

## Sustainability makes its mark in New Orleans

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They gathered for a class photo in Faubourg Lafitte, where new homes with green building features and connections to the 6th Ward neighborhood have replaced the Lafitte public housing development. They are the first graduates of a Tulane School of Architecture program that joins sustainability and real estate development.



Students in the new architecture degree program tour Faubourg Lafitte, a new mixed-income neighborhood where green-featured homes have replaced the Lafitte public housing development. (Photo by Sandi Stroud)

Sustainability can mean a lot of things, but Alexandra “Sandi” Stroud simplifies it this way: “It's just best practices, really.”

Stroud heads the school's [Master of Sustainable Real Estate Development Program](#), in its second year and garnering interest from around the country, partly because the redevelopment of New Orleans is gaining national attention.

“There is so much interest in doing it well, doing it right,” Stroud says of the city's rejuvenation. She is an architecture alumna and founding director of the degree program.

Doing things right means imbuing her students with an appreciation of sustainability, which works to minimize a project's impact on the environment and reinforces and strengthens the surrounding neighborhood.

Another central concept is “adaptive reuse,” a prime example being the historic renovation of a dormant 1950s-era auto dealership downtown into a [Rouses Supermarket](#). Sustainability also includes urban living and walkability. “A lot of it is about urban regeneration, about leaving it better than you found it,” [Stroud](#) says.

In New Orleans, sustainability is “very much something that needs to be in the conversation every day, preserving our culture and history,” especially at a time when managing resources is critical.

The degree program includes a multidisciplinary curriculum in architectural design practices, business, legal issues, finance and planning. Students learn job-ready skills from practitioners and travel to top development firms on the eco-conscious East and West Coasts.

Brennan Fournierat, a fledgling developer and student in Stroud's current class, sees green-featured, sustainable living as a key for young professionals: “Sustainability is a huge plus in attracting good minds that will help out New Orleans.”