

Lane Plantation House (c.1825) is a frame "Carolina I" house with Federal woodwork. It is located in the rolling wooded countryside of southwestern East Feliciana Parish. Despite a few alterations and additions, the house retains its National Register eligibility.

The essential characteristics of the "Carolina I" house are as follows:

- 1) a height of two stories,
- 2) a core plan which is two rooms wide and one room deep on each floor,
- 3) a one-story front gallery,
- 4) a one-story rear shed roof space (open as a gallery or enclosed as rooms),
- 5) an end gable roof, and
- 6) end chimneys standing outside the walls.

All of these features are found in Lane Plantation House. At Lane, the two floors are connected by an unobtrusive staircase which rises from the corner of one downstairs room to a narrow second floor hallway.

The home's Federal features include simple door and window surrounds, baseboards, chair rails, and four vernacular mantels with layered mantel shelves. These mantels are quite similar, although not identical. The main difference is the treatment of the fluting and reeding of their pilasters. Other noteworthy features found in Lane Plantation House include chamfered gallery columns; four light transoms over the two front doors; nine-over-nine windows on the lower floor's front and side elevations; original wooden floors; and doors, walls and ceilings made of beaded planks.

Changes experienced by Lane Plantation House over the years include the following:

1. Architectural evidence suggests that one side of the rear shed roof gallery was enclosed as a bedroom sometime during the nineteenth century and a chimney was added at the end of this new room. At some point the opposite rear corner was also enclosed and converted to a small room. After 1927 this room was converted into a bathroom and the space between the bathroom and bedroom was screened.
2. During the 1940s beams were added to the ceiling of one lower floor room to provide support for the floor above.
3. At some point, the lower portions of the gallery's chamfered columns were boxed.
4. The house underwent a restoration in 1969. The larger of the upstairs bedrooms was subdivided to create a bedroom, closets, and bath. In addition, the rear shed roof portion of the home was altered. The wall between the bedroom and screened porch was lowered and converted into a room divider. The fireplace and chimney were removed. Acoustical tiles and false ceiling beams were added. The bathroom was modernized and the screened porch filled in by a door with sidelights. The home was extended on each side at the rear corners, with a kitchen being added on one side and a master bedroom wing on the other. Finally, new siding was installed across the rear elevation.
5. The home's two surviving chimneys underwent extensive repair in the summer of 1992.

Despite these changes, Lane Plantation House retains its architectural integrity. The modern wings are set unobtrusively at the rear corners and are partially screened by vegetation. The facade looks exactly as it did in the nineteenth century, and the structure retains the essential characteristics of a "Carolina I" house as outlined above. As a rare example of this important house type, the Lane Plantation House is a strong candidate for National Register listing.

Non-Contributing Element

There is a frame one-story late nineteenth century kitchen building within the nominated area. However, it was remodeled into a modern guest house in 1969. Because it was not present

during the period of significance for the main house and has been extensively remodeled, it is being counted as a non-contributing element.

Significant dates c.1825
Architect/Builder unknown
Criterion C

Lane Plantation House is significant at the state level in the area of architecture as a rare surviving Louisiana example of the "Carolina I" house type. These houses are significant as indicators of the migration of the planter and upper middle classes from South Carolina. As noted cultural geographer Dr. Fred Kniffen states in his article on folk housing: "Early in its movement southward the "I" house became symbolic of economic attainment by agriculturists and remained so associated throughout the Upland South and its peripheral extensions." The SHPO is currently aware of only seven "Carolina I" houses that remain in Louisiana. Thus, Lane Plantation House stands as a rare example of a substrain of the British vernacular architectural tradition in the state. In addition, because five of the surviving "I" houses are found in the Feliciana Parishes, Lane Plantation House is an excellent representation of the distinctly Anglo-American (non-French) heritage for which that area is known.

Historical Note

Around 1830 William Allen Lane purchased the property which would become known as Lane Plantation from a family named Weston. The Westons had owned the home and accompanying plantation for only a short time before selling it. The property has remained under the ownership of Lane family descendants for over 160 years. The family now uses the plantation as a weekend home, and the grandchildren of the current owner are the ninth generation to enjoy the property.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Plauche, Cornelia Lane. "Plantation Memories," typescript, 1969. Copy in National Register file.

Staff knowledge of Carolina I houses in Louisiana.