

The purpose of this nomination is to re-list the Hughes House, which was recently moved from its original location. The house was listed on the Register in 1976 in its original location in the rural hamlet of Rocky Mount. It was moved in 1995 to its present location in the small town of Benton, within the same parish. It is a single story frame Greek Revival building constructed in two stages (c.1840 and c.1850). Despite the move and twentieth century alterations, the Hughes House retains its National Register eligibility.

### The Original Setting

Originally the house was located in a rural setting in the hamlet of Rocky Mount. It was in a roughly two acre clearing in a wooded area and stood about fifty feet from Louisiana 160. Other structures in the hamlet include an early twentieth century school, a church, and a handful of residences, some modern and some early twentieth century.

### The Move

In the years following its National Register listing, the Hughes House was a house museum, although not a heavily visited one. The museum was abandoned in the late 1980s, and the now vacant house began to deteriorate. By 1995, the deterioration was advanced and vagrants were regularly using the house for refuge. The Bossier Restoration Foundation, the owner, became concerned that if the situation continued, the house would either burn or fall victim to demolition by neglect. It became clear to the organization that in such a remote location it was impossible to secure and maintain a house which was not continually occupied. Its leaders reluctantly concluded that the only viable preservation alternative was to move the house to a more accessible and secure setting.

The move was accomplished in 1995, with the house being split in two sections. It was moved about 15 miles to Benton, a small community with a population of about 1500.

### The New Setting

The Hughes House is now located on a roughly one acre city block owned by the parish school board. It is in a modest mainly early twentieth century residential area about four blocks from the very small central business district. The street running perpendicular to the Hughes House (see map) has modern but traditionally designed church buildings on one side and on the other side a small low-key one story office. Also on the school board square is a non-historic two story brick school board office and a small one story frame historic school house moved there several years ago. There is no attempt being made to develop the property as a "recreated" village. It just happened that this was a piece of property available free of charge.

The parcel of land is grassy and has several mature trees. The three buildings' relationship to each other can be seen on the enclosed sketch map. Each building faces the street on its side of the square. It is important to note that the three buildings are not placed in such a way to suggest a historic relationship among them. Also, landscaping has already begun (see sketch map) to screen the Hughes House from the other two buildings and thus establish its own individual setting.

### Description of Hughes House

What would become the Hughes House began c. 1840 as a two room frame office building with a four column front-facing pedimented portico. This section has a completely pegged frame. The shallow front room has no fireplace and was evidently a waiting room or anteroom. The much deeper rear room features a pair of large windows on three walls and a central fireplace on the rear elevation. The chimney is long gone but the mantel remains intact. It is framed by a set of three narrow projecting boards designed to resemble Greek fluting and is surmounted by a small molded shelf. Other noteworthy details of the c.1840 office include doors consisting of two vertical panels and wide random width flush boards on the ceilings, the facade and the walls of the anteroom. The walls of the rear room are rough lumber, indicating that the space was always intended to have a wallpaper covering.

In about 1850 the office was enlarged and converted into a residence. A pitched roof house consisting of two large rooms in the front and two smaller rooms in the rear was appended to the side of the office via an open dogtrot corridor and a front gallery connecting with the side of the pedimented portico. This scenario is suggested by the house's very unusual configuration and is confirmed by the architectural evidence. The siding on the office side of the dogtrot is clapboarded,

indicating that it was meant to be exposed to the elements (i.e., a free-standing building). The siding on the house side of the corridor is flush boards, indicating it was never meant to be exposed to the elements.

The c.1850 section is pegged at the sill and nailed elsewhere. There is a central chimney between the two large front rooms with a pair of matching conventional aedicule style mantels. A four panel door opens from each of the rooms onto the front gallery. The interior walls and ceilings are sheathed in flush boards.

#### Alterations:

The Hughes was deteriorated in its original location in the 1960s and was extensively restored in the 1970s. Changes and replacements from this period cannot be documented precisely; however, surviving architectural evidence and a pre-restoration photo permit some analysis.

The northern five columns are from the mid-nineteenth century. The remaining four are twentieth century replacements (presumably from the 1970s). On these newer columns the capitals are similar in profile but not identical to the historic columns. It also appears that the historic columns that survived into the 1960s were placed in the above arrangement as part of the 1970s restoration.

Evidently the present mid-nineteenth century doors in the c.1850 portion have been moved around. In addition, the moldings around the interior openings in the c.1850 portion have been extensively patched and/or replaced using historic salvaged molding.

There is a crown cove molding in the rear office room of the c.1840 portion and the two front rooms of the c.1850 portion. This is a twentieth century feature.

Both chimneys are missing. At present the two mantels in the c.1850 section are in storage awaiting restoration of the interior.

#### Assessment of Integrity:

In terms of the building fabric, the Hughes House easily conveys its architectural identity as a very unusual provincial Greek Revival building. The most notable issue is the loss of some of the historic columns, although, quite frankly, this is observable only to the trained eye. What is important is that most of the historic columns survive and the replacements convey the style very well. All in all, the Hughes House retains the overwhelming majority of its original character defining elements, most notably its very unusual form.

The more serious issue, of course, is the move. While it would have been preferable for the house to remain in its original rural setting, it clearly faced demolition by neglect, as explained above. Admittedly, the present setting is not comparable to the original. However, it is not as inappropriate as one might think at first. Houses of this period, size and level of Greek Revival refinement were built in small and medium sized communities in northern Louisiana in the antebellum period; hence it is not out of character for one to be in the very small town of Benton. In short, it is not a type of house that is exclusively rural. Most importantly, the house should be judged as a work of architecture on its own.

Significant dates	c.1840, c.1850
Architect/Builder	Unknown

Statement of Significance  
Criterion C

The Hughes House is locally significant in the area of architecture as a very rare surviving Greek Revival building within the context of Bossier Parish and as an important example of dogtrot construction within the context of northwestern Louisiana.

The rarity of the Hughes House within Bossier Parish is evident when viewed within the context of the area's settlement patterns. Like other northern Louisiana parishes, Bossier was settled principally in the 1840s and '50s at a time when Greek Revival was the style. In addition to small hamlets like Rocky Mount, with their houses, churches, and institutional buildings, there were

many large plantations in the parish on the eve of the Civil War. For example, in 1860 there were forty-four large slave holdings (50 or more slaves) in the parish, none of which involved absentee ownership. And, of course, there were many more planters with smaller operations.

Against this pattern of settlement, it is clear that there were scores of Greek Revival buildings in the parish on the eve of the Civil War. The principal options at the time would have been log construction or Greek Revival. (This area is outside French Creole influence.) Despite what once must have been an impressive Greek Revival patrimony, Bossier has only three known surviving antebellum examples of the style. (There are one or two from the 1870s/'80s.) The parish's building stock today consists mainly of the largely modern city of Bossier City, a few early twentieth century downtowns and residential neighborhoods of no particular architectural significance, and Barksdale Air Force Base in the French Revival style. Because the Hughes House is a very rare survivor from the parish's earliest architectural history, it is of immense local architectural significance.

Because it combines the dogtrot form with Greek Revival styling, it is also architecturally significant within a larger context -- the several parishes which comprise northwestern Louisiana. The Hughes House represents a curious hybrid peculiar to the region -- the marriage of Upland South architectural traditions (the log dogtrot) to "high style" fashion.

One of the hallmarks of Upland South culture (which dominated the settlement patterns of northern Louisiana) was the dogtrot. The average example was an unpretentious log house with no architectural treatment whatever. By contrast, the Hughes House is a dogtrot house with full-blown Greek Revival detailing, albeit a provincial interpretation. Survey data and extensive staff knowledge of the state indicate that there are only about a half dozen comparable examples in Louisiana. Virtually all are in the northwestern part of the state. Although the Uplanders settled large sections of the state, the northwest is the main area where their building tradition merged with high style aspirations. This created a generation of "half-breed" houses, either built all at once or in stages, which distinguish northwestern Louisiana's historic architecture from the rest of the state. Because the Hughes House is a rare and particularly interesting example of this fusion, it is an important component of the region's architectural heritage.

Note: The Hughes House was listed originally on the Register for its political and military history as well. The old form describes how it was the scene of community meetings in 1860 which called for secession and organized military companies. Given the move, the LA SHPO did not think it wise to claim Criterion A in this re-submission.