

**NATIONAL
TRUST
FOR
HISTORIC
PRESERVATION®**

December 23, 2008

The Honorable Bobby Jindal
Governor
State of Louisiana
P.O. Box 94004
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9004

Dear Governor Jindal:

Recent correspondence from Sean Smith, your director of constituent services, to members of the National Trust for Historic Preservation prompts me to write you once again about the current plans regarding the Louisiana State University (LSU) and Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities in New Orleans.

Your goal to provide a world-class teaching and research hospital in New Orleans and to provide affordable quality health care for its citizens is not in dispute. Where we differ is on how to deliver the academic medical center.

Chancellor Larry Hollier and other state officials have stated in no uncertain terms that the reuse of Charity Hospital as a medical facility is out of the question. Great efforts have been made to discredit the RMJM Hillier feasibility study commissioned by the Foundation for Historic Louisiana at the behest of the state legislature. The funding of the state project is not secured, but officials look to the Obama Administration for increased FEMA funds and to the bond market for the rest.

At the current time it seems quite clear that plans for the development of a new \$1.2 billion LSU academic medical facility to replace the facilities in and around Charity Hospital are not realistic. This is due to the shortfall in the Louisiana State budget and the many competing needs for Louisiana, the uncertainty of any FEMA funding increase from the next Administration, and limitations on the amount of bonds that could be successfully sold for such an expensive facility.

Your administration is ready to market the Charity Hospital building for commercial development, when the RMJM Hillier Charity Hospital Feasibility Study concluded that a new state-of-the-art hospital can be housed in the solid shell of Charity Hospital in less time and at less cost than building an entirely new facility on acquired land. While attempts have been made to challenge the conclusions of the RMJM Hillier study, Hillier's comprehensive responses to these challenges clearly evidence the soundness of their conclusions.

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The entire LSU-VA medical center plan as currently proposed will be costly in human terms as well, as the owners and residents of 165 historic homes and buildings are dislocated. No more than 20 homes will be moved as part of the mitigation efforts determined by FEMA, the city, the state and VA. Such removals, and extensive demolitions in the historic Lower Mid-City neighborhood, could legally begin as early as January 1, even though the feasibility of LSU's new construction plan is highly questionable and may not be carried out for many years, if at all.

Designs for the new facilities are unknown at this time, but the successful incorporation of multi-storied medical facilities, office buildings, and parking garages into a historic district dominated by single-story shotgun houses is questionable.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has for more than three years contributed with technical assistance, grants, and advocacy to the recovery of New Orleans from Hurricane Katrina. We are on the ground with our New Orleans Field Office. It is as part of this effort that we placed Charity Hospital and the adjacent Mid-City neighborhood on our list of *America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places*.

I ask, given these facts, that you meet with representatives of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Foundation for Historic Louisiana, and RMJM Hillier. We believe there is a positive resolution to the current conflicts and ask the opportunity to make that case directly.

Thank you for considering this request.

Warmest regards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Moe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "M".

Richard Moe

RM:pb
cc: Alan Levine