

Program Summary:

Resilient reconstruction of historic jazz landmark integrating salvaged masonry, steel structure, and climate-responsive strategies preserving cultural identity.

Program Statement:

Situated on a historic avenue in New Orleans, this project reconstructs one of the few historic buildings preserved following the widespread destruction caused by Hurricane Ida in 2021. Although the building was largely destroyed, its significance as a cultural landmark—remembered as the place where Louis Armstrong spent much of his childhood and widely regarded as the birthplace of jazz—inspired an ambitious effort to preserve and reconstruct it rather than lose a piece of history. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the design team balanced historic authenticity with resilient construction to preserve the landmark. Although the building lost eligibility for Historic Tax Credits after the storm, it remained protected by a Preservation Easement administered by the Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans. Working closely with the Preservation Resource Center and its Easement Committee, the design team followed the National Park Service's Standards for Reconstruction to faithfully restore the historic exterior while developing a resilient structural system for a changing climate. The rebuilt structure combines a steel frame and metal stud walls with carefully salvaged historic brick masonry incorporated into a new cavity wall assembly. Today, the project serves as a catalyst to revitalize South Rampart Street, illustrating how historic preservation and resilient design can work together to protect cultural heritage while fostering environmental, economic, and community resilience.

RR135.01

Building Area: (sf)
4,200 sf

Cost per Square Foot:
\$310/sf

Construction Cost
\$1,300,000

Date of Completion:
2026

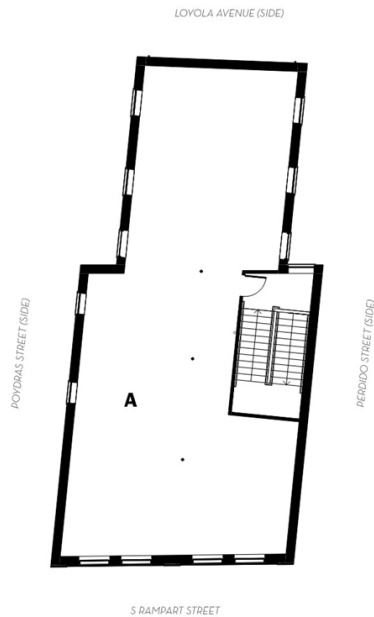
RR135.02

Originally a secondhand store, later a tailor shop, and eventually a renowned record store frequented by Louis Armstrong, the building has been carefully reconstructed brick by brick and strengthened to withstand future climate events.



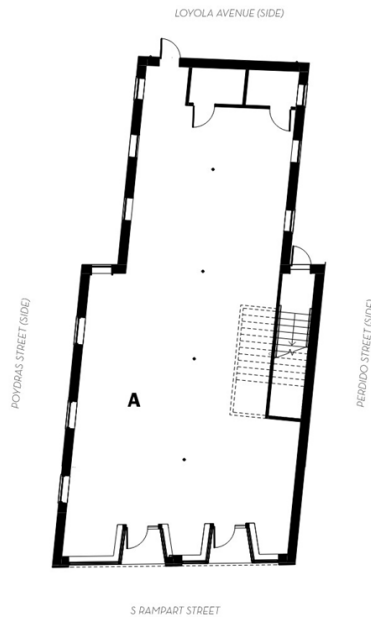
RR135.03

A plan drawing, pictured here, depicts the open-plan layout of this two-story building.



A SHELL SPACE

SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



RR135.04

A photo of the building in 2011 before it was destroyed by Hurricane Ida in 2021. The original building was built around 1910.



RR135.05

The family who lived in the building resided upstairs and operated a secondhand store, later expanding the ground floor into a tailor shop.

Soon after, they took in a young Louis Armstrong, offering him work and encouraging his early musical development. Later on, Armstrong's childhood friend—who also lived in the building—opened Morris Music on the first floor, the city's first jazz record store.



RR135.06

After the building was destroyed in 2021, each brick was collected and catalogued on site, with the aim of rebuilding this historically significant structure exactly as it once stood.



RR135.07

Construction process, 2025



RR135.08

Construction process, 2025



RR135.09

The image on the left documents the building boarded up following the storm, while the image on the right shows its full restoration.



RR135.10

A new steel frame and metal stud system provides interior structural support while forming a secondary protective layer for the original brick walls. New stairs were also introduced.



RR135.11

The layered materiality of the reconstruction combines salvaged brick from the original façade with new and traditional construction methods, demonstrating a thoughtful and inventive approach to building for the future.



RR135.12

New windows were installed, preserving the original view to the neighboring building and maintaining the building's spatial experience.



RR135.13

After nearly 5 years, the building is now complete and evokes the same architectural integrity prior to the building's damage from Hurricane Ida.

