

Group plans to make house into Hurricane Katrina memorial

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By JANET McCONNAUGHEY
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NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A house that was flooded by Hurricane Katrina could become a memorial to the catastrophic storm that nearly wiped New Orleans off the map 11 years ago.

The city planning commission will consider a request by the group Levees.org for a permit to preserve the house at a meeting on Tuesday, according to group founder Sandy Rosenthal. She said the house is likely the closest left standing near any of the three spots where levees broke, pouring water into the city.

The one-story brick house is still vacant, with gaping holes in a back wall and roof.

Rosenthal says she wants the exterior to look as it did just after the city was pumped dry, with a re-creation of a moldy, flood-upturned living room visible through the front windows.

Glenn Corbett, a New York fire safety professor who testified before the congressional 9/11 commission, said in a phone interview Monday that he believes the project is “an incredibly valuable thing and unique. Nobody’s done this.”

Corbett, who suggested that as he knows, this will be the piece of disaster history ... it, see what happened.”

Corbett said that after 9/11 parts of the World Trade C



three crazily leaning sections of facade and exterior beams — would be stabilized in place as part of a memorial. Instead, he said, the 8-acre site was swept clean.

Rosenthal's group, created to push for reforms in levee building and oversight, also has had plaques installed at the levee breaches and created a memorial garden in the vacant lot next door to the one-story brick house which she bought in April.

“We cannot squander the opportunity to preserve this relic, this insight,” she said at a news conference in front of the one-story brick house, still vacant 11 years after the storm.

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