

A two-story frame dwelling constructed in 1922, the Zappe Boarding House is a restrained example of the Craftsman style. It stands on one side of a two-lot parcel in a combination residential/industrial section of the Concordia Parish town of Ferriday. Although now removed, railroad tracks once ran only a short distance from the building. The boarding house has received some alterations since construction but retains its National Register eligibility.

The building's massing includes a main block in the shape of a large rectangle whose roof ridge runs perpendicular to the street. A smaller and lower mass (the porch) is attached to the facade, while a shed roof porch adjoins the rear elevation. The boarding house's Craftsman features include overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails, thick posts supporting the front porch roof, and jerkinhead roofs on both the porch and the main block.

As befits a building constructed for a somewhat utilitarian purpose, the interior of the boarding house is undistinguished and its floorplan is very straightforward. The first floor consists of two ranges of rooms. The range on the left (as one faces the building) contains a stair hall followed by a dining room, kitchen, and rear space containing a utility area and bath. The right range holds a parlor (located next to the stair hall) and three bedrooms. The second floor contains a long hallway flanked by small sleeping rooms for boarders. The second story bath is situated in one rear corner room.

Alterations to the exterior since the 1922 construction of the building include the lowering of the original front and back porches, the paving of a new ground level front porch with bricks salvaged from chimneys removed from the building (see below), the replacement of the original front door (which survives in storage), the covering of the front porch's original brick piers with plaster, the installation of asbestos shingles on the rear elevation, and the replacement of one window on the rear wall. Alterations to the interior include:

- 1) the installation of ceiling tiles in most rooms and carpet in some first floor rooms.
- 2) the enclosure, behind new diagonal walls, of space originally occupied by wood-burning stoves. These formerly stood in one corner of each of five downstairs rooms. Also, the chimneys which served these stoves were removed at this time.
- 3) the removal (due to floor damage caused by the 1927 Mississippi River flood) of a small hallway between the dining room and the kitchen and a 1960s kitchen update. As part of the latter, half of the wall between the kitchen and dining room was removed in order to make the two rooms more open to each other.
- 4) projects completed when the second floor's function changed from boarding house to apartment. These included the conversion of one upstairs room into a kitchen (and the paneling of that room's walls) and the remodeling of the downstairs bath which was used by the building's owner. The latter included the covering of one window and the shortening of another.

Although the lowering of the building's front porch is regrettable, this is the only alteration which has had a major impact on the facade. And despite this modification, former residents of the Zappe Boarding House would easily recognize the building if they were to return to Ferriday today. This ability, of course, is the litmus test for historical nominations. As a very rare surviving building associated with Ferriday's once thriving railroad industry, the Zappe Boarding House is a prime candidate for National Register listing.

Significant Dates: 1922-1948  
Architect/Builder: Unknown  
Criterion A

The Zappe Boarding House is locally significant in the area of transportation history because it is one of few surviving buildings associated with Ferriday's very important railroad industry. The purpose of the building was to house railroad workers whose jobs called for an overnight layover in the town. It was built in 1922 for widow Alice Zappe after her engineer husband died as the result of a railroad accident.

Ferriday stands on land which was once a part of a cotton plantation called Helena. A farsighted

individual who recognized the importance of the railroad, J. C. Ferriday, Helena's owner, encouraged railroad development in Concordia Parish by granting generous rights-of-way across his land. The Texas and Pacific and the Iron Mountain appear to have been two of the railroads which built across Ferriday's property. After his death in 1895, one of the railroads served his widow with a quick claim deed and assumed control of part of the plantation. By 1903, this control had passed to the Ferriday Realty Company, which platted Ferriday as a railroad town in that year. Three years later the community had grown enough to warrant incorporation.

Perhaps Ferriday's railroad history is most graphically illustrated in Sanborn Insurance Company maps for the 1926-1938 period. Even as late as 1938, when the area was experiencing an economic decline, a casual observer of the map would note that the railroad was vitally important to the town. At that date two lines served the community--the Louisiana and Arkansas approaching from the southwest and the Missouri Pacific from the southeast. The two lines joined at a point just south of Ferriday, then shared the same tracks as they moved through the town from south to north. (Although the map does not show what path the tracks took once they exited the town's northern corporate limits, it is likely that they once again separated into two lines at a point just beyond the northern boundary of the map.) Within the town numerous rail-related buildings and multiple tracks serving businesses and industries dependent upon rail transportation filled the corridor and nearby blocks. The former included the Missouri Pacific's passenger depot, freight depot, yard office, and a compound identified as the Missouri Pacific Roundhouse and Repair Shops. The latter contained a combination roundhouse and machine shop; separate turntable; oil pump; standpipe; and storage facilities for tools, oil, and water. Other buildings associated with the railroad included hotels and boarding houses located near the tracks. While not as directly associated with railroading as depots and roundhouses, these buildings were inextricably related because they housed the railroad's customers and, in the case of the boarding houses, its workers. In 1923, for example, Ferriday had two hotels and three boarding houses, one of which was the Zappe facility. In 1926 the town supported one hotel and two rooming establishments. Unfortunately, the 1938 Sanborn map does not differentiate boarding houses, but it clearly shows that the town still supported three hotels.

Today all of the buildings directly related to the railroad have disappeared, and of the secondary structures, only two hotels and the Zappe Boarding House survive. Even the tracks which once crossed the town have been removed. Both hotels are already listed on the National Register by virtue of their status as contributing elements to the Ferriday Commercial Historic District. Because there is so little left from the once abundant resources directly associated with railroading, secondary buildings such as the Zappe Boarding House are of considerable significance and merit National Register listing.

Note: The fifty year cutoff is being used as the end of the period of significance because the Zappe Boarding House continued to serve railroad workers beyond 1948. Alice Zappe retired in 1945, at which time approximately half of the boarding house's clientele were still railroad workers. (The other half consisted of employees of Louisiana Power and Light, which brought electricity to the area during the 1940s.) Alice's daughter Mabel Zappe McCurdy then operated the boarding house until the early 1950s, when she converted one floor into an apartment.

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Sanborn Insurance Company maps, 1923, 1926, 1938.

Site visit by National Register staff.