

Parkview is a primarily residential historic district with contributing elements ranging in date from c.1890 to 1945, the Register fifty year cutoff. Within the boundaries are 1,349 buildings, only 8% of which are non-contributing. Styles range from Eastlake to late Italianate to Bungalow to Colonial Revival to twentieth century eclectic. The noncontributing count is relatively low even for a New Orleans district and there have not been many significant alterations to contributing elements. Thus Parkview retains its National Register eligibility.

Surveys

A preliminary survey of Parkview was conducted in 1978 by the architectural firm of Koch and Wilson. As a result of that survey, the New Orleans Office of Housing and Community Development identified a number of broad areas of the city which it believed to be eligible for listing in the National Register. As a result, the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation set as one of its long-range planning goals the listing in the Register of all eligible districts in New Orleans. This work began in 1979 with the Esplanade Ridge Historic District. In pursuit of this goal, a new large district has been added to the Register every couple or so years as staff time has permitted.

In 1994 the SHPO and the New Orleans Preservation Resource Center commissioned Robert Cangelosi, a local architect and architectural historian, to make a National Register level survey of the Parkview District, identifying buildings by a series of type and style categories. (This method has been used by the SHPO numerous times in listing New Orleans districts on the Register.) Mr. Cangelosi's survey was used as a resource document in preparing this submission.

History of the Site

In prehistoric times the area which would become Parkview was a low swampy area drained by Bayous Metairie and Gentilly. Through annual flooding with silt laden waters, these bayous developed a system of natural ridges about five feet above sea level. Shortly after 1000 A.D., the region experienced a crevasse which permitted flood waters to flow out of what would become the City of New Orleans towards Lake Pontchartrain. This crevasse became Bayou St. John, a waterway which would figure prominently in the area's early history. High ground in the area was inhabited by the Acolapissa Indians (The Nation Who Hear and See). But shortly after 1700 the Acolapissa moved to Lake Pontchartrain on Bayou Castine to escape English and Chickasaw slave hunters. In 1699 the area was visited by a party of French explorers led by Jean Baptiste le Moyne Sieur de Bienville. The beginnings of settlement in the area predate the founding of the City of New Orleans. In 1708 eight colonists from Mobile received concessions along Bayou St. John. One of these, in the present district, was granted to Louis de St. Denis.

After the founding of New Orleans in 1718, Bayou St. John became the preferred access route to the city. This was because the route through the Rigolets across Lake Pontchartrain and into Bayou St. John was far easier for sailing vessels than fighting the swift current of the Mississippi River. By 1802 five hundred ships entered the bayou annually. Recognizing the bayou's importance, Governor Carondelet completed a fifteen foot wide canal from Bayou St. John to the back of the Vieux Carre in 1795. This canal ran along present-day Lafitte Street in the district (see map). The Carondelet Canal, as it was called, was widened and improved in the nineteenth century but its importance declined along with the importance of Bayou St. John as a route to New Orleans. The reason for this decline was that, with the advent of steam powered vessels that could overcome the Mississippi River's current, it was no longer necessary to use an alternative route from the Gulf of Mexico to the city. Deemed no longer navigable, the canal was ordered filled in by the state in 1927.

Despite Parkview's maritime commercial importance, it was very slow to develop. Indeed, it was not until the late nineteenth century that development began in earnest. The reason was the low swampy character of the area. Parkview was part of the great expanse of swamps known as "the back of town." Throughout the nineteenth century there were several attempts to drain the area but

all ran afoul of mismanagement or political intrigue. By 1895 a modern system of drainage was established with open canals and pumping stations located in many parts of the area. With the swamps drained, subdivision and construction on a large scale was possible.

Development in Parkview was spurred by the emergence of adjacent City Park as a major recreational amenity. In the 1850s the city acquired the first portion of the park as a bequest from local philanthropist John McDonogh. By 1858 a fence and park keeper's lodge had been built, but after the Civil War attempts to develop the park were stymied by lack of funds and political intrigue. Indeed, during these years City Park was used on and off for livestock pasture land. In 1891 the newly formed City Park Improvement Association began an aggressive campaign to develop a real park. They acquired more property, added an iron fence, attractive landscaping and restrooms. Later they added bridges, roads, walks, lagoons, a pavilion, a bird cage and a bandstand. Thus when proper drainage made the large scale development of Parkview possible, the park was in place to act as a draw for new residents. (Note: Located across City Park Avenue from the district, City Park is a huge, complex resource deserving of an individual listing in the Register.)

Development

The 1878 Topographical and Drainage Map of New Orleans shows very little development in the district except close to Broad Street and along Bayou St. John (see map). Major development in the district began in 1902 with a series of property subdivisions with names such as Taft Place, St. John Court, Park Row and Roosevelt Place. New subdivisions continued to appear through the 1920s. In 1922 the Parkview Place subdivision, from which the district takes its name, was opened.

As was typical of much of residential New Orleans, Parkview developed with relatively narrow deep lots. Widths were typically thirty to thirty-five feet, depths around a hundred feet. Dwellings were generally placed near the front of the lot, giving the streetscape a fairly intensive, spatially defined character. By the time the city adopted a comprehensive zoning plan in 1929, Parkview was fully developed and zoned primarily for one and two family dwellings and for multi-family dwellings. It was an automotive suburb inasmuch as, unlike other New Orleans neighborhoods, mass transit played little role in its development.

The Building Stock

The overwhelming majority of buildings in the district are wood frame one and two story residences with some sort of wood skin, generally clapboard. The previously mentioned Cangelosi survey produced the following breakdown of building types:

Single Shotgun	69	5%
Double Shotgun	440	33%
Camelback	11	1%
Bungalow	132	10%
Raised Basement	218	16%
Two-story Single	100	7%
Two-story Double	170	13%
Commercial	110	8%
Institutional	7	1/2 percent
Other	92	7%
TOTAL	1349	100%

Shotgun Houses (520 - 39%)

The shotgun house is the most conspicuous house type in the district. The basic single shotgun house is a single story dwelling, one room wide, two or more rooms deep, with the roof ridge running perpendicular to the front. Despite a number of popular and academic yarns, the origin of the shotgun house remains obscure. It is, however, a distinctively Southern house type which is found in the form of plantation quarters houses as well as urban and suburban dwellings. It often appears in the historic period as a speculatively built rent house. Double shotgun houses consist of two shotgun units joined side by side by a continuous party wall. Each side is a separate living unit. The camelback is a single or double shotgun with a second story over the rear rooms. This second level provides one or two bedrooms. Although it is difficult to generalize, essentially the camelback type denotes a more affluent occupant than the ordinary shotgun house. The earliest camelbacks seemed to have come about when a shotgun was added to the front of an earlier two story structure. It also appears that the process was reversed sometimes and a camelback was added to an earlier shotgun. Of course, a goodly number of camelbacks were built all of a piece.

Bungalow (132 - 10%)

For purposes of this submission, bungalows are defined using the standard cultural geographer's definition -- i.e., a single living unit one story high, two rooms wide and two or more rooms deep.

Raised Basement (218 - 16%)

Most of the buildings within this category fall within a subspecies of the bungalow which, at least in Louisiana, is peculiar to the New Orleans area. It consists of a bungalow raised a full story (or almost a full story) above grade on a high basement. The principal (upper) story is often reached by prominent flights of exterior steps. Indeed, sometimes these steps make a significant architectural statement. The lower basement story is usually given over to service spaces and storage. Here again, despite various popular and academic yarns, the origin of the raised basement house is obscure. Probably the most likely explanation is that it represents a continuing local preference for raised houses.

Two-story Single Houses (100 - 7%)

These represent the largest individual living units in the district and hence denote the most affluent occupants. Because of the system of relatively tight lots in the district, two-story single houses tend to be fairly boxy with a majority of the architectural articulation limited to the facade. In some cases, the boxiness is relieved by a one or two story porch projecting from a portion of the facade.

Two-Story Double Houses (170 - 13%)

These consist of a pair of living units one room wide, two or more rooms deep and two stories high, united with a single party wall. In a typical example, the front room is the parlor, the second room is the dining room with a staircase in it, and the third room is the kitchen. Many of these are symmetrically articulated, but in some cases the sides are articulated differently, as for example with an off-center gable, to give the double house the appearance of a two-story single.

Commercial (110 - 8%)

In terms of historic resources, this category includes the familiar one story frame New Orleans corner commercial building with a 45 degree corner entrance and overhanging roof, a few

small frame or brick false front buildings, and a few two story corner commercial buildings with residential space above. It also includes the large Art Deco General Laundry Building (NR), a nicely detailed Spanish Colonial/Mission building on Broad (perhaps a car dealership originally), and the mammoth American Can Company complex, a collection of brick and concrete industrial buildings dating from 1906 through the 1920s. Many of the commercial buildings are non-contributing.

Institutional (7 - 1/2 percent)

These are almost entirely multi-storied schools with fairly standard early twentieth century eclectic architectural styling.

Other (92 - 7%)

This category covers various property types that are unusual in the district, such as a handful of Creole cottages. It also includes many of the district's non-contributing elements.

Styles

Because Parkview developed later than some other New Orleans neighborhoods early, styles such as Greek Revival are not in evidence. On the whole, styled buildings in the district feature the same traits as their counterparts in other parts of the city. The previously mentioned survey produced the following stylistic/period breakdown.

Italianate	159	12%
Eastlake	34	3%
Colonial Revival	172	13%
Bungalow	653	48%
Mediterranean Revival	100	7%
No Style	50	4%
Other	71	5%
Non-contributing	110	8%
TOTAL	1349	100%

Italianate (159 - 12%)

Although the high style Italianate began to go out of fashion in the early 1880s in New Orleans, Italianate elements were used at the builder vernacular level as late as the first decade of the twentieth century. The Italianate houses found in Parkview are similar to those found throughout New Orleans. Virtually all are shotguns, featuring prominent, florid brackets and often quoins defining the sides of the facade and segmental arch windows. Because the brackets are visually dominant, this distinctly New Orleans interpretation of the Italianate is known locally as the "New Orleans bracketed style."

Eastlake (34 - 3%)

These take the form of gallery fronted shotgun houses similar to those found throughout New Orleans. There is also the two story galleried Saux commercial building (NR).

Colonial Revival (172 - 13%)

In most cases the Colonial Revival takes the form of a shotgun or bungalow fitted with Tuscan columns. It also appears commonly as a single story Tuscan porch on a two story house. There are a few two story houses with two story galleries. Some more elaborate examples of the Colonial Revival feature asymmetrical massing which is essentially a holdover from the Queen Anne Revival.

Bungalow (653 - 48%)

The use of the term bungalow in its stylistic sense should not be confused with its use in the previous section as a building type. For purposes of this section, the term bungalow refers to Arts and Crafts detail applied to the various buildings in the district. Although a bungalow is, strictly speaking, a single story dwelling, the term here is also used for two story buildings which feature bungalow-style details. During the historic period such houses were referred to as having been "built along bungalow lines." In the district bungalow features (i.e., battered porch posts on brick bases, angle brackets and overhanging eaves with rafter tails) appear on most building types noted in the previous section.

Mediterranean Revival (100 - 7%)

Some of the buildings in this category might best be termed Italian Renaissance. Others have a decidedly Spanish Colonial or Mission look. Still others are more difficult to categorize, but have a generic Mediterranean look with stucco walls, arches, overhanging red tile roofs and some surface ornament. Buildings of this ilk are essentially no different from their counterparts found in other New Orleans neighborhoods.

No Style (50 - 4%)

This category covers unornamented cottages and plain commercial buildings as well as a few two story garages.

Other (71 - 5%)

Included in this category are a number of landmarks such as the monumental Neoclassical main building at Delgado Community College. There are also a few residences with English half-timbered styling and a number of gable-fronted cottages which represent a watered down version of the so-called Tudor Revival style.

Non-contributing (110- 8%)

It should be noted that the 8% intrusion rate in the district is comparatively low even for a New Orleans district. (New Orleans district intrusion rates tend to be less than 15% as compared with about 25-30% found in districts in other parts of the state.) In addition, all of the intrusions are low in scale and most conform to the massing of the existing streetscape. Indeed, in terms of modern development, Parkview is one of the least impacted 50+ year old communities in Louisiana.

Contributing Elements

Parkview represents an important collection of buildings from the period c.1890 to 1945. There are certain elements (see Item 8) which give it this superior status, but the district should also be viewed as a tout ensemble of its period (per other New Orleans districts listed on the Register). Other 50+ year old elements which do not directly contribute to the district's superiority are important

in their own right because they help establish Parkview's identity and credentials as a historic neighborhood. Hence any 50+ year old structure which has not been altered beyond recognition is considered a contributing element for purposes of this application.

Integrity of Contributing Elements

During the course of the survey, only buildings that did not convey their architectural identity were rated as non-contributing elements. The most common alterations to contributing elements are replaced porch columns and substitute siding. But in all cases, the surviving historic elements still dominate the building's overall appearance.

Landmarks

The Parkview District has comparatively few landmark buildings. There are several residences designed by professional architects. In addition, there is the previously mentioned main building at Delgado (c.1925), a four story Neo-classical brick building with a colossal piano nobile and entrance marked by a pediment and a massive Roman lunette. There is also the three story John Dibert School with its vaguely medieval entrance. Finally, there is the previously mentioned brick and terra cotta Art Deco General Laundry and the brick and concrete American Can Company, a range of industrial buildings dating from 1906 through the 1920s.

2 Contributing Resources Previously Listed in Register: General Laundry Building and Saux Building

PHOTO INFORMATION COMMON TO ALL

Photographer: Robbie Cangelosi

Location of Negatives: Koch and Wilson, 1100 Jackson Ave., New Orleans 70130

Date Taken: August 1994

Significant dates N/A
Architect/Builder N/A
Criterion C

The Parkview Historic District is architecturally significant within the context of the southern United States because of its size and intactness and, more importantly, because of its important collection of houses in the shotgun tradition. It is also distinguished on the local level because of its collection of New Orleans basement houses. Finally, the district is locally significant in the area of industry because it contains the sprawling American Can Company complex, which is individually eligible for the Register.

ARCHITECTURE/ REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Although Parkview is small by New Orleans historic district standards, it is still conspicuous for its magnitude as a historic resource. It is a discrete geographical area containing 1,349 buildings with a non-contributing rate of only eight percent. There are relatively few places in the South where one can find a historic neighborhood of this size, and more importantly, this intactness.

Parkview shares with other New Orleans historic districts a unique collection of shotgun houses. Shotguns are found in vast numbers across the South, but virtually all collections consist mainly of plain humble structures with little, and in most cases, no architectural treatment. New Orleans and vicinity is the only place where one finds shotguns with a high degree of architectural styling. Parkview contains some 520 houses in the shotgun tradition (including camelbacks), which accounts for almost 40% of its overall building stock. Most of these (over 90%) feature some sort of recognizable architectural style, and many are fairly elaborately styled. Styles include Italianate, Eastlake, Colonial Revival and Bungalow. This is in sharp contrast to most other collections across the South. Collectively they represent a unique architectural flowering that in many ways makes a larger contribution to the character of "old New Orleans" than the better known Creole tradition.

ARCHITECTURE/LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE

Parkview is also important on the local level because it contains a good representative collection of New Orleans raised basement houses (16% of the building stock). This house type is one of the factors contributing to the architectural distinctiveness of the city. With 218 examples, the raised basement houses of Parkview form a significant part of the city's overall collection.

INDUSTRY/LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE

Parkview is significant on the local level in the area of industry because of the American Can Company, one of the district's major contributing elements. The huge facility (roughly 400,000 square feet) played an important role in New Orleans' industrial development. Historically it was one of few large factories in New Orleans and established the city as a major can making center in the South. The area served by the plant included Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and western Alabama.

Historically the chief economic activity in New Orleans was shipping. Other than industries related to the maritime trades, the city never really developed a strong industrial base. In short, the New Orleans economy traditionally was tied to the transportation of raw goods as a major point of entry from Central America and for exports abroad. Unlike "New South" cities such as Birmingham, New Orleans simply never had very many large manufacturing concerns.

The American Can Company was organized in 1901 and began construction on its New Orleans plant in 1906. This national firm came to own a vast system of factories throughout the United States and Canada. With its port facilities as well as its water and rail connections to the surrounding south central states, New Orleans was a logical site for the development of such a facility. By 1917, the plant was being described in the Times-Picayune as "the largest can maker in the South." By this date the work force had expanded from the original forty-six employees to over 500. From an annual output of ten million cans in 1906, the plant was now shipping that many alone to Mississippi.

Note: The period of significance under industry spans from 1906, when the plant opened, to 1945, the fifty year cutoff. American Can continued in the above described significant role past the fifty year cutoff.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cangelosi, Robert J., Jr. Research report on Parkview containing survey results, historical background, etc. Copy in National Register file, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.