

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Spanish Town is an old back streets neighborhood pocket, a well define entity of 14 large and small blocks comprising about 50 acres. It is bounded by the State of Louisiana-owned lands to the north and west (State Capitol Drive and North Fifth Street), to the east by the Interstate I-10 (Expressway), and to the south by North Street.

The boundaries separate Spanish Town from the surrounding areas, each of which differs widely in character from the Spanish Town district. The State-owned lands, which occur to the north and west of the district, are open and landscaped, with a few modern office buildings, the State Capitol, and a lake. The commercial properties, which occur to the south of the district, are almost invariably larger and more modern than the buildings in Spanish Town, more wider spaced, and interlaced with parking lots. The clearest boundary is I-10, an eight-lane dual highway, which occurs to the east.

Spanish Town has a rectilinear street pattern but the blocks are highly irregular in their shapes and sizes. Some blocks are long and only about one lot deep, while others are nearly square. The streets are so narrow that two cars cannot pass, consequently all streets are one way. Typically, the sidewalks are less than five feet wide and the average building is set back 10 to 15 feet. Approximately 65% of the buildings have one story and approximately 32% have two stories. Only about 3% of the buildings have more than two stories. The buildings are placed so closely together that the average distance between buildings is less than the average facade. This gives the streetscape strong definition. It also helps give the streetscapes a low scaled, intimate quality, which is in sharp contrast to the surrounding areas. The effect of intimacy is increased by the foliage and the many front porches.

There are 268 buildings within the boundaries of Spanish Town. Of these perhaps 10 or 4% are not additive to the district's overall character. The construction date of the structures are from many periods of time and reflect the architectural character of these various periods. The buildings have been categorized according to construction dates:

Approximate Date:	Number of Buildings:
Before 1860	6
Later 1800's	37
1900 to 1930's	175
1940's & 1950's	33 of which 1 is not additive to district
Since 1960	<u>17</u> of which 9 are not additive to district
	268 of which 10 are not additive to district

1. Before 1860:

The oldest extant house in Spanish Town dates from 1823. Buildings of this antebellum period in Spanish Town include several first rank examples of Greek Revival architecture. Virtually none of these buildings have been adversely altered.

2. Later 1800's:

This group is composed mainly of Queen Anne, shotgun, and small Creole houses with plain, Eastlake, or Italianate details. About 10% have been re-sided and about 5% have lost their front porches.

3. 1900-1930's:

This group contains shotgun, Creole, and a large number of craftsman bungalow style buildings. About 5% have been re-sided and about 5% have lost their front porches.

4. 1940's-1950's:

This group lacks any distinctive character. There has been little alteration.

5. 1960's-Present:

This group contains more intrusions than any other, the worst of which is the 9-story State Insurance Building in the northwest corner of the district. It was included because the land on which it stands was part of the tract which was originally laid out in 1805.

Some Points of Interest (as located on attached map and shown on attached photographs) in Spanish Town include:

North Street

Gentle House, 619 North Street, was built ca 1880 in the Romantic Mode. This was the home of the Gentle family who owned and operated the ferry at Baton Rouge. No. 1

The Pino House at 721 North Street stands on property once owned by Stephen de GrandPre, one of the sons of Spanish Governor Don Carlos de GrandPre. The cottage-styled house in the Classical Mode is believed to have been built about 1823. No. 2

The Stewart-Dougherty House at 741 North Street was built by Nathan King Knox and sold to Mrs. Elvira McCallop Stewart at the time it was completed on December 22, 1854. The Classical Revival structure was built by Nelson Potts, master brick mason. The house was scheduled for burning by Federal troops, until it was pointed out what an excellent hospital it would be. No. 3

The Grace-Persac House at 781 North Street is a cottage in the Classical Mode. The land belonged to Gabriel de GrandPre, another son of Carlos de GrandPre, in 1819 and the house is believed to have been built about 1830. The house was moved slightly in 1915 prior to North Street being widened. No. 4

Store at 801-803 North Street was built about 1883. This is said to have been a warehouse and residence, used many years by the Hackett family, whose business was refinishing furniture. No. 5

Residence at 813 North Street, 1886, Classical cottage of the elongated variety. No. 6

Residence at 821 North Street, 1886 Classical cottage of the elongated variety. No. 7

The Potts House at 831 North Street is a Classical Revival structure built about 1848 by Nelson Potts, master brick mason, who came to Louisiana from New Jersey. Potts was one of the master builders of Baton Rouge from 1846 until 1868. He was mason-builder for the Florence House (1850), the Louisiana Institute for the Deaf and Dumb and Blind (1852-1858), the East Baton Rouge Parish Jail (1852), the Stewart-Dougherty House (1854), the East Baton Rouge Parish Court House (1856-58), and more. No. 8

Spanish Town Road (Boyd Avenue)

Residence at 658 Spanish Town Road was built in 1916. No. 9

Residence at 715 Spanish Town Road. No. 10

Residence at 737 Spanish Town Road is a shotgun house, which is an example of many which once stood north of Spanish Town Road. Note: A shotgun house is one room wide with an

arrangement of room behind room from front to back; no hallway. Some say the name comes from the fact that a shotgun blast would hit every room of the house, from front to back. No. 11

Residence at 747 Spanish Town Road was built about 1935. This house was constructed with the historic background of the area in mind--Spanish influence massing, iron railings on the gallery and a small formal garden. No. 12

Residence at 818 Spanish Town Road is a cottage of the 1880's with interesting wood patterns around the bay and turned millwork on the porch. For many years it was the home of Negro preachers. No. 13

University Walk (Slocum's Alley)

The Garig House at 600 University Walk is a Neo-Classical structure dating from about 1915. No. 14

Fifth Street (Uncle Sam Street)

Residence at 714 Fifth Street. No. 15

Marker at Fifth and Boyd. For many years Fifth Street was called "Uncle Sam Street" because at the corner of Fifth and Boyd there is an old granite marker which denoted the boundary line of the United States Garrison grounds. The old marker is still there, the last of several such markers at various boundary designations for the garrison. "U. S." is carved in three sides of it. No. 16

Sixth Street (St. Hypolite Street)

Residence at 868 Sixth Street is an excellent example of the "prairie" houses of the 1920's. No. 17

Seventh Street (St. Mary Street, south of Spanish Town Road and St. Anthony north of Spanish Town Road)

Residence at 654 Seventh Street is exemplary of several two-story houses in Spanish Town. It was built about 1910. No. 18

"Presbyterian Minister's House" at 673 Seventh Street dates from the 1860's. This Classical Mode structure was built of lumber from flatboats used on the Mississippi River for floating salable merchandise to the South from the North. Reputedly, Abraham Byrd had it built to house the first Presbyterian minister to live in Baton Rouge. No. 19

Residence at 835-839 Seventh Street is a late 19th Century structure in the Classical Mode. No. 20

Eighth Street (Union Street)

The J. Clifton Yaun House at 673 Eighth Street was built about 1882 by Joseph Brooks in the Classical Mode. Other occupants of the house have included Samuel Y. Watson, who served as Clerk of Court, and Captain Daniel Webster Lusk, captain of the ferry boat at Baton Rouge. No. 21

Residence at 742 Eighth Street was once owned by Baton Rouge's only Republican mayor, Henry Schorten, about 1870. No. 22

State Capitol Grounds

Site of the Old Spanish Fort from 1779 to 1810; it was in ruins by 1817. No. 23

Site of the Spanish Commandant's House. The house that stood here became the home of Zachary Taylor, who was commanding officer of the United States Garrison here at the time he was called to be President of the United States, 1849. No. 24

SPECIFIC DATES
BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Spanish Town was first laid out in 1805 and is consequently the oldest neighborhood in the City of Baton Rouge. Its narrow intimate streets, its irregular block layout, and its high concentration of old buildings, give it the special character of a neighborhood which grew up before the age of the automobile. This is in sharp contrast to the surrounding city which strongly reflects wide streets and parking lotscape of the modern era. It is the old neighborhood in town, which many cities have, which constitutes a locally significant district

The vast majority of the buildings in Spanish Town were built during the period when Louisiana State University (L.S.U.) was located in the adjacent U. S. Garrison grounds. L.S.U. was the economic and social force which generated the district's most important growth spurt. Spanish Town represents the history of L.S.U. from 1885 to 1925.

Spanish Town has the oldest architectural history in the area, with a continuum of styles dating back to 1823. There are a number of fine examples of Greek Revival architecture (notably the Stewart-Dougherty House). There are a number of Queen Anne houses, shotgun houses, and a large number of craftsman bungalows. The buildings occur in unusually high concentration with only about 5% intrusions.

In 1805 Don Carlos de GrandPre, Governor of West Florida, had the official Spanish Surveyor, V.S. Pintado, draw up the layout of an area that became known as Spanish Town. It was to be laid off into 18 long and narrow lots, each of about four arpents, with a public road forty feet wide running east and west through the middle of them. The 18 lots were arranged so that a family could have an area sufficient for a house, a garden and a stable. All lots have subsequently been divided, often irregularly. The plan was soon extended to the east by 20 lots. The 1805 plan showed the four lots nearest the fort set aside as garden plots to provide food for the military personnel, but these lots were sold for houses in 1806. It is doubtful that they were ever used as garden plots.

The camino, or public road, in the middle of the original lots of Spanish Town was soon referred to as "Spanish Town Road", by 1890 it was called "Old Spanish Town Road", by 1908 the name had been changed to "Boyd Avenue", and in 1975 the street was renamed "Spanish Town Road". The original 18 lot layout of "Old Spanish Town" lies between Capitol Lake and North Street, between Fifth Street and Twelfth Street. An 1839 map shows Spanish Town as the same and confirms these boundaries. (Since the building of the Interstate I-110 between 9th and 10th Streets, the identifiable entity of Spanish Town has an eastern boundary at 9th Street.) As the original lots were subdivided, a street pattern emerged that still respects the original Spanish Land divisions. The grid plan of the district began with the only colonial street - Spanish Town Road (sometimes Boyd Avenue). As the area became populated other streets were added. (Uncle Sam (now 5th) Street appeared before 1820. Three sons of Carlos de GrandPre acquired the two southern 1805 garden

plots and divided them into thirds with property lines parallel to the camino--probably due to the swampy area near 7th Street. This swampy area also caused Slocum's Alley (now University Walk) to be laid out as it was. The present day 6th Street north of Spanish Town Road as well as Lakeland (formerly Middle Street) and State Capitol Drive (formerly Little North Street) between 5th and 7th Streets were laid out in 1845. St. Mary (now 7th) Street was extended to the north from North Street to Spanish Town Road in 1849. Other streets followed as the large lots were subdivided: Union (8th) Street prior to 1855; Mills (9th) in 1910; Bungalow Lane in 1915; and Lucilla Lane in 1921.

Names of owners that appear on early maps of Spanish Town are Antonio Monget, Thomas Pereyra, Joseph Dias, Jacob Drake, Gaspar Tilano, Joseph Tilano, Luis Delatt, Luis Marcos, Francisco Rivas, Celestin de Gruize, and Diego Quintana. Preferring to live on Spanish soil, they left Galvez Town at the junction of the Amite and Manchac Rivers; this village had been established in 1778 by the Spanish king to maintain control over a waterway that was used by the English as a route to the Gulf of Mexico. Long plagued by flooding from the periodic rises of the river, the colonists were glad to get to higher ground. In Baton Rouge they cleared their tracts and with some expense put them under cultivation. Their lots were so arranged that a family could have an area sufficient for a house, a garden and a stable. They built houses suited to the climate and the materials at hand. The constant agitation caused by rebels at the fort made them uneasy, and Governor GrandPre made every effort to get confirmed titles to their grants for them from the Spanish Government. In some cases he succeeded, in others not.

Five of the Governor's sons entered military service. By 1806 at least four of them purchased adjacent lots in Spanish Town. Among these were two of the lots set aside for garden plots.

By 1808 Governor de GrandPre was still trying to get his superiors in Pensacola to issue formal titles to the lots for the Spanish settlers. He sought "to terminate their alarms in case a change comes in the political state and condition of things", since the Spanish families had "made the clearings and had the said tracts under cultivation with some expense". GrandPre was recalled to Havana in 1808, to be succeeded in his post by Charles de Hault de Luziere. A change did come in the political state in 1810, with the end of Spanish rule in West Florida.

In 1817 the old Spanish fort was in complete ruins and the building of the Pentagon Barracks was authorized by the U. S. Government. The Spanish settlers, as well as the military personnel were ravaged in 1828 by yellow fever and in 1832 by Asiatic Cholera. The original settlers were almost wiped out. French and English people moved into the vacant places in Spanish Town. In property deeds names like Anthony Cruzat, Armand Duplantier, Lydia Tessier, Jean Poret and Maria Millis mingled with Juan Rodriguez Thomas Collardo, Manuel Lopez and Widow Miranda.

An 1855 map of Baton Rouge shows 38 houses plus several dependencies in ["Spanish Town." Of these at least four still remain. These are the Pino House, the Stewart-Dougherty House, the Grace-Persac House and the Potts House.

Then came the Civil War, fire and destruction. The Stewart-Dougherty House was converted to a hospital. A number of houses on the southeastern flank of the U. S. Army garrison, then referred to as Fort Williams, were set on fire and razed by the federal troops occupying the fort, so that the houses would not offer protection to Confederates who might try a counter-attack or to harbor Confederate spies. Freed slaves moved in when house owners moved out, particularly in the area north of Spanish Town Road.

The area was slowly rebuilt after the war, but never regained its former residential significance until Louisiana State University was moved to the U. S. Garrison Grounds, which had formerly been the site for the English, Spanish and American Forts. As the University "settled in" after 1886, faculty members and staff, fraternities and other students found Spanish Town an

excellent, convenient place for their residences. It was during this period that more streets and subdivisions appeared. For example, Dr. Arthur T. Prescott (noted author and codifier) divided the original plot where the Stewart-Dougherty House still stands by opening Bungalow Lane from North Street to Boyd Avenue (now renamed Spanish Town Road) in order for lots to be created so that his faculty friends could live near the University. Other subdivisions, such as University Park (on the old Nelson Potts property), appeared at this time. Street names changed: Spanish Town Road became Boyd Avenue and Slocum's Alley became University Walk. This era also had a marked effect on the architecture of Spanish Town for many of the buildings that still exist today come from the period of time that the University had a major impact on the district. One woman faculty member and her sister even went so far as to have their family's "Classical Revival" home recreated (at 600 University Walk, No. 12). Several "Queen Anne", "Neo-Classical" and "modern" (Period) buildings were built from the time the University located at the Garrison site in 1886 until LSU moved to its current location to the South along the Mississippi River in 1925.

The move of the University from the Garrison Grounds was quickly followed by the decision to build the Capital Complex on the site. State government had grown and needed additional space, the State Legislature appropriated funds and in 1932 the 34-story, "New State Capitol" was completed. Spanish Town received a boost from this development after the diminished population trend created by the move of LSU. State employees and elected officials bolstered the area as they purchased existing houses as their residences.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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