

Louisiana National Register Review Committee Meeting

July 18, 2013, 1:30 p.m.
Capitol Park Welcome Center
702 North River Road
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Minutes

Acting Chairperson Lynn Lewis called the July 18, 2013 meeting of the National Register Review Committee to order at 1:05 p.m. In addition to Mr. Lewis, members present included John Sykes, Lestar Martin, Mrs. Sue Turner, Mrs. Glenna Kramer, Ms. Susan McClamroch, Mrs. Peggy Lowe, Turry Flucker, and Mrs. Martha Salomon. Dr. Rebecca Saunders, Dr. Matthew Savage, and Gary Cooper were absent.

Mr. Lewis asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Mrs. Kramer so moved, with Mr. Sykes seconding. This motion passed unanimously.

Division of Historic Preservation Director Nicole Hobson-Morris welcomed the audience and Committee members, and then honored retiring National Register Coordinator Patricia Duncan by reading a proclamation from Lt. Governor Jay Dardenne. State Historic Preservation Officer Pam Breaux also spoke, thanking three retiring Committee members: Mrs. Mary Louise Christovich, Mrs. Patricia Ann Lewis Williams, and Wayne Coco, for their many years of service. Ms. Hobson-Morris then introduced several new members of the Committee. Duncan then introduced the entire Committee to the audience and explained which seats/disciplines each fills. These members are Mrs. Peggy Lowe, lay position; Ms. Susan L. McClamroch, architectural Historian; and Mrs. Martha Salomon, architect. A fourth new member, Dr. Matthew Savage (architectural historian) was unable to attend.

Mr. Lewis asked for a motion approving the minutes of the last meeting as distributed. Mr. Kramer so moved, with Mrs. Turner seconding. This motion passed unanimously.

Under New Business, the Committee considered eight National Register candidates.

225 Baronne Street, Orleans Parish

Presented by Rob Mawson, Heritage Consulting Group, Portland, Oregon

Completed in 1962, 225 Baronne Street is a 28-story, steel-frame, high-rise building located in the New Orleans (Orleans Parish) Central Business District. It stands just south of the main downtown shopping area (the latter along Canal Street) in a dense urban area with buildings of generally comparable commercial uses. Stylistically, it belongs to the New Formalism subdivision of the Modern Movement. Its interior has been modified, but the exterior remains very much intact. The building is locally significant and eligible for listing on the National Register within the context of New Orleans (Orleans Parish) under Criterion A in the area of Commerce. At a time when downtown New Orleans' faced threats of suburbanization, 225 Baronne played a unique role in maintaining and expanding the downtown economy. A purely speculative venture, the 1962 building was the first major building in the Central Business District [CBD] since before World War II. Its timely construction allowed the CBD to capture

benefit from NASA's \$502 million investment at Michoud in East New Orleans. The building's success tempered negative impacts of the 1960 race riots in the CBD and the quick absorption of the building's 421,000 square feet dramatically demonstrated the continued viability of the CBD as the city's economic heart. Finally, the building's continuing success – demonstrated in both a high occupancy rate and substantially increasing value – served as both example and comparable in the development of additional CBD construction in the years to follow. In fact, until the end of the decade, 225 Baronne was the only viable comparable. Its contribution was such that while prior to construction, the Mayor was calling for programs to save the CBD as the economic heart of the city, by the end of the decade, the Chamber of Commerce and City leadership were creating "Guidelines for Growth" for that same CBD. The building is the focus of a multi-million dollar project that will rehabilitate it for mixed use. Tax credits will be used to make the financial numbers work. The rehabilitation is scheduled to be completed in about 18 months.

After the presentation, an audience member asked when the building opened. Mr. Mawson responded that it opened in 1962. Mrs. Kramer asked if work has already started on the interior. Mawson explained that another party began gutting the building before Hurricane Katrina in 2005, but nothing else has happened since that time. The developers are awaiting approval of their Part II Federal Tax Credit Application before beginning work. Ms. McClamroch asked about parking for future tenants. Josh Collen was present and responded that parking will be provided on the building's lower floors. Mrs. Kramer then moved that the candidate be recommended to the State Historic Preservation Officer. Both Mr. Sykes and Mrs. Lowe seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

United States Naval Station Algiers Historic District
Presented by Richard Sidebottom, MacRostie Historic Advisers

The U.S. Naval Station Algiers Historic District is located on the south bank of the Mississippi River, just west of Algiers Point in New Orleans (Orleans Parish). Major development took place 1902-1919 and 1941-1945. The facility is a mixture of styled and unstyled resources. Styled contributing elements reflect the Colonial, Classical, and Romanesque revivals. There is also one mid-nineteenth century French Creole dwelling (National Register) within the boundaries. Style non-contributing elements display elements of the Modern Movement, mainly Postmodernism. Unstyled resources are industrial and utilitarian in nature. The district contains a total of fifty-five resources, forty-one (75%) of which are contributing elements and fourteen (25%) of which are non-contributing. Most of the older buildings are of masonry construction. Industrial/utilitarian resources are generally composed of steel, concrete, and brick. Despite changes over time, the district retains a high degree of integrity. The district is significant nationally under Criterion A in the area of Military because it was the first naval station established on the Gulf coast. Due to its location on the Mississippi River, New Orleans had established itself as the economic center of the Deep South by the time of the Civil War. The city was the staging point where river-going barges offloaded their cargo to sturdier vessels that could navigate the Gulf. The city's economic importance precipitated the need for a naval presence especially as the United States emerged as a world power at the turn of the twentieth century. During its tenure, operations at the base included the building and repair of ships, training of crews, and providing support for naval operations around the globe. The period of significance ends in 1945 because the station was marginalized throughout the 1950s and 1960s, with no major physical developments occurring until the 1970s. Although the facility is now in non-governmental hands, a charter school dealing with naval-type education will be opened in two of the buildings, which will both be tax credit projects.

Col. Bill Davis, United States Marine Corp, Retired, and Frank Rabalais of Crescent Growth Capital were present in support of the nomination. Col. Davis will be the commandant of the charter school. He spoke in favor of the nomination and testified that: 1) the buildings in the district were the heart of the naval base, and 2) he personally lived in two of the houses. Mrs. Turner asked how much military activity occurs there currently. Col. Davis answered that there is no military activity within the district. However, such activity occurs around the district in parts of the naval facility that have not been privatized. Ms. McClamroch then moved that the property be recommended and Mrs. Lowe seconded. The motion passes unanimously.

Fairfield Building, Caddo Parish

Presented by Barbara S. Bacot

The Fairfield Building was built 1948-1949. The construction is steel frame and hollow tile with brick cladding. Part of the building incorporates an earlier solid brick masonry wall building. The result is that the right side of the building--1600, 1606, 1608, and 1610--is four stories high, and the left side, 1612 Fairfield, is two stories. The building stands on the corner of Fairfield Avenue and Jacobs Street, where the main approach from downtown angles to begin a major residential street. The exterior retains most of its integrity: the only change is the addition of a drive-through banking kiosk on the rear built after 1965. The 4-story interior and the mechanical room are basically intact. The 2-story section has lost most of its original interior. The building still retains most of its integrity and is thus eligible for the National Register. A textbook example of the style, the building is locally significant under Criterion C—Design, in the area of Architecture because it is the best International Style commercial building in North Louisiana.

Developer Edward Taylor was present in support of the nomination. He explained that the building will be rehabilitated for residential use with the help of the tax credit programs. Mr. Lewis asked if the brushed aluminum on the building is original. Bacot responded that, although the canopy may be green enamel, the majority of the aluminum is original. Mr. Martin commented that, because of the way the building is constructed, the floors appear to float within the building's skin. He also commented that the building's architect, Samuel Wiener, also designed Grace Episcopal Church and the First Presbyterian Church, both in the 20th century version of the Gothic Revival style. Finally, Mr. Martin explained that, during a survey project in which his students took part, they found nothing else in North Louisiana like this building. Mrs. Kramer asked if the building actually faces Fairfield Avenue. The answer was affirmative. Mr. Martin moved and Mrs. Kramer seconded that the candidate be recommended to the SHPO. When discussion continued, Ms. Kramer called the question. The candidate passed without opposition.

Petroleum Tower, Caddo Parish

Presented by Jonathan Fricker, Fricker Historic Preservation Services

The Petroleum Tower (1958) is a sixteen story steel, glass and aluminum Mid-century Modern skyscraper located at the corner of Texas and Edwards streets in downtown Shreveport. (The location is within the downtown National Register district, but the building is coded as non-

contributing in a 1996 update to the original documentation. It was a dozen years shy of the 50 year cutoff at that time.) While the interior has been completely lost, the exterior is intact, enabling the building to convey its significance under Criteria A and C.

The Petroleum Tower is significant in the area of architecture (Criterion C: Design), at the state level, as a particularly important expression of post-WWII modernism within Louisiana. It exemplifies the omnipresent flowering of European Modernism in the American city during the middle of the twentieth century. State level significance has been chosen because the Petroleum Tower is one of a very limited number of steel and glass modular grid skyscrapers in the state from the post-war period. The period of significance under Criterion C is the date of construction: 1958. The Petroleum Tower is also of local significance in the area of industry (Criterion A: Events) as a major representation of the tremendous importance of the oil and gas industry to the Shreveport economy – from the time of the first successful oil well in the area (1908) through at least the 1960s. The period of significance under Criterion A spans from 1959, the date the building opened (with a majority of oil and gas related tenants) to 1963, the present 50 year National Register cutoff. The building continued to be occupied mainly by oil and gas businesses up to and past 1963, and the oil and gas industry continued to dominate Shreveport's economy up to and past 1963.

Bob King and Jeff Spikes attended the meeting in support of the candidate. Noting that one side of the building is solid brick, Mrs. Lowe asked if there is a view through the building's glass side. Mr. Spikes explained that three sides of the building are glass and there is a view. Mr. Lewis asked for a description of the view, which is of the entire west side of downtown Shreveport. Mrs. Salomon commented that the plans seemed to indicate the placement of bedrooms on the building's solid brick side and asked if the developer would have to cut windows in the brick wall for those rooms. Mr. Spikes stated that project leaders would make sure that no bedrooms are on the solid wall and that all bedrooms will have windows as required by code. Mr. Sykes then moved that the candidate be recommended to the SHPO and Mr. Flucker seconded. The candidate passed unanimously.

A five-minute break followed the Petroleum Tower discussion.

Tallulah High School, Madison Parish

Presented by Donna Fricker, Fricker Historic Preservation Services

The imposing two-story Classical Revival building (1927) that formerly housed the Tallulah High School occupies a park-like setting facing Brushy Bayou on the southern end of town. Tallulah is the seat of Madison Parish, located in the Mississippi delta of northeastern Louisiana. The building is finished in brick and accented with white trim. (The brick is of varying colors, with red being predominant.) It is an example of what was once called "Southern Colonial" architecture. The former high school has been vacant for years, resulting in deterioration and some losses. Nonetheless, it still readily conveys its architectural identity and National Register eligibility. The building is locally significant under Criterion C: (Design and Construction) in the area of architecture as an important example of the Classical Revival style within Tallulah, a community that lacks much in the way of architect designed buildings. It is an important example because it is well-executed and is the grandest of several Classical Revival

buildings within the community. There is no doubt that Tallulah residents consider it an architectural landmark. The period of significance is the date of construction: 1927.

A large delegation of Tallulah citizens, including Mayor Eddie Beckwith and historical society president Marilyn Bedgood, attended in support of the candidate. The mayor indicated that the community is looking for ideas for reuse of the building. An audience member asked about the boundaries of the nomination. Ms. Fricker responded that a building visible behind the school in a photograph is not within the boundaries. Mrs. Lowe asked when the school was vacated. Mayor Beckwith responded that it was in use until 2006. Mrs. Turner inquired why the building was being nominated; Mrs. Fricker explained that the building is a local architectural landmark. Mrs. Kramer asked for confirmation that the level of significance is local and received such confirmation. Mr. Lewis then moved that the candidate be recommended to the SHPO and Mrs. Lowe seconded. The motion carried with eight affirmative votes. Mrs. Turner voted in opposition.

Tallulah Post Office, Madison Parish

Presented by Donna Fricker, Fricker Historic Preservation Services

The Tallulah Post Office (1934) is a brick and concrete story-and-a-half institutional building located at the southern edge of the historic Tallulah Central Business District (Madison Parish). Mrs. Fricker explained that, like the similarly styled high school, the post office is locally significant in the area of architecture (Criterion C). It is a landmark in the town because it still strongly conveys its Classical Revival architectural identity through its imposing and intensively articulated facade. The post office is one of six examples of the Classical Revival style in town. In their day, these buildings would most likely have been termed "Southern Colonial." The other five examples (including the high school) boast grand pedimented porticos. However, the post office stands out because it features a handsome columnar arrangement.

The same Tallulah delegation that supported the high school's nomination supported that of the Post Office. An unusual feature of the building is a second-level observation area where supervisors could observe employees at work. Mrs. Kramer commented that the Franklin post office has a similar observation area, although it is shaped differently. Mr. Sykes asked that the historic period photograph shown by Mrs. Fricker in her presentation be included in the nomination; Mrs. Fricker promised to provide it. Mrs. Lowe asked if the building's copper lanterns are original. Mrs. Fricker admitted that she did not know but feels they look appropriate. Mr. Martin moved that the candidate be recommend to the SHPO, and both Ms. McClamroch and Mr. Flucker seconded the motion. It carried with eight affirmative votes. Mrs. Turner voted in opposition.

Boyce Methodist Church, Rapides Parish

Presented by Katy Arbour

Constructed in 1899, the Boyce Methodist Church is a single story, wood frame building that stands on a quiet residential block located in the Rapides Parish town of Boyce, settled on the west bank of the Red River in Central Louisiana. Although all exterior walls have received vinyl siding, the building remains locally significant under Criterion C: Design in the area of

architecture. It has a combination of Queen Anne and Gothic Revival styling that is significant within rural Rapides Parish. It especially illustrates the adaptation of Queen Anne and Gothic Revival style religious architecture to the simpler needs and resources of a small rural congregation. It is also one of the three most architecturally significant landmarks left in the small community, which has lost many of its historic buildings. The period of significance is 1899, the year of the church's construction.

A large delegation from Boyce attended the meeting in support of the candidate. Mrs. Kramer asked when and why the artificial siding was added to the building, but no one in the audience seemed to know. Ms. McClamroch commented upon the rear addition. An audience member commented that the church's bell is original and is still in use. Mr. Lewis then asked if it is run via a long rope hanging from it. The response was affirmative. Mrs. Lowe asked when the metal roof was installed but the nomination author did not know. Mr. Margin commented that the original roof was probably metal and then moved that the candidate be recommended to the SHPO. Mr. Sykes seconded. Mrs. Turner then asked if there was any significance associated with the church's growth during the historic period and its resulting need of the side addition. Ella James explained that Boyce was once a thriving town that continued to grow until it lost its railroad depot. Thus, it was much larger than it is now. Coordinator Duncan also explained that part of the town was taken by the Mississippi River. The vote was taken, with eight in favor of recommendation. It was not clear whether Mrs. Turner opposed or abstained.

L. A. Frey & Sons Meatpacking Plant, New Orleans

Presented by Stephen Fowlkes and Harriet Swift

The former L. A. Frey & Sons Meatpacking Plant is a mostly rectilinear two- and three-story brick and steel industrial building. It is located on Burgundy Street and is a non-contributing element (it fell outside the period of significance) in the Bywater National Register Historic District of New Orleans in Orleans Parish. The plant is one of only a few remaining industrial buildings in the large, mostly residential neighborhood that makes up the Bywater district. The 1921 building saw four major, unornamented additions from 1952 to the early 1970s, all of which are totally utilitarian in nature. The amalgamation of additions mostly subsumed the 1921 building such that only a few parts of it remain visible. The resulting structure is large, boxy and has no architectural style. Because approximately 60 percent of the existing building is comprised of sections built between 1921 and 1963, it retains the integrity and meets the 50-year age requirement for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The L.A. Frey & Sons Meatpacking Plant is locally significant under Criterion A: History, in the area of industry because it is a rare, intact example of an independent meatpacking operation that was family-owned and geared to the New Orleans market. This is a forgotten component of the mostly corporate, heavily centralized meatpacking industry. In the mid-twentieth century New Orleans had as many as 20 family-owned and/or independent meatpackers operating along with regional outlets of the national corporations (which at various times included Swift, Armour, Cudahy, Wilson, Hormel, and Morrell between 1921 and 1963). By the end of the twentieth century all of the independents were gone, either shut down or sold to a corporation. Of these independents, Frey was the longest surviving, closing in 1987. Other than the Frey Building, there are about six extant buildings in the New Orleans area that can be identified as one-time independent meatpacking sites. However, all of these buildings have been

heavily altered and/or are seriously compromised by blight and neglect. Thus, Frey displays the best integrity of the group. Additionally, it illustrates the changes in the meatpacking industry in the early and mid-twentieth century. The period of significance begins in 1921, the construction year of the oldest portion of the meatpacking plant, and ends in 1963, the National Register's current 50-year cutoff.

Mrs. Lowe commented that one of the most important parts of the site seemed to be the original machines that survive. She asked if these will be removed during the rehabilitation. Owner Shea Embry spoke in favor of the nomination and indicated that both she and the architect are in favor of as much preservation of the building as possible. Mrs. Kramer asked about some shotgun homes visible in one of the presentation photographs. Frey apparently owned them. Mr. Lewis asked if the hotdogs produced by the company are still available. They are not, as the company closed and its parts were sold. Ms. McClamroch asked about the blue circle visible on the roof. It is a swimming pool installed by the current owner when she lived on the third level. Mrs. Turner asked if Ms. Embry plans to use the tax credits for the rehabilitation. Ms. Embry replied in the negative. Mrs. Turner then told her a bit about the program and encouraged her to look into it. Mrs. Turner asked Coordinator Duncan if she was worried about this nomination's approval by the National Park Service. Duncan replied that she is a bit concerned but believes in the story the building tells. The candidate should have "its day in court." Ms. Swift then commented that she has researched in the National Register and has found that the program has recognized the importance of the meat packing industry to the nation's economy. Mrs. Kramer suggested that this point be developed further in the nomination. Mrs. Salomon then moved that the candidate be recommended to the SHPO. Both Mrs. Turner and Mr. Flucker seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Under Announcements, Duncan called attention to the informational materials she provided for the members. Mr. Lewis then welcomed the new members.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m. with Mrs. Kramer so moving and Mr. Flucker seconding.