

'This Old House' series to focus on New Orleans

TV series to restore New Orleans homes

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We've heard the continuing bad news about the ruined architecture and neighborhoods of New Orleans, so we can turn with relief to This Old House at 10:30 a.m. Sunday on PBS' WNEO/WEAO (Channels 45/49) for the second project of the 2008 season, This Old House Helps New Orleans Rebuild.

This promises to be an inspiring project. Encompassing 10 shows, it covers: the restoration of a damaged circa 1892 Creole-style shotgun single house in the Lower Ninth Ward; another shotgun house in another neighborhood restored through private efforts; other recovery efforts happening throughout the city, including the restoration of a house for an owner in a wheelchair done for free by volunteers; the creation of Musicians' Village, conceived by famed saxophonist Branford Marsalis and musician, composer and actor Harry Connick Jr. in conjunction with Habitat for Humanity. A shotgun-style house features a long, narrow building with rooms one behind the other.

This Old House experts will work with local architect Rick Fifield and builder Carl Hithe to help renovate the existing 1,200-square-foot house owned by Rashida Ferdinand, a recipient of the Historic Building Recovery Grants program.

They also plan to add on 1,070 square feet to the first and second floors in what is known locally as a "camelback" addition.

In conjunction with the local historic district guidelines, and with guidance from the Preservation Resource Center, the house will be restored with accurate period details, while also being updated for modern living.

Bars will be removed from the windows and wide, covered porches will be added on both the old and new work.

Flood-damaged floors, mantels and windows will be restored, as the vacant property is converted from a one-bedroom, one-bath house, into a three-bedroom, two-bath fully renovated home.

Thisoldhouse.com will feature progress of the New Orleans project 24/7 through four Webcams powered by [EarthCam](#).

Visitors to <http://www.thisoldhouse.com/toh/> also will be able to access other special features, such as a "before" photo gallery, project overview, and time-lapse archive where an in-depth look at the project's progress may be tracked once the transformation has concluded.

This Old House magazine will feature the New Orleans project starting with the April issue.

Here are some facts from the PBS show to put its new series in context. Their information comes from FEMA Gulf Coast Recovery, and the New Orleans Field Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation:

- More than two years have passed since Hurricane Katrina struck more than 150,000 homes in Louisiana.
- The storm devastated a 90,000-square-mile area, roughly the size of Great Britain, flooding 80 percent of New Orleans, equivalent to an area the size of Manhattan.
- Forcing more than 270,000 people into shelters after it made landfall, Katrina resulted in the largest displacement of Americans in our nation's history.
- More than 112,000 travel trailers and mobile homes are serving as temporary homes for Katrina victims, far outnumbering any housing mission in FEMA's history.
- Hundreds of thousands of local residents have been left unemployed since Katrina. The total economic impact of the storm is estimated in excess of \$150 billion in Louisiana and Mississippi.
- Historic districts in the center of the city of New Orleans had levels of floodwater from two to eight feet.
- Some 15 percent of the homes in historic districts of New Orleans suffered damage as the result of Hurricane Katrina.