COLONIAL STYLING . . . AUTHENTIC FINISHING

ART CENTER

By FRANCES LOVE

Hot beeswax on old brick floors, hand-carved wood, and authentic detailing of plaster cornices are some of the interior highlights of the turn-of-the-nineteenth-century colonial Louisiana styling reproduced for the new Art Center for Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, on the corner of Girard Park Drive and St. Mary.

During the entire month of March everyone who has contributed to the building fund, including area organizations, businesses, and civic clubs, will have an opportunity to see the building and hold meetings or parties there. The doors will open permanently to the public on April 1st. Everyone who contributes to this building fund automatically becomes a member of the Art Center. Donations received before March 3 will entitle the giver to membership to the Art Center and an invitation to the formal opening reception to be held here.

"The building of this Art Center is a good example of what private giving can do to improve the quality of a state-supported school," Fred Bates, Lafayette geologist and a past president of the USL Foundation, said. "Private giving is not a matter of survival for a state university, but it may be the choice between mediocrity and superiority of learning."

The Art Center has been built by the University of Southwestern Louisiana Foundation on land donated to them for this purpose by the late Mr. Maurice Heymann. A. Hays Town, native of Lafayette and a foremost authority on colonial Louisiana architecture, designed the building. Contractors have been the late Horace B. Rickey and his son, Horace B. Rickey, Jr. These men have worked together since 1962 while the building fund was being accumulated.

Fred Daspit, an assistant professor of art at the University of Southwestern Louisiana, will be the curator. A native of St. Martinville, Daspit brings a sensitive interest of art and crafts of all kinds and a special appreciation in Louisiana's art heritage to this position.

The Louisiana collection of paintings already owned by the USL Foundation will have a permanent home in this new building. In addition Daspit expects to bring a constant change of exhibits to the second floor galleries that will include art of all kinds.

D. S. "Shine" Young, President of the USL Foundation Board of Directors and M. L. "Tigue" Moore, stand at the entrance of the Art Center for Southwestern Louisiana. Individuals and families are urged to join the Art Center membership now in order to take part in the opening activities in March.
Another native of our area who is making a major contribution to the Art Center is Dan Bouliigny, a Lafayette interior decorator who was born and raised in Abbeville. He is donating the first floor draperies that will be finished with gold-leaf cornices in two of the rooms.

Undoubtedly, the most distinctive feature of this new building is its color. The building and its twenty-eight two-story brick columns are painted a very pale shade of pink that was produced by mixing old brick dust with the paint base. Since most of us have grown up thinking that all ante-bellum columns must be white, this soft pastel shade has a very stunning effect on most people at first glance. When most of us get used to the pink glow, the scheme of colors that includes soft charcoal grey slate roofing, gray-green shutters, and a white second story gallery rail, is quite pleasing.

Architect Town has assured us that many houses and public buildings of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were painted like this in colonial Louisiana.

Interior walls on the first floor are muted tints that will blend as perfect background for the Louisiana art collection.

"The Art Center building is a composite of many of the buildings and homes of early Louisiana," Town said.

One of the three fireplace facades is supported by Ionic columns similar to the empire style of the ones at Chretien Point near Sunset. An outside stairway is reminiscent of The Shadows at New Iberia. Doric columns are almost identical in the style of the Hermitage at Darrow, La.

The newel post and stair railing as well as the bricks are from Old Martin Hall from the USL campus, Horace B. Rickey said.

Lye, vinegar and beeswax have been rubbed into the cypress paneling for a light-toned aged finish; and first floor cornices are of plaster like the beauties completed before the War of Secession. The brick flooring was laid in an old pattern and finished with beeswax kept boiling hot in an iron pot during application.

"There are many fine patient craftsmen in Lafayette, who have done all of the excellent detail by hand," Town said.

Despite the authentic finishing of the Art Center the building benefits from modern materials and systems. Under the old slate shingles is a fire-proof roof, and concrete rather than wood is used between floors. An elevator and a small modern kitchen enhance the convenience of the building which is centrally heated and cooled.

Several thousand men and women from our area have worked together to provide the money for this building. About $50,000 is still needed to complete this project. Everyone who contributes to this new cultural center receives a membership card and will be privileged to attend the formal opening reception on Sunday, March 3rd.

Contributions are income tax deductible and may be sent to P. O. Drawer 4290, USL Station.

MARCH, 1968
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHWESTERN LOUISIANA FOUNDATION
95,900 sq.ft.

HERBERT HEYMANN

PLAT SHOWING PROPERTY OF
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHWESTERN LOUISIANA FOUNDATION
SITUATED IN THE CITY OF LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA

RUSSELL CAFFERY & ASSOCIATES
CIVIL ENGINEERS
LAFAYETTE, LA.

SCALE: 1"=60'
MAY 21, 1968

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