

Southern Rep Theatre's prayers answered, as it finds home in former church

Updated February 18, 2016 at 1:56 PM; Posted February 18, 2016 at 12:55 PM

bayou treme center

A preliminary rendering shows plans for the Bayou Treme Center's new home for the Southern Rep Theatre. (Illustration courtesy of MetroStudio)

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The St. Rose de Lima Church on Bayou Road has been vacant since it was closed in [Hurricane Katrina](#)'s aftermath, but it'll soon see a new life as a cultural community space.

[Southern Rep Theatre](#), Rose Community Development Corporation and Alembic Community Development announced plans Thursday (Feb. 18) to renovate the church, according to a news release. The theater company will make the space its new, permanent home with a projected opening date in 2018.

"This historic building is the perfect home for Southern Rep Theatre," said Aimee Hayes, producing artistic director for Southern Rep Theatre, according to the release. "It offers everything we have envisioned in our search for a permanent space. ... A permanent home of our own affords us the opportunity to build on the expansive arts education programs we already have in place, continue to produce artistically innovative new plays, and reach out to both the Treme and neighboring communities in a comprehensive and vital way."

The Gothic Tudor church was constructed in 1915, and today the campus covers 47,000 square feet, including two former schoolhouses.

Once renovated, that church space will transform into a 13,400-square-foot theater with a 125-seat main stage and a second performance space termed the "Lagniappe Stage." The Lagniappe Stage will offer seating for 65 and will be available for a cabaret or black-box configuration. Additional square footage will be reserved for multipurpose space, offices, rehearsal space and a bar/cafe area.

Across the street, 23,000 square feet of schoolhouse space will be renovated for a new school operator, according to the release, and the 11,000 remaining square feet will be used for offices.

The project has been long in the making, with plans [first appearing in 2012](#) for the Bayou Treme Center.

Construction is set to begin on the project in 2017.