Buyers eye historic mansion

By JOHN McMILLAN
River parishes bureau

BURNSIDE — Dorian Bennett said his New Orleans real estate firm has several potential purchasers for the $2,950,000 Houmas House, and whoever buys the Greek Revival mansion will keep it open to the public.

The sales price includes the almost 11,000-square-foot home built in 1840, outbuildings and 24 acres.

The galleries make up another 4,500 square feet, Bennett said.

The home, considered one of the premier plantation sites in Louisiana, was restored in 1940 by Dr. George Crozat, whose 22 heirs placed it on the market several weeks ago.

“The majority of the owners decided the best thing for them was to sell the home,” Bennett said.

In addition to the home, Neal Auction Co. of New Orleans plans to auction off the furnishings May 17 and May 18.

Bennett said the home may be sold before the auction and the new owner would have an opportunity to bid on the furnishings.

According to the Ascension Parish Tourist Commission, the home is “furnished with 1840s-period pieces of early Louisiana craftsmanship from Dr. Crozat’s collection.”

“Everyone who is looking at purchasing the plantation is planning on keeping it open to the public,” Bennett said.

In documents provided by the Tourist Commission, the history of the plantation goes back to the 18th century.

Houmas Indians sold the land upon which the columned mansion sits to Maruice Conway and Alexandre Latil in the last quarter of the 18th century; they built a small house on the property.

In 1812, Revolutionary War Gen. Wade Hampton of South Carolina bought the land.

The general’s daughter, Caroline, and her husband, John Smith Preston, built the Greek Revival mansion, preserving the original four-room house, later attached to the great house by an arched carriage way.

In 1858, the Prestons sold the house and approximately 12,000 acres to Irishman John Burnside for $1 million.

Burnside expanded his holdings to 20,000 acres and planted vast fields of sugar cane and built four mills to process the cane.

During the Civil War, Union Gen. Benjamin Butler tried to occupy the plantation, but Burnside declared his...
The Houmas House, built in 1840 by John Smith Preston and restored in 1940 by Dr. George Crozat, is being offered for sale by Crozat's heirs for $2,950,000 for the house, outbuildings and 24 acres in Burnside. The furnishings are scheduled for auction.

**Mansion**

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immunity as a British subject and the home was spared.

After Burnside's death, Col. William Porcher Miles became the owner. The plantation flourished until his death in 1899, when most of the land was sold and the house fell into a state of disrepair.

In 1940, Dr. Crozat purchased the house and remaining property from the Miles family and began restoration.

The plantation house was the setting for the film "Hush, Hush, Sweet Charlotte," starring Betty Davis, Olivia De Havilland and Joseph Cotton, and several television movies.

Over the years, Houmas House has been featured in a number of national magazines, including National Geographic, Life, House Beautiful, House and Garden, Ladies Home Journal and Holiday Magazine.

* Northbound off-ramp from I-110 to Chippewa Street will be closed from 10 p.m. to 6:30 a.m. Wednesday. Traffic will be detoured around work zone so repairs can be made to the spalled slab at the bottom of ramp.

Pick 3: 6-9-1
Pick 4: 8-7-2-0

The Associated Press provides Powerball results.
The Louisiana Lottery Corp. provides results for the other games.