

Highlights of Site Visit
FEMA Section 106 Review
Proposed Demolition of Four Sexton Cottages at
Holt, Carrollton #1, Lafayette #1, and Lafayette #2 Cemeteries
March 7, 2012, starting at 10:00 am

Meeting Attendees: Lee Wyma (FEMA HP); Gail Lazaras (FEMA HP); Thomas Ryan (Louisiana Landmarks Society); Sandra Stokes (Foundation for Historic Louisiana); John Schackai (Louisiana Landmarks Society) Stephanie Wexler (CSRS/CNO);); Nikki Cammon (CPA/CNO); Cooper Norman (GOHSEP); Rusty Anchors (FEMA EHP); Tommy Tregle (FEMA EHP); Sarah Birtchet (FEMA HP); Richard Williamson (FEMA HP); Jerame Cramer (FEMA HP); David Livingstone (SHPO); Bryan Guevin (SHPO); Chip McGimsey (SHPO); Damien Job (HMS); Ed Sens (CNO/City Property Management); Jack Stewart (Foundation for Historic Louisiana); Michael Duplantier (Save Our Cemeteries)

Meeting Summary:

The purpose of the site visit was to view the existing condition of the sexton cottages/maintenance sheds at Holt, Carrollton #1, Lafayette #1, and Lafayette #2 Cemeteries. Ed Sens from the City's Department of Property Management and Damien Job from HMS architects attended the site visit to address property specific questions. The replacement cottages will be constructed at grade and will primarily be used to store maintenance equipment. With the exception of Lafayette #2, the cottages will be constructed with a toilet and sink for the maintenance staff. FEMA's funding for the projects is currently limited to the demolition of the cottages, but FEMA has determined to consider the reasonably foreseeable replacement of the cottages as part of the Section 106 review. Representatives of preservation organizations asked numerous questions about the feasibility of repairing the existing structures. These organizations are very concerned about the introduction of inappropriate new buildings at these historic cemeteries. The City emphasized that this project is needed to provide storage for equipment in each of these actively used cemeteries. These cottages must require minimal maintenance. Interior photographs of the cottages taken during the site visit are included in this report. The site visits began at Holt at 10:00am and ended at Lafayette #1 at 1:30pm.

I. Holt Cemetery

Damien Job gave an overview of the damage assessment of Holt's sexton cottage. The original cottage was a 13x13 foot wooden frame building on piers. There are three additions. The City proposes to demolish the existing structure and additions and rebuild an on-grade building out of concrete masonry units (CMUs) faced with cement board siding on the original 13x13 foot footprint. The City chose the cement board siding because it appears to require less maintenance and may be more resistant to damage. It is not known how much ground disturbance will be required to build the platform/foundation for the building.



The new structure will house maintenance equipment and a toilet and sink. Ed Sens stated that Holt is the most actively used cemetery in the city, and requires a rest room. The existing rest room is in one of the additions, and it will be necessary to relocate the water and sewer line about 10 feet. The City has not determined if the water and sewer connections are functional, and the repair of these connections may require additional ground disturbance. Chip McGimsey, State Archaeologist, warned of the possibility of burials underneath the additions.



The architect said that cottage does not appear to have suffered severe termite or rot damage, but a complete inspection has not yet occurred. However, it will be necessary to bring the cottage to code and the City will be required to completely disassemble and reassemble the building if it is repaired. The cost of the project is estimated at \$30,000-45,000. Disassembling and reassembling the existing cottage will cost more than that budget. Thomas Ryan (Louisiana Landmarks Society) suggested that the old building be incorporated into the new design. Sandra Stokes (Foundation for Historic Louisiana) asked if volunteers could work on the repairs to help offset the costs and keep the original cottage.



Interior Holt Addition Showing Restrooms

She also stated that the handwritten signs are part of the historic character of the building/cemetery and suggested that those be saved and re-used. Ed Sens said that it was feasible to reuse the signage. Later discussions with John Schackai during the cemetery site visit indicated that the local preservation organizations do not have the ability to provide volunteers to repair these buildings.

The City will also place a dumpster to the south of the cottage. This action will not be funded by FEMA.

II. Carrollton #1 Cemetery

The cottage at Carrollton #1 is not a Historic Property (eligible for listing on the National Register) and the SHPO has concurred with FEMA's determination. The existing two-story cottage once housed the offices for City Cemetery personnel. It has been expanded several times and is larger than the other cottages. It has several rest rooms. The City plans to demolish the entire structure and replace it with a one story building that will be approximately 35 feet long. This new building will be constructed of CMU and covered with cement board siding. Sandra Stokes asked if it was possible to reuse the cinderblock portion of the existing structure. Damien Job said that may be a possible. The new structure will not contain offices, but will still have a toilet and sink. Although the structure rests upon an asphalt drive and concrete sidewalk, it isn't known if or to what extent ground disturbance will be required during demolition and reconstruction. The architect prefers to reuse existing footings/slabs, but it is not possible to make this decision until the existing structure is demolished.

Damien Jobs explained that the City has produced a protocol for inadvertent discovery of human remains. FEMA will reference this protocol in the Section 106 agreement for this Undertaking.

Rusty Anchors (FEMA EHP) explained that at this time FEMA's Undertaking is the proposed demolition of the four cottages. He said that it is appropriate to discuss reasonably foreseeable actions resulting from the demolition, such as the replacement of the cottages, but at this time the only official action involving FEMA is the City's proposal to use FEMA monies for demolition.

III. Lafayette #2 Cemetery

Damien Job described the Lafayette #2's sexton cottage as a 12.5x12.5 foot wooden building with a small lean-to addition. The cottage has extensive termite damage. The City proposes to demolish the existing structure and construct a similar 12.5 x 12.5 foot cottage in the same location. The new building will be constructed of CMU with cement board siding. Damien Job said that it may be possible to salvage and reuse some historic materials. John Schackai (Louisiana Landmarks Society) suggested that it would be possible to take out the floor, pour a slab, gut and redo the interior and replace the joists and siding. The City no longer plans to build the replacement cottage



Interior Lafayette #2 Sexton Cottage

on the open ground to the south of the current location by the Washington Street entrance. Jack Stewart stated that Lafayette #2's cottage was the most photographed cemetery building in all of the cemeteries due to funeral parades.

The City needs to locate a dumpster at this cemetery and may construct a pad and structure for the dumpster on the open ground south of the sexton cottage. FEMA will not fund the construction of the dumpster. Ed Sens explained that the dumpster will also service Lafayette #1 Cemetery since there is no space to locate a dumpster at that property. Sandra Stokes said that if the City constructs the proposed improvements at Lafayette #2 Cemetery the property could be used by the film industry, however this opportunity will not be possible if the City constructs a dumpster next to the entrance and the cottage. The idea of placing the dumpster in another location within the cemetery was discussed. Ed Sens emphasized that all the cemeteries are actively used burial grounds for the community and their use as a film set is secondary.

IV. Lafayette #1 Cemetery

Stephanie Wexler, representing the City of New Orleans, described that the City proposes to demolish and replace the cottage and repair approximately 33 linear feet of the hurricane damaged brick perimeter wall. She explained that the outside of the wall was improperly repaired after Katrina, but the inside still remains damaged and the entire wall needs to be repaired properly. The cottage has extensive termite damage and the roof has failed. The city proposes to build a new structure on the original footprint.



Lafayette #1 Perimeter Wall Damage

The existing toilet and sink will be replaced in the new cottage. The foundation will be continuous footing and slab on grade 18-24" thick. Footings are possible. The major change proposed to the design is the addition of a double rather than single door on the main façade to allow for the storage of larger equipment.

Michael Duplantier asked the City representatives a number of questions about the use of the City bond money to repair and upgrade the cemeteries. FEMA explained that the City projects funded only with the bond money are not part of

the FEMA undertaking. He requested that Save Our Cemeteries be given an opportunity to provide input before the plans are finalized and presented to City Council.



Interior Lafayette #1 Sexton Cottage

Tommy Ryan noted for the record that Lafayette #1 cemetery is the most historic in the city, attracting a large amount of tourists. He would like to see the cemetery maintain its historic fabric and wants Louisiana Landmarks Society to work with the City and FEMA and be part of the solution.