

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Thomas Scott House (1858) is a two story, frame, Greek Revival plantation house located in rolling farm country four miles from the village of Gloster. Despite some changes and deterioration, the house retains its National Register eligibility.

The Scott House features a central hall plan, two rooms deep, with an unusually placed staircase. The staircase is set in a narrow closet which is entered through a side door at the rear of the hall. Chimneys are set against the exterior walls.

The house has a squarish form with a pitched roof and a formal five bay facade. The principal exterior feature is a two story pedimented entrance portico with Doric posts, pilasters, and large dentils. The portico was made extra narrow to conform to the width of the central hall. Because each story of the portico is more or less correctly proportioned, the overall effect of the narrowness is not unpleasing. The windows are six over six sash type with louvered shutters. Although the upper windows about the entablature, here again the effect is not unpleasing. Traits such as the windows and portico mark the Scott House as a distinctly rural example of the Greek Revival style.

The interiors are sheathed in tongue and groove boards throughout. Most of the downstairs doorways feature fluted surrounds with plain cornerblocks. The upstairs doorways are plainer with superimposed planks designed to produce a fluted effect. The principal rooms of the house feature chair rails which form window sills. All of the original wood mantels remain. The more elaborate ones feature shoulder moldings, while the less elaborate ones feature plain molded surrounds. One of the upstairs mantels retains its original false marble treatment consisting of a black gold chain marbled architrave with white marbling surrounding the firebox.

Changes

1. In about 1900 a new doorway was installed downstairs leading from the hall into one of the front rooms.

2. According to the official family story, there was once a rear portico to match the one in front. Apparently it was removed in the 1920's, the wall was patched over with clapboards, and a new upstairs window was installed. Although architectural evidence seems to bear this out, no photograph exists to document the actual appearance of this one-time portico.

3. More recently, three of the four original chimneys have been lost, as have some of the window sashes.

4. The columns on the first story of the front portico have been replaced, as has the first story entablature fascia.

5. The balustrade at the top of the staircase has been broken off, although most of the pieces remain and could be reassembled.

6. The second story balustrade on the portico has been lost.

7. Most of the shutters have been lost.

Assessment of Integrity

Despite these changes and losses, the Scott House still retains its identity as a Greek Revival structure, as one can see from the front elevation. In addition, the house's significant features remain more or less intact (see Item 8). Although some of the entrance portico has been

lost, enough of it remains to make the strong stylistic statement of a two story pedimented portico. Finally, although the loss of the rear portico is regrettable, it only affected the secondary elevation.

As can be seen in Photo #1, there is a trailer within the nominated area. It is being used by the owners while rehabilitation work is taking place and will be removed when the work is completed. It is identified on the sketch map, and is listed as a non-contributing element.

Specific dates 1858
Builder/Architect Builder: Thomas Scott

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)
Criterion C

The Scott House is locally significant in the area of architecture as a relatively rare and superior example of a Greek Revival residence within the context of northwestern Louisiana. This includes the parishes of DeSoto, Caddo, Bossier, Red River, Bienville, Webster, and Claiborne.

Northwestern Louisiana was settled in the antebellum period by people from the southeastern states who brought with them various provincial forms of the Greek Revival. Unfortunately most of the architectural legacy this would have left has been lost over the years. Just how much has been lost is difficult to ascertain. The area has not been completely surveyed, including DeSoto Parish itself, where the Scott House is located. But one can get some idea of the extent of this architectural loss by examining nearby Bossier Parish. The 1860 census reveals that on the eve of the Civil War there were forty-four large slaveholdings (i.e., fifty or more slaves) in the parish. All involved individuals who lived in the parish. In addition, there must have been numerous good size holdings of less than fifty. Given this wealth, it is clear that there must have been numerous Greek Revival plantation houses in Bossier Parish on the eve of the Civil War (surely fifty at least). However, as far as the State Historic Preservation Office can determine, only five remain, one of which has suffered considerable loss of integrity. Despite incomplete survey data, the staff is familiar enough with the rest of northwest Louisiana to conclude that the Bossier Parish situation is fairly typical.

In addition to being one of a very limited number of Greek Revival houses surviving in northwest Louisiana, the Scott House is also a distinctly superior example. It is a full two stories, which places it in a minority of examples. More importantly, as far as the State Historic Preservation Office can determine, the Scott House is one of only four two story examples to feature a pedimented portico. The other examples just have continuous one or two story galleries without porticos or pediments.

Bibliographical References

The Nelsons and Scotts of DeSoto Parish, Louisiana and Related Families, Compiled and edited by Ouida Watters Nelson and Edward Kenneth Nelson, Printed by Professional Business Services, Shreveport, Louisiana, 1969.