

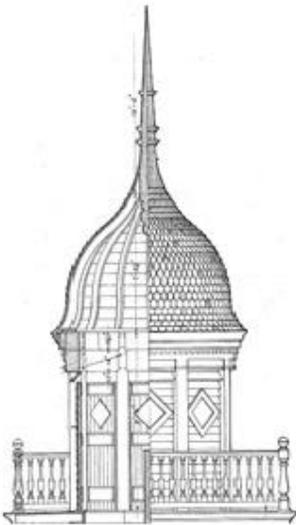
Architecture of the Cabildo

DETAIL OF BALCONY RAIL

The **Cabildo** in New Orleans is one of the most historically significant buildings in Louisiana. It was the seat of Spanish colonial government, the site of the Louisiana Purchase transfer ceremony, and home of the Louisiana Supreme Court. It is now part of the Louisiana State Museum. Learn more about the architectural features of this iconic building!

Architecture

The Cabildo was built 1794-1799 under Spanish rule. It was designed by Gilberto Guillemard in the classical style, which is modelled on the architecture of ancient Greece and Rome. This style was common for eighteenth-century Spanish government buildings and has been used throughout history to convey power and wealth. The wrought-iron balcony railings were created by Marcelino Hernandez, an immigrant from the Canary Islands. The Spanish coat of arms in the pediment was replaced with a patriotic sculpture of an American bald eagle in 1821, a few years after Louisiana became a state, sculpted by Italian artist Pietro Cardelli. In 1847, a third floor with a mansard roof and cupola replaced the original flat roof. This popular French roof style was added in part to match the planned scale of the Pontalba apartment buildings on Jackson Square, which were begun in 1849. These features form an impressive façade that reflect changing influences in New Orleans over time.



Architectural terms – Use this list of terms to label the drawing of the Cabildo on the next page.

- **arcade** – a series of arches supported by columns
- **arch** – a curved structural element spanning an opening that is supported at its sides
- **casement windows** – a window hinged on one vertical side that swings open, often in pairs
- **cupola** – a small dome or tower, located at the top of a building
- **dormer** – a perpendicular window in a sloping roof
- **entablature** - a horizontal, continuous lintel on a classical building supported by columns or a wall
- **ionic column** – tall, slender, and round vertical support, a capital (top) with prominent scrolls
- **keystone** – the wedge-shaped piece at the top of an arch
- **mansard roof** – a four-sided hipped roof featuring steep lower slopes and upper slopes that are less steep
- **pediment** – a decorative triangular piece situated over a door, window, or section of a building
- **pilasters** – a shallow, nonstructural rectangular column, attached to and projecting slightly from a wall surface.
- **spire** – a slender, pointed construction on top of a building
- **Tuscan columns** – round vertical support including an unfluted shaft, a simply molded capital (top), and a base.
- **tympanum** – Space inside the triangular pediment, often decorated with sculptures
- **wrought iron** – tough, malleable iron shaped by hand tools, often with decorative and artistic flourishes

Definitions from: *Merriam-Webster*, accessed April 23, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>

Trust for Architectural Easements, accessed April 22, 2020, <https://architecturaltrust.org/outreach/education/glossary-of-architectural-terms/>

Images from: *The Cabildo*, 711 Chartres Street, New Orleans, Orleans Parish, LA, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, from survey HABS LA-18-4, accessed April 22, 2020, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/hhh.la0007.sheet/?sp=1&st=list>



THE CABILDO
A LOUISIANA STATE MUSEUM

The Cabildo: Find the Features!

WORD BANK	
arcade	mansard roof
arches	pediment
casement windows	pilasters
cupola	spire
dormers	Tuscan columns
entablature	tympanum
ionic columns	wrought iron
keystones	

