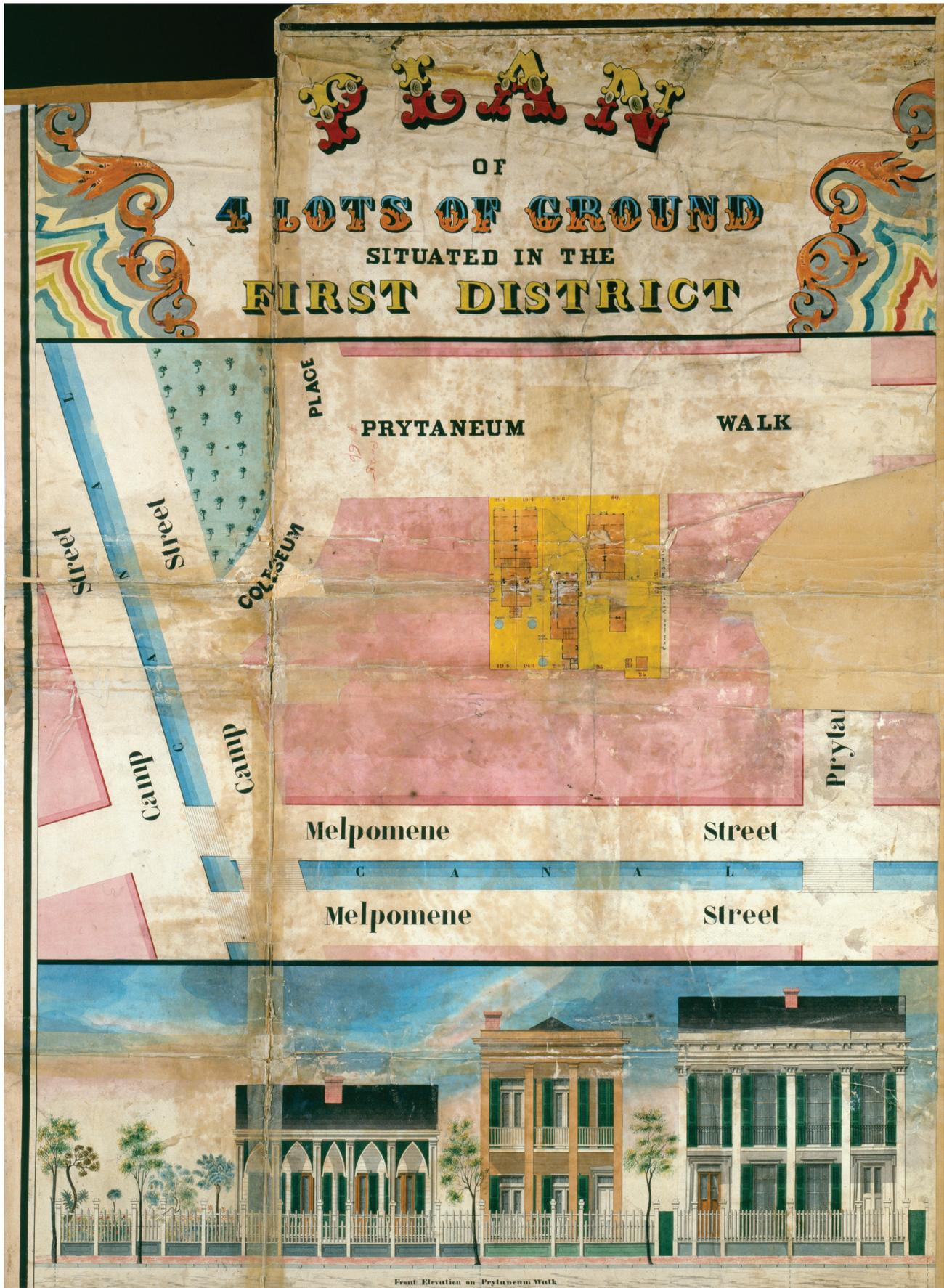
The *New Orleans Architecture Series*, a volunteer project of the Friends of the Cabildo, published by Pelican Publishing Company, expanded respect over the past four decades for the early planners, surveyors, engineers, architects, and builders of New Orleans. This increased awareness served as an impetus for the New Orleans Notarial Archives to begin a reorganization and preservation program for a vast collection of nineteenth-century original gouache and watercolor illustrations of New Orleans located there. Under the guidance of archivist/author Sally Kittredge Reeves, financial assistance was obtained through the Louisiana State Legislature galvanized by the late John Hainkel. In addition, grants were applied for and granted by the National Endowment for the Arts and Save America’s Treasures. At the New Orleans Notarial Archives, the city is presented visually in more than five thousand original large watercolor and gouache renderings, backed by Manila paper or linen to preserve them. Dating from 1803 to 1918, these color renderings and legal records comprise 5,147 archival drawings; 1,551 of them have elevations.

The centralization of these documents and their related notarial acts in the New Orleans Notarial Archives, as well as their recent digitization for public viewing and use, permits a broad range of the public to see New Orleans and its neighborhoods for the first time, as they were, are, and should be again. Building contracts often relate to archival drawings, or include plans, elevations, and specifications of related interest. Samuel Wilson Jr. and Robert J. Cangelosi Jr. have created a building contract index, covering the

years from 1767 to 1970, available at the Notarial Archives and at the Williams Research Center of The Historic New Orleans Collection.

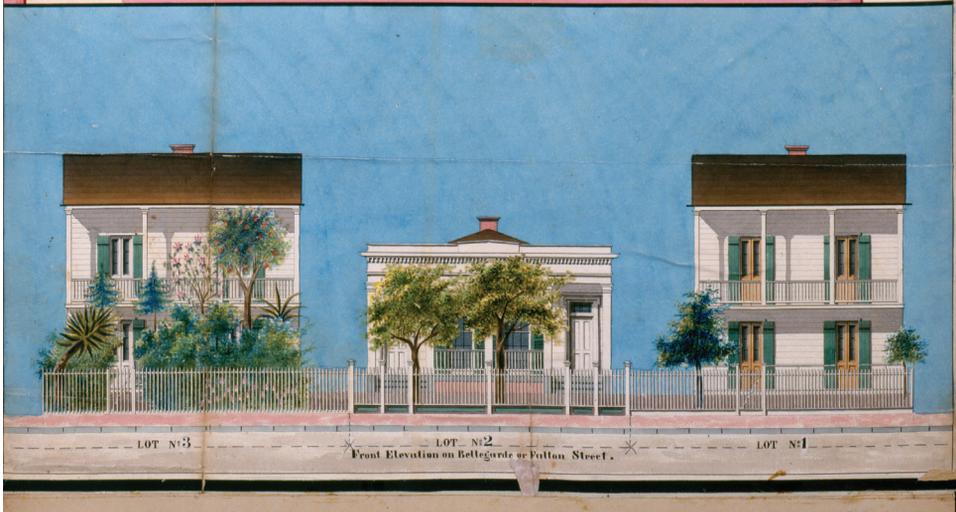
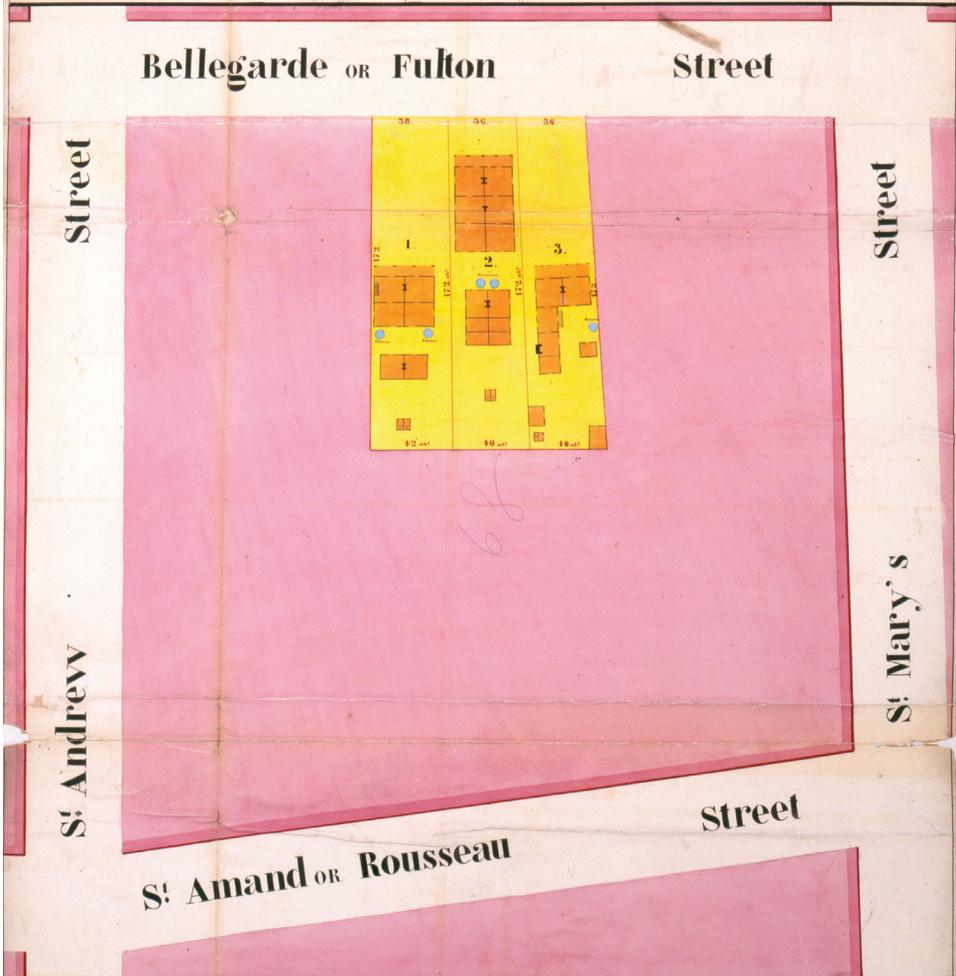
My intention is to present nineteenth-century color archival drawings of each New Orleans neighborhood to show what old, renovated, restored, and new buildings might look like and should look like. These gouache paintings and drawings serve as a pattern book of New Orleans architecture. The drawings indicate that traditional New Orleans house types and styles are selectively usable and affordable on the traditional New Orleans lot sizes, in appropriate neighborhoods, in a city without need for garages, alleys, or mews. However, traditional New Orleans floor plans—of shotguns and Creole cottages, especially, but also of side-hall townhouses, center-hall villas, and other house types—need adjustments to interior layouts to make them livable in the contemporary world.

Presented here are the signed and dated archival drawings themselves, along with adaptive use plans, using the original footprint as seen in the archival drawings and other measured drawings such as those done for the Historic American Building Survey, now at the Library of Congress. This book can be used as an educational tool, a pattern book, a handbook, or a visual treasure. It should be made available to university libraries, public libraries, and architecture and art schools, in addition to architect firms and the general public. Since what is illustrated here is just a fraction of the visual and written material available, visit the New Orleans Notarial Archives Research Center



Plan book 25, folio 56, New Orleans Notarial Archives. Signature and date obscured. (Lower Garden District.) Prytaneum Walk (now Terpsichore) between Camp and Prytania, backed by Melpomene. A street scene with buildings dating from about 1840 shows a two-story frame double house; a side-hall townhouse with double galleries and box columns, supporting a deep Greek Revival entablature; and an unusual four-bay Creole cottage with a gallery finished in the Gothic style. Canals run along both Camp and Melpomene, which is visible on the left of the plan map, actually the side toward the river, southeast.

**P L A N**  
OF  
**3 LOTS OF GROUND**  
SITUATED IN THE  
**FOURTH DISTRICT**



Plan book 13, folio 16, New Orleans Notarial Archives. No date, unsigned. (Lower Garden District.) Bellegarde or Fulton (now St. Thomas), between St. Andrew and St. Mary, backed by St. Amand or Rousseau. Three frame houses with setbacks on lots 172 feet deep are fronted by trees and a running picket fence. The lots widths are thirty-six, thirty-six, and thirty-three feet.

at 1340 Poydras Street, Suite 360 (in old Faubourg St. Mary). Their Web site, [www.notarialarchives.org](http://www.notarialarchives.org), illustrates sample elevations and plans.

In order to assist everyone who wants to either rebuild New Orleans so that it continues to look like its authentic self, or construct new buildings that conform to the *esprit* of its neighborhood, this book presents the following: a) photographs of extant examples of each house type taken by Betsy Swanson, Eugene Cizek, Robert Brantley, Dianne Badeaux, Gate Pratt, and others; b) plans for each house type developed in New Orleans, both from the Notarial Archives and the Historic American Building Survey; and c) new, contemporary adaptive use alternative plans, using the original footprints, that have been prepared by Limehouse Architects (Gate Pratt), Dr. Eugene Cizek, Trapolin Architects (Peter Trapolin), and architect Kristen McCallister.

The archival drawings from the New Orleans Notarial Archives shown here provide the public with its first chance to view large numbers of this resource, with the entire composition reproduced and presented as art. Since one objective of this book is to concentrate on reasonable and affordable houses that can be adapted, recycled, or constructed as contemporary homes, my selection has been of the more modest and simple examples of each house type. Together with photographs and drawings, the reader can see what has been and should be essential to the *tout ensemble* of the city.

This book illustrates appropriate programs and ideas for the further redevelopment of the Crescent City, as garnered from archival drawings. For example, green principles demand the adaptive use of the extant building inventory. Practicality recommends continuing the use of those types of New Orleans houses that have proven themselves both by their congeniality as dwellings and by their survival despite all that nature and the destructive hand of man have done to them. Rows of similar or identical buildings set at the line of what New Orleanians call the *banquette*, or sidewalk, saves space and adds order. Archival drawings illustrate traditional emphasis on the rear of New Orleans housing of most types. The rear of the house can open out onto private

gardens and patios for outdoor living, recalling Spanish colonial and Creole New Orleans. As in the past, rear-lot dependencies—recast as guesthouses, garages, or rentals—can serve at the same time as walls and lot enclosures, like they always have done.

In 1788, 1805, and 1810 when new suburbs, or faubourgs, were first appended downriver, upriver, and bayou-wards to the 1721 Vieux Carré (French Quarter) plan, surveyors inevitably tried to respect the original plan of the old city—sizes of squares and private lots and street and sidewalk widths. Avenues with wide, landscaped neutral grounds were inserted into the overall design to signal the entrances and exits to the new faubourgs that were developed after the Louisiana Purchase.

New Orleans squares and streets provide congenial proportions for tried and true house types. Each successive generation of surveyors, architects, builders, and developers until after World War II respected the old ways and measurements for streets and lot sizes. Large houses and mansions in the prevailing national and international styles generally were placed along the divided avenues and in the discreet new semiprivate residential parks. Such information is available and can be absorbed and utilized by observing archival drawings.

The documents presented here allow planners, builders, renovators, and restorers to build upon (no pun intended) the successes of the past. This presentation reveals the New Orleans that appeals to people of all nations and backgrounds. Using the notarial documents as evidence of the importance of New Orleans' traditions, heritage, and customs and as guides for building residences, creating spaces, and community invites broad segments of professionals and the general public to participate in the continuation of New Orleans as it was, is, and should be.

**Note:** As is customary with New Orleanians whether talking or writing, I have omitted the words "Street" and "Avenue" in all captions and, generally, throughout the book.

For all land measurements that do not have a French measure designation, the measurements are standard American.

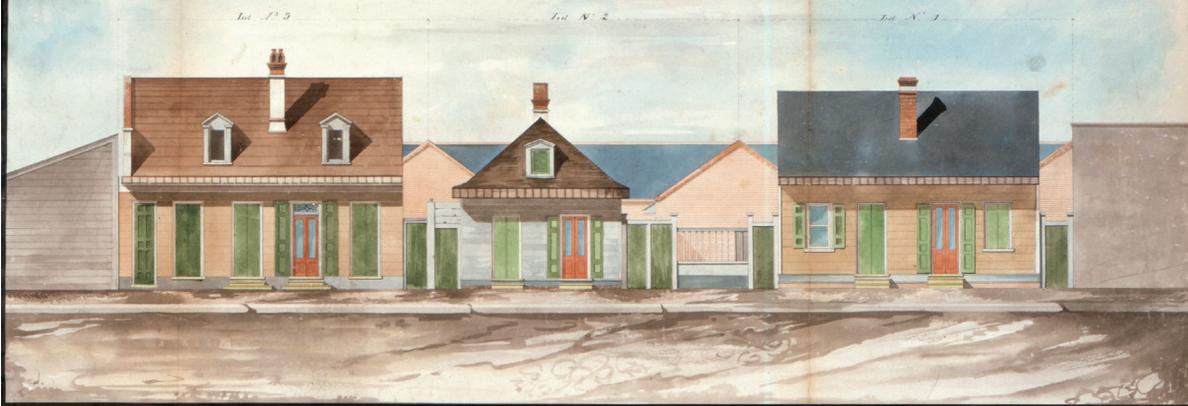
# PLAN and ELEVATIONS

## OF THREE PROPERTIES

Situated in the

### FAUBOURG MARIGNY

3<sup>e</sup> MUNICIPALITY.

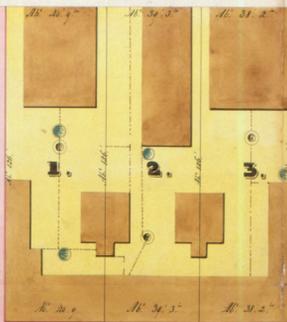


*N.O. March 23<sup>e</sup> 1848  
J. N. de Pouilly  
Architect*

### CRAPS STREET

BAGATELLE STREET

UNION STREET



SQ. 23.

AMERICAN MEASURE

Plan book 94, folio 23, New Orleans Notarial Archives. March 23, 1848, Jacques Nicolas Bussière de Pouilly, architect. (Faubourg Marigny.) Three houses facing Craps (now Burgundy) between Union (Touro) and Bagatelle (Pauger). The lots are 126 feet deep and vary in width from 38 feet 2 inches to 40 feet 9 inches (American measure). Notice the contiguous outbuildings delineating the back of all three property lines.