

Garden District New Orleans: History and Homes

The Garden District is home to some of the most beautiful late victorian architecture and greenery. The area was largely developed between 1832 and 1900 and has some of the best-preserved mansions in the state. In 1974, the Garden District was named a National Historic Landmark and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971.

Garden District History

One of New Orleans's most beautiful and loved hidden gems is the Garden District. One look at it from the streetcar, and you're in love; huge looming oak trees lining the streets enriched with memories from the past with epic, historical mansions peeking through the leaves. The Garden District is home to some of the most unique and gorgeous architectural masterpieces that once belonged to American plantation owners.

The Americans who arrived in the early 1800s are largely responsible for how the Garden District came to be. Feeling as if they did not fit into the social crowd, the Americans wanted to build magnificent and newly styled homes that topped homes in the French Quarter (once known as The Vieux Carre). They decided to have large gardens surrounding their homes, which was a new style at the time.

When American plantations dominated the district, there was a maximum of two homes on each block, much more sparse than it is today. The rest of the land's purpose was to grow agriculture. This is how the Garden District received its name; the area was filled with greenery. This all changed in the late 1800s. The lots were divided into smaller lots as the Garden District merged with the fast-growing, Uptown New Orleans. This change brought in many late victorian styled mansions that still decorate the street today.

Fortunately, the Garden District only received minor damage from Hurricane Katrina including some roof damage and minor flooding. The district shines as brightly as ever today, home to some of the most prestigious restaurants and high-end shopping. A few celebrities and writers even reside in the district as well, including John Goodman and Archie Manning.

Garden District Homes

There are many different styled homes in the Garden District including late victorian mansions, creole cottages, American townhouses, and creole townhouses. You can see a considerable influence of the Greek Revival movement in many grand homes that line the streets.

Colonel Short's Villa



This is a cornstalk fence mansion that is also referred to as Colonel Short's Villa. Even though the Garden District is filled with unique and magnificent homes, this mansion stands out above the rest.

The house resides on land that was once the Livaudais Plantation which is why the lot is filled with lush greenery. Colonel Robert Short hired Henry Howard to design the mansion, which was built in 1860. For a brief time period, the house was the home of the federal governor of Louisiana in 1864 before being returned to the Colonel again in 1865.

The impressive mansion is 9,800 square feet and incorporates the striking architecture of Italian-renaissance villas. The ironwork fence incorporates morning glory and cornstalk motifs. The home is also beautifully accented with corinthian pillars influenced by the Greek Revival style.

Squires House



Built in 1851, the Squires House is a greek revival house that belonged to a commercial merchant named George Washington Squires. It is a one and a half story house that has Corinthian style pillars frequently seen in other greek revival homes. The house underwent multiple remodels including James Kelly's re-design in 1884. After this remodel, no major changes were made to the mansion.

Around 1920, a gown and regalia shop named the Liberty Shop leased the mansion and ran the business from the home. Around 50 years later in 1970, another dress shop called The House of Broel took over the house to run their business.

The home stands out on the street with its unique ironwork, elaborate front entrance, and lush greenery surrounding the mansion.

Alfred Grima House



Featuring ionic order pillars, this greek revival mansion was built in 1857. Cornelius Payne sold the home to Thomas Clarke shortly after he built it. The mansion was remodeled in 1890 when Alfred Grima, an attorney, purchased the house. It wasn't until 1926 that both the formal side garden was finished and the garden trellis was added on. The garden trellis was the last built piece by architect Samuel Labouisse.

This beautiful house was finally donated to the Historic New Orleans Collection around 1981 and was privately purchased in 1987.

Women's Guild of the New Orleans Opera Association



This home is a greek revival designed by William Alfred Freret, built in 1859. The greek revival architectural movement was popular in the 18th and early 19th centuries; the main point of the movement was to incorporate designs of ancient Greek temples.

In 1965, Dr. and Mrs. Herman (the current owners at the time) donated the home, including all of the furniture and art, to the Women's Opera Guild. The mansion is now open to the public at various times for tours and events.

Sources:

- [New Orleans: Uptown & The Garden District](#)
- [New Orleans: New Orleans Architectural Styles](#)
- [Experience New Orleans: Garden District](#)
- [Wikipedia: Garden District, New Orleans](#)
- [My New Orleans: The Garden District](#)
- [Architectural Digest: Most Expensive Listing in New Orleans](#)