

Final Report
Rational Middle Foundation's Wiener Architecture Interactive Map

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Link to project:

<https://unexpectedmodernism.com/architecture/>

Project background and goals

Samuel G. Wiener and William B. Wiener—half-brothers, residents of Shreveport, and Fellows of the American Institute of Architects—were two of the most innovative and prolific modern architects in the American South. The Wieners designed over 130 buildings over the course of their careers, running the gamut from residential, commercial, and civic structures, many of which were celebrated at the time for their innovative design. The Wiener buildings are among the earliest and densest clusters of Modernist architecture in the world, a visible trace of the passage of modernism through the American South. Their oeuvre re-orientates the place of the South, and specifically of Shreveport, in Modernist historiographies and is thus of obvious value to anyone interested in Modernism, architecture, the arts, or community life in mid-century Louisiana.

In their lifetime, the Wieners' work won them the recognition of the American Institute of Architects, Architectural Record, International Institute of Arts and Letters, and numerous others. Several of their buildings are included in the National Register of Historic Buildings. Despite these achievements, the Wieners' story has remained largely unknown to a wider public. Our project, the Wiener Architecture Interactive Map, was conceived to correct this historical oversight—to help preserve the record of Sam and Bill Wieners' work in a durable, accessible, and public manner.

As a project simultaneously invested in digitally-enabled historic preservation and creative placemaking, our goals were twofold: to digitize (and make freely available) a range of archival material related to the Wieners' work in Shreveport, and to incorporate an interactive element in the form of curated driving tours through selected Wiener buildings so as to help promote architectural tourism in the Greater Shreveport area. The project also extends our previous work on the Wieners in the form of a documentary, "Unexpected Modernism: The Wiener Brother Story" (recipient of 2021 Telly Gold in the Documentary category.)

Work done: Digitization

The completed Wiener Architecture Interactive Map comprises 18 instances of the Wieners' work across three general categories: residences, schools, and civic structures. These are:

1. [A. Jack Tullos House](#)
2. [I. Ed Wile House](#)
3. [Pine Park Subdivision](#)
4. [Jacques Wiener House](#)
5. [William B. Wiener House](#)
6. [Samuel G. Wiener House](#)

7. [Simon Herold House](#)
8. [David Flesh House](#)
9. [James Muslow House](#)
10. [J.S. Clark Junior High School](#)
11. [Linwood Junior High School](#)
12. [Woodlawn High School](#)
13. [Kings Highway Christian Church](#)
14. [Fairfield Building](#)
15. [Shreveport Municipal Memorial Auditorium](#)
16. [Feibleman's Department Store](#)
17. [Commercial National Bank](#)
18. [John Preston House](#)

In selecting these buildings for inclusion on the map (with guidance from project consultant Dr. Guy Carwile, the Ken Hollis Endowed Professor of Liberal Arts in the School of Design at Louisiana Tech University), we aimed to assemble a representative cross-section of the Wieners' work. The 18 included properties thus cut across key periods of the Wieners' career (4 before and 14 after their 1931 trip to Europe, when they first encountered Modernist design; 9 before and 9 after WWII, which marked a shift not only in global sensibilities but also in specific, local clientele), function (residences, schools, and various civic structures, with the greater number of residence reflecting the Wieners higher output in this genre), and geographic spread (ensuring easily drivable distances.) With the exception of the John Preston house—which stands as a case study in the restoration of a Wiener property—none of the selected properties have been subjected to significant modification of design or structure.

100 assets—photographs, architectural sketches, and newspaper articles—were digitized for inclusion in this project. With the exception of a few newspaper pages, none of these previously existed in digital form. None were freely available for web perusal. These assets were compiled from the Northwest Louisiana Archives at Louisiana State University in Shreveport (LSUS), the work of private photographers, and newspaper/magazine archives (The Shreveport Times, Architectural Forum, Architectural Record, Popular Home Magazine, American School Board Journal). Additionally, 18 pre-existing digital assets from the Library of Congress and the National Register Database were embedded and linked to on relevant property pages. By bringing newly digitized as well as already-available assets together, the Map serves as a centralized resource, a one-stop destination for information about these Wiener works.

Each property also includes a short blurb describing key architectural and historical features. These texts were drafted for us by project consultant Dr. Guy Carwile, co-author of the definitive scholarly text on the Wieners, *The Modernist Architecture of Samuel G. and William B. Wiener: Shreveport, Louisiana, 1920-1960*. Where applicable, excerpts from our companion documentary have also been embedded in the property page (see for example [the Sam G. Wiener house](#)): the intent in all these cases has been to maximize available information, while ensuring accessibility for a general, non-specialist audience.

Work done: Tour feature

Our project offers three driving tours:

1. [Residential tour](#)
2. [School tour](#)
3. [Civic tour](#)

In each, the embedded Google Map on the left offers our suggested tour order. The panel on the right offers a way for users to click through to each property's dedicated page, where a Yelp plug-in lists nearby attractions for those interested in exploring further (since the plug-in is dynamic, this section auto-populates as new points of interest emerge or old ones disappear.) This tour feature was designed to be simple and easy to use, and is best viewed on phone.

Finally, to help promote and celebrate the launch of the Map, we hosted two screenings of *Unexpected Modernism* at the Robinson Film Center in downtown Shreveport on Thursday, May 19. The pair of screenings were complemented with a panel discussion featuring Dr. Guy Carwile, local architect Chris Coe (Fellow of the American Institute of Architects) and Shreveport City Councilmember LeVette Fuller. The conversation emphasized the importance of historic preservation, how we might go about it, and the place of our Map in such endeavors. The website has also been shared out via social media and our newsletter and was publicized in the local newspaper as well as with some of our local news outlets.