



ARCHITECTURE

EHLINGER & ASSOCIATES

THIRD QUARTER 1998



ST. BRIDE'S, Fleet Street, London, England, U.K.
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St. Bride's, Fleet Street London, England, U.K.

The great Fire of London in 1666 destroyed the whole city except its eastern and northern edges at the time. The populace set about rebuilding their homes first, but it wasn't long thereafter that attention was given to public buildings including the city's churches. The king, Charles II, turned to his friend, Sir Christopher Wren, who was an architect, a mathematician, a surveyor, a professor at Oxford, an astronomer, a model maker, and a high churchman. The committee for rebuilding the City churches consisted of Wren, the Bishop of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

There were 52 churches that were replaced by Wren and all are paradigms of restraint and simplicity. Of these 52, only 40 are standing today, many of them only retain portions of Wren's handiwork being victims of Victorian revival movements given into by their parishioners and World War II bombings.

The Fleet Street section of London is where all the printing and publishing takes place, which was true at the time that St. Bride's, this issue's limited edition signed print by Ladd P. Ehlinger, was rebuilt. At that time the area was commercial and

residential, although today few people live in the neighborhood

Many London neighborhood churches were in the center of the block, and were accessed by an alley fronting on one of the streets forming the block. The church itself fronted on a courtyard connected to the alley or on the alley itself, thereby leaving more street commercial frontage. St. Bride's is of this type.

St. Bride's was executed in the Renaissance style by Wren in white Portland stone. The steeple portion fronts on the alley and contains the entrance and narthex. The steeple tapers upward with a series of octagonal drums which diminish in size to a spirelet, giving a "wedding cake" appearance. The interior was reputed to have been magnificent, but unfortunately was gutted in 1940. The nave is a simple space with large arched windows to match those on the steeple. The central barrel vault over the nave and the cross vaulting over the aisles are as Wren designed them however.

SCHOOL SITED ON 280 YEARS OF HISTORY

E&A is currently performing architectural services for the Orleans Parish School Board at the Frederick Douglass High School (formally Francis T. Nicholls High School).

This project is especially interesting because the school is located in a unique and historically significant section of New Orleans just down river from the French Quarter. It is also because the school building is a particularly spectacular example of the architecture of the 1930's - Art Deco.

The School occupies a square block just 6 short walking blocks from the Mississippi River between Rampart Street (as an extension of the French Quarter street it was originally called Love Street), and St. Claude Avenue (originally Good Children Street) and only three blocks South of the Tennessee Williams' famous Desire Street.

The area was first occupied by small plantations - cattle, vegetables, oranges, pecans, breweries. The early settlers received grants from the Company of the Indies soon after New Orleans was founded in 1718 (280 years ago).

By 1834 the plantations had been sold and the area around the present school building had begun to be developed into street grids. Houses were built on lots according to an early style subdivision pattern called a Faubourg to accommodate the growth of the city beyond the original French Quarter location.

Today, one can see an architectural treasure chest of the 18th and 19th Centuries just within a few blocks of the school including many varieties of so called New Orleans Creole cottages, shotgun singles, and doubles, of every style from Edwardian to Greek Revival.

The original Francis T. Nicholls School building was opened in September of 1913 and was named after Francis Tillou Nicholls. Born in 1839, he was a confederate general who served two terms as governor of Louisiana and later became chief justice of the State Supreme Court.

A new building (the current school) was designed in 1938 or 1939 as PWA Project No. LA1019-F (the original plans that we have are not dated). The project was funded by the Federal Government under the post depression government work program called "not permitting waste". This, in part, explains the extravagant and spectacular auditorium, which could not be afforded in today's typical school budget.

The facility was dedicated on May 2, 1940 at ceremonies held at the school. The State Superintendent of Education said in his address, "within these walls may there always be respect for the individual, consideration and concern for others ... let us progress by helping boys and girls develop a wholesome knowledge of values, and teach them to use their intelligence."

Also speaking at the dedication was the regional director of the Federal Public

Works Administration in Chicago, he said "Letting men remain unemployed and materials lie idle is waste. No social system can survive the practice of waste."

The class of 1958 is celebrating their 40th year reunion this month. I spoke briefly to Paulette Ketry Barras, Chairperson of the Reunion, who remarked about the fabulous band concerts and plays held in the auditorium, and the great football teams.

I asked her if during her days at Nicholls the students used the ramp and large corridors for bringing their bicycles and parking them in the bicycle parking room originally located on the first floor.

renovations, and ADA (Americans With Disabilities Act) upgrades.

Unfortunately, there are no school board funds at this time (as far as we know) for sorely needed renovations to the auditorium. We have been searching the internet for possibilities under historic renovation funds, but have found none yet. Let us know if you have any ideas.

FREDERICK A. DOUGLASS

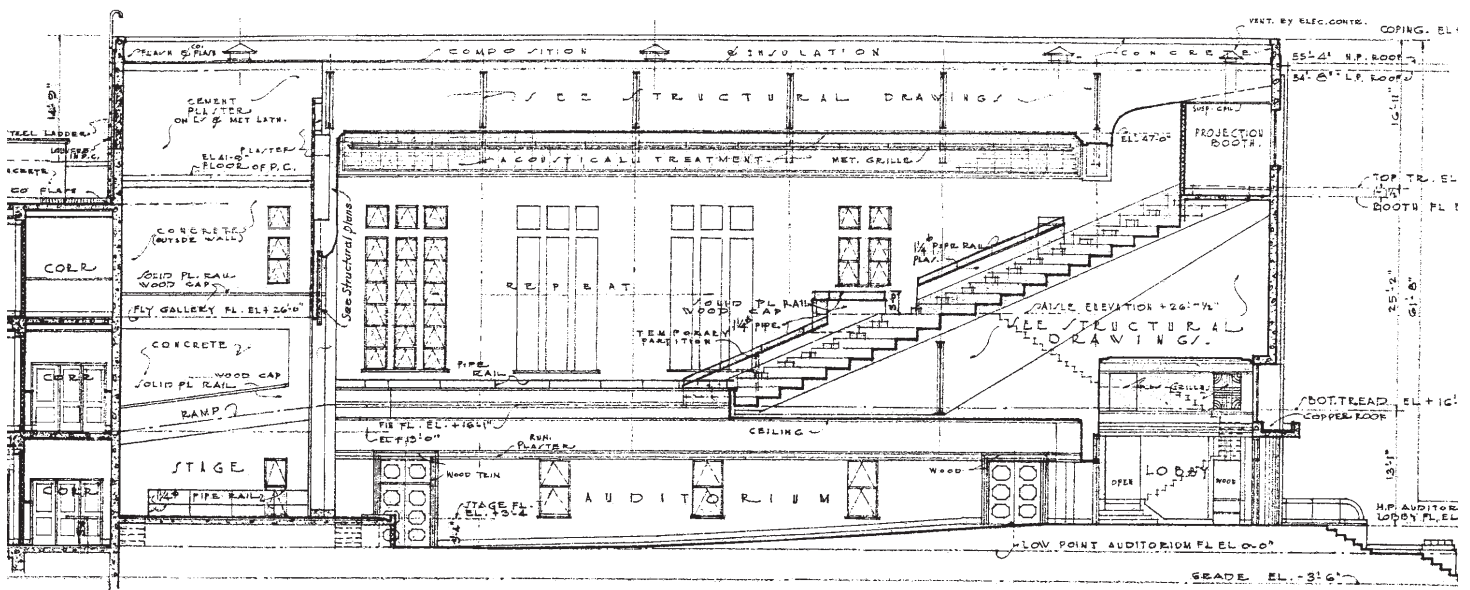
Born a slave in Tuckahoe, Maryland and after harsh treatment, escape attempts, and a final flight in 1838 to New Bedford, Massachusetts; Frederick Augustus

speak on the institution of slavery in the United States. Many of the Englishmen who heard him speak were moved to raise funds to purchase his freedom.

Upon returning to the United States, Douglass worked extensively for the Underground Railroad and established the North Star abolitionist newspaper.

In 1860 he campaigned for Abraham Lincoln. At the beginning of the Civil War, he assisted in raising the Massachusetts 54th and 55th regiments consisting of Black soldiers.

From 1877-1881, he served as US Marshal for the District of Columbia, and from 1881-1886 he served as Recorder of



DOUGLASS HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM LONGITUDINAL SECTION

She remembered that the office was on the 2nd floor and that students came from a great distance to get to the school. The bicycles were the only mode of transportation before school buses, students having cars, and good public transportation.

After almost 50 years the Douglass High School building still remains functional. The School Board recently sold bonds for completely Air Conditioning the facility. Our project involves renovations for two new classrooms on the 1st floor, office and entry lobby

Washington Bailey assumed the surname of Douglass.

An impromptu address, in 1841, at an anti-slavery convention in Nantucket marked the beginning of his career as an abolitionist. Through his speeches from 1841 to 1845, and his work for the Underground Railroad, Douglass secured a place at the forefront of the abolitionist movement.

The threat of being captured under the fugitive slave laws caused his friends to encourage him to relocate in 1845 to England, where he continued to lecture and

Deeds for the District. He served as US Minister to the Republic of Haiti from 1889-1891.

Though mostly self-educated, his intellectual abilities and skills as an orator aroused suspicions at the time that he could not have been a slave. He responded in 1845 by writing Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave.