

# LIVING WITH HISTORY IN NEW ORLEANS' NEIGHBORHOODS

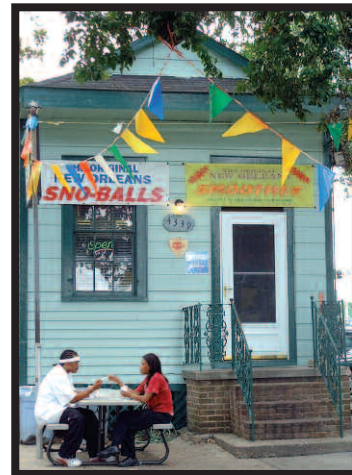
## Gentilly Terrace



PHOTO: MARY FITZPATRICK



Gentilly Terrace was the second of New Orleans' 20th-century neighborhoods to be named to the National Register of Historic Places. Developers Michael Baccich, Edward E. Lafaye and R. E. Edgar deMontluzin, who advertised their new neighborhood as a place "where homes are built on hills," planned their new community in 1909. "Hills" is an exaggeration, though Gentilly does sit on some of the highest land (4-5 feet above sea level) in metro New Orleans and many of its lawns do, in fact, sit atop man-made hummocks. Today, the neighborhood contains the largest collection of California Craftsman-style bungalows (built 1910-26) in the state, as well as English cottages and Spanish and Mediterranean Revival raised houses from the period 1910-1940. Twenty-foot setbacks on all lots and the presence of venerable oaks on major boulevards create a park-like setting.



Long before the 1909 development, in 1727, French colonists Mathurin and Pierre Dreux selected the natural levee along Bayou Sauvage as the site of their plantation, which they named "Gentilly" after the commune from which they came. Gentilly remained essentially rural, with a small village located three

**PRESERVATION RESOURCE CENTER OF NEW ORLEANS  
INVITES YOU TO EXPLORE THE LOCAL SIDE OF LIFE  
IN GENTILLY TERRACE, WHERE THE DISTINCT  
20th CENTURY ARCHITECTURE, AS WELL AS THE  
ENVIRONS AND PROGRAMS OF DILLARD UNIVERSITY,  
CONTRIBUTE TO THE RESIDENTS' HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE.**





miles from the Vieux Carré, through the 19th century. The establishment of Dillard University in 1930 and improvements in drainage technology spurred development here and in nearby Sugar Hill, which drew African-American professionals. As early as 1900, streetcar lines from downtown made it easy to get from old New Orleans to this progressive California-style suburb.

Gentilly Terrace remains as stylistically distinct as it was when Baccich, Lafaye and deMontluzin proposed their cutting edge development. Throughout the district, you'll find handcrafted piers and exposed rafters with carved ends, small-paned decorative windows and inlaid cobblestones and pebbles in porch piers, front steps and porte-

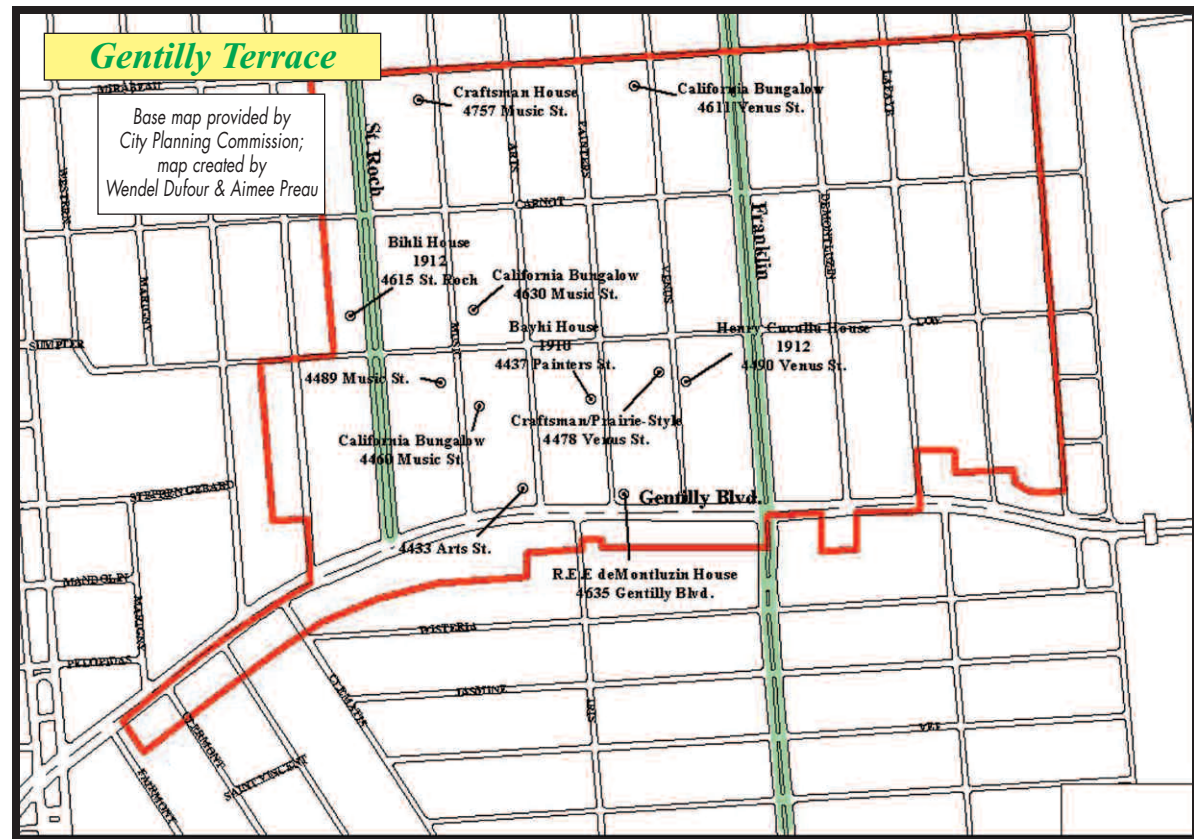
cocheres. Despite the presence of nearby shopping centers, Gentilly Terrace retains a laid-back, almost country feel that makes it attractive to both young families and older people, most of whom own their homes. Convenient to the Lakefront and the University of New Orleans as well as to downtown, the neighborhood is home to Gentilly Terrace Creative Arts Elementary School and is near Brother Martin High School, St. Joseph Central Catholic Elementary School and Benjamin Franklin High School.



# TOURS

**We encourage you to use good judgment and common sense in taking these tours.**

**TOUR A Drive/Bike** Start at 4635 Gentilly Blvd., the home of Gentilly Terrace developer R.E. Edgar deMontluzin. Tree-lined Gentilly Boulevard is an ancient route connecting Bayou Sauvage at the Rigolets with Bayou Road and the present-day Vieux Carré. In this neighborhood it is also known as Dreux St. in honor of French colonists Mathurin and Pierre Dreux, who established their plantation near here. Follow descending street numbers to Music St. and turn right to pass two outstanding examples of Craftsman-style architecture at 4460 Music St. (note the inlaid pebble details) and across the street at 4489 Music Street. A left on Lombard St., then right on St. Roch Ave.—another of this area's beautiful oak-lined boulevards—brings you to Bihli House, 4615 St. Roch Avenue. Built as the Gentilly Terrace Company House in 1912, it is widely regarded as the finest Craftsman bungalow in Louisiana. Continue up pleasant St. Roch Ave. to Mirabeau Ave., one of the historic district's boundary streets, and turn right, then right again to spy another fine example of Craftsman architecture at 4757 Music Street. Back on Mirabeau Ave., go two blocks to turn right on Venus St. and check out 4611 Venus. Proceed to Carnot St., at the end of the block, and then turn right and right again onto Painters St. to pass by Gentilly Ridge Creative Arts Elementary School, 4720 Painters St., itself a fine example of Japanese-inspired Craftsman



architecture. Return to Mirabeau Ave., turn right, and continue six blocks to drive past deMontluzin, Lafaye and Baccich streets—each named for one of the three developers of Gentilly Ridge, all of whom owned homes in the district. A left at Eastern St. (after Baccich St.) will bring you back to Gentilly Blvd. Turn left and proceed one block to view the James House, 4423 Franklin Ave., a minimalist cube that continued to push the envelope of architecture in this neighborhood when it was built in 1973. Return to Gentilly Blvd. via Lombard St. (turn right) and deMontluzin Street. Note that the historic district encompasses both sides of the boulevard between Lafaye St. and Spain St., which is the first street beyond St. Roch Avenue.

**TOUR B Walk/Bike** Start at the corner of Gentilly Blvd. and Venus St. following Venus in the direction of ascending numbers. 4492 is the Henry Cucullu House, built in 1912. Note the Craftsman/Prairie

Style home across the street at 4478 Venus. Left on Lombard and left again on Painters St. brings you to the striking Bayhi House, 4437 Painters St., designed by H. Jordan Mackenzie in 1910. The 2 1/2 story house was designed along the lines of a 19th-century Norwegian homestead, with its uppermost half story formed by two intersecting bow roofs. McKenzie, incidentally, is the architect responsible for the many blue tile roofs you see in the area. Return to Lombard and proceed one block to Arts St., then turn left to pass by 4433 Arts. Street names in this design-conscious development are purposefully artistic, but you're more likely to see toddlers on training wheels or families with strollers than painters and poets. Continue to Gentilly Blvd. and return to start by turning left.





- 1727 Mathurin Dreux and brother Pierre Dreux obtain high ground on natural ridge near Bayou Sauvage as concession and name it Gentilly
- 1803 Louisiana Purchase
- 1830 Pontchartrain Railroad cuts through Gentilly
- 1850 Bayou Sauvage dammed, drained and filled, limiting flooding in and around Gentilly Terrace
- 1909 Gentilly Terrace planned by Michael Baccich, Edward E. Lafaye and R.E. Edgar deMontluzin
- 1910-1940 Most Gentilly Terrace homes built
- 1930 Dillard University chartered as merger of Straight College and New Orleans University
- 1924 Gentilly Gardens and Improvement Association founded
- 1935 Gentilly Terrace begins to see substantial growth
- Mid-1970s I- 610 expands through Sugar Hill, adjacent to Gentilly Terrace
- 1999 Gentilly Terrace established as National Register Historic District

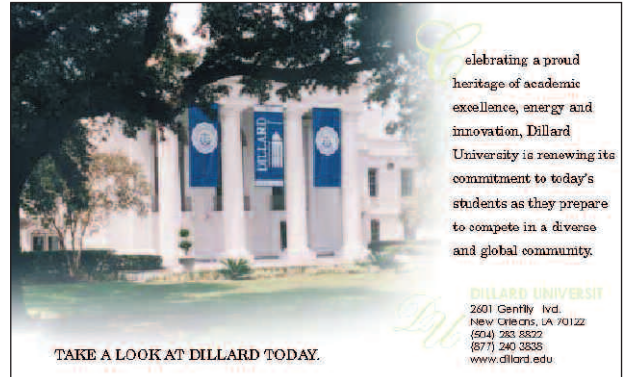


## Annual Events

- August: Night Out Against Crime

## Neighborhood Associations

- Gentilly Terrace Neighborhood Association
- Gentilly Sugar Hill Residents Association
- Gentilly Terrace & Gardens Improvement Association



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*Since 1974 the Preservation Resource Center has promoted the preservation, restoration and revitalization of New Orleans' historic neighborhoods and architecture.*



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