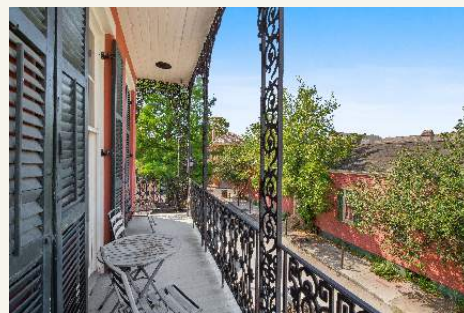




732 Governor Nicholls St., New Orleans

\$1,575,000



## Classic French Quarter Greek Revival Townhouse

Exceptional in every way, this 3 bedroom, 3 1/2 bath beautiful masonry townhouse has a lush slate private courtyard and fountain, parking for two cars with an electronic gate, and a covered balcony overlooking the beautiful lower French Quarter streetscape. Lovely historic details in its 2,360 SF of living area are found throughout, with wood floors, fireplaces with marble mantles, and floor-to-ceiling windows. The two-story rear dependency houses an eat-in gas French country kitchen with custom cabinets, a den, two guest bedrooms and a second covered balcony.

The information contained herein has either been given to us by the owner of the property or obtained from sources that we deem reliable. No warranties or representations, expressed or implied are made as to the accuracy of the information contained herein, and same is submitted subject to errors, omissions, change of price, rental or other conditions, withdrawal without notice, and to any special listing conditions.

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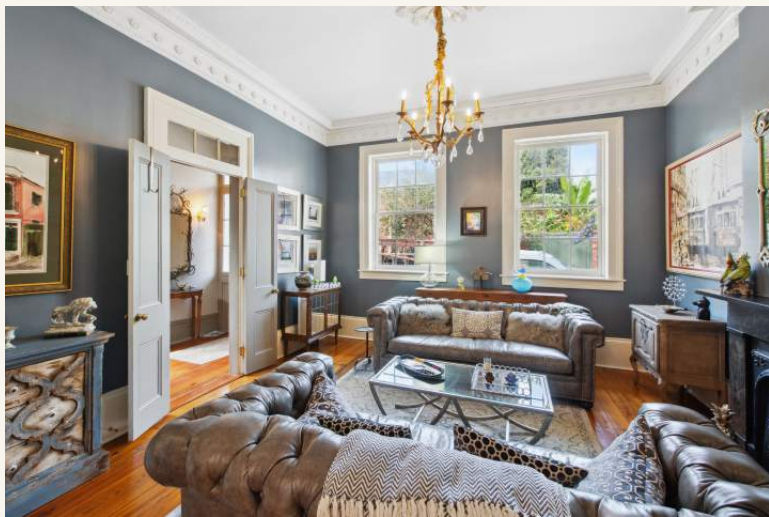








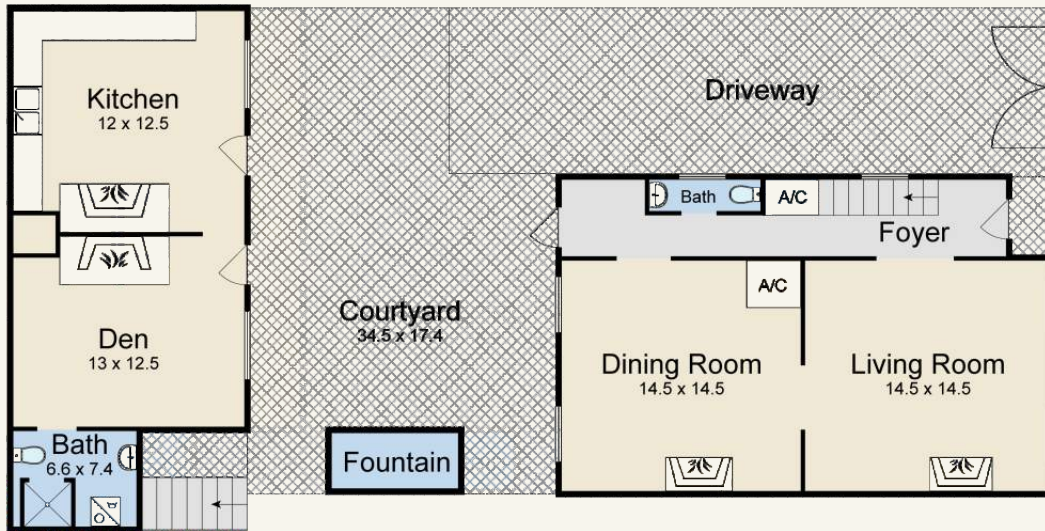




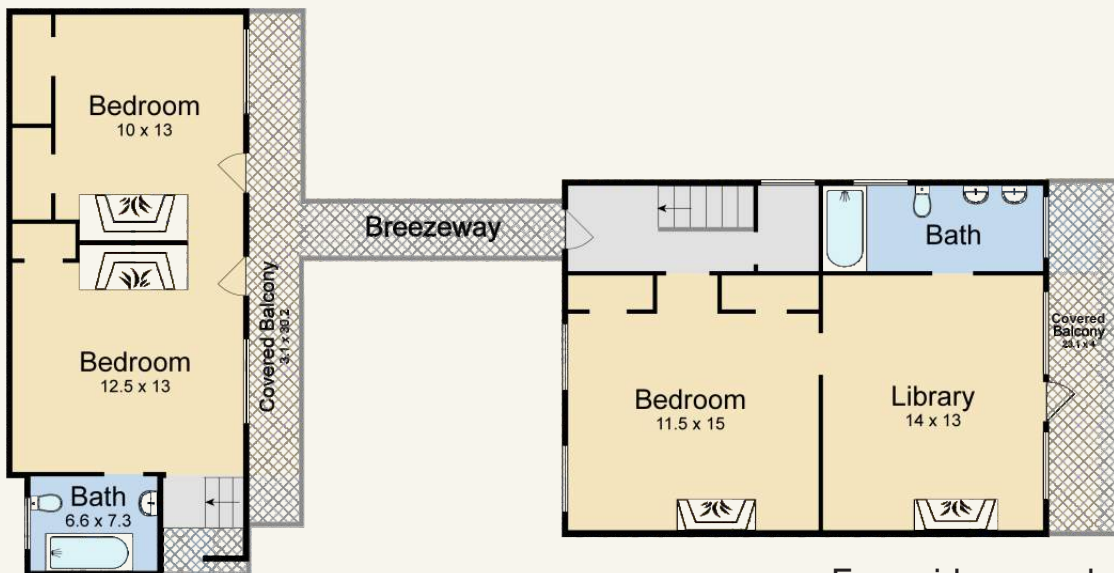


# Floor Plan

## 1st floor



## 2nd floor



For guidance only



# The Times-Picayune

May 13, 1995

## DRAPED IN LUXURY HISTORIC RENOVATION A LABOR OF LOVE

MARY FOSTER *Contributing writer*

It's a familiar story.

Hal Williamson fell in love. Deeply. He lavished attention, money and time on his beloved, going overboard. But then, why not? This was forever.

Then another caught Williamson's eye and soon his heart. It tore him up to leave, but the time had come to move on and so he's going. He's paying for his change of heart, however.

Williamson's first love is a beautifully restored townhouse at 732 Gov. Nicholls St. He has put in on the market as the result of a newfound love - a mansion with a cornstalk fence at Fourth and Prytania streets in the Garden District, which he purchased this spring.

He is asking \$675,000 for the townhouse - at least \$200,000 less than he has invested in the historic renovation that won the Vieux Carre historical restoration award for both the front and back buildings.

"I wasn't planning to do all that I did. I just kept on with things thinking I'd never leave that house," said Williamson, the merchandising manager and an interior designer for Hurwitz-Mintz Furniture Co. "It's a perfect house in the French Quarter. I loved it and thought I'd be there forever."

### **Tracing the history**

Built in 1841 as a Creole cottage with a slave quarters in the back, the house was bought by a free black woman who had the cottage replaced by a two-story townhouse in 1865, Williamson's research found.



Much of the architectural detail is in keeping with the 1841 cottage, however.

When Williamson bought it eight years ago, the buildings still had 13-foot ceilings, pocket doors and other original items. They were rundown, however, and the slave quarters had deteriorated to the point of being unsafe.

Working with architect Frank Masson, who is known for his historic renovations, Williamson took two years to restore the front building. Then, after a one-year break, he spent another 2 1/2 years restoring the slave quarters.

"That part was so bad we were told not to even walk upstairs," Williamson said. "The structure was so fragile at that point."





Williamson began by removing the exterior pipes and the gas meter in front of the house. He then installed new wiring throughout, put in new copper plumbing, and removed the old plaster walls and replaced them with new plaster walls.

Downstairs in the front building, a double parlor with its original pocket-doors opens off the long side hall. Williamson turned it into a formal living room and dining room.

### **A touch of France**

The living room walls were painted with seven shades of red to give them a rich look. The ceiling is done with gilded paper, and gold leaf was applied to the crown molding. The dining room provides the most dramatic touch in the renovation.

Williamson bought Zuber wallpaper in Paris for the room. Zuber, which first started making its wallpapers in 1710, is best known in the United States for the paper Jacqueline Kennedy selected for two rooms when she redecorated the White House.

The company still uses the original carved wood blocks to print the paper. The blocks were hidden in caves under the cathedrals of Paris during World War I and II to protect them.

Once printed, the designs are colored with delicate watercolors.

The paper Williamson selected, a panorama of Bombay with palm trees and banana trees he thought suited New Orleans, cost \$40,000.

Williamson had the walls waterproofed before the wallpaper was installed. He also had protective coating put on the wallpaper before it was installed.

"I could just see opening a bottle of champagne and it going all over it and me ending up with nothing but streaks of color," Williamson said.



The paper required a special paste and Williamson had to translate the French directions for the installer. He then watched his investment go up.

"When he pasted the first piece, it turned transparent and had spots all over it," Williamson said. "I was about to have a heart attack."



Although it was July, Williamson turned the heat on to dry the paper and he and the installer sweated the process out.

The ceiling of the dining room was painted to match the sky in the wallpaper with delicate clouds added. The hall has a stenciled border near the ceiling. The baseboards are done in a faux marble finish.

Upstairs there is a study with a balcony overlooking the street and a master bedroom. Williamson converted the upstairs hall into large cedar-lined closets and a bathroom with marble floor and a whirlpool bath.







Williamson selected tone-on-tone silk for curtains. They were custom made and hand sewn for each window at a cost of \$12,000 a window and will remain with the house. Four windows in the double parlor were treated.

### **Blending old, new**

The kitchen was left in its original location in the slave quarters.

"Historically it would have been wrong to move it," Williamson said. The kitchen still has the huge fireplace once used for cooking, with the old mantle over it. Williamson had cabinets made and finished in an antique green. A commercial stove and other appliances were added, along with granite counter tops and round sinks from France. French tiles were used for the splash board and over the stove.

French doors open from the kitchen and breakfast room onto the courtyard. There also is a bath and laundry room downstairs.

An outside staircase leads up to a guest bedroom, sitting room and bath. The sitting room walls are covered with a tulle fabric Williamson found in France that depicts Lafayette meeting the American Indians. An antique map of Paris was used to cover the wall behind the tub in the bathroom and color wash was used for the other walls. Williamson also installed closets in the rooms.

The buildings, which have just over 2,200 square feet of living space, have eight fireplaces, four in the front house and four in the back. Williamson had the ones in the front building sealed. In the back building they are gas with either coals or logs.

The slate courtyard, with a fountain and lush trees and shrubs, was featured on the cover of the publication "Secret Gardens of the Vieux Carre."

In his research, Williamson found that a door in a brick wall on one side of the property had replaced the gates that were once there for a carriage way. He petitioned the Vieux Carre Commission and was allowed to reinstall gates. Williamson added solid mahogany gates and a slate drive that allows off-street parking for two cars.

"I was never planning on doing all I did," Williamson said. "I never thought I'd leave the French Quarter though. I know I'll never get the money out I put into it. I just hope it will go to someone who will appreciate it and take care of it."

