

From the Mid City Messenger

<http://midcitymessenger.com/2015/02/06/city-council-approves-bed-and-breakfast-in-old-treme-jail/>

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A bed and breakfast is proposed for the old jail on St. Phillip Street (UptownMessenger.com file photo by Jean-Paul Villere).

An historic jail located in the Treme may soon be home to “Inn at the Old Police Jail,” a bed and breakfast designed to hold nine rooms and a community meeting space for the neighborhood.

New Orleans City Council voted unanimously on Thursday to allow a conditional use for the building, a 6,291-square-foot Queen Anne- and French Renaissance Revival-style structure with a century-old facade. The permit allows for the bed and breakfast historical home to be built in a two-family residential district.

The owners of the building, Liz and Raul Canache, will live in the top floor of the bed and breakfast, according to city planners. Guests staying at the inn will have to rely on on-street parking in the neighborhood, as the permit doesn’t allow for off-street parking.

On Thursday, the decision sailed through City Council with no hiccups and a 7-0 vote. This was not the first time the issue had come up before City Council or the City Planning Commission, however, since the plan to convert the building into the bed and breakfast proved to be more complicated than just renovating the property, which had long been left to crumble and rot.

The vote comes after months of grappling with the city bureaucracy and the language of its land-use rules. The Canaches needed a zoning change to build the business — an act that, until Thursday, was impossible under city law.

The first time the proposal was brought before the City Planning Commission, [staff members said the building must be a former single- or two-family home to legally become a bed and breakfast](#) — which the old jail never was. It also must be occupied by its owner, planners said.

However, city officials were in favor of the proposal, which would essentially save the beloved building from falling into complete disrepair. When the proposal was again brought up before City Planning Commission last month, planners [voted to work with City Council and change the law](#) to allow former institutional buildings to be used as bed-and-breakfasts.

That law was passed just prior to old jail's zoning change during Thursday's City Council meeting.

Thanks to a new text amendment, the zoning ordinance now defines a bed and breakfast accommodation" as "an owner-occupied residential structure, originally constructed as either a single-family or a two-family structure that is easily converted to a single-family structure or a former institutional or commercial structure that is easily converted into a single-family structure, which provides sleeping rooms for overnight paid occupancy of up to seven (7) nights," according to city documents.

During prior meetings, the Canaches, who bought the building for \$175,000 during an auction of surplus city-owned property in December, received an [outpouring of support for the project](#). The Louisiana Landmarks Society has spoken out in favor of the couple fully restoring the building, explaining that the old police station was on their 2010 list of New Orleans' nine most endangered properties.

City planners, neighbors and members of St. Luke's Episcopal have also showed support.

"The point is to bring back the neighborhood's heritage and save something from falling down, which is where the building was headed," Canache told Mid-City Messenger.

In November, City Councilmember Jared C. Brossett, who spearheaded the zoning change, echoed the Canache's sentiments.

“This project will take a historic property and bring it back into commerce, providing a high quality and appropriately located bed and breakfast for visitors to our City,” said City Councilmember Jared C. Brossett, according to a release from City Council. “Treme is one of our most culturally significant neighborhoods and I look forward to seeing this blighted structure become a jewel of the neighborhood. We thank the owners for working with the community and we look forward to seeing the development of this property.”

Below from the Preservation Resource Center

2010 New Orleans Nine: Police Jail and Patrol Station

By LDerrington



Police Jail and Patrol Station, 2552 St. Philip Street

The former Police Jail and Patrol Station at the corner of St. Philip and Dorgenois Streets is next in our series on Louisiana Landmarks Society's [2010 New Orleans Nine](#).

At the turn of the 20th century New Orleans was badly in need of infrastructural modernization. Elected in 1899, Mayor Paul Capdevielle took office the following year and brought with him Captain William Joseph Hardee as his City Engineer. Hardee, who would hold this position until his death in 1918, was an active public figure in charge of directing civic improvements from road construction and paving to the installation of the city's sewer system. He personally designed a number of public buildings, one of which was the Police Jail and Patrol Station in 1902 (unfortunately, [LaSalle Elementary](#) from last year's New Orleans Nine is also his work).

The new jail and substation was built at the same time as the now-demolished House of Detention at Tulane and Broad Street. Both were to assume the functions previously served by a deplorably antiquated prison on St. Peter near the former Carondelet Canal. The smaller Police Jail and Patrol Station at 2552 St. Philip would serve as a satellite for the larger facility.



Progress on the building was highly-anticipated by the community and often covered by the *Times-Picayune*. Hardee had completed his brick and terra cotta design by April 1902, incorporating elements of the Queen Anne and French Renaissance Revival styles into an eclectic whole. With public expectations running high, he aimed to produce "one of the handsomest, artistically and structurally, of any of the city's public buildings." Hardee carefully watched over the jail's construction, and his insistence on the finest materials both drove up its budget and delayed completion until late 1903. The station occupied the building's first story, while jail cells were located on its second floor and rear wing.

By 1951 the structure had been converted into a library and community center. Still under city ownership, today it stands vacant. Years of deferred maintenance are taking their toll from plants growing from cracks in the façade to exposure to the elements. The former Police Jail and Patrol Station stands within both the Esplanade Ridge Historic District and the Bayou Road African American Heritage Cultural District, making it eligible for tax credits totaling fifty percent of rehabilitation costs. If the city no longer has need for the building, it should sell it to a private party who can utilize such incentives to put the former jail back to good use. As reported in the April 3, 1902 edition of the *Times-Picayune*, "Capt. Hardee says he designed the jail for strength [and] durability, [and] proposed placing a building that would be an ornament and to make it spacious and modern so that it would serve future years as well as the present." To allow the building to continue to stand empty would be a disservice to the Treme neighborhood, as well as a waste of a fine historic resource.