

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Old Post Office is set on North Boulevard near the center of downtown Baton Rouge. Although the building faces a narrow neutral zone park, it has in all other respects a completely urban setting.

The building is three stories high with a plan which has been reworked over the years. The only major interior space which remains intact is the old courtroom upstairs with its two-story coffered ceiling and round arch windows.

The building is constructed of heavy masonry with buff Baltimore brick and terra cotta facing. The exterior is articulated in a manner which was inspired by the northern Italian Renaissance in its later phase.

The ground floor forms a base for the second-story piano nobile. The third story is set within the massive frieze of the building. The central portion of the piano nobile is lighted by a set of five arched windows in which the common impost blocks rest directly upon the slender Corinthian columns. The building is entered via a five-bay Ionic portico with massive corner posts and a heavy parapet. It is surmounted by an elaborate terra cotta balustrade with urns and a central cartouche. The exterior design is extensively ornamented with terra cotta bricade.

Recently a rear wing was added but this addition has not affected the main views of the building.

Specific dates	1895
Builder/Architect	N/A

Statement of Significance
Criteria A & C

The Old Post Office is one of the finest and most pretentious examples of turn-of-the-century Renaissance Revival architecture in the state. Few other comparable buildings in Louisiana can boast such a high degree of stylistic sophistication and close adherence to Italian prototypes and such extensive use of terra cotta ornamentation. In its day, its design stood at the forefront of architectural development in the state. It represented a divergence from the loosely imitative, and over done eclecticism of the Victorian period and the introduction of an architecture based upon the imitation of this or that particular historical style.

The Old Post Office is also of significance in the area of politics/ government since it was an important government building in the city for many years. It served as the post office from its construction in 1895 until 1933, when it became the city hall. It remained the city hall until 1956. Since 1957 the building has been used as the City Club.

Major Bibliographical References

"Downtown Landmark," Baton Rouge State-Times, 3 January 1964.

Heck, Robert W., Historic Baton Rouge. Baton Rouge: Community Renewal Program, 1970.

"Study of Sites Recalls Other P. O. Locations," Baton Rouge State-Times, 6 September 1962.