

NATIONAL
TRUST
FOR
HISTORIC
PRESERVATION®

Richard Moe
PRESIDENT

November 4, 2008

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

Dear Governor Jindal:

You have a strong reputation for fiscal responsibility and managerial rigor, and thus I hope you'll take the time to review very carefully the current plans regarding the Louisiana State University (LSU) and Veterans Administration (VA) medical facilities in New Orleans.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has been deeply engaged in the post-Katrina recovery efforts in New Orleans for the last three years, working closely with our partner the Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans. We established a field office in the city soon after Katrina; we drew nearly a thousand volunteers to assist in the city's recovery; we were key in obtaining fifty million dollars for Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama in federal preservation grants; we have completed 15 demonstration rehabilitation projects with low-income home owners; and we have made the case nationally that New Orleans is an irreplaceable part of our country's heritage and culture, and must be saved with its landmarks and historic neighborhoods restored.

As part of our efforts to assist New Orleans' recovery, we have become significantly involved in ongoing efforts to convince federal agencies, the State of Louisiana, and the City of New Orleans, that New Orleans can have first-class medical facilities, with full synergy between the Veteran's Administration and LSU facilities, without demolishing 200 homes in the historic Mid-City neighborhood and abandoning Charity Hospital to an uncertain fate.

You are no doubt aware of the study commissioned by the Foundation for Historical Louisiana, at the direction of the state legislature, and completed by the nationally respected architectural and medical planning firm RMJM Hillier. The study concludes that the basic structural systems of the Charity Hospital building are sound, and that they can fully support the projected medical facilities. The study recommends the total gutting of the building to its basic structural system, floor plates, and exterior skin and in effect constructing a new hospital within the shell. It concludes that this rehabilitation of Charity Hospital can be accomplished for a projected **20 percent (\$136 million) less** than plans for land acquisition and new construction of equivalent facilities, and within a time period **at least two years faster** than the current LSU proposal. Moreover, the reuse of Charity Hospital by LSU would keep these facilities within the Central Business District (CBD), rather than moving them out of the CBD. They can thus provide first-class medical care while being an engine for economic revitalization of the CBD.

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Attempts have been made to challenge the conclusions of the RMJM Hillier report, and Hillier is currently preparing a full rebuttal to these challenges. I ask you to await this rebuttal and then to undertake a full review of the alternative plans. I believe an objective review will confirm that full rehabilitation of Charity Hospital, with VA facilities nearby, is the more responsible alternative for developing the first-class medical facilities that New Orleans needs, while strengthening the economic vigor of the CBD.

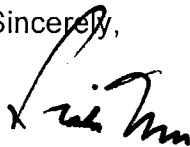
Earlier this year, the National Trust placed Charity Hospital and the adjacent Mid-City neighborhood on our list of *America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places*. We never take this action lightly and, given the implications of this designation, we conducted a thorough vetting before making the final selections this year and in past years.

I urge you to examine the RMJM Hillier report, and to consider whether rehabilitation of Charity Hospital can achieve the state's major health care goals, while doing so at a substantially lower cost and shorter timeframe than the current LSU proposal. In addition to significant savings of money and time, rehabilitating Charity Hospital would also avoid bulldozing the homes of 200 families in a historic neighborhood still struggling to rebuild after Hurricane Katrina.

Thank you for your consideration. Representatives of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Foundation for Historical Louisiana, and RMJM Hillier stand ready to meet with you or your staff to assist in such a review.

Warmest regards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Moe", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Richard Moe

RM:wg