United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

**1. Name of Property**

Historic Name: D’Agostino Building
Other Names/Site Number: N/A
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

**2. Location**

Street & Number: 110 N. Jefferson Avenue
City or town: Port Allen  State: LA  County: West Baton Rouge
Not for Publication: □  Vicinity: □

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this □ nomination □ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property □ meets □ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

□ national  □ state  □ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: □ A  □ B  □ C  □ D

**Signature of certifying official/Title:** Kristin Sanders, State Historic Preservation Officer  Date

Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property □ meets □ does not meet the National Register criteria.

**Signature of commenting official:**  Date

**Title:** State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government
4. National Park Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other, explain: ___________________________

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply.)

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Category of Property (Check only one box.)

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Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.): DOMESTIC/hotel; COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty
**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions.): VACANT/NOT IN USE

### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions.): No style

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)
- foundation: unknown
- walls: brick, concrete
- roof: other (modified bitumen)
- other: glass, wood

**Narrative Description**
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

**Summary Paragraph**

The D’Agostino Building, 110 N. Jefferson Avenue, in Port Allen, West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, is a two-story, brick-masonry commercial building located at the northeast corner of N. Jefferson Avenue and Court Street in the heart of Port Allen’s historic business district. Originally built in 1929, it was reconstructed in its present location in 1931 following a large-scale levee construction project that displaced most of Port Allen’s old commercial district. The building has a rectangular footprint and consists of a buff-colored face brick exterior with a flat roof and a prominent corner entrance accessing the largest ground-floor commercial space. Four additional commercial spaces are accessed along the Court Street façade. Over the decades, the first-floor units were leased to a variety of businesses catering primarily to local residents, including a local chain grocery store, restaurant, bar, barber shop, clothing store, drug store, and repair shops. The second floor housed the seventeen-room Magnolia Hotel, the largest hotel in the parish. Extant historic exterior features include the brick exterior; wood storefronts; double-hung wood sash windows along the second floor (removed for storage); contrasting brick cornice; and original building signage on the Court Street façade that reads “Sam D’Agostino 1929.” The first-floor interiors exhibit an assortment of historic and non-historic finishes that accumulated as tenants changed and modernized their spaces over time. The second-floor interior is largely intact and features double-loaded corridors and original guest-room configurations; wood floors; horizontal-panel wood doors with transoms; and plaster or early wallboard walls and ceilings. A one-story brick-masonry addition was constructed c. 1940s on the building’s north/rear elevation to expand the corner commercial space. Other alterations include the removal of canopies along the street-facing facades and a balcony on the north/rear façade. In addition, the building has sustained long-term water damage and has stood at least partially vacant for more than a decade. Overall, however, the D’Agostino Building possesses a high degree of integrity on both the exterior and interior and remains clearly recognizable as an early twentieth-century commercial building.

**Narrative Description**

**Setting and Site**

The D’Agostino Building, 110 N. Jefferson Avenue, is a two-story, brick-masonry commercial building located in the city of Port Allen, the parish seat and largest municipality in West Baton Rouge Parish. Port Allen
The D'Agostino Building sits flush with the south and west property lines to fully engage with the street. The north/rear elevation is visible from N. Jefferson Avenue due to a gravel parking area that fills out the rear of the parcel, and the east elevation is visible from Court Street and bordered by a concrete-paved parking lot.

Exterior (Photos 1-6)

The D'Agostino Building is brick masonry construction with wood joists and rafters and wood-frame interior partitions. There are a limited number of cast-iron or steel beams/columns where brick walls were removed or modified. The low-slope roof is covered with deteriorated modified-bitumen roll roofing and bordered by a short brick parapet. On the east and west sides, the parapet steps down as it approaches the rear/north side of the building.

Court Street/south façade: The primary Court Street/south façade is buff-colored, wire-cut face brick with a contrasting red-brick string course and patterned cornice. Set between the string course and patterned cornice is the original cast-stone building signage that reads “Sam D’Agostino 1929,” which references the original building owner, Salvatore (Sam) D’Agostino, and construction date. At the southwest corner of the first floor is an angled entrance to the primary commercial unit (452 Court Street). This opening is marked by a painted cast-iron column, which supports the corner of the floor plate above, and staggered brickwork that forms a checkerboard pattern at each angled corner (Photo 4). The entrance doors to this unit have been replaced with aluminum storefront doors; the three-light wood transom and beadboard soffit are original. Moving eastward along the first floor, there are historic wood-frame display windows with transoms for the corner unit, followed by the stair entrance to the second-floor hotel and four smaller storefronts, three of which consist of wood-frame plate-glass display windows, transoms, and paired or single light-over-panel wood doors (438, 436, and 432 Court Street). The storefront covered with vertical wood paneling (444 Court Street) retains its transom

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1 Robert Landry, interview with Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Landry, c. 1976. Courtesy of the West Baton Rouge Museum.
D’Agostino Building

Name of Property: D’Agostino Building

County and State: West Baton Rouge, Parish, Louisiana

windows and storefront-window openings, which are visible only from the interior (Photo 8). Above this modified storefront is a modern blade sign for “Riverside Pub & Poboys.” Regularly spaced corroded iron rings attached at the ceiling height of the first floor mark the location of a former canopy structure. Extending the full length of the second floor are ten pairs of windows. The majority of the historic six-over-six wood sash windows have been removed and stored for repair and the openings covered with tar paper to keep the building weathertight.

N. Jefferson Avenue/west façade: The N. Jefferson Avenue/west façade is the building’s secondary street-facing façade. It is clad in buff-colored wire-cut face brick to match the Court Street façade and similarly features a contrasting red-brick string course and patterned cornice. The corner entrance described above is equally accessible from this side of the building, which also features one historic storefront window with transom. Moving north along this façade, there is a single light-over-panel wood door and arched transom, which served as a secondary entrance to the corner commercial unit. Corroded iron rings mark the location of a former canopy structure that would have turned the corner from Court Street. At the second floor are a pair of six-over-six wood sash windows (removed for repair); a centered former door opening corresponding to the west end of the double-loaded corridor of the hotel that was converted into a window; and a trio of six-over-six wood sash windows (removed for repair). Directly to the north is a one-story brick-masonry addition that was constructed c. 1940s to increase the square footage of the corner commercial unit (Photos 3-4). On the street-facing N. Jefferson Avenue/west façade, the addition is clad in yellow face brick to blend with the original façade and topped with a simple stuccoed brick cornice. Openings consist of wood-frame storefront windows, transoms, and a light-over-panel wood door with screen door.

North/rear elevation: The north/rear elevation faces the interior of the block and is characterized by an exposed common-brick exterior with brick flues serving the commercial units. Openings along the first floor are rear exits for the commercial units with a limited number of added openings for air-conditioning units or connections to later additions; the rear doors have been replaced with vinyl or wood-slab doors, and the windows are missing or bricked in. Second-floor openings are historic six-over-six wood sash windows that have been removed and stored for repair; in addition, there are three door openings that historically accessed a rear balcony and stairs for egress. This balcony was removed at an unknown date. The exit doors at this level are paneled wood or missing. The north/rear elevation of the c. 1940s addition is red common brick with two small openings for air-conditioning units (removed). Adjacent to the c. 1940s addition was a utilitarian wood-frame lean-to addition dating to c. 1960s per aerial photographs; it was recently demolished due to advanced deterioration. Its concrete floor slab remains. Another small, temporary metal-clad lean-to addition was recently removed from the east end of this elevation.

East elevation: The common-brick east elevation is visible from Court Street and was used as a surface for hand-painted signage for the Magnolia Hotel per a 1958 photograph (Historic Image 4). Today, the exterior exhibits a variety of paint finishes (Photo 2). The first floor is uninterrupted brick except for two small punched openings at the north end. Second-floor openings consist of two pairs of historic six-over-six wood sash windows and one single window that corresponds to the east end of the double-loaded corridor of the hotel. These windows have been removed and stored for repair.

Interior (Photos 7-19)

The first floor houses five separate commercial units. The corner unit (452 Court Street) is the largest of the five and is open in plan with concrete-slab floors, plastered-brick walls, and exposed wood-joist ceilings, which were historically covered with wallboard (removed due to water damage). The wall dividing this unit from the staircase to the second-floor hotel is wood frame covered with painted wallboard. Running laterally through the center of the space are three painted cast-iron columns supporting a wood beam and a brick header where the rear wall stood prior to the construction of the c. 1940s addition (Photo 7). These features were recently exposed following the removal of non-historic fabric during stabilization efforts, including acoustical-tile ceilings and horizontal wood wall paneling.
The other four commercial units (444, 438, 436, and 432 Court Street) are open in plan with concrete-slab or asbestos-tile floors, walls covered with wallboard or wood/wood-veneer paneling, and exposed-joist ceilings. The floor in 438 Court Street is historic green and white ceramic tile (Photo 9). Like the corner unit, some non-historic finishes in these smaller units were recently removed during stabilization efforts, including various types of wall paneling and acoustical-tile ceilings. Interior bathroom partitions located at the rears of these units were recently demolished.

The second floor housed the seventeen-room Magnolia Hotel, which operated from 1931 through the 1960s (Photos 12-19).\(^2\) The painted-wood staircase accessed from Court Street (Photo 12) leads to a second-floor landing that intersects the double-loaded corridor running the length of the building. To the left, the corridor leads to five guest rooms, three of which can be converted into suites, and to the right the corridor leads to twelve single guest rooms. The corridor and stair landing retain their wood floors, wallboard-covered walls and ceilings, simple wood baseboards, and numbered horizontal-panel wood doors with transoms and painted-wood frames leading into the guest rooms (the metal room numbers were removed by a previous owner but the markings remain). The guest rooms are modest in size and amenities; some have closets, and most lack private baths. Interior finishes include plaster on the exterior brick walls and wallboard on the interior partitions; wood floors; simple wood baseboards and some chair rails; and simple wood window casings. Some guest rooms include small porcelain-enamel sinks.

**Alterations**

Exterior alterations include the removal of the canopy structure along the street-facing facades and the removal of the second-floor balcony on the north/rear elevation. The c. 1940s addition on the N. Jefferson Street/west façade occurred during the period of significance and has gained historic significance in its own right.

Other alterations include the construction of the two lean-to additions at the building’s rear/north elevation, which were recently demolished due to their temporary construction and deteriorated condition. The openings in the historic brick wall where these additions stood do not adversely impact the building’s historic appearance given their limited size and location on the least visible elevation.

A limited number of exterior openings were modified (e.g., doors converted into windows) at an unknown date, and some openings have been cut into the brick walls to accommodate air-conditioning units. The storefront of 444 Court Street has been altered with a modern entrance door and wood paneling, but some of the original features, including two transoms and the display window openings, remain intact beneath the paneling. The entrance doors to the corner unit, 452 Court Street, have been replaced with aluminum storefront doors. On the rear/north elevation, first-floor doors have been replaced with vinyl or slab doors.

On the interior, the commercial units were updated over time with new finishes as tenants and uses changed or tenants modernized their spaces. In most cases, historic fabric is intact beneath these later materials, most of which were recently removed as part of stabilization efforts due to long-term water damage.

**Assessment of Integrity:**

**Location and Setting:** The D’Agostino Building possesses integrity of location and setting. It remains in its original location. The setting retains its historic pattern of development, which consists of modest, low-rise commercial buildings along Court Street with scattered single-family residential around it. Some of the

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\(^2\) This closure date comes from Mona Budden, granddaughter of original building owner Salvatore “Sam” D’Agostino. Email correspondence with the author, November 11, 2019.
commercial buildings that made up the business district have been demolished, and some have been extensively remodeled, but the general character of the district remains intact.

*Design, Materials, and Workmanship:* The building possesses a high degree of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship on both the exterior and interior. Intact historic exterior features include the buff-colored face brick and contrasting cornice on the street-facing facades; cornice signage; fenestration patterns; wood storefronts; six-over-six double-hung wood sash windows (removed for storage); and rectangular form and simple massing. On the interior, modifications to the leased commercial units is to be expected, and in many cases underlying historic fabric is intact. The general configuration of the units is intact. The hotel layout of the second floor remains virtually unchanged since the period of significance. The loss of the exterior canopy and the rear balcony is regrettable but does not significantly detract from the building’s historic appearance. The c. 1940s addition on the N. Jefferson Avenue/west façade, which increased the square footage of the corner commercial unit, dates within the period of significance and relates to the historic significance of the building as a commercial building of central importance within Port Allen and the parish.

*Feeling and Association:* The building’s integrity of location, setting, design, materials, and workmanship combine to create integrity of feeling and association. The building clearly reads as a prominent, early twentieth-century commercial building that housed a variety of businesses. The engagement with the street, number and arrangement of commercial units, original storefronts, brick construction, cornice signage, and distinctive hotel layout, among other features, all indicate that the D’Agostino Building historically served a central role within Port Allen’s business district, most notably as the leading hotel in West Baton Rouge Parish.

### 8. Statement of Significance

**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

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<td>Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.</td>
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<td>Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history</td>
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**Criteria Considerations:**

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<td>Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years</td>
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**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions.): commerce

**Period of Significance:** 1931-1968
D'Agostino Building

West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana

**Significant Dates:** 1931, 1968

**Significant Person** (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above): n/a

**Cultural Affiliation** (only if criterion D is marked above): n/a

**Architect/Builder (last name, first name):** unknown

**Period of Significance (justification):** The period of significance begins in 1931, when the D'Agostino Building was reconstructed in its present location, and ends in 1968, when the completion of the Horace Wilkinson Bridge and the new interstate highway system shifted Port Allen's commercial center away from its historic “Main Street” strip.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary):** n/a

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The D'Agostino Building, 110 N. Jefferson Avenue, in Port Allen, West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of commerce as the premier hotel in West Baton Rouge Parish during the period of significance and as the primary extant commercial building associated with the historic business district of Port Allen, the parish seat. From the 1930s through the 1960s, Port Allen was the commercial center of the parish, and the D'Agostino Building was at the heart of it, providing the seventeen-room Magnolia Hotel, once the largest hotel in the parish, as well as five leasable commercial units for a wide variety of local businesses. Originally constructed in 1929, the D'Agostino Building is also notable for its association with the relocation efforts of Port Allen’s downtown during the Mississippi River levee construction of 1930-31, which transformed the city’s street grid and trajectory of development. The period of significance begins in 1931, when the D’Agostino Building was reconstructed in its present location and the Magnolia Hotel opened for business, and ends in 1968, when the completion of the Horace Wilkinson Bridge and the new interstate highway system shifted Port Allen’s commercial center away from its historic “Main Street” strip.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

**Brief History of Port Allen, Louisiana**

The city now known as Port Allen evolved out of a series of plantations and three small nineteenth-century settlements that developed along the west bank of the Mississippi River near Baton Rouge: St. Michel, West Baton Rouge, and Sunny Side. The village of St. Michel, the earliest of the settlements, was laid out by French doctor Michel Mahier in c. 1810, but the buildings were largely lost to river encroachment by the 1850s. In 1854, Wing W. Kinchloe, a local sugar planter, established the town of West Baton Rouge near St. Michel, and in 1871, across some plantation fields, commission merchant J. W. Burbridge created the village of Sunny Side in 1871. Sunny Side contained the railroad depot for the Baton Rouge, Grosse-Tete and Opelousas Railroad (later Louisiana Central Railroad) and a steamboat and ferry landing. In 1878, the area comprising West Baton Rouge and Sunny Side was renamed Port Allen after Henry Watkins Allen, Louisiana’s last Confederate

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3 Elizabeth Kellough and Leona Mayeux, *Chronicles of West Baton Rouge* (Baton Rouge: Kennedy Print Shop, 1979), 164.

D’Agostino Building

Name of Property

West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana

County and State

The “Port” in the name came from Sunny Side’s riverside railroad terminus and ferry service, which served as a valuable shipping and receiving point for regional goods and produce. The area that would become Port Allen has been the seat of West Baton Rouge Parish since the latter was recreated c. 1812, and its downtown has served as the commercial center of the parish since at least the mid-nineteenth century.

In 1916, when it reached 250 inhabitants, Port Allen was chartered as a village. By 1923 it had grown to more than 1,000 inhabitants and was chartered as a town. In 1924, it grew significantly in land area with the addition of the Oaks Subdivision, which was platted from the former Oaks Plantation, and, in 1925, the Cohn Subdivision, which was created from a portion of Carolina Plantation. Until 1930, the buildings housing Port Allen’s commercial and civic life—e.g., shops, banks, a parish courthouse and jail, and the parish’s only post office—were located near the river, first at the north end of town around Burbridge Street, then, after a major fire (1918) and the relocation of the railroad depot and ferry terminus, further south near Court Street.

In the Great Flood of 1927, the Mississippi River broke through the levees and flooded more than 27,000 square miles, killing hundreds. The disaster devastated much of the American South, including West Baton Rouge Parish, and led to the Flood Control Act of 1928, which allocated federal funds for the construction of a series of flood control mechanisms such as spillways, reservoirs, and new levee systems. In West Baton Rouge Parish and in Port Allen, under the aegis of the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, a new levee system was constructed approximately 300 feet further inland from the old levees to escape river encroachment. Homes and businesses within the new levee’s path were either demolished or relocated, and Port Allen’s riverfront downtown was eradicated. According to the Morning Advocate,

practically the entire city [of Port Allen], including almost the whole of the business section, must soon be moved some three or four hundred feet back to escape the encroaching Mississippi River. A new levee will be raised in place of the former embankment, and a ‘new’ city will rise to displace the old.

By 1931, the new town center had been established at the intersection of N. Jefferson Avenue and Court Street in the Cohn Subdivision, where the D’Agostino Building stands today. Whereas the 1926 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map series does not even include this area due to its lack of development, the 1932 series depicts a series of small-scale commercial buildings that stretch east-west along Court Street, from the new levee/Commerce Street (present-day S. River Road) to the east and ending around 6th Street to the west. Despite the loss of an important section of the town and the rebuilding efforts that ensued, Port Allen maintained its role as the parish’s commercial center. In 1948, for instance, it had 15 of the parish’s 18 groceries, 5 of its 12 restaurants, 2 of its 3 drug stores, the largest hotel, and the only bank, department store, theater, shoe repair, hardware store, food and seed store, and newspaper/printer. In 1947, the city’s population had reached 2,360.

Traffic patterns were key to the success of Port Allen’s new town center. Following the levee project, the ferry connecting Port Allen to North Street in downtown Baton Rouge remained docked at the foot of Court Street, which created a steady flow of vehicular and foot traffic into downtown Port Allen. N. Jefferson Avenue was part of Louisiana Highway 1 (LA 1), a state highway that connected to Baton Rouge via the Huey P. Long

5 West Baton Rouge Historical Association, The History of West Baton Rouge Parish, 115, 150.
7 West Baton Rouge Historical Association, 150.
10 Kellough and Mayeux, 169.
11 West Baton Rouge Parish Planning Board, West Baton Rouge Parish Resources & Facilities (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Department of Public Works Planning Division, 1947), 82.
12 West Baton Rouge Parish Development Board (1958), 36; and West Baton Rouge Parish Planning Board (1947), 81.
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NPS Form 10-900

D’Agostino Building
West Baton Rouge
Parish, Louisiana

Name of Property

County and State

Bridge (1939) and U. S. Highway 190 north of Port Allen at present-day Anchorage. The crossing of these two thoroughfares created a vibrant downtown scene. According to The Advocate, former Port Allen councilman R. J. Loupe “remembers cars jamming Court Street….’The traffic was really something….We were kids…and we would go shine their shoes or do whatever they want, go get them a coke, for a dime or a nickel. We made a lot of money….”14

The post-World War II period marked a period of transformation for both Port Allen and West Baton Rouge Parish. In the late 1940s, the City of Baton Rouge began developing plans for a new port that would serve the greater metropolitan area. Following a 1949 study, the newly formed Baton Rouge Port Authority chose a site just below Port Allen for its “stable [river] banks, a natural deep-water channel, better rail facilities, road connections, and…proximity to the proposed Port Allen-Indian Village cutoff canal for the Gulf Intracoastal waterway.”15 Construction of the Port of Greater Baton Rouge began in 1954 and continued into the 1960s. The Port Allen Lock, so named for its point of origin, was constructed in 1957-61 to provide a shorter route between the port and the Gulf of Mexico (about 68 miles shorter than the traditional Mississippi River route). Until this time, West Baton Rouge Parish’s economy had been predominantly agricultural, but the establishment of the port and construction of the Port Allen Lock led to rapid industrialization. Major new industries arrived in the parish during this period, including Cargill Corporation (1955), Manard Molasses Corporation (late 1950s), and Dow Chemical (1959).16 In 1958, Port Allen’s population had increased to 4,893 (12,500 total in West Baton Rouge Parish), a 107-percent increase in one decade.17 Two surveys of the parish during this period (1947 and 1958) described Port Allen as the largest municipality and “most important trade and business center in the parish.”18 It was officially designated as a city in 1963.19

Major highway construction projects in the 1960s had a significant impact on Port Allen’s downtown and the city’s landscape more broadly. LA 1 was relocated from N. Jefferson Avenue four blocks to the west and widened to connect to the new Horace Wilkinson Bridge, which was completed in 1968 as part of the interstate highway system. The new bridge, which remains “the area’s most vital transportation link,” drew businesses away from downtown Port Allen onto LA 1, where they could capitalize on increased vehicular traffic, and also made it more convenient for Port Allen residents to travel to Baton Rouge and beyond for their everyday needs.20

Today the city’s population is 5,180, but what once was the heart of downtown is now a quiet intersection. Some buildings, including the D’Agostino Building, are vacant, and several have been demolished or remodeled beyond recognition.

History of the D’Agostino Building

Salvatore (“Sam”) D’Agostino (1868-1933), a native of Palermo, Sicily, immigrated to the United States in 1891. By 1910, he was living with his wife and young children in West Baton Rouge Parish (Port Allen) and operating his own grocery store.21 By the 1920s, he owned at least three commercial properties in Port Allen, including a saloon, a store, and a store/hotel.22 His store/hotel, the D’Agostino Building, has stood at the corner of Court Street and N. Jefferson Avenue since 1931. However, several sources indicate that he originally built

14 Ibid.
15 Kellough and Mayeux, 191.
16 West Baton Rouge Historical Association, 188-89.
17 West Baton Rouge Parish Development Board (1958), 36; and West Baton Rouge Historical Association, 192.
18 West Baton Rouge Parish Planning Board (1947), 81; and West Baton Rouge Parish Development Board (1958), 71.
19 West Baton Rouge Historical Association, 192.
20 West Baton Rouge Historical Association, 222; and “Happy birthday? How 50-year-old ‘new’ bridge reshaped the Baton Rouge area,” The Advocate, April 7, 2018.
22 Robert Landry, interviews with Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Landry and Dave Vavasseur, c. 1976. Courtesy of the West Baton Rouge Museum.
it in 1929 at the corner of Court Street and Riverside Avenue, and that it was relocated to its present site during the 1930-31 Mississippi River levee reconstruction project.

According to the transcript of a 1976 interview with long-time Port Allen residents Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Landry, the building, which per their description housed “D’Agostino’s store and hotel,” was “torn down brick by brick…and rebuilt.” According to Port Allen resident Mona Budden, granddaughter of Sam D’Agostino, the building was moved in the 1930s. A 1930 Morning Advocate report about the levee project states that “[a] large brick building, the D’Agostino store, will probably be demolished. Grocery stores, garages, offices, residences, a depot, newspaper and hotel will all be relocated.” Considering that the hotel to be “relocated” was in the D’Agostino Building, the “D’Agostino store” to be “demolished” per the article is likely a reference to another building associated with the D’Agostino family, who owned, in addition to the store/hotel, a saloon building and another store also located on Court Street. Alternatively, the article could be describing the fact that the D’Agostino Building was to be deconstructed and rebuilt rather than relocated intact, as was the case with other buildings impacted by the levee project. Finally, the original building signage in the cornice of the D’Agostino Building reads “Sam D’Agostino 1929,” which very likely indicates the construction date. It could not have been built in its present location in 1929 because D’Agostino did not purchase the two lots on which the building now sits until May 1930, at which time they were vacant per property records.

The primary occupant of the D’Agostino Building was the seventeen-room Magnolia Hotel, which was owned and operated by the D’Agostino family from 1931 through the 1960s. For many years it was the largest hotel facility in West Baton Rouge Parish, and it remained the premier hotel in the parish during the period of significance. It accommodated all types of visitors, from road-tripping families to workers building the Port Allen Lock. The hotel’s guest rooms comprised the entirety of the second floor, and its amenities, which included a café and bar, were located downstairs, including the corner unit in the 1940s and 1950s. The c. 1940s addition on the north side of the building was most likely constructed for this purpose.

Other occupants included Capitol Stores, Inc., a Baton Rouge-based grocery store chain. In June 1931, following the building’s relocation, Capitol Stores announced the grand opening of its “new and modern grocery store…at Jefferson Avenue and Court street, in the D’Agostino Building.” This was the company’s first location in West Baton Rouge Parish, to which it claimed to bring “a new type of grocery store, with complete modern facilities for the handling of high quality merchandise.” The grocery occupied the large corner unit until the 1940s, when it relocated and was replaced by the Magnolia Hotel bar.

The original occupants of the four smaller commercial units are unknown, but by the late 1940s they included the Port Allen Drug Store and the West Side Jewelry Store. Other occupants from the period of significance include a liquor store, a barber shop, a watch repair, and Mona’s Children Shop, a clothing store operated by the D’Agostino family.

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23 Robert Landry, interview with Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Landry, c. 1976. Courtesy of the West Baton Rouge Museum.
24 Adam Maher, interview with Mona Budden, July 24, 2019.
26 According to transcripts of interviews conducted in c. 1976 with long-time Port Allen residents, the D’Agostino family owned a store, a store/hotel, and a saloon, all of which were located on Court Street. These interviews were conducted by Robert A. Landry with Mr. and Theodore Landry and Dave Vavasseur. Courtesy of the West Baton Rouge Museum.
27 Act of sale, Ernest Delahaye to Salvatore (Sam) D’Agostino, May 3, 1930; and act of sale, Sidney L. Mouch to Salvatore (Sam) D’Agostino, May 3, 1930.
28 Mona Budden, email correspondence with the author, November 11, 2019.
29 Polk’s Greater Baton Rouge City Directory, 1940s-1950s; and Mona Budden, email correspondence with the author, November 12, 2019.
31 Ibid.
33 Polk’s Greater Baton Rouge City Directory, 1948.
Recent ground-floor tenants include Mona’s Children Shop, a bar, and a po-boy restaurant, but the building has been largely vacant for the past two decades. It remained in the D’Agostino family until 2019, when it was sold to the present owners, Future Port Allen, LLC.

**Hotels in West Baton Rouge Parish**

During the period of significance, 1931-1968, the Magnolia Hotel was the leading hotel in West Baton Rouge Parish. When it opened at the corner of N. Jefferson Avenue and Court Street in 1931, it was also the only hotel in the parish according to city directories. After World War II, when a handful of smaller hotels and other facilities opened in the area, such as highway-adjacent tourist courts, the Magnolia Hotel remained the premier lodging facility because of its central downtown Port Allen location, number of rooms, and amenities, e.g., a café and bar. As such, it stood apart as a symbol of the city’s economic and social standing within the parish.

A parish-wide survey in 1947 provided the following snapshot of the limited size and type of visitor accommodations offered in West Baton Rouge Parish at the time:

> The hotel facilities of the Parish are inadequate. The Magnolia Hotel with 17 rooms and the Port Allen Hotel with 4 rooms, both located in Port Allen, and the railroad employees’ rooming houses at Addis and Anchorage constitute the hotel facilities of the Parish. For the tourists coming through the Parish, there are some, but not adequate, facilities in tourist camps along the U.S. Highway 71. Facilities along this highway are Salter’s Cabins, which will take care of 18 families, at Erwinville; a tourist court of 8 cabins on the north side of the highway at Lobdell; another court with 9 cabins directly across the highway on the south side; and a third court of 15 units one mile west of the Mississippi River Bridge.

The closest comparable to the Magnolia Hotel, the four-room Port Allen Hotel, was no longer listed in city directories by the 1950s; its precise location is not specified and therefore its present status is unknown. Nevertheless, it was significantly smaller than the subject property and remained in business for only a short period.

In the early 1950s, the Patterson Hotel & Café opened in Port Allen at 212 Atchafalaya Street, corner of Magnolia Street (extant). The modest, one-story, concrete-block structure offered approximately four to six rooms and therefore, like the Port Allen Hotel, is not directly comparable to the Magnolia Hotel.

As described in the 1947 survey, West Baton Rouge Parish also gained alternative types of lodging, i.e., tourist camps and courts, outside of Port Allen along the area’s early highways. Predecessors to the motel (or “motor hotel”), these casual and affordable roadside accommodations grew in popularity nationally as motor-bound visitors increased in number and created a demand for convenient access to parking. By contrast, traditional hotels located in the downtown districts of cities and towns, such as the Magnolia Hotel, were typically less convenient for automobiles and thus less desirable to this new type of traveler.

The D’Agostino family, owners of the Magnolia Hotel, met this demand by opening a six-unit tourist court, Mona’s Court and Hotel, in the late 1940s on the north side of the D’Agostino Building (demolished 1988). According to Mona Budden, the daughter of Sam D’Agostino and the business’s namesake, it was a one-story, L-shaped building with a parking space at the entrance to each unit.

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36 West Baton Rouge Parish Planning Board (1947), 48-49.
38 West Baton Rouge Parish Planning Board (1947), 48-49.
39 Mona Budden, email correspondence with the author, November 11, 2019.
D’Agostino Building

Outside of Port Allen, the largest of these automobile-focused facilities was Salter’s Cabins, an eighteen-unit tourist court that opened in Erwinville, northwest of the city, in the late 1940s (demolished). Based on aerial photographs, the other three courts mentioned in the 1947 parish survey are, like Salter’s, no longer extant. While these courts and camps represent an important development in the types of accommodations offered within the parish, they are fundamentally different from the Magnolia Hotel in terms of their locations and building typologies.

Criterion A: Commerce

The D’Agostino Building is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of commerce as the preeminent hotel in West Baton Rouge Parish during the period of significance (1931-1968) and as the most prominent and intact example of the few remaining commercial buildings associated with historic downtown Port Allen. The D’Agostino Building is also significant for its association with the 1930-31 Mississippi River levee relocation project, a major event in the city’s history that had an indelible impact on its landscape and future development. While there may be other surviving buildings associated with the event, the D’Agostino Building is the largest and best-documented as of the writing of this nomination.

Port Allen, the largest municipality in West Baton Rouge Parish, has served as both the parish seat and its commercial center for much of the city’s history. First as an agricultural parish, then as an industrialized one, West Baton Rouge Parish has historically relied on Port Allen for its civic leadership, its position as a trade and transportation hub, and its many businesses supporting residents’ everyday needs. Port Allen’s historic downtown embodies this important role within the parish, and no extant building is a better reflection of this history than the D’Agostino Building. In particular, its role as the premier hotel in the parish for more than thirty years, during a period of transformative growth and industrialization, signifies its central importance as a symbol of economic vitality within the community.

Developmental History/Additional historic context information

See above

9. Major Bibliographical Resources

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Begue, Gabrielle. Email correspondence with Mona Budden, November 11, 2019.


Maher, Adam. Telephone interview with Mona Budden, July 24, 2019.

40 Ibid.
D'Agostino Building

Name of Property

West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana

County and State


*Polk’s Greater Baton Rouge City Directory*, 1940s-1960s.


Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

____ previously listed in the National Register

____ previously determined eligible by the National Register

____ designated a National Historic Landmark

____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # ____________

____ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # __________

____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # ___________

Primary location of additional data:

____ State Historic Preservation Office

____ Other State agency

____ Federal agency

____ Local government

____ University

____ Other

Name of repository: ____________________________________________

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): ________________

10. Geographical Data
D'Agostino Building  
West Baton Rouge  
Parish, Louisiana

Name of Property

Acreage of Property: less than one acre

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84: __________
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)
1. Latitude: 30.452635°  Longitude: -91.205123°
2. Latitude:  Longitude: 
3. Latitude:  Longitude: 
4. Latitude:  Longitude: 
5. Latitude:  Longitude: 
6. Latitude:  Longitude: 

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.) The property boundaries consist of the entirety of Lot Number One (1) and Lot Number Two (2) of Square Number Eighteen (18), as designated on the official map of Cohn’s Subdivision on file and of record in the office of the Clerk and Ex-officio Recorder for the Parish of West Baton Rouge, Louisiana, each lot measuring Sixty (60’) feet front on North Jefferson Avenue by a depth between parallel lines of One Hundred Twenty (120’) feet.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.) The boundaries of the property correspond to both the current legal boundaries as per the parish assessor and to the historic legal boundaries per West Baton Rouge Parish Clerk of Court records.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Gabrielle Begue/Senior Associate
organization: MacRostie Historic Advisors
street & number: 614 Gravier Street
city or town: New Orleans  
state: LA  
zip code: 70130
e-mail: gbegue@mac-ha.com
telephone: (504) 655-9707
date: 01/29/2020

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- Maps: A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property’s location.

- Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- Additional items: (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs
Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn’t need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: D’Agostino Building
City or Vicinity: Port Allen
County: West Baton Rouge
State: LA
Name of Photographer: Gabrielle Begue
Date of Photographs: July/October 2019

01 of 19
Exterior view, corner of N. Jefferson Ave. and Court St.; camera facing northeast

02 of 19
East elevation from Court St.; camera facing west

03 of 19
Rear/north elevation (c. 1940s addition at far right); camera facing southwest

04 of 19
N. Jefferson Avenue/west façade (c. 1940s addition at left); camera facing northeast

05 of 19
Detail view of original building signage on Court Street façade; camera facing northeast

06 of 19
436-438 Court Street storefronts; camera facing northwest

07 of 19
452 Court Street interior (corner unit); camera facing north

08 of 19
444 Court Street interior showing partially intact historic storefront; camera facing south

09 of 19
438 Court Street interior showing historic tile flooring; camera facing south

10 of 19
436 Court Street interior; camera facing northwest

11 of 19
432 Court Street interior; camera facing south

12 of 19
Stair to 2nd-floor guest rooms; camera facing north
D'Agostino Building

Name of Property

West Baton Rouge
Parish, Louisiana

County and State

13 of 19
Central corridor on western side of hotel; camera facing east

14 of 19
Entrance to Guest Room 13; camera facing south

15 of 19
Interior of Guest Room 13; camera facing south

16 of 19
Entrance and interior of Guest Room 17; camera facing south

17 of 19
Central corridor on eastern side of hotel; camera facing east

18 of 19
Interior of Guest Room 11; camera facing north

19 of 19
Interior of Guest Room 3; camera facing south

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Historic Image 2. Detail view, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1932 (Vol. 1, Sheet 3)
D’Agostino Building
110 N. Jefferson Avenue
Port Allen, West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana

National Register of Historic Places Nomination
- Exhibits
D'Agostino Building, 110 N. Jefferson Avenue, Port Allen

Parcels
Lots
Dimensions
Railroad

= boundary
= Lat/Long: 30.452635°, -91.205123°

D’Agostino Building
110 N. Jefferson Avenue
Port Allen, West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana

National Register of Historic Places Nomination
- Exhibits