



Background

The Rose Collaborative Project consists of the adaptive reuse of the former St. Rose de Lima Catholic Church and two adjacent schoolhouses in the Tremé neighborhood of New Orleans into a community-serving arts, education, and entrepreneurship hub.

The church portion of the Project was originally built by the St. Rose de Lima congregation in 1880. The original church building was destroyed by a fire in 1913 but was rebuilt in 1915. The Catholic Church deconsecrated the property following Hurricane Katrina and the church remained vacant until acquired by Rose CDC and Alembic in 2016.

The schoolhouse portions of the property were built following the 1915 reconstruction of the Church. The first schoolhouse was built in 1925 and is similar in size and scale to the church. The second schoolhouse was built in 1938. The Orleans Parish School Board occupied the schoolhouses until Hurricane Katrina forced them to abandon the property.

The Project

The Project transformed the vacant St. Rose de Lima Catholic Church building and two schoolhouses into a cultural hub for the arts and education featuring a performing arts venue, a non-profit school, and small business incubation and co-working space.

The centerpiece of the development is the adaptive reuse of the former church into a performing arts venue. The church's interior was converted into a 120-seat main stage theater for large productions and a 65-seat black box theater for smaller performances and acts. The Southern Rep Theatre, an acclaimed 30-year old New Orleans theatre production company with a mission of delivering programming for underserved youth, manages the venue.

The 1925 schoolhouse is now a 23,000 SF educational space designed for the non-profit Waldorf School of New Orleans. This school will serve students from early childhood and kindergarten through eighth grade. This new facility will allow the Waldorf School to increase its minority student enrollment and expand its existing tuition assistance program to include



Total Development Cost:
\$11.7 Million



NTCIC Financing:
\$10 Million NMTC Allocation
\$1.4 Federal HTC Equity



Project Partner:
Alembic Community Development
and St. Rose Community
Development Corporation



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dedicated full annual scholarships across all grades for low-income families living in its community. As the school prepares to move to its new location, the space within the Rose Collaborative is being used as a temporary home for several community-serving nonprofit tenants.

The 1938 schoolhouse was renovated into 10,880 SF of co-working space targeting entrepreneurs and non-profits working in New Orleans. It offers flexible and affordable leases and provides small offices, individual desks, and shared amenities at below-market rates. The co-working space also houses the “Micro-Enterprise Recourse Center”, which is operated by a strategic partnership between the Project’s sponsor and FUND 17, a non-profit providing New Orleans’ underserved community entrepreneurs with business development services, training, and resources.

Economic and Community Impact

During post-Katrina planning efforts, community leaders recognized a need for targeted investment in the arts and education and conceived the Project. Throughout its planning process, the development team worked extensively with community stakeholders to implement a shared community vision for the adaptive reuse of these historic properties.

Subsidy generated by the NTCIC investments allow for every project tenant to provide financial assistance to community members and program participants through tuition assistance, grants, and below market rents.

The Project’s performing arts venue allows the Southern Rep Theatre to expand its “School to Stage Pipeline” arts education to low-income communities. The “School to Stage Pipeline” programming includes in-school intensive activities, afterschool workshops, summer camps, and apprenticeships. The Waldorf School will increase the number of students it serves from 150 currently to approximately 225 students at the Project within the next 7 years.

To accommodate various tenant scheduling constraints, three temporary community-based tenants will occupy the Waldorf School’s ultimate space during the Project’s first year. Operation Spark, whose mission is to help jumpstart software development careers for low-opportunity individuals, plans to operate trainings at the Project serving at least 140 adults and youth. The New Orleans Career Center will help at least 120 high school students earn industry-based credentials and certifications. New Harmony High School, an ecology-focused high school, has also recently opened its doors.