

Louisiana National Register Review Committee Meeting

April 14, 2015 , 1:00pm
Capitol View Room, State Library of Louisiana
701 N. 4th St
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Minutes

Acting Chairman Lynn Lewis called the April 14, 2015 regular meeting of the National Register Review Committee to order at 1:05 p.m. In addition to Lynn Lewis, members present included John Sykes, Mrs. Sue Turner, Mrs. Peggy Lowe, Sam Kincade, Mrs. Martha Salomon, Kelly Rich, Turry Flucker, Dr. Robert Carrier, and Dr. Matthew Savage. Dr. Rebecca Saunders and Tarah Arcuri were unable to attend.

Mr. Lewis asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Peggy Lowe so moved, with Kelly Rich seconding. This motion passed unanimously.

Division Director, Nicole Hobson-Morris, welcome the audience and Committee members.

National Register Coordinator Jessica Richardson then introduced all Review Committee members present to the audience.

Mr. Lewis asked for a motion to approve the minutes of November's meeting. Sam Kincade so moved, with Turry Flucker seconding. This motion passed unanimously.

Under New Business, the Committee considered seven new National Register nominations, one multiple property submission, and three delistings.

Booker T. Washington High School, Caddo Parish

Presented by Jessica Richardson, National Register Coordinator (preparer Lane Callaway was out of town)

Booker T. Washington High School (also known as BTW HS) is an urban high school sitting on a 33 acre tract located within an African American neighborhood two miles west of the central business district. Constructed next to a busy thoroughfare and within the former southeast corner of a large park, the institution consists of two masonry buildings, both of which are being classified as International Style for the purposes of this nomination. Built in the style of modernist architecture, it is a two story steel framed building using brick curtain exterior walls, glass, and metal to denote its architectural elements. BTW's main structure, which contains 55 classrooms is landscaped into the contours of a relief which comprises a local park called Lakeside Park. Despite the later addition of ancillary buildings and structures to the campus, the original buildings retain their integrity and National Register eligibility.

Booker T. Washington High School (BTWHS), located in Shreveport in Caddo Parish, is eligible for the National Register at the local level of significance under Criterion A: Education and Ethnic Heritage: Black for its role in educating Shreveport and Northwest Louisiana's African American Community for the last 65 years and for its role within the Civil Rights movement in northwest Louisiana in 1963. The school's construction in 1949 and opening in 1950 marked a vast improvement in the quality of education and educational facilities available to the African American students of Caddo Parish and Northwest Louisiana. Additionally, Booker T. Washington High School played a significant role in a civil rights incident in 1963, which gained national and international attention. The nomination has two periods of significance: 1949-1965 under Education and 1963 under Ethnic Heritage, the date of the civil rights incident.

There was a large group of alumni from Booker T. Washington High School in attendance including the president of the alumni association, Tahira Abdul-Rahman, and the vice president, Robert Jackson. They spoke on behalf of all the alumni present in support of the nomination. They also presented a petition with over 1,000 signatures of other alumni who support the nomination. They also shared a poster from the recent all class reunion held at the school. State Representative Barbara Norris, who represents the area and is also an alumni, was also in attendance and spoke in support of the nomination.

Mr. Flucker moved that the nomination be recommended to the State Historic Preservation Officer. Mr. Kincade seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Harrisonburg Methodist Church, Catahoula Parish

Presented by Betty Gaither, nomination preparer

The Harrisonburg Methodist Church, located in Harrisonburg in Catahoula Parish, was originally constructed in 1853-54 on what is now Highway 124, a major road through town. Situated on a lot donated by a local family who were parishioners of the newly established church, the church was originally surrounded by residential structures but now has a post office on the east, constructed in 2001 and a health unit, constructed in 1993 on the west. A residential neighborhood is still located behind the church. The present Ouachita River Bridge literally ends at the front of the church. In 1929, following an unprecedented flood in 1927, the church was altered to its present form. It is a one story, Classical Revival styled church with a covered portico, witch's hat cupola topped by a crucifix, has a double door entry, is covered with wood siding, and features six over six double hung wood windows. The interior is simply detailed and has painted white board walls and ceiling and a simple pulpit area with rail. Despite two additions made to the rear of the church, the overall historic integrity of the church is intact and the building is worthy of listing on the National Register.

Located on Pine Street in the small town of Harrisonburg, Louisiana, the Harrisonburg Methodist Church is locally significant under Criterion C: Architecture, as it embodies the characteristics of the Classical Revival style within Harrisonburg and Catahoula Parish. Originally constructed in 1854, the church was altered in 1929 with the removal of its second story and addition of a new front portico and steeple designed in the Classical Revival style. Portions of the structure as well as window openings and the interior layout of the original 1854 church remain, but the current appearance of the church reflects its 1929 renovation. The building has received one addition in 1957 that does not detract from the building's overall historic character. The period of significance for the church is 1929, the date of its Classical Revival alterations, for which it is architecturally significant at the local level.

There were no questions from the committee or audience. Mr. Sykes then moved that the property be recommended to the State Historic Preservation Officer and Dr. Savage seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Huey P. Long Memorial Hospital, Rapides Parish

Presented by Jessica Richardson, National Register Coordinator (Paul Smith, preparer, was out of the country)

Huey P. Long Memorial Hospital was designed by well-known Louisiana architect, Edward F. Neild and constructed in 1937. Located across the Red River from downtown Alexandria in neighboring Pineville, the entire 20.16 acre hospital property includes 7 contributing and 11 non-contributing buildings. The 3 story main hospital building sits at the end of a long drive complete with a guard house and fence. The building's modern style can be seen in many original features including ribbon windows, contrasting colors of blonde and red bricks, aluminum details including curved entrance canopies, and original aluminum sculptural panels above the entry. There have been some alterations to the exterior of the main hospital block and some of the support buildings, but overall, the Huey P. Long Memorial Hospital retains a high degree of integrity and remains eligible for listing on the National Register.

Huey P. Long Memorial Hospital is significant at the local level under Criterion C: Architecture for its significance as a prime example of Streamline Modern architecture within Pineville and Rapides Parish. Additionally, it is significant statewide under Criterion A: Health/Medicine for the role it played as the charity hospital for central Louisiana. The period of significance under Criterion C is 1937-1939 reflecting the years it took to design and complete the hospital. The period of significance under Criterion A is 1937 – 1965 reflecting the years that the hospital served as the only charity hospital in the central Louisiana area including the 8 surrounding parishes.

Mr. Sykes gave some information about the current firm, Somdal Associates, and how they may have further information on whether the architect was Neild, Sr., or Neild, Jr. From what Mr. Sykes knows of the Neilds, the architecture of HPLMH looks a bit more like Neild, Jr.

Mr. Sykes moved that the property be recommended and Ms. Saloman seconded that the property be recommended to the SHPO,

Houma Elementary, Terrebonne Parish

Presented by Donna Fricker, nomination preparer

The Houma Elementary School (1931) is a quite large two story educational facility in the Art Deco style. It is constructed of structural brick laid some three to four bricks deep and finished in brick veneer. The school is located in a mainly residential (working class) early twentieth century neighborhood. The property consists of an irregularly shaped city block bounded by Grinage, Point, Goode and Academy streets. The strongly linear building has an impressive 240 foot façade set back from Grinage Street. Behind the school is a parking lot. In 1950-51, an addition, considered contributing, was made to the north end of the rear, forming an L. The addition was sensitively designed and does not impact the original school's historic integrity. The imposing building retains an overall high degree of architectural integrity on the exterior, the source of its local architectural significance.

Houma Elementary School is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture as a superlative example of the Art Deco style within the City of Houma. It is one of the two most convincingly and intensively styled Art Deco buildings in the city, and of these, it is easily the largest. The period of significance for the school is 1931, its year of construction.

Dr. Savage asked about how proposed plan modifications for the school's rehabilitation would affect the second floor, which is completely intact. Victor, from Renaissance Neighborhood Development (the developer of the school), stated that as part of the rehabilitation, they will be preserving the corridor, transom windows, and light fixtures.

Mr. Flucker then moved that the property be recommended to the SHPO and Ms. Saloman seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

10 Minute Break

New Orleans Federal Savings and Loan, Orleans Parish

Presented by Gabrielle Begue, nomination preparer

The New Orleans Federal Savings & Loan Building (NOFSL), 4948 Chef Menteur Highway/US Hwy 90, New Orleans, Orleans Parish, Louisiana, is an 8-story bank and office building located at the edge of the suburban Gentilly Woods neighborhood approximately 500 feet west of the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal, better known as the Industrial Canal. It is prominently situated at the end of Gentilly Woods' major commercial thoroughfare just past the foot of the Danziger Bridge on-ramp, which leads into New Orleans East, and is set back on a roughly 100' x 450' lot about 59 feet from the public right of way. The building was designed in the Wrightian style according to 1964 plans by local architecture firm Leonard Reese Spangenberg and Associates Architects. Completed in 1965, it is steel-frame construction faced with coarse-aggregate cast-stone panels and color-tinted glass. It has been vacant since 2006. NOFSL stands out among a number of suburban low-rise shopping centers fronted by large parking lots, including a large storage facility across the 6-lane Chef Menteur Highway/US Hwy 90 that originally housed a Sears, Roebuck & Co. store (1956), as well as a number of scattered 1- to 2-story commercial buildings that date between the 1950s and the 2000s. It is by far the tallest building in visual range. The building's exterior, where the structure's stylistic elements are concentrated, retains a high degree of integrity. The interior was significantly compromised by post-Hurricane Katrina vandalism and water damage, but the relatively small ground-floor bank space features simple interior finishes that did not echo the Wrightian style of the exterior, and the upper floors were speculative "vanilla box" rental office spaces. Thus, since NOFSL's style manifests in its exterior detailing and form, which have sustained only minor losses, the building retains its eligibility for National Register listing.

The New Orleans Federal Savings & Loan Building is of local significance under Criterion C: Design, in the area of Architecture, as the only known example of a Wrightian-style bank and office building in Orleans Parish. In addition, it is one of only two of architect and former Taliesin apprentice Leonard Reese

Spangenberg's remaining commercial designs in Orleans Parish that exhibit his strong connection to Frank Lloyd Wright. The period of significance for the building is 1965, the building's construction date.

Ms. Lowe asked about the proposed use of the building. Reggie Winfield, the building owner, was present, and he stated that the proposed use is multi family, market rate apartments and mixed used with commercial space on the ground floor. A rooftop garden is also planned. There were no further questions.

Ms. Lowe moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO and Mrs. Turner seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

John S. Dawson High School, West Feliciana Parish

Presented by Laura Blokker, nomination preparer

John S. Dawson High School is located approximately three and a half miles northwest of the town of St. Francisville in West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana. The western border of its 10.96 acre site is Bayou Sara, which connects with the Mississippi River just south of St. Francisville. Undulating slightly between approximately sixty-six and seventy feet in elevation, the site consists of cleared land bordered by mature trees. The existing buildings are clustered together at the front, eastern end. The primary resources are the high school, the elementary wing, the industrial arts/home economics building, and the agriculture building. Constructed between 1951 and 1965, these one-story buildings are modern in style and material. Concrete posts and protruding ceiling beams are the defining feature of the front elevation. Covered walkways connect the elementary wing and additional buildings with the original high school building as one unit, although they were constructed independently. Just to the northwest is the wood frame bus shed and drivers education building, that was constructed c. 1968. Closed since desegregation in 1969, the school has suffered deterioration, but remains very much familiar and recognizable to its alumni who attended during the 1951-1969 period of significance.

John S. Dawson High School is locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of education and ethnic heritage because it provided very important educational opportunities for African Americans in West Feliciana Parish. Most significantly, it was the first high school in West Feliciana Parish for African Americans. John S. Dawson High School provided students with a well-rounded educational foundation that enabled them to progress to college and pursue many different professions. The period of significance begins with the construction of the school in 1951 and terminates in 1969, the year John S. Dawson High school was closed.

There were several alumni in attendance in support of the nomination including Dr. Henry Hardy, president of the alumni association, and Kenneth Dawson, John S. Dawson's grandson. Both spoke about some of the history of the school and Kenneth Dawson showed his grandfather's ring from the high school with the review committee. Mr. Sykes asked about the cobra on the ring and Mr. Dawson stated that the school mascot was the cobra. There were no further questions.

Mrs. Turner moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO and Mr. Kincade seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

A. Hays Town Multiple Property Submission & Union Federal Savings and Loan Association, East Baton Rouge Parish

Presented by Nicole Kennelly, nomination preparer

Albert Hays Town was a renowned Louisiana architect whose career spanned eighty-five years. During this time, Town designed numerous buildings throughout Louisiana and Mississippi, with scattered buildings across the nation. Town's architectural career is representative of both the personal, cultural, and historical transformations during his lifetime.

A. Hays Town is a unique architect as his extensive career can be categorized as two careers. First, Town was a prominent Modernist architect for commercial and institutional buildings on the Gulf Coast. Second, Town combined his experience with Modernist design with Louisiana's traditional and vernacular forms. These two periods of Town's career had a brief overlap as he transitioned from commercial into residential building design.

The designs of A. Hays Town are the subject of this multiple-property submission. The designs of A. Hays Town may be significant under Criterion C as significant examples of property types and styles popular during particular periods of construction within the contexts of the states of Louisiana and Mississippi. Town can be considered a master architect; his career as an accomplished designer whose work has been recognized by his peers and who developed an architectural signature that is distinct and readily identifiable sets him apart from the majority of architects working in Louisiana and Mississippi during the middle of the 20th century.

The Union Federal Savings and Loan Association, constructed in 1956, is located in downtown Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on a corner lot at 500 Laurel Street. Designed by architect A. Hays Town, this 6 story mid-century modern office town is a prime example of Town's modern style commercial buildings designed between 1939 and 1960. The building itself is cast in place concrete construction with rows of large single pane windows separated by the vertical concrete structural members. The L shaped building includes a small courtyard that is part of the original design. Parking lots, part of the original plan, are situated to the south and west of the building. The interior of the building includes several original details, primarily in the entry and lobby areas. This building retains a high degree of historic integrity and is eligible for listing on the National Register.

Constructed in 1956, the Union Federal Savings and Loan Association (UFSLA) is significant on the local level under Criterion C: Architecture. Designed by well-known Louisiana and Mississippi architect, A. Hays Town, the building was a ground-breaking design for Town that set the course for his later commercial designs. The UFSLA building was the first of Town's in which he used colored glass for the windows as well as an exposed concrete structural grid and was used as a model for later Town buildings, including the Department of Transportation building in Baton Rouge. The Union Federal Savings and Loan Association has direct associations with the historic context, *A. Hays Town Commercial Designs, 1939-1968*, developed as part of the MPS, "The Architecture of A. Hays Town in Louisiana, 1939-1991," and meets the registration requirements of Property Subtype – Commercial Buildings under Buildings found in Section F of the MPS cover. The Union Savings and Loan Association is eligible under Criterion C as an important design in A. Hays Town's career as it would influence his later commercial architecture designs. The period of significance for the building is 1956, the year it was constructed.

Ms. Lowe and Mr. Lewis asked about the organization of the document and if this meant that all Town buildings would be eligible. Ms. Richardson stated that no, not all buildings are eligible. There are registration requirements in the document that state what specifically makes a Town building eligible. It also serves as the historic context for any future Town nominations and saves time on writing those future nominations. Mr. Sykes added that he has some copies of newspaper articles from the year that the Union Federal Savings and Loan Association opened that he will share with Ms. Kennelly and Mr. Richardson to include with the nomination. Mrs. Turner added some information concerning Mr. Town and how she had met him many times as well as had friends who used him to design their homes. There were no further questions.

Mrs. Turner moved that the Union Federal Savings and Loan Association nomination be recommended to the SHPO and Mr. Flucker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Conerly House Delisting, Rapides Parish

Presented by Jessica Richardson, National Register Coordinator and nomination preparer

The purpose of this additional documentation is to remove Rapides Parish's Conerly House from the National Register of Historic Places. The property was added to the National Register on December 5, 1984. It was listed as a component of "The Neo-Classical Architecture of Bayou Rapides" nomination. The houses, including Conerly, that were listed under this nomination (10 total) represented the architectural mainstream during much of the 19th century in the area.

The Conerly House has lost its integrity of location and setting as it no longer sits in on Bayou Rapides, where it was constructed c. 1890 by the S.L. Conerly. The move from a rural setting on Bayou Rapides to a more suburban setting within a residential neighborhood placed the building in a setting that does not reflect its original setting (most of which has been subdivided and built on with modern businesses and homes now).

Ms. Rich moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO and Mr. Lewis seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Alexis LaTour House Delisting, Evangeline Parish

Presented by Jessica Richardson, National Register Coordinator and nomination preparer

The purpose of the additional documentation is to remove the Alex LaTour House from the National Register of Historic Places because the structure has been moved from its original location.

The Alexis LaTour House, built in 1837 and listed in 1987, was a story-and-a-half bousillage Creole house located in Ville Platte, Evangeline Parish. One of the oldest homes in Ville Platte, some elements that contributed to its significance were the Greek Revival features including the symmetrical façade with a central doorway with transom and side lights and Queen Anne Revival dormers on the front and rear of the house. The LaTour House is one of the only surviving elements left from the original structures in the town Ville Platte. However, the house was moved from its original location which eliminates the level of integrity that qualified the house for the National Register of Historic Places. Phone calls with the former Certified Local Government contact, the Evangeline Parish Chamber of Commerce, and the LaTour's descendant who still owns the original property confirmed that the building was moved in 1998 from its original location to a new piece of land at 890 Chretien Point Rd in Sunset, LA, approximately 30 miles to the southeast.

Ms. Rich moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO and Mr. Lewis seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Adams House Delisting, East Baton Rouge Parish

Presented by Jessica Richardson, National Register Coordinator and nomination preparer

The purpose of this additional documentation is to remove East Baton Rouge Parish's Adams House from the National Register of Historic Places. The property was added to the National Register on May 8, 1998. It was listed at the local level for its significance under Criterion C: Architecture because it was one of very few Italianate style residences remaining in the city of Baton Rouge.

The Adams House has lost its integrity of location and setting as it no longer sits in an urban, city setting, but rather in a suburban setting. It is no longer bounded on each side by buildings of similar age, but is instead bounded on one side by a creek and on the other side by a 1940s house. Across the street from it are two newly constructed houses and what appears to be a c. 1960 house. Furthermore, looking at recent Google streetview images of the house (updated in 2015), it appears that the slate roof has been replaced with metal, the front entry doors have been replaced with French doors, the two chimneys were removed and replaced with a single one (likely removed when it was moved), a side addition was added to the left side of the building, and new rear additions were built. Lastly, a letter in our files indicates that the move occurred prior to 2001 when the owner at the time asked for the property to be relisted. In this letter, it states that the Italianate mantles were also lost. These alterations affect the overall integrity of design, craftsmanship, and materials.

Mr. Sykes moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO and Mr. Flucker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Richardson had no further announcements.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:41p.m.