

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Vermilion Inn (c.1835) is a two-story brick-between-posts provincial Greek Revival structure located near the north bank of the Vermilion River. Although it once had a more rural setting, it is now in the midst of expanding suburban Lafayette. Despite several changes and additions, the building retains its National Register eligibility.

The Vermilion Inn is a combination of Creole French and Anglo-American features, Creole features include the upstairs hall-less floor plan with its two large rooms and its pair of rear cabinets and the fact that the staircase is set on the rear gallery between the cabinets. Anglo-American features include: (1) the one-time central hall floor plan on the ground story; (2) the fact that the ground story entrance is in the center; (3) the simple Greek Revival mantels, all four of which survive; (4) the five-bay colossal Doric post gallery in the front; and (5) the fact that the chimneys are set against the exterior walls.

Other noteworthy features include:

1. The exposed and beaded beams on the ground story,
2. The four-panel doors which open onto the upper gallery from each of the upstairs rooms.
3. The six over six windows on the front gallery and on the sides of the upper story,
4. The nine over six windows on the sides of the lower story.

The following noteworthy changes have been made in the structure since construction:

1. The original front doorway has been replaced by a reproduction turn of-the-century style doorway.
2. The rear gallery has been enclosed on both stories.
3. The walls of the central hall have been removed on the ground story, thus creating a single long room. (Originally there was a central hall with a room on either side.)
4. Shutters have been remounted with new hardware.
5. Large wings have been added on the rear and on the north side. (The northern wing contains an imitation Normandy style turret.)

Assessment of Integrity

Despite the aforementioned changes and additions, the Vermilion Inn retains its National Register eligibility. The original building's basic form stands apart from its accretions and most of its Greek Revival features remain, including all of the mantels. Hence, in the opinion of the State Historic Preservation Office, it retains its obvious identity as a Greek Revival structure. Moreover, it retains the two features which establish its architectural significance -- i.e., the building's two-story height and its colossal gallery. (See Item 8)

Specific dates c.1835
Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)
Criterion C

The Vermilion Inn is locally significant in the area of architecture as a superior example of Greek Revival architecture within the context of Lafayette Parish.

The Historical Sites Inventory prepared for the Lafayette Council of Governments identifies some twenty-eight Greek Revival structures remaining in Lafayette Parish. Most are single story cottages with simple posts for gallery columns. About half are in a deteriorated state and many have been significantly modified. The Vermilion Inn is conspicuous among this group because it is one of only four two-story examples and because it is one of only two examples which have colossal columns on the gallery. This is important because the Vermilion Inn represents something of an architectural fashion of its time. Shadows-on-the-Teche (1834) set a fashion for colossal gallery columns on larger houses in the vicinity of Iberia, Lafayette and St. Landry parishes. This appears to have been the leading high style architectural trend in the area. The Vermilion Inn is a rare surviving example of this trend in Lafayette Parish.

Historical Note:

The Vermilion Inn is so named because it is believed to have been an inn at some point in its history. In addition, the area where it is located is the site of the Battle of Vermilion Bayou (October 1863), at which time the structure was occupied by Union troops.

Major Bibliographical References

Historical Sites Inventory, Lafayette Parish, Section I. Prepared by the Lafayette Regional Planning Commission for the Lafayette Council of Governments, June, 1976.

Nomination Form Prepared by Ruth Fontenot, Copy in National Register File, LA State Historic Preservation Office.