

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Fischer House is set on a large well treed lot on the western shore of Lake Providence.

The house is a broad spreading, hip-roofed Colonial Revival structure which is surrounded by a gallery, and raised a full story above the ground on brick piers.

The floor plan is largely open with a great corner room connecting to a rear hall which takes up over a third of the floor plan area. This room features elaborate board and batten stained pine wainscoting, a parquet floor, a heavy milled cornice, and large wainscoted ceiling panels. Some years after the house was built, a massive brick segmental arch fireplace was added with a heavy brick mantel shelf and a tapering medieval style flue. This fireplace, together with the dark wood walls and thirteen-foot ceiling gives the room the character of a medieval hall.

Apart from this large room, the main story is occupied by bedrooms and a kitchen. Most of the rooms have plate glass windows which go to the floor. The sixty and seventy-foot galleries are composed of catalogue ordered, machined, ionic columns of a type similar to those used in furniture of the period.

Some years ago the present owners enclosed the lower level of the house so as to form a ground story. Appropriate landscaping has been installed so as to obscure this work as much as possible. Originally there was a front staircase, but this has been removed due to decay.

Adjacent to the house is a c.1920 frame garage and to the rear is a tennis court.

SPECIFIC DATES	C.1905
BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Joseph L. Fischer, Builder

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Fischer House is significant in the areas of architecture and social/ humanitarian.

The main living space, with its dark wood wainscoting and massive fireplace, is one of the most impressive interiors in the area. It also occupies an important place in the history of Louisiana architecture because it represents the culmination of a late 19th and early 20th century tendency towards openness of floor plan. In Queen Anne houses, large sliding doors were frequently used to open living rooms, halls, and parlors onto one another, so as to unify public areas. The Fischer House went beyond this, eliminating the walls entirely, and creating a truly open floor plan. Since this is a development for which the modernist movement has often claimed credit, it is significant to find an example of it in a small Louisiana town in 1905.

The house was built about 1905 by Joseph L. Fischer, the owner of a local lumber company. He purchased the site in 1904 from the Providence Land Company. Fischer and his family resided in the house until 1920, when due to business reverses he sold it to Walter Pittman. It remained in the hands of his family until 1929, when they sold it to the Lake Providence American Legionnaires. For the next nine years, the house was the scene of many of the community's social gatherings, including Legion functions, Rotary meetings, wedding receptions, bachelor dinners, and dances. In 1938 the Pittman family reacquired the home and retained it until 1968, when James Stewart Pittman, Jr. sold it to some local developers. Soon after, the Fischer house was purchased by its present owners.

Recollections of the older citizens of Lake Providence indicate that during the early part of this century, Fischer house played an important role in the life of the town. This was as a social center for the community. To begin with Mrs. Norce Fischer entertained frequently in the house. In 1929 the house was bought by the American Legion. The large open space upstairs was used for Rotary meetings, wedding receptions, bachelor dinners, lovely dances complete with name orchestras and was, in general, the city social center. The lake front was made into a public swim area and a pier was constructed for public fishing. The Red Cross gave swim lessons and provided a life guard during the summer months.

#### MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Brown, Gayle, Research Report on Fischer House, located in National Register file on Fischer House, State Historic Preservation Office, Baton Rouge.

Pinkston, Georgia P. D., A Place to Remember: East Carroll Parish, La., 1832-1976 (Baton Rouge: Claitor's Publishing Division, 1977), pp. 48-49.