

SAINT BERNARD HOUSING PROJECT, ADMINISTRATION
BUILDING
3801 Saint Bernard Avenue
New Orleans
Orleans Parish
Louisiana

HABS LA-1380-J
HABS LA-1380-J

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SAINT BERNARD HOUSING PROJECT, ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

HABS No. LA-1380-BZ *H*

Location: 3801 Saint Bernard Avenue, New Orleans, Orleans Parish, Louisiana

Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates:
29.995976873392944°, -90.07867723703384°

USGS New Orleans East Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinates:
15.781828.3321933

Date of Erection: 1940
demolished in 2008

Architects: Herbert A. Benson, George H. Christy, and William E. Spink

Owners: Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO), City of New Orleans

Significance: The Great Depression of the 1930s spurred the first peacetime federal government attempts to systematically address the lack of adequate affordable housing for low-income residents. The federal government financed local building efforts through a series of new laws. Among the third wave of these projects planned and built in the ~~late 1930s~~, the construction of Saint Bernard Housing Project addressed two major issues of the era: the housing reform movement (i.e. – urban “slum clearance”) and the reemployment of large sections of the labor force. *1940s*

History: Please see ~~historic report~~ *field notes for* HABS No. LA-1380 for the general history of St. Bernard Housing Project.

Description: The architects of the administration building of the Saint Bernard Housing Project designed a Neo-classical structure. The two-fold mission of the building: provide services to the residents and work and storage space to the people who keep the grounds and buildings.

Even after many storms and two major hurricanes (Hurricane Betsy in 1965 and Hurricane Katrina in ~~2008~~ *2005*), the brick, concrete and terra cotta “tile” walls had no structural failure. The building still retained the original asbestos shingle roof.

In an inverted “T” shape, the resident services were located at the front of the building, the worker storage and staging in the rear.

The building stood a little over 55 feet long, 100 feet deep, and approximately 22 feet tall at the front ridge line. The walls sat on concrete footings with an approximately three foot high knee-wall forming a vented crawlspace. Terra cotta “tile” masonry supported the twelve-inch thick walls with a brick exterior veneer. The floor was a six-inch thick concrete slab. The only wood could be found in the roof: trussed rafters spaced 23½ inches on center.

The concrete front porch extended eight feet out from the façade, with front steps. A gable roof with a pediment covered the porch. Two square Doric columns supported the porch roof.

The exterior front door had four panes over a panel. Two pane sidelights flanked either side. A large transom topped the door. Large eight over eight pane wood double-hung windows were installed. Eight over eight-pane window are more common to the northern half the United States. The main roof was a hip with half-round roof vents; wood

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SAINT BERNARD HOUSING PROJECT, ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
(3801 Saint Bernard Avenue)
HABS No. LA-1380-BZ (Page 3)

J 2

molding covered the eaves, then box gutters with downspouts carried rainwater off the roof. The rear roof had a gable roof.

In the past, the interior had been gutted. The designed countertops, desks, and doors were removed and replaced with modern institutional furniture and metal doors.

Historian:

Virginia S. Lee
Preservation Architect, M. Arch.
Earth Search, Inc.
P.O. Box 770336
New Orleans, LA 70177-0336