

NEW ORLEANS HISTORIC DISTRICT LANDMARKS COMMISSION
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT HISTORIC DISTRICT LANDMARKS COMMISSION

LaToya Cantrell
MAYOR

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Bryan Block
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Honorable City Council
1300 Perdido Street
New Orleans, LA 70112

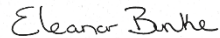
Re: 2831 Livaudais Street

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Attached, please find a report regarding an appeal of the New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission's denial of an application to demolish 100% of a Contributing rated structure located in the Uptown, partial control, local historic district.

Should you have any questions or require any additional information, please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Eleanor Burke
Deputy Director





2831 Livaudais Street is a Contributing rated, single shotgun house located in the Irish Channel, full control, local Historic District. The building, purchased by the current owner in 2020 for \$249,000, was inhabited until recently. The recently published *Transient Lodging Study* requested by the City Council, noted the following: “...it is the very exceptional community character in New Orleans that drives the tourism industry and increases demand for STRs. For this reason, protecting community character must come first.”ⁱ Community character is derived from the vibrant mix of modest and grand vernacular architecture that survives. The continued destruction of authentic historic resources and their replacement with historicist new construction undermines the “exceptional community character” that the City of New Orleans must maintain to ensure its long term economic viability.



1896 Sanborn Map



HDLC Guidelines:

Section 12, Pages 23-24 of the Guidelines for New Construction, Additions and **Demolition** states that the demolition of all or portions of historic resources within a local Historic District or Landmark site are considered drastic actions, since they alter the character of the area. Once historic resources or buildings that contribute to the heritage of the community are destroyed, it is generally impossible to reproduce their design, texture, materials, details and their special character and interest in the neighborhood. When reviewing demolition applications at properties located within a Historic District or at a Landmark site, the HDLC uses the following criteria in its evaluations:

- **The historic or architectural significance of the building or structure as designated by its “rating”:** Contributing
- **The importance of the building or structure to the tout ensemble of the area:** FEMA survey estimates the single-shotgun was constructed between 1890 and 1900 and first appears on the 1896 Sanborn map. The footprint and massing of the house remain very similar to that of the 1896 Sanborn map. The house retains its original footprint and massing. However, almost all other architectural elements have been stripped or covered up. The front roof form has also been altered to cover the enclosed porch. The entire front wall reframed at some point and a much later period Arts & Crafts style door with sidelites was installed at the center.
- **The alternatives to demolition that have been explored by the applicant:** None on record.

- **The difficulty or impossibility of reproducing such a building or structure because of its design, texture, material or detail:** It may not be cost prohibitive to replicate the massing but it would be highly unlikely that the historic details would be replicated.
- **The special character and aesthetic interest that the building or structure adds to the local Historic District:** The house continues to contribute to the tout ensemble of the Irish Channel neighborhood in its scale and massing, but has been heavily altered and stripped of its architectural features. It is one of four remaining historic houses facing Livaudais St, as all others have been demolished to pave the way for new construction and warehouses.
- **The condition of the building or structure:** An interior and exterior visual inspection was completed on August 27 by the HDLC inspector. The building appeared to be in poor structural condition with the roof appearing to be in fair condition and intact.

At the exterior, the building was covered in vinyl siding that appeared to be intact, with windows a mix of historic and vinyl throughout. The building envelope had extensive Demolition by Neglect conditions which, if allowed to continue to deteriorate, will continue to cause considerable damage to the building. The building framing and roof structure were not square and the building appeared to have settled throughout. There were several areas with holes present in the ceiling.

At the interior, the flooring was found to be in very poor condition throughout, and the building was not currently habitable. The flooring was missing in places, deteriorated and undulating throughout the building. There was moisture rot and insect damage visible on the floors, walls and ceilings. The floor system was compromised with uneven areas and soft spots throughout. There was significant evidence that some type of animal (rodents, cats, opossum or raccoons possibly) was living in the building.

A supplemental inspection was conducted on October 28, 2025. At the time of that inspection, all trash and debris had been removed from the building and access to all rooms was possible. Selective exploratory demolition had been completed in areas showing more of the framing. The majority of the exterior walls throughout were barge board construction indicating the age of the existing building. Wood destroying insect damage was visible throughout most of the subfloor as well as in many, but isolated, areas of wall framing. The subfloor in most locations was soft and failing, likely due to the compromised areas of the roof and windows which allowed for water intrusion.

Staff Recommendations:

The supplemental inspection revealed more of the existing framing that is in fair condition and structurally sound. While the house is in poor condition and would require remediation, the barge board constructed single shotgun is not beyond rehabilitation. However, much of the historic architectural elements of the house have been stripped, altered, or covered up. The house does not retain any historic windows or doors; the front door is a much later period Arts & Crafts center door with sidelites in lieu of what was likely a typical door and window shotgun configuration. The front gable roof was likely extended over the enclosed porch and is not the original condition. The house does retain its barge board structure, footprint, massing, and wood weatherboards under the applied vinyl siding. As a result, the Staff left the decision to the discretion of the Commission.

At their meeting of November 5, 2025 the Commission reviewed the supplemental inspection report and updated Staff recommendations. The Commission voted unanimously approve the demolition of all but the front two rooms of the historic structure. The HDLC has approved renovations of and additions to countless single shotguns located in the local historic districts – many of which were in far worse condition. The continued demolition of New Orleans’ vernacular, modest building stock erodes the architectural character, authenticity and significance of our economically and culturally diverse neighborhoods.

Additional information, inspection photos and public comment may be found in the staff report: <https://sites.google.com/view/no-cmm-110525/old-demolition-applications/2831-livaudais-st>

A recording of the hearing may be found here: <https://nola.gov/next/hdlc/meetings/>

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2831 Liveaudais St. Supplemental Demolition Request Inspection Results

- An interior and exterior visual inspection of the structure took place on October 28, 2025.

Additional building information:

- Any trash and debris has been removed from the building and access to all rooms was possible.
- There was selective exploratory demolition completed in areas of the building were not previously open to see isolated areas of the structural frame of the building.
- The subfloor in most locations is soft and failing, likely due to the compromised areas of the roof and windows which allows for water intrusion.
- Wood destroying insect damage is visible throughout most of the subfloor as well as in many, but isolated, areas of wall framing.
- The majority of the exterior walls throughout are barge board construction indicating the age of the existing building.
- There are many layers of finishes that should be stripped down to the framing or to the original finish condition if it still remains.

While the exploratory demolition does show evidence of some structural compromise, there is no further evidence that the structure of the building is beyond rehabilitation. A new roof, new windows, and weatherboards should be installed on the building to prevent further deterioration. The interior could be gutted and refinished with new building materials. The many layers of flooring and subflooring should likely be stripped to the existing floor joists and reinstalled using the proper assembly and materials. The front porch enclosure should be removed and the historic architectural elements should be visible from the street. I do not believe there is evidence available that would indicate this building is a good candidate for demolition. Rehabilitation of the building would not be prohibitively expensive, dangerous, or uncommonly difficult.

2831 Liveaudais St. Demolition Request Inspection Results

- An interior and exterior visual inspection of the structure took place on August 27, 2025.

Building description:

- The vacant 1-story residential building appeared to be in poor structural condition.
- The building sits above grade on masonry piers and utilizes a standard wood framed flooring structural system.
- The building's exterior walls, ceiling and roof are likely standard wood frame construction.
- The asphalt shingle roof appears to be in fair condition and is intact.

Exterior:

- The building is covered in vinyl siding which appear mostly intact throughout.

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- The building framing and roof structure are not square and the building appears to be settling throughout.
- There are several areas with holes present in the ceiling.
- The windows are a mix of historic, surface mounted vinyl or aluminum windows throughout.
- The building envelope has extensive Demolition by Neglect conditions which, if allowed to continue to deteriorate, will continue to cause considerable damage to the building.

Interior:

- The interior of the building was accessible at the time of the inspection.
- The floor is in very poor condition throughout, and the building is not currently habitable. The flooring is in places missing, deteriorated and undulating through the building.
- There is moisture rot and insect damage visible on the floors, walls and ceilings.
- The floor system is compromised with uneven areas and soft spots throughout.
- The interior space does not appear to have been conditioned for some time.
- There was significant evidence that some type of animal (rodents, cats, opossum or raccoons possibly) is living in the building.

Overall, the building appears to be in very poor condition, showing signs of neglect and a compromised building envelope. The building's roof is intact and appears to be functional. Rehabilitation of the interior of the building as a single or multi-family dwelling would not be particularly difficult, however would likely be very costly. The floor structural system is compromised and would likely need major restructuring. Some original historic elements of the building visible on the exterior of the building have been removed and replaced with non-historic building materials. There is very little historic material to be preserved on this building. There is significant moisture and insect damage evident on the interior of the building. The full extent of the damage to the structure of the building is not known. Exploratory demolition of the interior wall finishes and flooring would show the extent of the structural damage conclusively. Without knowing the full extent of the damage to the building's structural system, I do not believe this application is a good candidate for demolition.

HDLC Inspector Alex Nassar



DEMOLITION

The demolition of all or portions of historic resources within a local Historic District or Landmark site are considered drastic actions, since they alter the character of the area. Once historic resources or buildings that contribute to the heritage of the community are destroyed, it is generally impossible to reproduce their design, texture, materials, details and their special character and interest in the neighborhood.

As a result, the HDLC rarely considers the demolition of Significant or Contributing buildings or structures within a local Historic District or on a Landmark site to be an appropriate option.

When reviewing demolition applications at properties located within a Full Control Historic District or at a Landmark site, the HDLC uses the following criteria in its evaluations:

- a. The historic or architectural significance of the building or structure as designated by its "rating";
- b. The importance of the building or structure to the tout ensemble of the area;
- c. The alternatives to demolition that have been evaluated and explored by the applicant;
- d. The special character and aesthetic interest that the building or structure adds to the local Historic District or Landmark site;
- e. The difficulty or impossibility of reproducing such a building or structure because of its design, texture, material or detail;
- f. The condition of the building or structure;
- g. The future utilization of the site; and
- h. The proposed mitigation measures such as, but not limited to, fencing, landscaping and maintenance contracts.

If the proposed demolition involves only a portion of a building or structure or if there are multiple buildings on a site, demolition applications must include a site plan that clearly shows the area proposed for demolition. The application should include details for the stabilization and protection of the remaining portion of a building or structure for partial demolition proposals. The HDLC may also require photographs or drawings of the existing building or structure as part of the application. If the applicant believes the building is structurally unsound or a hazard, they are encouraged to provide documentation of the unsound conditions prepared by a licensed structural engineer or architect. The only instances in which the HDLC Staff can approve demolition applications are when:

- The HDLC's Building Inspector indicates the building, monument or structure is in a state of imminent danger of collapse; or
- It is a Non-Contributing building or structure which is less than 1,000 square feet in area and its demolition is approved by the Executive Director of the HDLC.

All demolition Applications that do not meet the criteria for Staff review will be considered by the Commission at a public hearing. After initial review, the Commission typically requires demolition applications to lie over for 30 days. This allows further investigation by Staff and the Building Inspector, particularly as to the historic importance and current condition of the resource, and provides an opportunity for public comment.

If the Commission votes in favor of a proposed demolition, a Certificate of Appropriateness (CofA) will be issued for the work after all conditions of the Commission's approval have been met. No work may begin on a proposed demolition until a CofA has been issued by the Staff and the applicant has obtained all other necessary permits from the applicable City agencies including the Department of Safety and Permits.

HDLC DEMOLITION JURISDICTION

The HDLC's demolition jurisdiction varies depending whether the property is located within a Partial Control Historic District or a Full Control Historic District. (Refer to HDLC District Jurisdiction, Guidelines Introduction, Page 01-4.)

- **Partial Control Historic Districts:** In Partial Control Districts in which the HDLC's jurisdiction is limited to demolition review, the review criteria shall be limited to criteria a through f. The design of any proposed redevelopment will not be considered.
- **Full Control Historic Districts:** In Full Control Historic Districts, the HDLC has jurisdiction over the demolition and retains jurisdiction over alterations or new construction visible from a public way. The Commission strongly encourages the submission of redevelopment plans concurrently with Demolition Applications for all properties in Full Control Historic Districts.



The Isidore Newman House, constructed in 1890, designed by Thomas Sully, was demolished in 1972. Its demolition galvanized the organization of what is now known as the St. Charles Avenue Association, and the push for preservation ordinances to protect historic districts.

ⁱ New Orleans City Planning Commission. *Transient Lodging Study*. Desire Line, 2025.
<https://nola.gov/nola/media/City-Planning/Major%20Projects/Inclusionary%20Housing%20Study/10-29-2025-ALL-TransientLodgingStudyReport.pdf>