

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Chairman: Lucy Denton

Purpose

The purpose of this committee is to make recommendations to restore or rebuild and protect our historical sites and neighborhoods for the people of Biloxi, past, present and future.

Katrina's destruction of our historic sites and buildings was massive: over 250 National Register properties were destroyed along the Coast counties, 1,300 were severely damaged and another 4,000 received damage. The National Trust for Historic Places lists the Mississippi Gulf Coast on the list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places – a critical blow for an area well known for its historic preservation. In Biloxi, much of the architectural heritage of the city was washed away when so many historic homes and buildings were destroyed. That unique Biloxi style will be lost forever unless those buildings that survived are restored and the Biloxi style is replicated in future buildings.



PHOTO: JOHN FITZHUGH/SUN HERALD

ABOVE: Tullis-Tuldano Manor, a 19th-century antebellum home in Biloxi made of red-clay bricks from this region, was not grand as some architecture from the 1950s, but its history reflects Biloxi culture. Hurricane Camille badly damaged the manor in 1969. During restoration, the city returned it and the slave quarters near it to their original appearance, using them as a museum and popular site for weddings and local gatherings. Hurricane Katrina, showing no respect to Tullis-Tuledano, forced the Grand Casino Biloxi barge on top of the house site.

Recommendations

Zoning

43. *Review and define the historical districts and strictly adhere to the zoning and the Design Review Guidelines.*
44. *Strictly avoid granting any commercial zoning along the beachfront in areas already zoned as residential.*

Historical Preservation

45. *Respond to the urgency of stabilizing and securing the city-owned damaged historical landmarks/structures to stop further deterioration.*
46. *Consider these structures as priorities for preservation and restoration or rebuilding: Beauvoir, Dantzer House, Tullis-Toledano Manor, Magnolia Hotel, Old Brick House, Bond House, Biloxi Lighthouse, Lighthouse Keeper's House, Swetman House, US Coast Guard Station, Saenger Theater, Brielmaier House, Creole Cottage, Biloxi City Hall, Biloxi Library, #3 Fire Company.*
47. *Obtain right of first refusal for the City when privately owned historic properties such as the Old Biloxi Library are up for sale.*
48. *Gain agreement to establish building codes, which will create unity of design and maintain a Sense of place as recommended by the Governor's Commission.*

BELOW: The historic Saenger Theater in Biloxi.



49. *Keep the integrity of historical neighborhoods by placing all utilities underground.*
50. *Avoid moving the Magnolia Hotel in order not to place it in harm's way.*

51. *Attempt to acquire the properties at the east and west corner of Porter and directly behind the east corner of Porter to add to the visitors center complex. **If these properties cannot be acquired, structures built must adhere to the AHRC Design Recommendations and meet the City's building codes.***



52. *Begin collecting Biloxi historic artifacts that were salvaged from homes and businesses for display in the Biloxi Museum.*

53. *Strongly enforce current signage codes and strengthen these codes if necessary to ensure signage is appropriate for historical areas.*



PHOTOS: SUN HERALD

54. *Beachfront property zoned residential must remain residential. **Commercial businesses must not be given variances in these areas, especially businesses such as pawnshops and service stations.***

55. *Place historical markers downtown to create a walking and driving tour.*

56. *Strongly encourage knowledge and enforcement of ordinances and laws governing the preservation of existing structures and construction of compatible infill in the City's historic districts and around all historic resources.*

ABOVE: The Old Brick House, a mid-1800s house of locally made brick, is one of Biloxi's most important structures because it represents the period of the city's earliest substantial settlement. The front porch of the Old Brick House collapsed during Hurricane Katrina, but the structure will be saved.

57. *Conduct a comprehensive update of the City's six (6) locally-designated historic districts to identify remaining contributing structures; review the 154 locally designated landmarks and the additional new designations; and reevaluate district boundaries for updating the Biloxi Land Development Ordinance and the Architectural and Historical Review Commission's "Design Review Guidelines."* **The City of Biloxi has given preliminary approval for a 2006 CLG grant to update its six locally designated historic districts and review its landmarks.**



58. *Support the concept of leaving the Town Green as green space.*
59. *Ensure Beauvoir is preserved.*
60. *Buildings that were destroyed should be reviewed and the feasibility of building replicas should be determined.*

Trees, Green Space, and Gardens

61. *Strongly encourage the preservation of the City's green spaces and centurion trees by enforcing tree ordinances. **Restore the beauty of Beach Boulevard by nurturing damaged oaks and replace where appropriate.***
62. *Protect and preserve our centurion trees. **The City must not allow these trees to be replaced by saplings even when enticed by developers who promise a fifty to one ratio of replanting.***
63. *Do not give variances to remove trees for development.*
64. *Support the development of parks, gardens and green space.*
65. *Support the development of the Mississippi Renaissance Gardens and*

Horticultural Center: A Mississippi Renaissance Garden and Horticultural Center would provide a place for people to reconnect with the beauty of their environment, commemorate the Renaissance of the State of Mississippi and continually renew the spirit of the people and the volunteers who are making our Renaissance possible. The non-profit horticultural and therapeutic garden for survivors and volunteers would consist of various themed gardens, such as a Memorial Garden, a Therapeutic Garden, a Children’s Plant and Play Garden, a Sensory Garden, an Enabling Garden and a Community Garden, along with classrooms available for community and educational use. A gift shop would generate revenue and the area would provide an attraction for local artists to exhibit nature-related works. A detailed plan has been prepared by the committee.

Funding.

66. *Use FEMA monies at 90% to restore or rebuild City-owned historical buildings.*
67. *Use FEMA Emergency funds to shore up those buildings, which are in danger of further deterioration.*
68. *Use funds from Historical Preservation Trusts and organizations to restore City-owned historical buildings.*
69. *Seek foundation and corporate grants such as the Kellogg Foundation and AT&T Corporate Responsibility program. An initial list of potential grant-issuing entities was developed by the committee.*
70. *Fund any remaining historic preservation needs with local, county or state appropriations.*

Historical Preservation Action Plan

The Historical Preservation Committee recommends the City embrace the following time frame for the protecting, restoring and rebuilding, of our historical buildings.

Stage One

This stage includes the shoring up of City owned damaged buildings in danger of further deterioration; the development of conceptual plans to create a Visitor's Center and Biloxi Museum Complex at the Danzler House site; and conducting of a study by experts to determine what is needed to restore existing damaged buildings or rebuild destroyed buildings.

Timeline: August, 2006 through December, 2006.

- > Repair those City-owned buildings that are still standing.
- > Secure additional property at the Lighthouse site to use for Visitor's Center and Museum Complex.
- > Have an architect create a design for the Visitor's Center and Museum Complex including the rebuilding of the Dantzler House.

BELOW: The Biloxi Visitor's Center.



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- > Write grants and secure FEMA monies.
 - > Have a team of architects and construction engineers conduct a study to determine what is needed to restore existing buildings and rebuild demolished buildings.

Stage Two

This stage includes breaking ground for the Visitor's Center and Museum Complex and preparing for other restorations and rebuilds.

Timeline: January, 2007 through May, 2007.

- > Begin Construction on the Visitor's Center & Museum Complex.
- > Have architect complete plans for restoring or rebuilding remaining historical buildings.
- > Determine overlapping time frames for completing the construction on remaining historical buildings.

Stage Three

This stage includes the completion of the Visitor's Center and Museum Complex and beginning of other restorations and rebuilds.

Timeline: June, 2007 through June, 2008.

- > Complete Visitor's Center Complex.
- > Begin construction on other historical sites.

Stage Four

This stage includes the completion of all restorations and rebuilds.

Timeline: June, 2008 through June, 2009

- > Complete all restorations and rebuilds.



PHOTO: DAVID PURDY/SUN HERALD

LEFT: Grand Casino Biloxi has grown in spurts since its opening in January, 1994, a growth reflected in one of the largest gambling barges among the Coast's 13 casinos in business at the time of Katrina. The hurricane swept the Grand, now part of Harrah's Entertainment, across U.S. 90. The Grand plans to reopen on Casino Row, this time, with the gambling taking place in a land hotel because the state, post-Katrina, approved land-based gambling.

