



**New restaurant called  
oldest Uptown buiding**



A renovated property in the rapidly redeveloping Lower Garden District has been recognized as the oldest known structure in New Orleans upriver from the French Quarter.

Located at 1539 Religious St., the double Creole cottage dates to approximately 1810, according to research conducted by staff from the city's Historic District Landmarks Commission. The commission concluded that would make it the oldest-known structure above Canal Street, which was the city's upriver boundary during its early years. In August, the commission voted to designate the building as a historic property.

The building is now home to Le Citron Bistro, a restaurant opened in July by David Baird and his company, Warehouse Café Properties LLC.

Baird says the building, which is roughly 1,900-square-feet, had been used as a home and for a variety of commercial uses through its history, but was most recently a woodworking shop and storehouse. "It was a shell, no electricity, no plumbing," he says.

He bought the property in July 2003 and spent about a year in extensive renovations before opening the restaurant. He says some of the building's characteristics discovered during the renovation indicated that it was older than previously thought.

Baird says the rate of large-scale redevelopment nearby motivated him to seek official recognition for the building's historical significance. Major residential and retail developments have risen on adjacent lots in recent years, including the Wal-Mart Supercenter, while the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center has plans to expand its own facility nearby.

Baird has been involved in developing several restaurants and bars in the city, including the Warehouse Café and Vic's Kangaroo Café. —I.M.

