

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Kidd-Davis House (1886) is a story and a half Italianate frame house which was greatly modified in the Colonial Revival style in the early-twentieth century. It is located on Vienna Street in Ruston's historic residential area and has received no noticeable alterations since the early-twentieth century remodeling.

Because the early-twentieth century renovation was so extensive, the Kidd-Davis House will be described as a single unit rather than as the product of two periods of construction. The only visual evidence of the original 1886 construction is the shallow arched windows and the front door with its transom and side lights.

The house has a complex shape, with a large pitched roof main block and a pair of small side wings. There is also a larger secondary side wing on the south elevation. To the rear of all this is a large multiple pitched roof back wing which terminates in a porte-cochere.

The interior features a wide central hall with a small staircase at the rear. All of the rooms have simple molded baseboards, chair rails, and window frames. Many of the doors are glass and some of the door frames have pediment shaped tops. One of the rooms features an Adamesque mantel.

Most of the house's Colonial Revival features are on the exterior. These include:

1. The thirteen bay fluted Doric gallery which encompasses the front half of the house.
2. The Chinese Chippendale inspired balustrade which surmounts the gallery.
3. The three Palladian windows in the upper half story, one of which is set in a large central dormer.
4. The two arched dormers which flank the previously mentioned large central dormer.

Specific dates c.1920 Remodeling
Builder/Architect Uncertain for c.1920 remodeling

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)
Criterion C

The Kidd-Davis House is locally significant in the area of architecture as a landmark in Ruston's heritage of late nineteenth-early twentieth century residences.

The Louisiana Historic Structures Survey has identified 718 50+ year old buildings in Lincoln Parish, most of which are in the City of Ruston. Virtually all of Ruston's older structures date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The majority of Ruston's older residences represent the Queen Anne Revival or bungalow styles. The Kidd-Davis House is one of about fifty residences which show some Colonial Revival influence. Most of these, however, are merely irregularly massed Queen Anne Revival houses with Colonial columns or else plain cottages.

The Kidd-Davis House features a monumental, symmetrical articulation which marks it as one of the landmarks of its style in Ruston. The front gallery is particularly impressive in this regard. Of the numerous Colonial Revival galleries in town, it is the longest. In addition it is one of only three which is surmounted by a balustrade. Moreover, it is one of few which is symmetrical and one of few which features fluted rather than plain columns.

Historical Note (extracted from "a Case Study of Functional Preservation: The Kidd-Davis House of Ruston as Museum and Community Center" by Philip C. Cook, North Louisiana Historical Association Journal, Vol. IX (Summer 1978), 150-153)

The history of the Kidd-Davis House dates back to 1885, one year after the founding of Ruston. In that year, Leroy Madison Kidd, a merchant from the neighboring town of Vernon in Jackson Parish, moved his business to the recently established railroad town of Ruston. He bought a 300-foot square block from Robert E. Russ, city founder and namesake of Ruston. Kidd then sold the property to Charles H. Harris, who started construction of a house in 1886. Either during construction or soon after, Harris sold the property and the new house to Captain Milton B. Kidd, brother and business partner of the original owner of the lot. The Kidd family occupied the house until 1921 when it was sold to the Robert Wesley Davis family.

Major Bibliographical References

Louisiana Historic Standing Structures Survey, Lincoln Parish.

Cook, Philip C. "A Case Study of Functional Preservation, The Kidd-Davis House of Ruston as Museum and Community Center." North Louisiana Historical Association Journal. Volume IX (Summer, 1978), pp. 150-153.