



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Charnley-Norwood House to open for tours

OCEAN SPRINGS, Miss. – The historic Charnley-Norwood House will open for tours every Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The tours will be given by local architect Ligia Romer.

The tours begin Friday, Sept. 4, and they are free.

“The Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area staff has been hard at work to reopen the Charnley-Norwood House,” said Rhonda Price, director of the Gulf Coast National Heritage Area. “This will allow visitors to have the opportunity to see the beautiful workmanship and learn about the wonderful history of the area.”

The home, located at 509 East Beach Drive in Ocean Springs, was designed and built in 1890 by renowned architect Louis Sullivan of Chicago, also known as the father of the skyscraper. His young draftsman who assisted with the design was Frank Lloyd Wright. The original home was destroyed by a fire in 1897 but was rebuilt immediately.

Sullivan also designed and built homes on either side of the original house, one for himself and the other for a friend, James Charnley, a wealthy Chicago lumber merchant. Charnley later sold the home to another lumberman, Frederick Norwood.

The houses Sullivan created were different from 19th-century Victorian architecture and included horizontal design, rooms that flowed into each other, natural materials and glass throughout the home. These forms later became the hallmarks of modern architecture.

Katrina destroyed Sullivan's home, but the Charnley-Norwood house and the octagonal guest cottage next door both were saved. The Mississippi Department of Archives and History did emergency stabilization work after the storm, and in 2011 the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources purchased the house and property for \$1.4 million through the federal Coastal Impact Assistance Program. MDAH contributed \$300,000.

Archives and History also received a grant to pay for the restoration of the Charnley-Norwood House, and the MDMR is managing the property through its Gulf Coast National Heritage Area Program. Currently, four groups are working together under a temporary memorandum of agreement: MDMR, MDAH, the Mississippi Heritage Trust and the city of Ocean Springs.

“The city of Ocean Springs is delighted to work with the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources and other organizations to showcase to the public one of the most important architectural venues in the country,” said Mayor Connie Moran. “We value our historical architectural vernacular and recognize ‘Bon Silene’ as significant, not only from a historical perspective, but also for the remarkable restoration championed by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History after Hurricane Katrina.”

No appointments are required for the tours, but guests are reminded that because of the uniqueness of the wood floors, no heels are allowed.

For more information, call 228-523-4150.

Photos courtesy Mississippi Department of Marine Resources



Cutline: These photos show the exterior and interior of the Charnley-Norwood House in Ocean Springs. The home was designed and built in 1890 by renowned architect Louis Sullivan of Chicago.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at www.dmr.ms.gov.

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