**Old Home Converted To Local Art Gallery**

**BY FLETCHER CESERI**

The partners gave top consideration to protection of the valuable contents of the gallery, especially vulnerable to the hot, damp Louisiana climate. They insulated thoroughly and installed a heating-cooling system which keeps the temperature at a constant 70 degrees, the ideal temperature for paper. A hygrometer polices humidity and keeps it around 45 per cent. An electronic air filter keeps the air clean, dust can be harmful to prints.

Although the old Bacque home no longer shelters the family and will probably hear little of the patter of small feet, its function today, exhibiting antique and contemporary graphic art, may very well be just as noble.

The new gallery is located at 119 Fletcher Lane, about a mile from their present garden. The Bacques for development of the rooms and create a more intimate atmosphere. And we installed track lighting,” Fletcher explained.

The partners consider their major innovation was the carpeting of the walls. They chose a warm, creamy beige carpet which is an ideal background for display. The carpet eliminates the problems of nail holes, always worrisome when pictures are changed frequently as they are in a gallery. Acoustics and insulation have also been helped by the carpeting.

Like the building, the furnishings are a blend of contemporary and antique. Among the furnishings are chrome and suede armchairs, a 17th century Tuscan blanket chest, angular chrome floor lamps and a 1740 tripod table.

The newer part of the home was separated from its older part on S. College Rd., where builders were developing an office building complex. Fletcher and Ceseri moved their section to the gallery site on the Fletcher property at 119 Fletcher Lane.

The original section of the Bacque home is believed to have been built about 1843 by Arnaud Bacque, an architect, who styled it after typical Cajun cottages. It consisted of two rooms, a high peaked, shingled roof, and the exterior walls were made of “bousillage,” mud bound together with dried moss or animal hair.

Mrs. Gus Bacque, who with her husband, lived in the home for a period after World War II, said there had been a gar- conière in the attic but the stairs to it had been removed before she occupied it. Another section of the home was added to the Cajun cottage about 1880, and a sixth room, a kitchen, was added between 1900 and 1910.

Mrs. Pauline Bacque Lasserre, Arnaud Bacque’s daughter, cared for her father in his home when he became ill and after his death she was given the property in 1935 or 1936.

Another of Bacque’s daughters, Mrs. Pauline Bacque McBride, also occupied the home with her adopted nephew, Gus Bacque, in 1965. Subsequently Gus Bacque bought the home from his mother.

The property on which the home was located was sold by the Bacques for development and the old family home had to be disposed of. Kenny Abshire, an antique dealer, bought it with the intention of moving it away, but instead sold the newer part to Fletcher and the older part to Mrs. Robert Smith, who intends to restore it.

Fletcher and Ceseri were about to build a modern art gallery when they discovered the Bacque home on S. College, about a mile from their site. They learned that Abshire planned to demolish the newer part of the home, about 1,000 square feet, but the partners considered the cypress pine and redwood lumber of excellent quality and the entire section perfect for what they wanted. Their plan was not to restore, but rather to adapt the rooms to their need for gallery space.

Fletcher said the simple Victorian lines of the old home were suited to their needs and the section fits perfectly on the new site. The original bay window looks down on the Fletcher garden just as though it had always done so, Fletcher said, and otherwise the entire building seems to be “at home” on its new site.

A new tin roof has been added and Ceseri designed a front porch with a hipped roof for the entrance.

Among the innovations made to convert the structure to a gallery is the installation of solid sheets of bronze solar reflective glass to replace the original windows and panes. The new glass filters out ultraviolet rays, harmful to prints, drawings and furnishings, and is a better insulation material than window glass. Further, the specialized glass gives a lovely golden tint to the scene outside, even on a gray day. As Fletcher said, “It’s almost like looking at the world through rose-colored glasses.”

“We lowered the ceilings a bit to improve the proportions of the rooms and create a more intimate atmosphere, and we installed track The property at the original unit of the house, about 135 years old. The section at left was converted to an art gallery.