

The Meadows House (c.1900) is a one-and-a-half story frame residence reflecting the Queen Anne Revival and Eastlake styles. It is located on a spacious lot in an old residential section of Ruston. Although there have been numerous alterations since construction, they have not impacted the house's Eastlake detailing, which is the source of its architectural significance within Ruston.

The house has a steep hip roof with a front gallery culminating in two prominent forward projecting gabled entrance porches, one on each side. While this symmetrical articulation is certainly not a Queen Anne Revival trait, the complex massing does reflect the style. In addition to the two front gables, there are gabled projections from the hip roof on the sides and rear. A polygonal bay and sawtooth shingles in the two front gables and one side gable are the house's other Queen Anne features.

According to local tradition, the Meadows House is an earlier small house that was greatly enlarged and remodeled shortly after its purchase in 1900 by T. D. Meadows. The Meadows had eight children at the time, which explains the need for a larger house. This scenario is supported by the architectural evidence. Three of the rooms have different door and window surrounds on the interior, and the front door opening into one of these rooms (the northernmost door) has a different surround. (Its top has a pediment shape.) One suspects the earlier house dates to c.1890.

The house's most distinctive feature is its Eastlake front gallery. The gallery extends around and connects the two projecting entrance porches. It has elaborately turned columns with brackets, an elaborate spindlework frieze accented with decoratively cut woodwork as well as hanging pendants, and a balustrade reflecting the Italianate taste. Because the gallery follows the projecting entrance porches, it has more visual interest than a gallery extended in a straight line across the front of a house.

Most of the windows are four over four. The front and side gables feature a three-part window treatment. The southernmost front door has a transom and side lights.

The floor plan consists of four rooms across the front with a range of three rooms behind and a rear one room wing. As explained below, there have been numerous interior modifications. Surviving historic features (besides the plan) include beaded board ceilings in some rooms and the door and window surrounds. Those in the older portion have heavy molding, while those in the other rooms have bull's eye corner blocks and transoms.

Alterations Since Construction:

- (1) It appears that the house was clapboarded originally. Most exterior surfaces today are sheathed in drop siding, which must be a later addition because it encompasses a shed roof extension on the rear wing. The southern side gable and a rear gable retain their clapboarding. One suspects that the drop siding alteration is over fifty years old.
- (2) The side porch on the rear wing was enclosed using board and batten siding. Part of the rear elevation was resheathed in board and batten as well. This work also appears to be over fifty years old.
- (3) A pent dormer was added to the front roofline in the 1920s or '30s.
- (4) A window on the northern side gable has been enclosed.

- (5) The polygonal bay on the southern side gable has been altered. Its original windows were removed, and multi-pane windows were inserted that encompass almost the entire bay.
- (6) There have been numerous alterations on the interior, many associated with work done by the present owners when they acquired the house. The original mantels were gone, and salvaged mantels were installed in two rooms. One room has a modern brick fireplace. In addition, the walls were sheetrocked and wallpapered, some ceilings were sheetrocked, crown molding was installed in most rooms, the kitchen was modernized, and a chair rail and built-in bookcase were added to the southernmost front room.
- (7) A deck has been added at the rear.

Assessment of Integrity:

Although numerous, the above described changes have not had much of an impact upon the frontal views of the house. The house's elaborate Eastlake gallery, the source of its local architectural significance, is completely intact.

Significant dates	c.1900
Architect/Builder	unknown
Criterion C	

The Meadows House is locally significant in the area of architecture because it is easily Ruston's most elaborate example of the Eastlake style.

The parish seat of Ruston was founded in 1883 when the Vicksburg, Shreveport and Pacific railroad came through the area. It developed in the late nineteenth century when Queen Anne Revival/Eastlake houses were in their heyday. Today the town retains about two dozen examples. Almost all of these are simple one or one-and-a-half story cottages with Queen Anne massing and a gallery that is either Colonial Revival or a replacement. A few houses have imbricated shingle gables.

Against this background, the Meadows House is quite a landmark because of its elaborate, richly three dimensional Eastlake gallery. The Division of Historic Preservation's Historic Structures Survey shows that it is one of only five Eastlake galleries in Ruston, and among these, it is far and away the most elaborate. The four other examples feature only simple turned columns with brackets. One has an Italianate balustrade, two have no balustrade, and one has simple straight balusters. In comparison, the Meadows House gallery has elaborately turned columns with brackets and an intricately detailed spindlework frieze featuring prominent bulbous spindles, scrollsawn ornamentation and hanging pendants. The gallery is particularly eye-catching because it advances and recedes to follow and connect the two forward projecting gabled entrance porches.

Major Bibliographical References

Historic Structures Survey, Lincoln Parish, Louisiana, Division of Historic Preservation.

Conveyance Records, Lincoln Parish.

