

**Mississippi Department of Archives and History
National Trust for Historic Preservation**

Association for Preservation Technology, Int'l. Volunteer Team #4: February 12 – 19, 2006
Week in Review

Team Members

- Jennifer Baughn, Jackson, MS: Architectural Historian, Field Coordinator, and Den Mother Extraordinaire
- David Black, Raleigh, NC: Preservation Architect
- Beth Haydon, Chicago, IL: Preservation Specialist
- Bob Hunnes, Boulder, CO: Structural Engineer
- Janet Null, Troy, NY: Preservation Architect
- Carrie Zaboroski, Dallas, TX: Preservation Architect

The fourth APT volunteer team responding to the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina returns home today, February 19, 2006. We're traveling to homes across the country from a busy week centered on Mississippi's Gulf Coast. Many thanks to Brian Robinson, APT Vice President, Savannah College of Art and Design, for organizing a diverse team of historic building professionals that formed a very cohesive group. The team is in debt to the combined efforts and expertise of Jennifer Baughn, Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH); Lolly Barnes, National Trust for Historic Preservation; and Patrick Sparks, Structural Engineer. Their leadership enabled us to assess 130 buildings in Gulfport, meet with ten homeowners, navigate the coastal communities, enjoy local seafood and BBQ, and nest comfortably in the Preservation House. We appreciate y'all's effort and thank you for giving us the opportunity to help where needed. Below is a review of our week's activities.

"Normal" conditions throughout the Gulf Coast are, in fact, extraordinary. Snapped trees, relocated cars, blue-tarped roofs, skeletal marquees, hand-written street signs, and boarded-up buildings consume the landscape. On the other hand, beach cleaning machines, salvaged architectural features, construction workers, pruned live oaks, and "open" signs signal that progress is spreading. In the midst of debris piles and hollow casino barges, a tangible energy to restore ordinary conditions is growing, whether in the form of reopening businesses, planning Mardi Gras parades, or welcoming volunteers such as ourselves.

Our team split into two small groups to address the week's tasks. One of them focused on estimating the rehabilitation costs for downtown Gulfport's civic, cultural, and commercial community. The group streamlined the condition assessment and cost estimating process and completed surveys for all 130 buildings in the area, which includes a historic district. Highlights cover the entire downtown area and include a Victorian train station, Venetian-Gothic revival office blocks, and a sleek, Moderne cold-storage facility. MDAH will forward the condition assessments and cost estimates to the Gulfport Main Street Program to support future grant applications.

The second APT group traveled along the coast, meeting with the owners of ten historic homes who had responded to the assessment letters that were completed by previous APT teams. The site visits covered beach front mansions and cottages in Pass Christian and Long Beach, several Arts and Crafts bungalows in Gulfport and Bay Saint Louis (which have new beachfront views thanks to Katrina's land-clearing force), a riverside cottage in Moss Point, and the former Waveland School which had been converted to the community's civic center. Each homeowner we met exhibited a resilient determination to move forward and restore the integrity of his/her historic house. Some homeowners wondered if rebuilding was an option, others needed guidance on where to begin, several were already restoring their houses and needed direction for the next step, a few needed to be convinced that restoration was cheaper than tearing down and building anew, and one simply needed reassurance that he wasn't crazy to tackle such a

daunting task. Every homeowner exhibited admirable strength while trying to determine the best course of action. Their resolve is inspiring.

At the end of the day, our team enjoyed the considerable comforts of Preservation House. The cots and air mattresses proved sufficient for restful nights. Recent luxuries include heat on both floors, a shower in the one working bathroom, wireless internet, and a full kitchen. We were a domestic group, staying in several nights to cook group dinners, yet we enjoyed several meals out at local restaurants, too.

The next Biloxi-based APT team is scheduled for March 19-26, 2006, and more teams are currently being organized through May. MDAH is in immediate need of volunteers with experience in code related issues (especially as they pertain to flood situations and conditions), March 9-15, 2006, in Gulfport. Many thanks again to those organizing APT's volunteers. We are all so glad to have had an opportunity to apply our skills to this great coastal community. If you are interested in joining a team, please call Brian Scott Robinson, APT Vice President, Savannah College of Art and Design at 912-262-6250 or email him at brobinso@scad.edu.

Sincerely,

The APT Volunteer Team #4