

LIVING WITH HISTORY IN NEW ORLEANS' NEIGHBORHOODS

Broadmoor



PHOTO: MARY FITZPATRICK

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INVITES YOU TO EXPLORE THE LOCAL SIDE OF LIFE IN
BROADMOOR, AN ETHNICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY MIXED
NEIGHBORHOOD ON THE REBOUND AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA.



In architecturally, economically and racially diverse neighborhood, Broadmoor is situated in the heart of the city. Although largely a 20th-century neighborhood, it began to be developed in the early 1880s on marshy pasture land, which during heavy rains became a twelve-acre lake and favorite fishing spot for Uptowners.

A Bayou St. John tributary, which ran to the bayou from what is presently St. Charles Avenue, filled the lake. In 1873 there was only one registered landowner, but in the mid-1870s plans to develop the area were put into motion. By 1885 drainage canals had been built to move water out of

the district. Now on the National Register of Historic Places, Pumping Station #1 at South Broad and Melpomene streets was completed in 1902 (just outside of the neighborhood's boundaries.)

By the end of the first decade of the 20th century a small population resided in the area, and the South Claiborne Avenue and Napoleon Avenue streetcar lines served the residents. The largest percentage of construction occurred between 1920 and





1924; and by 1930 the neighborhood had its own newspaper, *The Broadmoor News*. About the same time one of the city's earliest neighborhood associations, the Broadmoor Civic Improvement Association, was formed. By the 1940s, at least 50 percent of the homes in the area were owner-occupied. Today the district is comprised of approximately 770 buildings, predominantly multi-storied Spanish Colonial and Mediterranean Revival homes, Bungalow style basement houses, low-slung double shotgun houses and Classical mansions. While the official National Register district is roughly bound by Octavia and Milan streets and South Claiborne to slightly beyond Fontainebleau, residents consider Broadmoor to be a larger area extending up to South Jefferson Davis Parkway and past Milan to Washington Avenue.

The opening of Chevra Thilim Synagogue on the corner of South Claiborne and Jena Street in 1948 attracted a large Jewish population to the area. Throughout the 1950s and '60s, over 30 percent of the students at the neighborhood's public grammar school, Andrew H. Wilson, were Jewish. In addition, the Communal Hebrew School, located across the street from Wilson, educated thousands of Jewish children during these years. The synagogue closed in the late 1990s and is now occupied by a Baptist congregation which offers many programs and services to the neighborhood.

The Rosa Keller branch of the New Orleans Public Library is one of the most recognizable land-

continued on reverse side

marks in the district. Named after the noted civil rights and women's rights activist, the tile-roofed, stucco, Arts and Crafts villa was built in 1918 and designated a historic landmark under the name Hardie-Fattel House in 1986. It served as a residence until 1990 when it was acquired by the city.

Broadmoor can claim one of the most unified neighborhood associations in the city, the Broadmoor Improvement Association. This descendent of the Broadmoor Civic Improvement Association was incorporated in 1970, and its members are fiercely loyal to preserving the neighborhood's historic atmosphere and architectural significance. The association's role in rebuilding Broadmoor – badly flooded in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina – is exemplary. When planners suggested the neighborhood should return to green space, residents rallied. The association, with the assistance of Harvard College, completed a rebuilding plan in record time. Racially mixed and containing stretches of wealth as well as poverty, Broadmoor has one of the highest rates of return in the flooded parts of the city. The neighborhood association (broadmoorimprovement.com) includes representatives from surrounding areas, and an extension of the National Register boundaries is under consideration.

by Celeste Berteau-Stover



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***Since 1974 the Preservation Resource Center
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and revitalization of New Orleans' historic
neighborhoods and architecture.***



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TOUR

We encourage you to use good judgment and common sense in taking this tour.

Drive/Bike/Walk: From westbound Claiborne Avenue turn right onto Octavia Street. The homes here are representative of the architecture found throughout

Broadmoor from various historic revival styles to raised bungalows. Indeed, 41 percent of the homes in Broadmoor are bungalows. The earliest homes were raised, with full story above-ground basements and living quarters on the second



floor. Octavia Street has a concentration of 1920s-1940s two story brick or stucco Colonial Revival houses. As you approach Napoleon Avenue, notice the homes on the south side of the 4100 block of Fontainebleau. Of particular interest is the Arts and Crafts villa at 4100 Fontainebleau. This stucco house dates from 1918 and features elaborate timberwork, diamond-paned casement windows and an ornate tile roof.

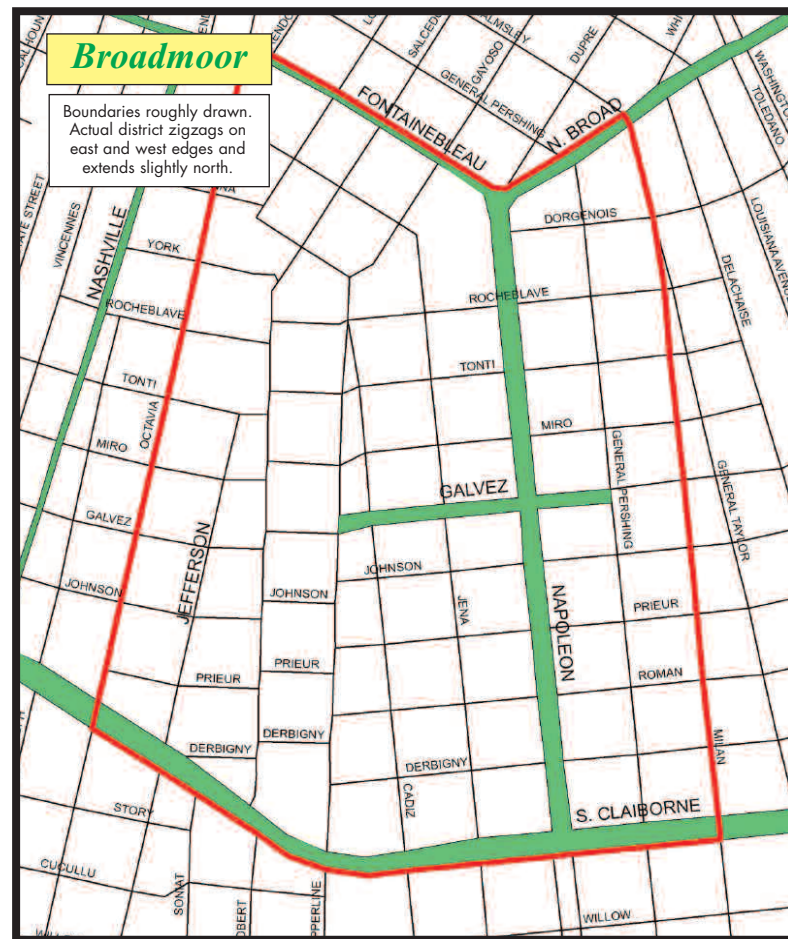
Here, at the intersection of Fontainebleau Drive and



Napoleon Avenue, you are at what is considered to be the heart of Broadmoor. You may want to park and cross Fontainebleau on foot to take a closer look at the Gloria Dei Lutheran Church at the corner of South Dupre and Fontainebleau. Built in 1952, this brick and cast-stone basilica features single-center lancet openings and buttresses that thrust above the roof. The front-facing gable contains a stained-glass rose window, and the bell tower extends skyward through the limbs of the surrounding live oaks. Directly across from Gloria Dei, on a grassy island where Napoleon Avenue becomes Broad Street, is the Broadmoor Playspot, a lovingly tended park enjoyed by the neighborhood children.

Cross Napoleon Avenue on foot to visit the Rosa Keller Branch of the New Orleans Public Library. Formerly known as the Hardie-Fattel House, this landmark is on the National Register. Return to the west side of Napoleon and note the two-story residence at 3852 Napoleon. This stucco home, built in 1910, features prominent arches on impost blocks and is reminiscent of the Art Nouveau style of design. Next door at 3818-20 is a large, double house, resembling an Italian palazzo, that features an elegant arcade on the first floor and a dramatic columnar loggia on the second floor. The tile roof of this rough stucco structure continues into prominent overhangs.

Continue driving, riding, or walking on Napoleon toward Claiborne Avenue, taking note of the extraordinary array of homes, the majority built in the 1930s. On either side of this wide avenue are



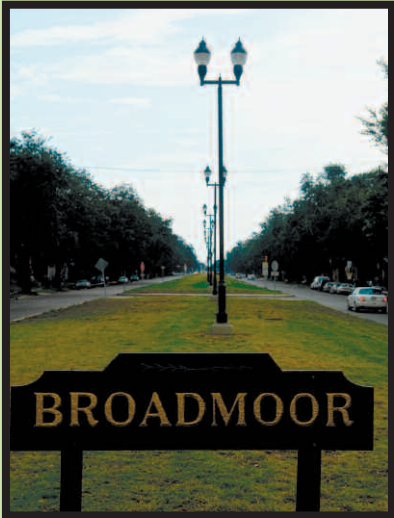
MAP: DANIEL WINKERT

examples of houses with motifs and elements ranging from Spanish



PHOTO: EDWARD HALL

to Tudor, from Classical to early Louisiana plantation style. Halfway between Fontainebleau and Claiborne, turn right on South Galvez. Here you will notice examples of early 20th-century American home design, such as the raised Craftsman cottage at 4510 South Galvez and the sprawling brick Prairie-Style house at 3416 Upperline, near the corner of South Galvez and Upperline. Continue on South Galvez to Jefferson Avenue. Turn left on Jefferson, driving six blocks back to Claiborne Avenue, where once beyond the neutral ground you will leave Broadmoor.



- 1719** Included in land grant obtained by Jean Baptiste le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, soon after he founded the city of Nouvelle Orleans
- 1857** Plans drawn up to drain the area
- 1871** First drainage canal dug under present day Claiborne Avenue
- 1902** Pumping Station # 1 completed
- 1910** New, large capacity screw pumps designed by Albert Baldwin Wood installed at Pumping Station #1
- 1922** Andrew H. Wilson School opens
- 1925** All of Broadmoor serviced by sewer and water lines and public utilities and new streetcar lines established on S. Claiborne and Napoleon Avenues
- 1930** Publication of the *Broadmoor News* begins, coinciding with formation of Broadmoor Civic Improvement Association
- 1970** Broadmoor Improvement Association incorporated
- 1986** New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission designates the Hardie-Fattel House a landmark
- 1999** Southeast Louisiana Flood Drainage Control Project begins four year endeavor to build new underground canals in the area
- 2003** Broadmoor listed in the National Register of Historic Places
- 2005** Hurricane Katrina hits New Orleans and Broadmoor submerged by flood waters
- 2006** Broadmoor Improvement Association and Harvard University develop comprehensive rebuilding plan