The 'Streetcar Named Desire' is moved onto a flatbed truck Thursday to be taken away for repairs.

‘Desire’ streetcar headed for storage

By The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — For years, a retired, vintage streetcar, with the name “DESIRE” showing through the little window above the driver’s seat, has drawn glances from tourists walking through the French Quarter.

On Thursday, the 86-year-old "Streetcar Named Desire," in veneration of the Tennessee Williams play, was hoisted aboard a flatbed truck and shipped to the maintenance yard of the city’s Regional Transit Authority.

There, the wood, canvas and sheet metal will be protected from the elements. RTA officials said they hope to restore it for possible exhibition later, but those plans are incomplete.

The car has been on display at the Old U.S. Mint since 1979. It was named for the route that ran through the French Quarter to Desire Street.

“We have reached an agreement with the Louisiana State Museum to transfer ownership to the RTA," said Wayne Dupre, RTA executive director. "No one wanted to see the car continue to deteriorate as it sat without protection from the weather."

“We now have a place to store the old car until such time as it can be renovated.”

Officially designated as Car 453, the streetcar is one of 25 Brill semi-convertible cars purchased for less than $5,000 in 1906 from the American Car Co. of St. Louis. It was rebuilt in 1917.

Though 24 of the cars were retired from regular service in 1935, Car 453 was retained as a training vehicle for New Orleans Public Service Inc. streetcar operators. NOPSI is a New Orleans electric and gas utility that once ran the streetcar system.

Car 453 was rebuilt again in the early 1970s as part of a scheme to tour the country to promote New Orleans tourism. But the tour never materialized and the car wound up the property of the state museum system in 1979.