



The Villas at Spanish Court: LDEQ's BCRLF Funds Cleanup of Historic Minden Site

The first loan from LDEQ's Brownfield Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund (BCRLF) was awarded to real estate investor Sara McDaniel to address asbestos and lead-based paint at the Villas at Spanish Court site in historic Minden, LA. With funding to address the environmental concerns, Sara restored the villas into quaint short-term rentals to foster tourism and tax revenue for her community.



At the end of July 2022, LDEQ Brownfields Program awarded its first Brownfield Cleanup Loan to Sara McDaniel, a seasoned real estate investor with a focus in renovating historic properties. Sara invested in a 1.5-acre historical property developed in 1931 as state-of-the-art studio and one bedroom apartments in Minden, Louisiana. The property became vacant in the 1980s and sat unmaintained for decades, until Sara imagined a new life for them. The property includes three multi-unit, one-story apartments that were uninhabitable when Sara first acquired the property. With her experience in renovating historic properties that are on the brink of total devastation, Sara planned to restore The Villas at Spanish Court into short term apartment rentals, while keeping the historical Spanish-style elements intact. Due to the age and poor condition of the structures, asbestos containing material (ACM) and lead-based paint (LBP) needed to be addressed before Sara could begin renovations.

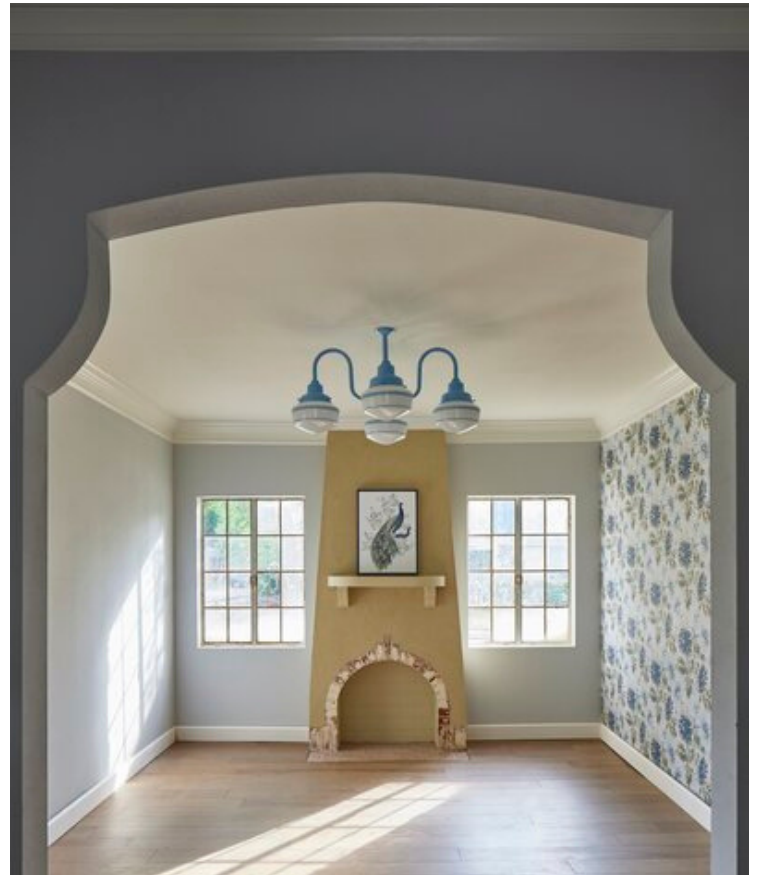


Top: Guests arriving at the newly renovated Villas at Spanish Court
Bottom: Outdoor patio space for guests to enjoy during their stay.
Photo Credit: Sara McDaniel



Through our Brownfield Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund (BCRLF) Program, LDEQ awarded an \$80,000 loan/ line of credit for the ACM and LBP abatement. The loan has a 0% interest rate, and repayment doesn't begin until 6 months after the site receives a certificate of occupancy or two years after the loan was awarded, whichever comes first, allowing time for the site to become income-producing. Renovations are now complete and the Villas at Spanish Court began booking stays in March 2023. Not only did revitalizing this property remove environmental hazards from the community, but it also revitalized blighted, abandoned structures; created jobs; increased the value of surrounding properties; added to the local tax base; supports tourism to downtown Minden; and fills a need of the increased tourism bolstered through recent television and magazine features.

This renovation was featured in national lifestyle magazines including Cottages and Bungalows and American Farmhouse Style, and the town of Minden was featured in HGTV's Hometown Kickstart last Spring. With community champions like Sara and resources from local and state entities like the LDEQ Brownfields Program, architectural treasures in our small communities like the Villas at Spanish Court can be revitalized and brought back to life.



Top: A living room area in one of the units pre-renovation.
Bottom: Post-renovation photo of the Laura Suite Living Room.
Photo Credit: Sara McDaniel

To Book Your Stay Click [HERE!](#)
To see more of the renovation process,
check out Sara's Instagram account:
[@simplysoutherncottage](#)



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<https://deq.louisiana.gov/brownfields>

More About LDEQ's Brownfield Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund:

LDEQ's Brownfield Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund (BCRLF) Program provides low interest loans with flexible repayment options to support the cleanup of Brownfield sites throughout the state. If you have a site that may benefit from LDEQ BCRLF funds, check out LDEQ's BCRLF webpage [HERE](#).

You can also download and complete our BCRLF Interest Form [HERE](#), e-mail it to Brownfields@LA.gov, and a member of our Brownfields team will follow up with you.



Top: A kitchen in one of the units pre-renovation.
Bottom: Post-renovation photo of the Laura Suite Kitchen.
Left: A living room area in one of the units pre-renovation.
Photo Credit: Sara McDaniel



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LDEQ's Local Community Brownfield Planning Assistance

Did you know LDEQ provides Local Community Brownfield Planning Activities Assistance to government/nonprofit entities to provide community outreach, research, and technical assistance to facilitate the reuse of Brownfield sites?

The overarching goal of the Brownfields Program is site reuse, and Brownfield Planning Activities are essential to the effective reuse of a Brownfield Site or Target Area. Revitalizing a Brownfield site starts with understanding how the community's reuse goals align with local economic, infrastructure, social, and environmental conditions. Brownfield Planning Activities can help your community determine which reuses are feasible for a site to transition it from neighborhood blight to community asset. Planning Activities may begin at any point in the Brownfields process and may be conducted concurrently with assessment and/or cleanup activities.

LDEQ's Local Community Brownfield Planning Activities Assistance Program may be able to assist your planning activities to initiate brownfields revitalization and prepare the site for redevelopment. Examples of Brownfield Planning Activities include:

<p>Activities to initiate brownfields revitalization in a target area such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equitable Development Activities • Brownfields Area-Wide Planning • Site Reuse Assessment • Land Use Assessment • Market Study • Infrastructure Evaluation 	<p>Planning activities to prepare a brownfields site for redevelopment such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Reuse Vision • Resource Roadmap • Revitalization Plan • Evaluation of Market Viability 	<p>Other Eligible Activities Such As:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing or enhancing an inventory of Brownfield sites within a community • Community outreach to promote the Brownfields program and involve the community in the environmental assessment, cleanup and reuse process • Other activities that facilitate the redevelopment and reuse of Brownfield sites
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Visit EPA's Brownfield Planning Activities webpage [HERE](#) for additional information on each of the Planning Activities.



Our Technical Assistance Program awarded a \$20,000 Technical Assistance Grant to Acadiana Planning Commission (APC) to assist the Town of Churchpoint in conducting Brownfields-related community outreach. They also enhanced their inventory of potential Brownfield sites specifically in their historic downtown area. APC and the Town then used the inventory to identify catalyst sites for future economic development activities. APC also developed a retail market analyses to generate ideas for future redevelopment. Coordinating their efforts with the mayor, council members and the Church Point



Railroad Depot in downtown Churchpoint.

Community Development Corporation to help identify brownfield redevelopment priorities, APC plans to develop an action plan for the reuse of the site(s) that have the greatest catalytic potential.

Interested in Applying for Local Community Brownfield Planning Activity Assistance?

- **Download and complete the Local Community Brownfields Planning Activity Interest Form [HERE](#) and submit to: Brownfields@la.gov**
 - LDEQ will follow up with each community that completes an interest form to determine what Brownfield planning resources would best benefit that community.
 - One entity can apply for several Brownfield planning projects; however, not all projects may be selected. Complete a separate Brownfield Planning Activity Assistance Interest Form for each project.



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Upcoming Events and Trainings

Event: KSU TAB's 2023 Brownfields Grant Writing Training Webinar Series:

It is Never too Early to Start

Dates and Times: Webinars will be held from 1:30-3:30 pm CDT every Thursday for 6 weeks starting on April 20th

This webinar series was designed to determine your readiness for an EPA Brownfields Multipurpose, Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, or Cleanup (MARC) Grant followed by guidance to prepare you for the next competition. Learn from seasoned grant writers and subject matter experts on how to tell your story effectively and craft a successful application! Each webinar will be roughly 2 hours, including questions and answers. If you are unable to make each individual webinar, a recording will be available before the next webinar is scheduled. To view webinar topics for each week and register, visit the event's page [here](#).

Event: How to Get the Money! A Grant Writing Workshop to Address Your Blighted Properties

Dates: June 14-15, 2023

Location: Younes Conference Center, Kearney, NE

Join the Nebraska Department of Environmental Energy (NDEE), KSU TAB, and EPA for this FREE Brownfields Grant Writing Workshop. The workshop was designed for Nebraska communities, but the information may be tailored to fit your community's application. If you're interested in additional details and registration information contact Taryn Horn with NDEE at Taryn.Horn@nebraska.gov.





Upcoming Events and Trainings Continued

Event: National Brownfields Training Conference

Dates: August 8-11, 2023

Location: Huntington Place Convention Center, Detroit, MI

Learn about available financial and technical resources from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to transform your community Brownfield sites into community assets. Learn more [here](#).

Interested in a conference scholarship to attend the conference?

- LDEQ plans to offer a limited number of scholarships to nonprofit and government entities to help defray the cost to attend. If you are interested in a scholarship, please send an email to Brownfields@la.gov to be notified once the scholarship application is available.
- The Louisiana Brownfield Association (LBA) Conference Scholarship is available to government employees working in a brownfield career, or students actively enrolled in undergraduate, graduate, or job-training program in an environmental or related field within the State of Louisiana. More information about the scholarship and how to apply can be found [here](#). The deadline to apply is June 30, 2023.

Event: 2023 Louisiana Brownfield Conference

Dates: October 25-26, 2023

Location: Convention Hall, Alexandria, LA

Agenda Coming Soon!

