
NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Built in 1892, the Vives House is a one-story, frame, Queen Anne Revival style urban cottage (see below) with Eastlake details. It also exhibits a few touches of the Stick Style. Located near the central business district of the Lafourche Parish seat of Thibodaux, the frame building stands on a double lot at the intersection of two residential streets. The block of which it is a part contains late nineteenth and early twentieth century houses. Although altered on the rear, the home's façade and much of its side elevations are original. Thus, the house's National Register eligibility remains intact.

Introduction

The Vives House is composed of two distinct masses – a public wing oriented toward Jackson Street (the area on the left when facing the house; see floor plan and location map attached) and a bedroom wing projecting toward the cross street (West 10th Street, on the right). These masses join at a ninety degree angle. The resulting overall “L” shape might lead observers to conclude that the bedroom wing is a later addition to an earlier home. However, this assumption cannot be confirmed or disproved via documentary evidence, and architectural evidence leads the National Register staff to conclude that the public and bedroom wings were constructed simultaneously. This is because virtually all of the well-executed ornament on both is identical.

As found in Thibodaux, a Queen Anne Revival urban cottage is a narrow but deep one-story house whose size and shape are determined by the similar configuration of the lot upon which it stands. Although its outline may be asymmetrical due to the presence of projecting rooms, the overall impression is that of a slender rectangle running perpendicular to the street. Despite its “L” shape, the Vives House should be classified as one of these urban cottages because: 1) its dominant portion – the highly ornamented public wing – easily maintains the requisite narrow but deep outline associated with the town's other examples, 2) by choosing to include needed space through an original but clearly secondary wing attached to one rear corner of the public section, the owner seemingly went out of his way to maintain the home's urban cottage configuration, and 3) placement of the bedroom wing at a rear corner of the public wing makes the former appear as something of an afterthought in the design.

Description

Characteristics of the Queen Anne Revival style found throughout the exterior of the Vives House include the application of multiple Queen Anne and Eastlake motifs (to be described below) to create textured surfaces on the exterior walls; a door combining Queen Anne window glazing with Eastlake detailing; an asymmetrical floor plan featuring projecting rooms; and a steeply pitched, irregularly massed roof whose four cross-gables crown the projecting spaces below. (Because the roof and gable treatment of the bedroom wing are identical to those of the other cross gables, it is included in this count.) A fifth gable occupies the roof's center. The rear and two side cross gables connect to this central portion at or near its rear, while the fourth cross-gable connects to the central gable's front. Running perpendicular to Jackson Street, the central gable is taller and wider than the front cross gable nearby. Because the connection between the two is off-center, much of the central gable's triangular front wall area is visible. Covered by clapboards, the upper third of this wall is treated as a gable. The lower two-thirds forms a skirting roof. Except for the roofs over two small additions, the entire roof is covered by diamond-shaped slate tiles. Tall brick chimneys with corbelled tops stand at the front and rear of the central gable.

Public Wing Façade

Below the roof, the façade is composed of two parts, both sheathed by clapboards. On the right, the room beneath the front-projecting gable terminates in a polygonal bay with forty-five degree corner cuts. A single one-over-one window penetrates each of the bay's three angles. Elements of two architectural styles contribute texture to the bay. Vertical boards reminiscent of the Stick Style emphasize the bay's angles, and Eastlake elements ornament the forty-five degree corner cuts. Screens formed by short, thin, vertical members outline each side of the two overhangs formed by the corner cuts. Each of these screens resembles an abacus, except that its vertical members decrease in height as the composition flows toward the cutaway's outer corner to culminate in a ball drop ornament. The window surrounds are composed of moderately thick vertical and horizontal boards, with simple sills projecting slightly at the bottoms. Molded corner blocks occupy the top corners of the surrounds and support decorative entablatures running above and parallel to their top horizontal members. Each entablature is divided into its three classical parts – architrave, frieze, and cornice, the latter molded. Below the entablature and between the corner blocks, a scalloped Eastlake molding adds additional ornament and texture to the surround. The foundation's slightly molded sill, brick piers, and the decorative but modern cast iron fencing filling the space between the piers are visible beneath the walls.

Between the gable peak and the bay below, a smooth horizontal board serves as an entablature. The gable is pierced by a highly decorative rectangular vent. Its prominent surround is identical to those accompanying the windows below, except that it is smaller. Muntins form diamond shapes within the rectangle. However, there is no glazing. Instead, a flat board with multiple circular piercings fills the space behind the muntins. Above this composition a vergeboard fills the tip of the gable peak. It has four parts. A horizontal member is attached to each of the gable's sides. Below this piece, a scalloped wooden strip parallels the horizontal element. This strip has circular holes drilled within each scallop. A vertical member descends from the very tip of the gable to end in a carved arrow slightly below the point at which it intersects the horizontal pieces. Behind these, multiple flush boards set in contrasting diagonal patterns form a solid background separated by several inches from the shingled gable wall behind it.

Located several feet behind the end of the projecting room, a small portion of the wraparound gallery fills the façade's left side. Wooden steps with cast iron railings rise to its floor. The gallery's ornament will be described below. Behind the gallery, the front door, its transom, and its surround dominate the slender wall. The door combines elements of the Queen Anne and Eastlake styles. Two decorative wooden panels occupy the space at the bottom. These have surrounds featuring reeded elements and bull's eye corner blocks. Each panel is decorated by a set of four incised straight lines running diagonally from the lower outer corner to the upper inner corner. The result is that the two panels are mirror images of each other. The door's upper section contains Queen Anne style glazing consisting of a large pane of glass (in this case etched) surrounded by smaller panes in different colors. The top of the window is curved like a segmental arch. Eastlake elements frame the glass, forming a surround with thin members. They include four reeded pieces, one on each side of the glazing. Like the window below it, the surround's topmost member is curved. Bull's eye corner blocks occupy each corner of this ensemble, and carved arrow-like elements similar to the one on the vergeboard rise from the two top corner blocks. Another bull's eye block and arrow occupy the center of the curved section. The transom above the door consists of one large rectangular pane etched with the home's address numbers. This glass is probably modern. The transom bar separating the transom from the door resembles a carved Eastlake column turned on its side. A more prominent surround outlines three sides of the door/transom composition. Except that it is taller and lacks a sill, it is identical to the surrounds accompanying the windows.

Public Wing Left Elevation

The public wing's left elevation is composed of the wraparound gallery's longer leg (on the right when facing this portion of the building), the exterior wall of the projecting dining room (in the center), and the wall of a small kitchen addition (on the left). However, because a large tree grows just outside one of the dining room windows, only the gallery remains clearly visible. One suspects the owner and builder meant the wraparound gallery, as well as the previously described, highly ornamented façade, to be the visual focus of the design. Both are seen simultaneously when the house is viewed at a diagonal from Jackson Street.

The gallery's roof has only a very slight pitch and, when viewed close-up, looks flat. Below it an entablature follows the curving roof line. Its architrave and cornice are smooth, but its frieze contains two strips of reeded molding. The entablature is supported by turned Eastlake columns and engaged Eastlake pilasters that divide the gallery into five bays. The three rear bays (those nearest the projecting dining room) are the same size. However, the front bay is slender like the façade's entrance wall behind it, and the corner bay (located where the gallery curves) is wider than the others. The columns anchor an Eastlake balustrade whose balusters, although identical to each other, do not match the accompanying columns and pilasters. Brackets ornament the pilaster's tops and also flank the tops of the columns. Each is composed of two pieces – a thick wooden border outlining the long side of a thinner wooden triangle containing a small pierced work design. Below the gallery, the home's sill and brick piers are visible. Here modern latticework fills the space between the latter.

Behind the wraparound gallery's curve, a thick Stick Style vertical board marks the angle where the previously mentioned narrow entrance wall and long left side wall intersect. The latter is pierced by two, one-over-one windows with surrounds identical to those accompanying the three windows in the front-projecting bay. Another window and matching surround are located at the end of the gallery. Facing toward Jackson Street, this opening pierces the wall of the home's projecting dining room – a wall which is perpendicular to the gallery's longer wall. Featuring three large panes of glass, this window stretches from floor to ceiling and can be raised high enough to serve as a door.

Next to the gallery, the side projecting dining room is square-shaped rather than polygonal. Thus, its end wall is straight rather than angled. It is pierced by a single one-over-one window whose surround matches the others original to the home. The decorative treatment of the gable above this wall is identical to that of the gable on the façade.

On the left rear corner (behind the dining room), a small addition has expanded the kitchen slightly. The addition's shed roof connects to the building several inches below the plane of the main roof and is covered by asphalt shingles. Its clapboard walls are pierced by paired six-over-six windows. Vertical boards mark the spot where the addition adjoins the dining room wall and the angle where the addition's wall turns to connect with the rear of the house. However, these boards are not as prominent as the Stick Style boards marking the building's other angles. Below the addition, the foundation sill can be seen, but the piers are hidden by vegetation.

Public Wing Right Elevation

The long clapboarded wall of the public wing's right elevation has three windows with surrounds identical to the others previously described. A smooth entablature runs above, and a smooth foundation sill beneath, the wall. The foundation's brick piers are visible, and cast iron fencing identical to that beneath the front-projecting room ornaments the space between the piers.

Bedroom Wing Front Elevation

Also clapboarded, the front elevation (facing Jackson Street) of the bedroom wing intersects the right elevation of the public space at the latter's rear. The former has two windows, two surrounds, a smooth entablature, a smooth sill, brick piers, and cast iron decorative fencing identical to those previously described on other elevations. In fact, the only difference in appearance between the two walls is their length.

Bedroom Wing Side Elevation

Because the bedroom wing has received a sizeable expansion at the rear, its end elevation (facing West 10th Street) now consists of two parts. The original portion is identical to the previously described end wall and ornamented gable of the projecting dining room. To its right, a one-room-deep addition adjoins the house, with the older and newer portions separated by a thin vertical board. Although the vergeboard on the addition's end wall mimics the originals within the other gables, this wall is otherwise treated differently from the older walls. It has paired six-over-six windows rather than single one-over-one openings, and the window surrounds are plain rather than ornamented. The addition's wall is also pierced by a third window – a small rectangular opening with a plain but thick surround. The addition's gable peak is lower than the original gable beside it, resulting in a sawtooth roof on this side of the home. Furthermore, the addition's gable peak lacks fish scale shingles. Instead, clapboards fill the entire space beneath its vergeboard. Below this elevation, the same cast iron fencing found elsewhere fills the space between the foundation's brick piers. However, no sill is visible on this part of the addition

Rear Elevation

Due to additions across the back, this elevation is almost entirely changed. The alterations include a bath flanked by two bedrooms, another small kitchen expansion, and a new rear porch. (Designations of left and right in the following description of the rear elevation assume that the viewer is facing that elevation rather than the façade; refer to floor plan and location map attached.)

Located on the left and occupying slightly more than half of the rear elevation, the bedroom/bath addition is the same one mentioned above under the discussion of the original bedroom wing's side elevation. The addition replaced an original rear "L"-shaped wraparound gallery but was also extended outward beyond the latter's footprint to create bigger rooms. Thus, until construction of the rear kitchen addition (to be discussed later in this narrative), the new bedroom area projected beyond the end wall of the original room (the kitchen) beneath the cross gable to the right. Today, a small, triangular portion of the addition's clapboarded side wall is visible where it intersects and hides part of the ornamented cross gable. The rest of the bedroom/bath elevation is also clapboarded, and a vertical Stick Style member marks its termination point on its right side. This portion of the home also has a smooth foundation sill that appears to be continuous, brick piers separated by cast iron decorative fencing, and six-over-six windows with plain surrounds. The fenestration pattern is as follows: a set of paired windows (left), a single window set high on the wall (center), and a second set of paired windows (right).

Although the presence of the continuous sill suggests the addition was built all at once, there are several pieces of conflicting architectural evidence pointing to construction in stages. First, a few inches

of the thick vertical member that once terminated the right bedroom's wall at the point where it later joined the bathroom wall remain visible above the eaves of the bathroom roof. A thinner vertical member now occupies the place below the eaves where the majority of the thicker vertical has been removed. Second, two foundation piers stand side by side below the above mentioned thin vertical element. One is located below the corner of the right bedroom, the other below the corner of the bath. An extra pier would not have been needed had both areas been built simultaneously. Third, the clapboards sheathing the right bedroom wall do not line up with those covering the bath and corner bedroom. Finally, the roof and smooth entablature of the latter are lower than those of the right rear bedroom. The roof, in fact, is part of the sawtooth roof configuration described above in the discussion of the side, or West 10th Street, elevation.

The right portion of the rear elevation is filled by two additions. First, a shallow shed roof expansion was attached to the rear-projecting kitchen. (This area is not to be confused with the previously mentioned similar addition that expanded the kitchen in another direction behind the dining room.) This change obliterated part of the original ornament in the former rear wall and gable, leaving only the four-part vergeboard and diamond-patterned vent visible. Later, a deep, rectangular porch on brick piers was attached to the rear wall of the kitchen addition. Its shed roof connects to that of the enclosed addition but its angle is different. Slender posts rising from only slightly thicker bases support the porch roof. The posts have simple capitals and thin decorative necking. Wooden steps with cast iron railings rise to the porch floor. Behind the porch, the wall of the shed addition is pierced by a recycled period door; a large and modern-looking double window; and a third, tall but slender window.

Interior

The unusual shape of the house results in a somewhat odd floor plan. In the public wing, the front door is recessed behind the short leg of the wraparound gallery on the left side of the slender façade. (These directions are based upon facing the façade.) It opens into a long side hall. Two rooms (one a parlor projecting forward several feet beyond the entrance and the second possibly a former bedroom) parallel the hallway on the right side. The longer portion of the wraparound gallery parallels the hallway on the left. A door in the hallway's end wall opens into the dining room, which projects outward on the left side of the home. The kitchen occupies the area behind the dining room and projects slightly toward the rear. As mentioned above, it has been expanded twice, a fact clearly reflected in the room's appearance. On the dining room's right side, two doors open into the side-projecting, rectangular-shaped bedroom wing of the home. In the corner, one door leads to a hallway. (Original to the home, this door once accessed the rear wraparound gallery. The second door, located in the dining room's right side wall, leads to what is now the master bedroom. A former second bedroom was located just beyond the first. It has been repurposed. Part of its space was used to expand the master bedroom, part was converted into a narrow office reached from the hallway, and the final part (in the middle) became a bathroom. Until these changes were accomplished, the master and the former second bedroom also had doors opening to the rear gallery. These doors now open to the hall.

Interior decorative features include five panel doors with operable transoms, molded window and door surrounds with bull's eye corner blocks, tall baseboards, four mantels (each designed differently), three tile hearths, and a bead board wainscot and molded cornice in the side hall. Other decorative features have been added by subsequent homeowners. These include the addition of wainscot in the front projecting parlor and dining room, the placement of decorative molding on the dining room ceiling, and the replacement of that room's broken tile hearth.

Alterations, Integrity and Significance

In the interest of accuracy and clarity, the previously mentioned alterations to the Vives House will be summarized here. These are the construction of a small shed roof addition on the kitchen's left side; the reconfiguration of walls in the original bedroom wing to create a larger bedroom, a bathroom, and a small office; and the extensive changes to the rear elevation. The latter includes 1) the small shed roof addition to the kitchen's rear wall; 2) the rectangular porch added to the rear elevation behind the rear kitchen addition; and 3) the removal of the rear wraparound gallery and its replacement, possibly in two stages, by a bathroom, two bedrooms, and a hallway.

Although the alterations to the rear elevation are quite extensive, most of this area is not visible when the Vives House is viewed from the front (Jackson Street). Only the addition's side facing West 10th Street (the cross street) is visible, and that only when one faces the building while standing on or near 10th. Furthermore, this newer side wall displays at least some of the decorative features found on original portions of the exterior. The majority of the home's exterior is original, maintaining all its Queen Anne Revival, Eastlake, and Stick Style features as well as the dominating urban cottage configuration of the public wing. As an important contributor to Thibodaux's collection of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Queen Anne Revival architecture, and as a rare and equally important example of one category – the urban cottage – within that collection, the Vives House is a legitimate candidate for National Register listing.

Non-Contributing Element

A one-story wooden storage building with gambrel roof and a shed roof extension supported by metal poles stands in one rear corner of the property. Obviously modern, it is being counted as a non-contributing element for the purposes of this nomination.

NOTE: Landscaping in front of the Vives House makes photography difficult.

Significant Date: 1892
Architect: Unknown
Criterion: C

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Vives House is locally significant under Criterion C: Architecture. The context for evaluation is the town of Thibodaux in Lafourche Parish. The house's importance is based upon two factors. First, as a good example of the style, it is an important contributor to the fine collection of Queen Anne Revival residences for which the community should be known, and 2) it is an important and rare example of the urban cottage sub-category of the style as it developed in that community.

Historical Background

Thibodaux, with a population of about 14,431 in 2000, 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 in Ascension Parish. The bayou then continues southward, running through the length of Assumption and Lafourche parishes before emptying into the Gulf of Mexico. The town bears the name of Henry Schuyler Thibodaux, who settled in the area around 1801. Originally named Thibodauxville, the community became the parish seat in 1808, incorporated in 1830, and was well established by the Civil War. The town owes its historical importance to agriculture (most especially the cultivation of sugar cane), the availability of steamboats and railroads for transporting passengers and freight, and its role as a commercial center for the surrounding territory.

Architectural Background

The following analysis of the Queen Anne Revival relies heavily on the work of architectural historians Virginia and Lee McAlester, as published in *A Field Guide to American Houses*. It also draws from Fricker, Fricker, and Duncan, *Louisiana Architecture: A Handbook on Styles*.

The Queen Anne Revival ranked as the dominant style of American domestic architecture during the 1880s and 1890s and, although less popular, persisted through the first decade of the twentieth century. The style was named and popularized by a group of nineteenth century English architects led by Richard Norman Shaw. The style's name is rather inappropriate, for the historical precedents used by Shaw and his followers had little to do with Queen Anne or the formal Renaissance architecture that was dominant during her reign (1702-1714). Instead, they borrowed most heavily from models of the preceding Elizabethan and Jacobean late medieval eras, as well as from Dutch and Flemish sources. Architectural historian Mark Girouard has aptly referred to the English Queen Anne as an "architectural cocktail," while another author, Russell Lynes, termed it a "tossed salad."

Shaw's work was well known and much admired in America, and the earliest American examples followed his early, half-timbered designs. The first of these was the half-timbered Watts Sherman House in Newport, Rhode Island, constructed in 1874. Designed by H. H. Richardson, the house closely resembled the work of Shaw, but with wooden shingles instead of the tiles the Englishman often used to create variety and texture. Various high style East Coast architect-designed examples followed, largely in the Shaw tradition. Popular acceptance of the style was aided immeasurably by the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, with two half-timbered buildings erected by the British government receiving rave reviews in the architectural press. By 1880, the style was being spread throughout the country by pattern books and the first architectural magazine, *The American Architect and Building News*. The expanding railroad network also helped popularize the style by making pre-cut architectural details conveniently available throughout of the nation.

Throughout the 1880s and '90s, a relatively few high-style urban examples, executed in masonry

with relatively restrained styling, and continuing to imitate Shaw's later English models, continued to be built. However, as it developed and was interpreted by builders in the South and West, the Queen Anne took on a look distinctly different from its English and earlier American prototypes. High spirited, freewheeling, and often constructed of wood rather than masonry, the Queen Anne Revival in these regions followed the Victorian dictum that "too much is never enough." Wild silhouettes were created by projections of various sorts going in various directions—multiple gables, polygonal bays, balconies, dormers, prominent chimneys, etc. – anything to avoid a boring roofline and plain flat walls. In fact, designers and builders used wall surfaces as primary decorative elements, attaching multiple materials of differing textures wherever expanses of planar wall occurred. The ultimate projection was a turret -- a round, polygonal or square tower typically set at the corner and rising above the roofline. Unknown in the English Queen Anne, this feature is believed by some to have been borrowed from French châteaux. The style's goal, according to architectural historian Walter C. Kidney, was "to create something comfortable and charming, using anything and everything that served the purpose."

Queen Anne houses could be built by any carpenter using an architect's plans, pattern books, or perhaps just his and the client's imagination. Despite this tendency to adapt the style to local preferences, there are basic characteristics that help to identify the Queen Anne Revival style in the United States. These include:

- 1) a marked verticality, usually reinforced by the presence of a steeply pitched roof.
- 2) irregular roof massing combined with an asymmetrical footprint and façade. Tall chimneys, large frontal dormers, and/or the presence of cross gables define and shape the roof, while the presence of projecting rooms and/or bay windows (some of the cutaway variety) cause the building's asymmetrical appearance and footprint.
- 3) A partial, full-width, or wraparound porch/gallery usually one story high. Two story porches are found occasionally, as are upper level balconies.
- 4) The presence of multiple decorative elements and materials (shingles in differing patterns, bargeboards, half-timbering, etc.) used to create a textured appearance. The peaks of gables are often decorated with these materials. Additionally, Eastlake spindle screens and turned columns and balusters (usually in the Eastlake style) are often used to provide texture on the porch/gallery.
- 5) Windows featuring: a) subdivided upper sashes (usually in the shape of small squares) above large single pane sashes, or b) large, clear single panes outlined by small squares of colored glass.
- 6) Finally, round, square or polygonal towers/turrets are sometimes present.

Virginia and Lee McAlester have identified subcategories of roof shape and use of materials/decoration that developed as the style evolved. In theory, any decorative category could be applied to any roof type, resulting in a rich variety of examples throughout the nation depicting the Queen Anne taste. The roof shape groups include:

- 1) the hipped roof house. In these, a steeply pitched hipped roof is pierced by one or more cross gables or dormers projecting from the lower portion of the roof. When multiple gables/dormers are present, each is usually located on a separate side of the roof.

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- 2) the cross-gabled roof house. In this type, the roof is formed by cross gables located on multiple elevations. Multiple cross gables may also appear on the same elevation. This home's footprint is usually L-shaped.
 - 3) the front-gabled house. Here, a large, perhaps full width front gable dominates the façade.
 - 4) the town house. This type is defined as a row house with either a gabled or a flat roof. Each attached unit may be individually distinguishable on the façade or may be part of a larger façade design.

The materials/decoration categories include:

- 1) Half-timbered. As mentioned above, the half-timbered American subtype is closely related to the work of Shaw and his colleagues in England. It uses decorative half-timbering in gables or on upper-story walls. Porch supports in this subtype are usually heavy turned posts with solid spandrels. Groupings of three or more windows are a common characteristic. This subtype occurs principally in the northeastern states and shares certain features with the early Tudor house.
- 2) Patterned Masonry. The patterned masonry subtype is also closely related to Englishman Shaw's work. It features masonry walls with patterned brickwork or stonework and relatively little wooden detailing. Terra cotta and stone decorative panels are frequently inset into the walls. Gable dormers, sometimes parapeted and shaped, are frequent. Examples of this subtype are usually high-style architect-designed houses, which exhibit a wide variation in shape and detail. Most were built in large cities.
- 3) Spindle work. These residences display delicate turned spindle work in the Eastlake style. The ornament most commonly occurs in porch columns, balustrades, and bands or screens outlining porch ceilings. It is also used in gables and under the wall overhangs left by cutaway bay windows. Eastlake was a distinctly American phenomenon and added greatly to the very different look the Queen Anne acquired in this country.
- 4) Free Classic. This subtype is also an indigenous American interpretation. It uses classical columns, rather than delicate Eastlake spindle work columns, as porch supports. These columns may be either the full height of the porch or rise from a pedestal the same height as the porch railing. The columns are sometimes grouped together in units of two or three. Palladian windows, cornice-line dentils, and other classical details are frequent. This subtype became common after the World's Columbian Exposition of the 1890s revived the popularity of classical design. It has much in common with some early (asymmetrical) Colonial Revival houses and marks a transition between the latter and the busy, polychromatic and multi-textural High Victorian Queen Annes built earlier.

In Louisiana, the hipped roof and cross-gable roof types became dominant. The front gabled house occurred mostly in areas settled by Midwesterners, where the type was quite popular. (Jennings in Jefferson Davis Parish is an example.) The SHPO knows of no Queen Anne Revival row houses or town houses in the state. Few (if any) patterned masonry houses exist here. Instead, the typical example was built of wood and clapboarded. A few Louisiana Queen Anne houses featured half-timbering but not the other motifs of that sub-group. The state has many examples featuring Eastlake spindle work. However, the ornamental textures on Louisiana Queen Anne houses are usually not as varied as can be seen elsewhere in the nation. The quieter Free Classic subtype was also very popular.

In addition to these roof shape and decorative/materials types, Louisiana developed its own interpretations of the Queen Anne. A common practice was to create an asymmetrical footprint by applying a polygonal bay to the otherwise typical and rectangular galleried cottage type. More affluent families often preferred large and rambling galleried cottages. Both types were one or one-and-one-half stories tall, i.e., horizontal rather than vertical, but otherwise exhibited Queen Anne massing and ornament. Even if a turret was present, such a house retained a horizontal appearance. Louisiana homeowners considered turrets to be the absolute high point of the Queen Anne style. Since they provided little usable space and were expensive to build, only prosperous people could afford to waste space and money building one. Thus, placing a turret on his home allowed a homeowner to boast of his wealth.

In conclusion, Louisiana Queen Anne houses are fairly conservative in massing and ornamentation when compared to the national norm. While the state has scores of perfectly splendid eye-popping Queen Anne houses, the more typical example is a modest one-story cottage with a polygonal forward-facing bay, an Eastlake gallery that perhaps wraps around the side, and shingling in the gables.

Thibodaux's Queen Annes

The years from c.1890 to c.1910 were particularly favorable ones for Thibodaux. A new prosperity touched many of the citizens, and others achieved real wealth. All of this resulted from the re-emergence of the sugar industry, which had been depressed after the Civil War. The town's growing population indicated this prosperity, increasing from 1900 in 1892 to 4300 in 1907. The local housing stock also revealed the economic upswing. Seeking luxuries not previously available in local housing, some residents replaced their older homes while others became first-time homeowners. Many of the new residences reflected the then popular Queen Anne Revival style. And, because the prosperity extended downward to include the merchant class as well as planters, fine interpretations of the style were not limited to large mansions.

Due to this building boom and the variety of homes it generated, today Thibodaux's collection of notable Queen Anne Revival style houses ranks as one of the four best in Louisiana outside New Orleans. (The other centers of the style are Shreveport, Abbeville, and Lake Charles.) Thibodaux's collection can be subdivided into three categories based upon size and massing. These include: 1) turreted houses, 2) galleried cottages, and 3) urban cottages. (The community also has its share of simple, undistinguished Queen Anne examples, each with only a few standard repetitive details.)

Thibodaux has an unusually large number of turreted Queen Anne Revival style houses, seven in all. In addition to the turrets, the following features characterize these examples: 1) the use of as many as five gables to enliven the massing, 2) complex galleries which wrap around the entire front portion of the house following the contours of the bays and other projections, and 3) large amounts of manufactured ornamental detailing. Additionally, two of the examples have second story balconies. Although their heights range from two stories, to one-and-one-half, to one, all are substantial examples which stand out on the streetscape. Of the seven, five are listed on the National Register as part of the Thibodaux Multiple Resource Area nomination completed in 1986. (Notable losses of integrity prevented the nomination of the other two.) The majority of the houses in this category are located along Canal Blvd., historically the town's grandest thoroughfare.

Houses like those in Thibodaux's second Queen Anne Revival category – galleried cottages – are

(as discussed above) a Louisiana interpretation of the style. Their most important characteristics are wide facades paralleling the street; expansive, rambling floor plans; and abundant exterior ornament. These houses are either one or one-and-one-half stories tall. Scattered throughout the town's older neighborhoods on lots large enough to accommodate their size, they also maintain a strong presence within their streetscapes.

Thibodaux's Queen Anne urban cottages differ greatly in size and massing from the town's other Queen Anne types. These one-story tall residences stand on narrow lots that require narrow and deep rather than wide and rambling floor plans. (They are not shotgun houses, because their projecting rooms make them asymmetrical and they often are more than one room wide.) Located in a neighborhood behind the community's grand boulevard, the compact houses have shallow front yards reminiscent of those found in most New Orleans neighborhoods. Despite their small size and proximity to the street, these houses are highly ornamented and feature porches or galleries on their facades. When present, the wrapping galleries are smaller in scale than those found on the Queen Anne galleried cottages and turreted houses. Thibodaux once had at least seven of these urban Queen Anne cottages, but one has been modified by the addition of an inappropriate second story, and three have been lost. This leaves three rare examples to illustrate the type – the candidate, 816 Jackson Street, and 820 Jackson. The survivors stand near each other in a historic neighborhood near the town's central business district.

The houses at 816 and 820 Jackson are similar in size, massing, and ornament. Both belong to the hipped roof and spindle work sub-categories of the Queen Anne Revival style. Both have pyramidal roofs with multiple cross gables, projecting bays, recessed front porches, Queen Anne fish scale shingles, and Eastlake and Stick Style decoration. The candidate (the Vives House) also belongs to the spindle work sub-category. Like the other two examples, it exhibits cross gables, projecting bays, fish scale shingles, and Eastlake and Stick Style ornament. However, its cross gables adjoin a gabled rather than a hipped roof, and its façade is ornamented by a dainty wraparound gallery

The three urban cottages surviving with their integrity intact (as well as examples of the town's Queen Anne Revival galleried cottages) were overlooked in Thibodaux's 1986 multiple resource nomination because, at that time, the Register focused mostly on the largest and most elaborate homes of the community's wealthiest citizens. Since then, the program has broadened its scope. It is the opinion of the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office that all of the remaining Queen Anne Revival urban cottages (as well as the best examples of the galleried cottages) should be added to the National Register. As well-executed and important local examples of the style, the urban cottages clearly contribute to the collection of Queen Anne residences that helps define Thibodaux's identity. They also illustrate a specific and now rare sub-type within that collection, and they clearly shine against the larger background of the town's late nineteenth/early twentieth century lower and middle class homes. Thus, we will pursue these listings as the opportunity arises. Meanwhile, the acceptance of the Vives House to the National Register will recognize an excellent and rare example of an important local type (the Queen Anne urban cottage) and begin a new and needed effort to acknowledge and document more examples of Thibodaux's significant Queen Anne Revival patrimony.

Historical Note

The Vives House was built by Ellis Braud in 1892. It became the property of his married daughter, Virginia Touns, in 1900. After Virginia's death, it became the property of her daughter Vivian. The latter later married Van Vives. Vivian Vives sold the house in 1997 to Mr. and Mrs. David Williamson, who restored it. The Williamsons sold it to Dr. and Mrs. John Kennedy in 2004.

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