



*Preserving America's Heritage*

August 4, 2011

Honorable Mitchell J. Landrieu  
Mayor  
City of New Orleans  
1300 Perdido Street  
New Orleans, LA 70112

Mr. Robert L. Neary, Jr.  
Acting Director  
Office of Construction and Facilities Management  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC  
20420

Mr. John V. Ketchum  
Federal Preservation Officer  
Mitigation Division  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20472

Ref: *Programmatic Agreement Regarding the Funding to Repair or Replace Healthcare Facilities  
Comprising the VA Medical Center and the Medical Center of Louisiana at New Orleans*

Dear Mayor Landrieu, Mr. Neary, and Mr. Ketchum:

It has come to the attention of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) that a number of historically significant homes recently moved from locations impacted by the New Orleans Medical Center Project have been placed in new locations in the city with little to no effort to ensure their protection after relocation. Members of the public have contacted the ACHP to express their concerns and disappointment that historic homes, whose removal from the Medical Center Site was intended to preserve them, are now lying unused and open to the elements, deteriorating by neglect and creating health and safety hazards to residents.

The relocation of these historic properties is addressed in the November 2008 *Programmatic Agreement Among the US Department of Veterans Affairs, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the City of New Orleans, the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding the Funding to Repair or Replace Healthcare Facilities Comprising the VA Medical Center and the Medical Center of Louisiana at New Orleans*. While the Programmatic

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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Agreement does not clearly stipulate the process for managing how and when these properties are to be rehabilitated for continued use, their short term protection subsequent to relocation is clearly implied and consistent with the spirit of this agreement.

At the outset, please note that we commend the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the City of New Orleans (City) for embarking on a program to save historic properties from demolition and limiting the adverse effect of the development of the Medical Center on the City's historic properties. Nevertheless, we are concerned that the relocation plan has not been well-defined, managed effectively by contractors, or sufficiently described for the benefit of residents of affected neighborhoods. In order for the ACHP to determine how best to assist all parties to the November 2008 agreement in its implementation and ensure that we understand the broader historic preservation issues related to the recent relocation of the historic properties from the Medical Center Site, we request the following information from all parties:

- Are all of the relocations being funded solely with VA and FEMA funding or are other federal monies, such as Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, also being used?
- How are the requirements of Stipulation V.B.3 of the November 2008 agreement being fulfilled?
- What agency(ies) is responsible for the Section 106 consultation for relocated properties?
- What process was used to select relocation sites?
- How was the public involved in the decision making process for the selection of sites for relocation and what was the project schedule presented to them?
- What are the requirements that were negotiated to ensure that the City or funding agency would stabilize and restore the historic properties post relocation?
- Has the City agreed to reevaluate the historic significance of the relocated buildings once restored?

Upon receipt of this information, the ACHP will follow up with signatories to the PA with recommendations on addressing this issue. We are particularly concerned about whether any amendments to the PA will be necessary to address the concerns recently raised by residents.

The ACHP looks forward to receiving your response soon. In the meantime, should you have any questions or want to discuss this matter further, please contact me via email at [rnelson@achp.gov](mailto:rnelson@achp.gov) if I can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,



Reid Nelson  
Director  
Office of Federal Agency Programs