

# Gallery Guide

## Happy Hill

### Shotgun House Project



## Happy Hill Shotgun House Project

*“the house serves as womb and a cradle from where culture is learned. The house represents an image of a community and expresses a group’s social universe. The power in which culture depends is derived from the house...”*

*Dogon Philosophy*



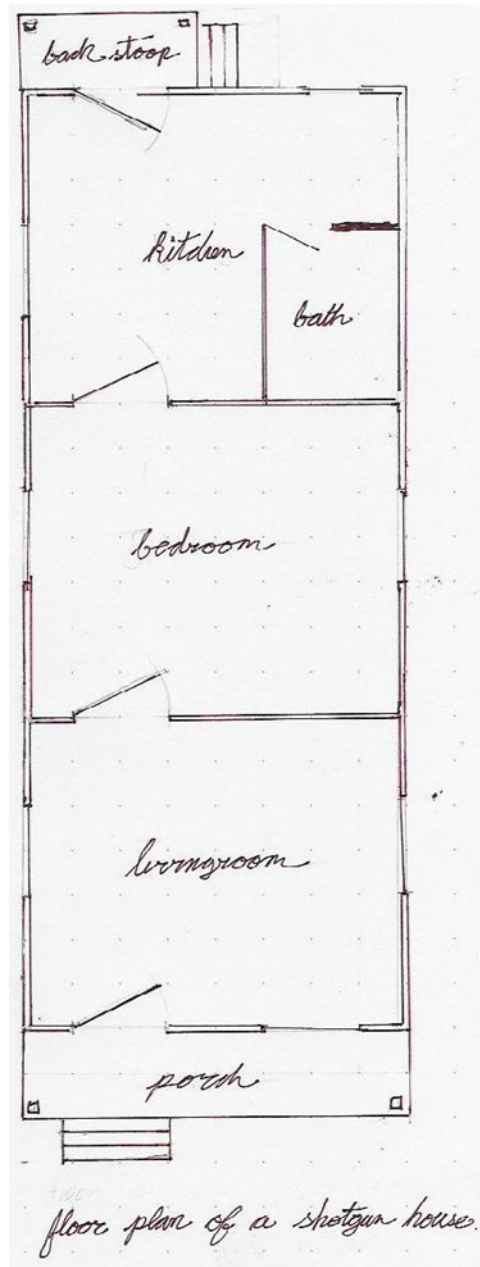
In his paper, **African American Architecture : A Hidden Heritage**, Dr. Joseph E. Holloway states, “unless one makes a concerted effort to look, African American contributions to the art of architecture goes unnoticed. Historically, the slave artisan was afforded no change for self expression. The paradox of southern slave participation in environmental affairs was that it always reflected the European culture base. Nonetheless within these spatial limitations, exists an undisturbed African American architectural tradition that has its “roots” in African architectural design.”

Such is the case of the shotgun house an architectural style that scholars believe may have originated from Yorubaland (West Africa) via Haiti to the American South. Relatively inexpensive to construct, the shotgun house is rectangular, one room wide, and up to three rooms deep with all rooms and their doors in a straight line perpendicular to the street, commonly supported on short brick piers, heated by a fireplace, and did not include indoor plumbing.

## Happy Hill Shotgun House Project

Ground floor plan of an American shotgun house. From front to back: Porch, living room, bedroom, kitchen & bath, back stoop.

There were no hallways. You had to pass through each other's rooms.



Source=English Wikipedia  
| Date=15 June 2006 | Author=US  
user:futurebird (Susan Murray)

The term shotgun is believed to have originated because if all the front and back doors were left open you could shoot a gun straight through. However, Dr. Holloway, states that the word "shotgun" is a derivative of African word origin and is derived from the Yoruba word to-gun. In Yoruba this word means place of assembly, or where people gather. Additional references indicate another possible derivative from the Yoruba word "shogon" which means "God's House."



## Happy Hill Shotgun House Project



Happy Hill -- Sanborn Map, 1927

Shotgun houses once populated the Happy Hill community and neighborhoods throughout the city. The narrow width of shotgun houses cut costs by allowing many houses to be built on smaller plots of land. Developers often bought 10 to 15 acres and filled them with shotgun houses squeezed tightly in rows along small streets and alleys. They housed low-income and working-class African American families, who often paid rent to absentee landlords. The houses often do not have windows on side walls, as their close proximity to neighboring houses does not allow for ventilation or light from the side. Such close proximity does, however, maximize socializing, with residents often sitting on front porches and chatting with neighbors and people passing by on the street.



## Happy Hill Shotgun House Project



The 1940 United States Census lists the following residents living at 716 Humphrey Street.

- Annie Rorie (Head of Household, age 38) (RENTER)
- Catherine Lindsey (daughter, age 17)
- John F. Rorie (son, age 13)
- Beatrice Simms (Granddaughter, age 2)

The 1940 US Census does not list occupations for anyone in the Rorie household, but it indicates that Annie Rorie and Catherine Lindsey are receiving income from sources other than wages and salaries. The rent on 716 Humphreys Street was six dollars a month. Additionally, everyone living on Humphreys Street were renters, not homeowners, paying five to six dollars a month in rent. No one in the Rorie household including 13 year old John Rorie attended school in the last year. In fact, John's highest grade level in school was the fourth grade. Annie and Catherine both attended school through the seventh grade.



# SHOTGUN HOUSE PROJECT - PROPOSED ACTION

716 Humphrey Street



Full Restoration of the Architecture

Beadboard

Floors

Ceilings

Windows

Tin Roof

Doors



# SHOTGUN HOUSE PROJECT - PROPOSED ACTION

720 Humphrey Street



## Stabilization and Repurpose

Open Concept, remove walls

Multiuse Community Space

Exterior – Public Art

Add deck for extended usage



# SHOTGUN HOUSE PROJECT - PROPOSED ACTION

720 Humphrey Street



Grounds

Exhibit Panels

Outdoor Concerts

Gatherings

Restrooms



# SHOTGUN HOUSE PROJECT - PROPOSED ACTION



TCA believes two vital issues can be addressed in this restoration effort:

Erasure of Black history from the landscape

Repository for local Black history

## Benefits:

Job Creation

Entrepreneurship

Tourism

Cultural Competence

Posterity

# Give:

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