

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Thibodaux Multiple Resource Area consists of fifteen individual buildings ranging in date from the antebellum period through the 1920's. The owner of one of the fifteen (914 Jackson) has filed a notarized letter of objection, and hence the building in question cannot actually be listed on the Register. Of the fifteen, there are seven commercial buildings, five private residences, two residences in commercial use, and one church. Styles run the gamut from Greek Revival, to commercial Italianate, to Queen Anne Revival, to twentieth century eclectic. All of the buildings have either urban or suburban settings. None of them have been altered enough to cause an integrity problem. There are also four buildings within the city limits that are already on the National Register (Rienzi, the Lafourche Parish Courthouse, St. John's Episcopal Church and the Dansereau House). These listed properties are referred to in the text, but, of course, are not being re-nominated.

Thibodaux, with a population of about 15,000, is the seat of government for the large rural parish of Lafourche (1,141 square miles). It is located on the banks of Bayou Lafourche, a waterway that branches off the Mississippi River at Donaldsonville and runs through the length of Lafourche Parish before emptying into the Gulf of Mexico. The town was incorporated in 1830 and was well established by the Civil War. By 1892 it had a population of 1900, and by 1907 this figure had jumped to 4300. The present building stock as well as other available evidence indicates that the years from c.1890 to c.1910 were particularly prosperous ones for Thibodaux. (See item 8 historical development statement for additional information on this topic.)

Thibodaux developed along a fairly standard grid pattern with no formal planning features. The central business district is characterized, of course, by party wall buildings. For the most part, not even the larger homes in the town's old residential sections have very much land. Large homes are interspersed freely with humbler bungalows and cottages. Although the town's grand rue, Canal Boulevard, has a greater concentration of landmarks than one would find elsewhere, it is still peppered with more humble dwellings.

The town has a one to two story scale with buildings ranging in date from the antebellum period to the present. There is little architectural cohesiveness in the downtown area due to considerable modern infill and copious alterations to older structures. When the State Historic Preservation Office staff evaluated it as a possible historic district, they found a 54% intrusion rate. Although the surrounding older neighborhoods do not seem to have as many intrusions, they do have too much low-key pedestrian infill. Essentially Thibodaux is a city of impressive landmarks set in a sea of modest buildings -- i.e., plain bungalows, ordinary shotgun houses, and unadorned commercial buildings. Indeed, many of these modest "older" structures are not even verifiably fifty years old. For example, there are many bungalows which could date from 1925, but which could also date from 1940. For these reasons, the State Historic Preservation Office concluded that there was no possibility of a Register eligible historic district anywhere in Thibodaux.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

All but two of the fifteen buildings fit into one of the following three categories:

(1) The Greek Revival: As far as the State Historic Preservation Office can determine, nothing remains from the pre-1840 period; hence this category represents the city's earliest extant structures. According to survey data, there are about twenty Greek Revival structures in Thibodaux, most of which are plain cottages with simple details in various states of integrity. In a general sense these buildings reflect Thibodaux's antebellum sugar-related prosperity. In addition to the one Greek Revival residence in this submission, there are already three examples of the style on the Register. These four buildings have little in common apart from being Greek Revival.

The three listed buildings are: (1) the brick and stucco 1856 Lafourche Parish Courthouse with its massive colossal pedimented portico; (2) St. John's Episcopal Church, an 1843 brick temple style building without a portico; and (3) Rienzi, a c.1845 two story peripteral plantation house.

The one Greek Revival building in this submission is 914 Jackson, a c.1850 two story frame residence with a pedimented portico.

(NB: As noted on the continuation sheet, this building cannot actually be listed on the Register because of owner objection.)

(2) The Queen Anne Revival: Thibodaux's second wave of prosperity is broadly reflected by numerous cottages, shotgun houses, and Queen Anne Revival houses located throughout the old part of town. Most are fairly plain with standard repetitive details. Some of the Queen Anne Revival houses feature more individuality, but the five nominated examples are clearly "the cream of the crop."

The nominated buildings share the following characteristics:

1. Each is of frame construction.
2. Each has galleries.
3. Each has an unusually large amount of typical turn-of-the-century manufactured ornamental detailing.
4. Each is in a good state of architectural integrity.
5. Most importantly, each has a turret.

(3) Commercial Buildings: The Thibodaux central business district contains some sixty-five structures, thirty of which are 50 years old and survive in a reasonable state of integrity. The vast majority of these older buildings are relatively plain frame or brick stores of one or occasionally two stories. Here again, the buildings which constitute the "cream of the crop" are being nominated. These run the gamut from representative two story galleried commercial structures (the historic "backbone" of Thibodaux's commerce) to pretentious Italianate, Beaux Arts, and neo-classical buildings. There is also a large Italianate warehouse.

The two nominees that do not fit into the above categories are the Peltier House, a 1910 Colonial Revival residence, and St. Joseph's Co-Cathedral (1920), a flamboyant mixture of Renaissance, Gothic, Baroque, and Early Christian elements. The fourth Register property in Thibodaux, the Dansereau House, also does not fit into any of the above categories. It is a c.1875 three story Second Empire residence which was nominated at the state level as a rare example of its style.

The Survey

The City of Thibodaux was recorded in the spring of 1979 as part of Louisiana's on-going comprehensive historic structures survey. The work was performed by Dr. Paul Leslie, one of the state's contract surveyors as well as a professor of history at Nicholls State University. This survey was the primary organ from which candidate buildings were chosen. This survey was augmented by a thorough windshield survey of the city conducted by the State Historic Preservation Office staff in

the summer of 1985. In addition, all but one of the chosen buildings were inspected on the exterior and interior by members of the State Historic Preservation Office staff. The one not inspected on the interior was the one with an objecting owner -- 914 Jackson Street.

Selection Methodology

In preparing this nomination, the State Historic Preservation Office carefully evaluated each 50+ year old building within the Thibodaux city limits and selected those for which a plausible case could be made for architectural or historical significance on at least the local level. For reasons which have been explained already, a district was ruled out. With three exceptions, those properties selected were so chosen because of their demonstrable architectural significance. The three exceptions have special importance in the city's commercial history. Other commercial buildings in this submission which are being nominated solely for their architectural significance were not also chosen for commercial significance because their associations are general in nature and are shared with every other 50+ year old commercial structure in the city. Only three buildings are being nominated for historical significance (as opposed to architectural) because the State Historic Preservation Office was unable to uncover any other properties that met the requirements for nomination under Criterion A or B.

MULTIPLE RESOURCE AREA PROPERTIES

PELTIER HOUSE (Building #1)

Builder: Sidney Peltier

Contractor: Joseph A. Robichaux
1910-14

Local Significance - Architecture

The Peltier House is a one-and-a-half story frame Colonial Revival residence with a central hall plan. The house is four rooms deep with two polygonal bays. The interior features pocket doors, deep cove cornices, and four fireplaces with columnar mantels. The present dado in the dining room is a recent addition. The front gallery features grouped Ionic columns on heavy brick bases and a central projecting entrance under a segmental pediment. The hip roof has four large squat hip dormers which are ornamented with pilasters.

In addition to the dado, the central hall has been partitioned at the rear, a staircase has been added, the attic has been finished, and a small portion of the front gallery has been sensitively enclosed. Because the house is significant for its frontal appearance, only the gallery enclosure is a factor in terms of loss of integrity. Fortunately the enclosure is set well behind the columns and is barely noticeable.

To the rear of the house is a roughly contemporaneous garage with beaded board throughout the interior. The old garage doors have been glazed in and the windows replaced. Nonetheless, because of its age and general appearance, it is listed as a contributing element. There is also a modern garage to the rear, which, of course, is listed as a non-contributing element.

Significance:

Thibodaux's post-Queen Anne Revival historic residential architecture is characterized almost exclusively by the bungalow style. Bungalows occur in large numbers, but virtually all are low-key run-of-the-mill examples. There are no elaborate Craftsman or impressive twentieth century eclectic houses, for example. There is only one other noteworthy 50+ year old Colonial Revival house in Thibodaux, and it was excluded because its Colonial Revival porch may or may not be

original. Against this background, the Peltier House, with its impressive Colonial Revival facade, clearly emerges as a landmark from the period.

BREAUX HOUSE (Building #2)
1890's (is on 1898 Sanborn map)
Builder: Lewis Breaux

Local Significance: Architecture

The Breaux House is a single story frame Queen Anne Revival residence with Eastlake gallery posts. The plan consists of two front rooms and a rear corridor leading to bedrooms and a kitchen. There are two polygonal bays, a small entrance vestibule, and two fireplaces, one of which has an elaborate slate mantel. This mantel has a basic aedicule shape, but with free-standing colonnettes on brackets supporting the shelf. The various surfaces are painted to resemble granite and marble. Panels are stenciled with stylized leaf and flower patterns. The roofline of the house features three imbricated shingle gables, each of which has stylized cruck and tie-beam ornamentation. The massing is crowned by a square turret with a flared pyramidal roof and an oculus. The Eastlake gallery features filigree brackets and incorporates five changes in direction in order to encompass the front half of the house.

Since construction, the house has been partially aluminum sided, the front gallery has been screened in, a small rear gallery has been enclosed, and one of the mantels has been replaced. Despite these changes, the Breaux House still retains its massing, its gallery, and its painted slate mantel, which are the features which establish its architectural significance. In addition, it retains most of its exterior and interior details; hence its architectural identity remains intact.

Significance - Please refer to Queen Anne Revival section of Item 8. In addition, the Breaux House is separately significant because of its painted slate mantel. The paintwork is in perfect condition and is a very rare surviving example in the parish.

Contributing/Non-contributing Elements:

To the rear of the house is a small roughly contemporaneous frame dependency which is listed as a contributing element. Also at the rear is a frame garage which may well not be fifty years old. In any event, it is certainly not contemporaneous with the house and hence is listed as a non-contributing element.

ROBICHAUX HOUSE (Building #3)
Builder: E. G. Robichaux

Local Significance: Architecture

The Robichaux House is a two story frame Queen Anne Revival residence with Eastlake gallery details. The plan consists of a central hall with two principal rooms on each side. There are three polygonal bays and two chimneys. One original mantel survives downstairs, as does a large panel of "carpenter's lace." The roofline features five gables, two of which are decoratively treated. The main front gable features cruck and tie-beam inspired ornamentation as well as a side balcony under a horseshoe arch. The roof is crowned by a square turret with two oculi, a band of pointed arches, and a modillion cornice. The front portion of the house is encompassed by an Eastlake gallery with columns, brackets, and rows of spindles overhead. Alterations include the replacement

of most of the mantels, the removal of pocket doors, the extension of the rear kitchen area, the enclosure of a small portion of the front gallery, and the replacement of the front gallery column bases. The exterior changes have had only a very minor effect upon the principal views of the house. And because the exterior articulation is the source of the house's significance, these changes have not imperiled its National Register eligibility.

In addition to the house, there are two contemporaneous cisterns, a contemporaneous servant's cottage, and a contemporaneous carriage house. These, of course, are listed as contributing elements.

Significance - Please refer to Queen Anne Revival section of Item 8

RIVIERE HOUSE (Building #4)
Builder: Henry Riviere

Local Significance: Architecture

The Riviere House is a story-and-a-half frame Queen Anne Revival residence with Eastlake gallery details. The plan consists of a central hall with two principal rooms on each side. At the rear of the hall is a staircase set off by an elaborate screen of "carpenter's lace." There are three polygonal bays and four fireplaces, each of which has a columnar mantel-overmantel set. Two of the exterior doors retain their original etched glass panels depicting egrets in a swamp setting. The roofline features five decorative gables and a square corner turret with an oculus, a modillion cornice and a flared pyramidal roof. The Eastlake gallery curves around the front and side of the house with columns, brackets, and a row of spindles overhead. There is also a rear porch with an Eastlake gallery.

Since construction, the house has received only the most minor of alterations (two metal window awnings on the side and rear, a side window boarded over, and the loss of one etched glass panel). In addition to the house, the property includes a contemporaneous frame wash house which is listed as a contributing element. There is also a metal sided garage which is listed as a non-contributing element.

Significance - Please refer to Queen Anne Revival section of Item 8

CHANTICLEER GIFT SHOP (Building #5)
Built sometime between 1898 and 1907 Sanborn maps

Local Significance - Architecture

The Chanticleer Gift Shop is a single story frame Queen Anne Revival residence with Eastlake gallery details. The plan consists of two front rooms and a rear corridor leading to bedrooms and a kitchen. There are four golden oak mantels, two sets of pocket doors, one panel of "carpenter's lace," and two polygonal bays. The roofline features multiple hip roof shapes and scallop-shingled gables. The roof's crowning feature is an octagonal scallop-shingled turret with a conical roof and a flared base. The intricate Eastlake gallery changes direction six times in order to encompass the front portion of the house.

The only change in the house since construction has been the enclosure of a small rear gallery. This, we feel, should be regarded as minor.

Significance - Please refer to Queen Anne Revival section of Item 8.

RIVIERE BUILDING Building #6
Builder: Thomas A. Riviere

Local Significance - Architecture

The Riviere Building is a two story, brick, Italianate commercial structure with an elaborate pressed metal front. The second story's numerous details include engaged composite columns on pedestals, copious brincade panels, square floral panels, a full entablature, and a central tablet surmounted by a pediment. An old photo reveals that the original shopfront was fairly conventional. As originally built, the store had a large open ground story with a square opening in the ceiling which provided a view of the second story. The opening was defined by balustrades.

Since construction, the second floor opening has been covered over and a new floor has been inserted dividing the first story. Thus the old second story is now the third. The first story has been completely modernized, the shopfront has been fitted with carrara glass, and a new fixed awning has been installed. There is also a more modern very thin single story side wing to the left which reads as a separate entity. These changes have not affected the aforementioned pressed metal ornamentation, which is the source of the building's significance. Hence, the Riviere Store retains its National Register eligibility.

Significance:

There are undoubtedly over one hundred commercial buildings in Lafourche Parish which are fifty years old or older. Most of these are either simple late nineteenth-early twentieth century plantation stores or examples of the "commercial vernacular," the latter being a diluted, sometimes much diluted, version of the urban Italianate style.

Of course, the grandest commercial buildings in the parish feature the most elaborate Italianate styling. The Riviere Building is one of only three false front Italianate commercial buildings in Lafourche Parish which retain their architectural integrity. Others have been modified beyond recognition. Of these three, the Riviere Building is the only one with an ornamental pressed metal front.

Building #7
KTIB Radio Building
c.1900

Local Significance - Commerce
Architecture

108 Green Street is a two story brick corner commercial building with an Eastlake gallery on two sides. The lower gallery is cast-iron while the upper gallery features wooden Eastlake columns with scroll sawn capitals (balustrades are replaced). The building is surmounted by an elaborate pressed metal entablature featuring anthemions and modillions. The French doors upstairs are original while the lower story doors and windows are replaced. The interior is completely modern, and there is a modern wing on the Green Street elevation.

Despite the above changes, the building still easily retains the bulk of its late nineteenth century exterior appearance. Hence it retains its architectural identity as a historic galleried commercial building. The aforementioned wing has had a minimal visual impact because it reads as a separate building.

Commercial Significance:

Of Thibodaux's five surviving galleried commercial buildings, 108 Green Street is the most intact on the exterior to a single original period of construction. Other examples have suffered total column replacement, new shopfronts, and/or total replacement of upstairs windows. Hence 108 Green is an important representative of Thibodaux's historic commercial activity. (See galleried commercial buildings section of Item 8 for further explanation and justification.)

Architectural Significance:

108 Green is also locally significant in the area of architecture as Thibodaux's finest surviving galleried commercial building. It is the only one with an Eastlake gallery (as opposed to a plain gallery) and the only one with an ornamental pressed metal entablature.

Building #8
GRAND THEATRE
1920's

Local Significance: Architecture

The Grand Theatre is a two story neo-classical commercial building with an impressive pilastered front. It has a large open auditorium with a second story gallery over the lobby. The ornamental pressed metal ceiling and the interior wall pilasters remain, although the capitals have been removed. The wall surfaces between the pilasters have been covered with fiberboard panels. The front portion of the building is articulated with colossal paneled pilasters, a full entablature, and a shaped parapet with a pediment shaped tablet. The ground story has arched openings which have been enclosed. The monumental facade is made more striking by the use of light and dark colored brick to emphasize ornamental details.

In addition to the above changes, the marquee has been replaced and a 1930's looking sign has been installed on the second story. None of these changes have affected the theatre's National Register eligibility because its neo-classical styling remains intact.

Significance:

There are undoubtedly over one hundred 50+ year old commercial buildings in various states of integrity in Lafourche Parish. Most of these are either simple late nineteenth-early twentieth century plantation stores or fairly plain examples of the ubiquitous "commercial vernacular" style. The Grand Theatre is one of only two commercial buildings in the parish representing the high style eclectic architectural trends of the early twentieth century. And of these two, it is the more monumental because of its impressive colossal pilasters. (The other is the Citizens Bank of Lafourche, also a nominee in this submission.)

NB: The Grand Theatre is presently vacant and the electricity has been turned off. A flashlight enabled a State Historic Preservation Office staff person to see enough to describe the interior, but it was much too dark for photography.

Building #9

Original Name (until 1929): BANK OF LAFOURCHE BUILDING

Present Name: OIL & GAS BUILDING

1897

Local Significance: Architecture

The Bank of Lafourche is a two story, brick, Italianate commercial building with a handsome marble front. The interior was completely altered in the 1960's, and virtually nothing original remains. The building features a grand Serlian motif entrance with rock-faced voussoirs, Ionic columns, and a console keystone. The lower story also features rock-faced bands and two oculi with Mannerist surrounds. The upper story features three arched windows, a modillion cornice, a balustrade, and a central tablet.

There is a small one story wing to the right of the original facade which appears to be over fifty years old. Neither the wing or the aforementioned interior alterations have affected the bank's National Register eligibility because the building still retains its principal elevation, which is the source of its significance.

Significance:

There are undoubtedly over one hundred 50+ year old commercial buildings in Lafourche Parish. Most of these are either simple late nineteenth-early twentieth century plantation stores or examples of the "commercial vernacular," the latter being a diluted, sometimes much diluted, version of the urban Italianate style.

Of course, the grandest examples feature the most elaborate Italianate styling. The Lafourche Bank is certainly the most opulently and impressively styled Italianate commercial building in the parish. It is the only one with an articulated marble front (as opposed to brick), and it is the only one with a grand Serlian entrance (as opposed to an ordinary commercial front).

Building #10

LAMARTINA BUILDING

Pre-Civil War; remodeled in 1922

Local Significance: Commerce

The Lamartina Building is a two story brick commercial building with gable parapets and a wooden cantilevered front gallery. There is also a contemporaneous single story brick shed roof wing in the rear. It is not known if the chamfered post gallery is original, but it certainly dates from well before the turn-of-the-century at least. The building consists of two shops downstairs with a staircase between. The upstairs contains living quarters with French doors front and rear. The front French doors appear to date from the early twentieth century, while the rear ones appear to date from the mid-nineteenth century. At one time there was a rear gallery, but this has long since been removed. The handsome Gothic style balustrades on the front gallery are not original, but have been with the building a considerable length of time. The interiors feature beaded wall board throughout. In 1922 the facade was stuccoed to resemble dressed stone and the present shopfronts were installed. Since 1922 the only changes have been the bricking over of the bulkheads, the replacement of some of the shopfront glass, and the removal of a few of the shopfront glazing bars. In our opinion, these alterations should be regarded as minor.

Significance:

The Lamartina Building is locally significant in the area of commerce as a rare surviving example of a once common phenomenon. Old photos and Sanborn maps reveal that galleried commercial buildings were once a dominant element in Thibodaux. However, today there are only five remaining examples. Of these, the Lamartina Building is the oldest. Although it has been modified over the years, the changes have reflected continuing business activity in the area. Thus the building is an important material representative of Thibodaux's historic role as a commercial center for Lafourche Parish. (See galleried commercial buildings section of Item 8 for further explanation and justification.)

Building #11

Original Name: CITIZENS BANK OF LAFOURCHE

Present Name: CITIZENS FINANCE CORPORATION BUILDING

1910 Thibodaux, LA 70301

Contractor: Joseph A. Robichaux

Local Significance: Architecture

The Citizens Bank of Lafourche is a single story brick Beaux Arts building consisting of a central block and two rounded end wings. The plan is very axial, with a central entrance facing a bank vault across an open banking hall. The vault is set in its own decorative pavilion. The banking hall is surmounted by a rectangular comical vault with a stained glass lantern. This unusual vault registers on the exterior as a sort of rectangular dome surmounting the entire central block. The building also features an aedicule motif entrance surmounted by two cornucopias and an oculus. Both the side wings and main block have paired modillion entablatures. Other noteworthy exterior features include lunette windows, decorative cartouche panels and a marble water table.

Since construction, a second story has been added to one of the side wings, ceiling and wall tiles have been installed on the interior, and a corner doorway has been replaced. None of these changes have affected the building's National Register eligibility because it still retains the features which contribute to its architectural significance (see significance statement below)

Significance:

There are undoubtedly over one hundred 50+ year old commercial buildings in various states of integrity in Lafourche Parish. Most of these are either simple late nineteenth-early twentieth century plantation stores or fairly plain examples of the ubiquitous "commercial vernacular" style. The Citizens Bank of Lafourche is one of only two commercial buildings in the parish representing the high style eclectic architectural trends of the early twentieth century. Its comical roof, rich detailing, grand facade, and axial planning distinguish it as the parish's most complete commercial statement in the then prevailing Beaux Arts taste.

Building #12

McCULLA HOUSE (RACELAND BANK AND TRUST, THIBODAUX BRANCH)

c.1907

Builder: John McCulla Contractor: Joseph A. Robichaux

Local Significance - Architecture

The McCulla House is a two story frame Queen Anne Revival residence with Colonial Revival gallery columns. The plan consists of a large "L" shaped front hall with rooms on either side and a rear corridor. The front hall has a fireplace and the rear corridor features a staircase with an Eastlake built-in bench. The interior also features pocket doors and corner fireplaces in the principal rooms, each with a columnar mantel and overmantel.

Noteworthy exterior features include four imbricated shingled gables, an octagonal turret with a faceted roof, a horseshoe arched balcony, an Ionic gallery which wraps around the front with 45 degree turns at the corners, and two polygonal bays, one of which is set under the corner turret.

Since construction, a vault has been installed, a rear wing with drive through bays has been added, a wall has been removed to provide for banking space, and crown molding has been installed throughout. These changes have not affected the principal views and hence have not threatened the house's National Register eligibility.

Significance - Please refer to Queen Anne Revival section of Item 8.

Building #13

ST. JOSEPH'S CO-CATHEDRAL AND RECTORY

1920, construction began; January 1923, church dedicated
Architects: Burton and Bendernagel Contractor; Joseph A, Robichaux

Local Significance - Architecture

St. Joseph's is a brick basilican plan church with a crossing and a half-domed apse. Its flamboyant design borrows from the Early Christian, Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque styles without being heavily indebted to any of them. The twin tower facade features a columnar arcaded entrance surmounted by a rose window which in turn is surmounted by a somewhat broken pediment with an inset statuary niche. The campaniles culminate in two-stage cupolas with massive volute scrolls and comical vaults.

The interior is somewhat more stylistically cohesive, It features an elaborate coffered ceiling, free-standing composite columns down the aisles and around the apse, a clerestory, and numerous stained glass windows.

The only noticeable alteration has been the replacement of the front doors.

The adjacent two story brick rectory is listed as a contributing element because it is contemporaneous with the church and is obviously related to it.

Significance:

St. Joseph's is locally significant in the area of architecture because it is the most conspicuous architectural landmark in Thibodaux. It is the tallest building in the area, towering impressively over the predominantly one to two story townscape. Moreover, it is easily the most architecturally embellished building in Thibodaux. Finally, its interior is easily the most impressive public or private space in the city. It features the only use of a coffered ceiling and the only use of free-standing columns.

Historical Note: A large Roman Catholic church such as St. Joseph's is typical of many South Louisiana communities, although most are not as large. It reflects the predominant French Catholic settlement patterns in the area.

PERCY-LOBDELL BUILDING

Building #15

c.1900

Local Significance - Commerce
Architecture

The Percy-Lobdell Building is a two story brick Italianate warehouse located adjacent to Bayou Lafourche and a railroad line. The front portion has a group of offices downstairs and a monumental false front. The remainder of the building is largely open except for a few small partitioned off spaces. There is a single staircase. The ground story has numerous segmentally arched windows with metal shutters. The false front is five bays wide with a central round arched entrance, decorative cast-iron window caps, a brick cornice and a parapet. Since construction the building has not been significantly altered.

Significance:

The Percy-Lobdell Building is locally significant in the area of commerce as Thibodaux's only remaining historic warehouse. It is the sole representative of the all important warehousing aspect of the city's historic role as a commercial, service, and distribution center for Lafourche Parish. The Percy-Lobdell Company was involved in the wholesale distribution of groceries and feed, as evidenced by Sanborn Insurance Company maps. Of the seven major warehouses shown on the 1916 map, Percy-Lobdell is the only one remaining. Its pivotal role is very evident not only in its warehouse appearance but also in its location adjacent to Bayou Lafourche and a railroad line.

The Percy-Lobdell Building is also locally significant in the area of architecture. There are undoubtedly over one hundred commercial buildings in Lafourche Parish which are fifty years old or older. Most of these are either simple late nineteenth-early twentieth century plantation stores or examples of the "commercial vernacular," the latter being a diluted, sometimes much diluted, version of the urban Italianate style.

Of course, the grandest commercial buildings in the parish feature the most elaborate Italianate styling. The Percy-Lobdell Building is one of only three false front Italianate commercial buildings in Lafourche Parish which retain their architectural integrity. Others have been modified beyond recognition.

Specific dates c.1850-1920's
Builder/Architect Multiple Resources

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)
Criteria A & C

Thibodaux's architecturally significant resources are all outstanding examples of their particular style on the local level. Taken as a whole, they by far represent Lafourche Parish's finest collection of historic buildings. In addition, three buildings are being nominated as exemplars of Thibodaux's historic role as the commercial focal point of the parish.

For the most part, the significance of each nominee is addressed adequately on the attached continuation sheets. However, two categories of resources, the Queen Anne Revival residences and the galleried commercial buildings, warrant special attention.

Queen Anne Revival Residences:

Thibodaux has an unusually large number of turreted Queen Anne Revival houses, seven in all. Most Louisiana towns of comparable size have none, and only a small minority have one or two examples. For example, there are only six turreted houses in all of north central Louisiana (a seven parish area).

Of the seven remaining examples in Thibodaux, five are being nominated as part of this submission. The other two have sustained overwhelming losses of integrity and hence were omitted. One has had a large front wing added which completely obliterates the original facade. The other has had a second story added and its present inappropriate scroll sawn gallery brackets are modern.

Generally speaking, it is the use of a turret which distinguishes the grand Queen Anne houses from the lesser examples. To begin with, only the very largest examples have turrets. Secondly, a turret contributes much to the elaborateness of a house's massing, something which is very much a part of the Queen Anne Revival aesthetic. Finally, because a turret contributes very little extra floor space at considerable extra cost, it is certainly a luxury item.

The importance of Thibodaux's five nominated Queen Anne Revival houses can be seen if one views them within the overall context of period residential architecture in Lafourche Parish (c.1890-c.1910). Of the hundreds of examples which survive, most are cottages or shotgun houses. A minority show touches of the then fashionable Queen Anne Revival. Usually this takes the form of an asymmetrical cottage with a gallery across half the front and a projecting bay under a gable. Larger examples may have two bays and a secondary gallery wrapping around the side. The five nominated houses easily represent the "high water mark" among period residences in the parish. Most importantly, they are the only turreted Queen Anne Revival houses in the parish that retain their architectural integrity (the only other two being the altered examples mentioned above). In addition, each features a complex gallery which wraps around the entire front portion of the house following the contours of the bays and other projections. Other noteworthy attributes include the use of as many as five gables to enliven the massing and "carpenter's lace" panels on the interior.

These Queen Anne Revival houses represent the affluent business and professional class of Thibodaux around the turn of the century. The fact that there are so many first-rate examples reflects the general prosperity in Thibodaux at the time. (See Item 8 historical development statement.)

Galleried Commercial Buildings:

Thibodaux has historically been the commercial focal point of Lafourche Parish. Other communities were purely local trading centers and did not embrace as large an area as did Thibodaux. Most, in fact, were merely crossroads communities which embraced only three or four surrounding plantations. (Please refer to Item 8 historical development statement for more information on Thibodaux as a commercial center.)

Of course, the town's commercial prominence is reflected in a general way by its stock of older commercial buildings. However, three buildings are being nominated for their commercial significance because they have particular importance in this area. One is a warehouse which, of course, exemplifies the all important warehousing function without which no commercial center

could exist. The other two are typical galleried commercial buildings. Structures of this type feature commercial space on the ground story and residential space above. Typically the lower gallery is of cast-iron while the upper gallery is of wood, although sometimes the upper gallery is cantilevered and there are no lower gallery columns.

These buildings were the work horses of small town commercial activity and were far more typical of commercial centers such as Thibodaux than the handful of pretentious Italianate or neo-classical buildings that were present. Moreover, unlike these grand stylistic statements, galleried commercial buildings grew out of everyday needs of trade and housing. Thus in many ways they are more representative of the commercial vanguard of the city. In many cases the shopkeeper and his family lived above the shop and quite often the upper wooden gallery was the only outdoor space the family had.

The prevalence of this type of commercial building can be seen if one examines late nineteenth-early twentieth century Sanborn maps for southern Louisiana communities. There are usually at least one or two major streets lined with galleried commercial buildings of this type. Many survive, but most that do have lost their galleries and been otherwise modified over the years. Galleries and second story living spaces became less important as stores became air-conditioned and shopkeepers began commuting to work in automobiles. The 1916 Sanborn map for Thibodaux shows twenty-eight galleried commercial buildings, of which five remain today. Of these five, two are being nominated--108 Green Street, which is the most architecturally elaborate and the most intact, and the Lamartina Building, which is considerably older than the others. (It is one of very few pre-Civil War commercial buildings remaining in Thibodaux.)

Significance of Resources as a Whole:

The architectural superiority of Thibodaux's historic buildings within Lafourche Parish is obvious to even the most casual observer. Taken as a whole, the fifteen proposed buildings and four listed buildings represent the architectural apex of the parish. Other collections pale in comparison. There are fourteen communities in the large rural parish of Lafourche along with numerous plantation complexes. But no other locale can even begin to approach Thibodaux in terms of number, quality and variety of architectural landmarks. The other communities are characterized almost exclusively by typical late nineteenth-early twentieth century small town buildings. Thibodaux contains four first-rate Greek Revival buildings whereas other communities in the parish have none. Even plantation complexes in the area have only a single Greek Revival residence. In contrast to the small, pedestrian, largely unadorned commercial buildings found in other Lafourche Parish communities. Thibodaux's noteworthy examples feature impressive Italianate, Beaux Arts, and neo-classical styling. As noted elsewhere, the three Italianate nominees are the only examples of the style in the parish, and the Citizens Bank of Lafourche and the Grand Theatre are the parish's only exemplars of the high style eclectic architectural trends of the early twentieth century. The significance of Thibodaux's Queen Anne Revival residences has already been explained, but suffice it to say that examples of the style in other communities in the parish are ordinary in comparison. No other community has a turreted Queen Anne Revival residence, while Thibodaux has five noteworthy examples. (There is one other impressive Queen Anne Revival residence in the parish and it is outside the Thibodaux city limits and hence could not be included in the multiple resource area.

Historical Development:

Although Thibodaux's historic building stock reflects, for the most part, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the town dates from the early 1800's. It has been since 1808 the seat of government for Lafourche Parish, which was created in 1805. The city bears the name of Henry Schuyler Thibodaux, who settled in the area around 1801. In 1818 he donated the present courthouse site to the parish in exchange for a tax exemption for his hotel and billiards hall. In 1820

Thibodaux had the land he owned between present-day Canal Boulevard and Jackson Street (the historic core of today's Thibodaux) surveyed and subdivided by streets and lots, and in 1828 his widow donated a one hundred foot wide tract of land running from Bayou Lafourche to Bayou Terrebonne for the construction of a canal (present-day Canal Boulevard). In 1830 the town was incorporated as "Thibodauxville" in honor of its chief promoter-developer.

Thibodaux owes its historical importance as a commercial center to its location on Bayou Lafourche and various railroad lines. The east-west New Orleans, Opelousas and Great Western Railroad arrived within three miles of Thibodaux in 1854, and in 1859 a spur was built into the town. In 1872 a spur was built to Houma, and sometime in the late nineteenth century a line was extended north-south from Donaldsonville. Although the railroads obviously achieved dominance in the transportation of goods, the steamboat era did not end suddenly but instead entered a long period of demise. The shipment of goods via Bayou Lafourche continued until 1903 when the bayou was damned at its juncture with the Mississippi River.

Thibodaux's development was also directly linked to that of agriculture, in this case principally sugar. On the eve of the Civil War Lafourche Parish was one of the state's leading sugar parishes. J. Carlyle Sitterson in his history of the southern sugar industry notes that cane cultivation became "almost nearly universal" in the Teche-Lafourche parishes of St. Mary, St. Martin, Terrebonne, Lafourche and Assumption. In 1859 more than thirty percent of the plantations in these parishes produced sugar, and these plantations contained seventy-five percent of the total improved acreage of the region. The one Greek Revival house in this submission reflects this antebellum era of prosperity, as do three Register properties in Thibodaux (Rienzi Plantation House, the Lafourche Parish Courthouse, and St. John's Episcopal Church).

The Civil War, of course, had a devastating effect on the Louisiana sugar industry, and recovery was a slow process. Generally speaking, it really was not until the late 1890's that better times returned. Bolstered by favorable tariff legislation, the industry from the late 1890's to 1912 was characterized for the most part by high production figures and better prices. Statement of the Sugar Crop Made in Louisiana reveals increases in production for Lafourche Parish during the period. For example, 72, 867, 846 pounds were produced in 1897-98; 88, 536, 283 in 1902-03; and 103, 584, 396 in 1905-06. The 1897-98 crop accounted for about a tenth of the state's total, while the 1905-06 crop accounted for about one seventh. Production dropped slightly to 97, 825, 390 in 1907-08, although it still accounted for about one seventh of the state's total.

It is interesting to note that many of the properties being nominated in this submission were built during these boom years in the parish's sugar industry, and one cannot help but believe that there is a connection. Thibodaux's prosperity, by definition, was linked to that of the area's principal crop. When sugar was doing better, Thibodaux merchants, bankers, etc. had to feel the ripple effects. Candidate buildings dating from this period are 108 Green Street, the Percy-Lobdell Building, the McCulla House, the Riviere Building, the Bank of Lafourche Building, the Citizens Bank of Lafourche, Chanticleer Gift Shop, the Robichaux House, the Peltier House, the Riviere House, and the Breaux House.

This period of high production and better times, however, was short-lived. With the disastrous crop of 1912, the sugar industry entered what a leading authority terms "The Great Decline." Largely because of unfavorable weather conditions and the spread of mosaic disease, there was a gradual but steady decline in sugar production, acreage, and tonnage per acre. This caused twelve parishes (Lafourche being one) to lose about one-sixth of their population between 1910 and 1930.

Various industries in late nineteenth-early twentieth century Thibodaux were also factors in the local economy. Sanborn maps for the period show a foundry-boiler-machine shop, three boiler works, an ice factory, and a wholesale grocery operation housed in the Percy-Lobdell Building, one

of the nominees in this submission. The 1912 and 1916 maps also show a Lafourche Lumber Company yard.

A final factor in Thibodaux's development is the town's role as a commercial service center for the surrounding agricultural area. In short, it was (and is) the only town of any size in the parish and was obviously the place to come for goods and services. One can get a sense of this commercial preeminence by examining the 1916 Sanborn map for Thibodaux. At a time when most other communities in the parish had presumably one or two general stores, Thibodaux had over 100 mercantile establishments of many different kinds. There were, for example, six grocery stores, seven restaurants, four barbers, five haberdashers, four laundries, four millinery shops, four drugstores, four saloons, four confectioners, and three banks, to name just a few. This theme in Thibodaux's history is reflected in a general way by nominees such as the Riviere Store (a grocery-dry goods combination), the Bank of Lafourche Building, the Lamartina Store, the Citizens Bank of Lafourche, the Grand Theatre and the commercial building at 108 Green Street. In addition, the Percy-Lobdell Building survives to represent the all important warehousing aspect of the city's historic role as a commercial, service, and distribution center for Lafourche Parish.

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