

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings

Hermann-Grima House, 818-820 St. Louis Street,
New Orleans, Louisiana

Among the finest houses in the Vieux Carre, the Hermann-Grima House exemplifies an adaptation of American taste to a Creole environment. With its dependencies and courtyard it has been restored with care to provide an authentic picture of a corner of New Orleans when it flourished as the Nation's fifth largest city.

The exterior of the house is red brick brought from Philadelphia and laid in Flemish bond. The entrance is an elaborately carved Georgian doorway with delicate Ionic columns separating the leaded sidelights from the door itself. There is also a graceful elliptical transom. The doorway is repeated on the second floor where it opens onto a narrow wrought iron balcony which extends across the entire facade. Elliptical-arched triple openings mark the galleries at both levels of the rear elevation. Three triangular-pedimented dormers pierce the roof at the attic level. This elevation and the courtyard it faces are in the New Orleans tradition.

The plan of the house is of American origin having a central hall extending through the house with rooms on each side and a gracefully curving stair ascending from the back of the hall. Its only concession to the French tradition is in the recessed gallery across the rear, enclosed by the usual small room at each end. Wood moldings and details are of a quality best exemplified by the treatment of the opening between the parlor and dining room. Fluted Corinthian columns frame the opening and are slotted to permit the sliding doors to move into the paneled pockets. A fixed panel above the doors is carved with tasselled swags and garlands of roses on the parlor side and fruit on the dining room side. Marble mantels are of Greek Revival design. A brass newel ornaments the stair rail.

A long, three-story, galleried outbuilding extends across the right side of the yard. At the end nearer the house is an unusual one-story wing with a curved corner.

The replanting of the courtyard parterre recreates a garden of the period and includes herbs used for culinary and medicinal purposes.

William Brand, an architect-builder, erected the house for Samuel Hermann, a wealthy commission merchant, in 1831. Owned and restored by the Christian Woman's Exchange the property is open to the public.

* * * * *