

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Calhoun Farmhouse is a c.1880 rambling, provincial Italianate, frame house located in rolling farm country north of the town of Ruston. Although there have been additions to the house, none can be considered a loss of integrity.

The house is essentially an expanded and elaborately detailed version of a standard late-nineteenth century farm cottage. The house originally consisted of an off-center hall with two rooms to the east and four rooms to the south. This gave it an "L" shaped plan with two arms, each of which was one room deep. The asymmetrical floor plan was actually a composite of three symmetrical two-room units, each with a central chimney and back-to-back fireplaces in the manner of the folk "saddlebag." In about 1890 a kitchen service wing was added at the rear, which gave the house a "U" shaped plan. With the exception of the protruding front parlor, the entire front of the house is encompassed by a gallery. Galleries also encompass portions of the rear of the house. In 1952 the rear galleries were enclosed to form a hallway. In addition, a rear carport was added. (See attached sketch of floor plan.)

The most noteworthy aspect of the house is its ornamentation. Ornamental features associated with the Italianate tradition include:

1. The front gallery with its delicately proportioned chamfered columns, scroll brackets, molded capitals, and multiple cornice formed of moldings, dentils, and guilloche work.
2. The rounded panes of glass set in the transoms and side lights
3. The front doorway surrounded with its guilloche work, denticular cornice, and elaborately paneled pilasters.
4. The relatively low pitched gables with their inset oeil-de-boeuf motif ventilators.
5. The mantels in the front rooms of the house. These take the form of heavy and richly molded aedicule motifs articulated with pairs of panels which have diamond knobs set between them.
6. The cornices which surmount the major windows and doors,

The interior features unusually heavy and complex baseboards and ceiling moldings. In addition, most of the doors in the original portion of the house have oak faux bois with burl panels. The front rooms feature floor-length four over four windows. All shutters are of the movable louver type.

In addition to the previously described changes, the front gallery has lost its original balustrade. Also, in about 1960 a new roof was put on and chimneys were demolished above the roofline. However, it should be noted that all of the changes in the house are minor. The 1952 gallery enclosure is easily removable because the old posts and brackets still remain. In any case, neither the enclosure or the 1952 carport are visible from the front of the house. Also, the lost balustrade was of minor importance compared to the other elaborate woodwork in the house. Finally, the removal of the chimney tops is a change which is easily reversible.

Specific dates c.1880
Builder/Architect Uncertain

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)
Criterion C

The Calhoun Farmhouse is locally significant in the area of architecture because it is an architectural landmark in Lincoln Parish. Of the 717 fifty-plus year old buildings in Lincoln Parish identified in the Louisiana Comprehensive Standing Structures Survey, only six stylistically or typologically pre-date the Queen Anne Revival. Of these, the Calhoun Farmhouse is by far the largest and most pretentious. Moreover, in a several parish area whose patrimony is almost entirely given over to the Queen Anne Revival, the Colonial Revival, and the bungalow style, the Calhoun Farmhouse is a rare example of the Italianate influence.

Historical Sketch:

The Calhoun Farmhouse was built c.1880 near the center of a 160 acre tract of land acquired by Mrs. John D. Calhoun in January 1879. It was the headquarters for the extensive farming operations of John D. Calhoun, which included about 2,000 acres by the turn-of-the-century. The house was occupied by members of the Calhoun family until 1965, and since that time by the Sherrill family as caretakers for the Calhoun family. The present owners, Colonel and Mrs. John D. Calhoun, are planning to restore the house to its original c.1880 appearance and reside there.

Major Bibliographical References

Family History supplied by Applicants. Copy in Calhoun Farmhouse National Register File.
Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office.

Lincoln Parish Conveyance Records

Louisiana Comprehensive Standing Structures Survey, Lincoln Parish