

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The buildings in the Jackson Street Historic District (late nineteenth/early twentieth century) are the only intact "survivors" of the once flourishing courthouse square residential area of Winnsboro.* The district consists of three large single story frame residences and seven outbuildings. It is set in the northeastern corner of the Franklin Parish courthouse square. (The old courthouse was replaced in 1952.) North of the district is a cypress hollow which was once the bed of Turkey Creek. Although the present district residential area is greatly reduced, what remains has suffered little loss of integrity.

* The qualifier "intact" is used because there is one other turn-of-the-century residence in the vicinity (about a block from the present district), but it has been drastically altered.

The three residences in the district are linked by several factors:

1. They are adjacent to each other
2. They occupy a common curving frontage along Jackson Street
3. They are within easy sight of one another.
- 4 They occupy the same well treed setting.
5. They share a common scale and street frontage setback.
6. They are part of the same period of residential development:

Belle Fann dates from 1891.

The Godfrey House dates from 1900.

The Scott-Elam House dates from 1906.

Although the three houses are different stylistically, they all reflect late nineteenth century architectural trends in Louisiana.

The following structures are within the district boundaries:

1. Belle Fann (1891) is a single story, five bay, galleried, retardaire Greek Revival house with a central hall plan, double parlors, and a rear kitchen/dining room wing. Noteworthy details include the full entablature, the turned balustrade, windows with pediment shaped tops, and manufactured golden oak mantels. Changes include the replacement of the front windows, the installation of an entrance awning, and the addition of a rear porch. **SEVERELY DAMAGED BY FIRE – INTERIOR DESTROYED; EXTERIOR WALLS SURVIVE**

Outbuildings at Belle Fann

2. The smokehouse (c.1900) is a hip roofed board and batten structure with a large porch (presently screened-in). The screening is the only alteration it has received.

3. The outhouse (c.1900) is a small plank sided shed roof structure which has suffered no alterations.

4. The barn (c.1900) is a board and batten structure with a low pitched roof. It is relatively small, which indicates that Belle Fann was always a town property and not a farm. The barn has undergone no major changes since construction.

5. The shed (c 1900) is a hip roofed board and batten structure which has undergone no major changes since construction.

6. The maid's house (c.1900) is a small one room frame cottage which is presently unused. It is essentially unaltered.

7. The garage, a c.1940 tin sided frame structure with a new latticework facade, is a non-contributing element.

8. The Scott-Elam House (1906) is a single story, five bay, central hall plan, double parlor, frame structure with the original plate glass windows. Four light, square posts support a central high pitched Queen Anne Revival inspired front porch gable. The gable has an inset flared shingled cave. The house has undergone no major changes since construction.

9. The Scott-Elam Garage (c.1940), a non-contributing element, is a simple board and batten frame structure.

10. The Godfrey House (1900) is a single story, frame, central hall plan, double parlor, pitched roof structure with a five bay Eastlake gallery under a separate roof. All of the original six over six windows survive as do the Eastlake mantels. Since construction, the exterior of the house has been asbestos sided and half of the front gallery has been screened-in.

Assessment of Integrity:

In the opinion of the State Historic Preservation Office, the few small changes which have been made to the buildings in question have not significantly intruded upon the overall late nineteenth/early twentieth century character of the district. Only 3 of the eight contributing structures have been altered, and then only slightly.

Specific dates 1891-1906
Builder/Architect N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)
Criterion C

The Jackson Street Historic District is locally significant in the area of architecture because it is an important part of the residential architectural heritage of the parish seat of Winnsboro. It is the town's only remaining grouping of late nineteenth-early twentieth century residences and related structures. Its buildings, which are among the town's oldest, are the only extant intact visual reminders of Winnsboro's old courthouse square residential neighborhood. The district is also significant because of the survival of the outbuildings at Belle Fann.

All three of the houses in the Jackson Street Historic District are examples of the large though unpretentious residences found in many small towns in Louisiana in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Representing the more affluent local citizens, these are usually single story, frame, galleried structures with central hall plans and double parlors. Some have Queen Anne Revival or Eastlake touches while others have retardaire Greek Revival features. Although these are town residences, they resemble small plantation houses.

The houses in the Jackson Street Historic District are the only intact "survivors" of Winnsboro's historic courthouse square residential area. Since 1846 this has been a prestigious location within the town, due primarily to the presence of the Franklin Parish Courthouse. The area flourished in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries because of an unusual period of prosperity which was generated by over 20 years of bumper cotton crops, which local factors were able to sell. (This is in contrast to much of the rest of the South where the production of cotton was in a depressed state.)

The affluence of the area during this period is evidenced by the construction of a new fashionably styled parish courthouse in 1903. The Jackson Street area became Winnsboro's most important residential neighborhood with larger residences than were commonly found in other parts of town.

Since Winnsboro's agricultural heyday, there has been considerable redevelopment in the area, much of which was due to a boom in natural gas production. Today little remains of Winnsboro's historic residential architectural heritage. With one possible exception, the oldest

residences in town date from the turn-of-the-century, and there are only about a half dozen of these, three of which are in the Jackson Street district. A fourth example is adjacent to the district, but because it was recently moved to the area, it has been nominated separately. A fifth example is in the vicinity of the district, but has been drastically modified. Other than these and a scattering of bungalows, the town's housing stock dates from the mid-twentieth century or later.

The present Jackson Street Historic District is all that remains of the once flourishing courthouse square residential area. In addition, it is Winnsboro's only remaining grouping of late nineteenth/early twentieth century residences, indeed of historic residences of any period. If all of the above is considered simultaneously with the fact that Jackson Street's houses were superior residences of their day, it must be concluded that the Jackson Street District is of great importance to Winnsboro's architectural patrimony.

The district is also significant because Belle Fann retains an almost complete complement of outbuildings. This includes a barn, a maid's house, a smokehouse, a shed and an outhouse. Very few town residences in Louisiana retain any outbuildings at all, let alone the number which survive at Belle Fann.*

*Although the outbuildings at Belle Fann can be spoken of within the context of the state, the State Historic Preservation Office does not feel that a sufficient scholarly basis exists to make a case for significance on the state level. In any event, the district as a whole is significant only within the context of Winnsboro.

Bibliography

Franklin Parish Conveyance Records

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Research report prepared by Gay Hatfield, Parish Librarian based upon oral interviews with long-time residents of Winnsboro.