

## Summary Paragraph

Bosco Plantation House is a story-and-a-half, frame Greek Revival cottage located in a flat rural setting situated on its original site near the Ouachita River levee in South Ouachita Parish. After having the surviving architectural evidence (foundation sills, moldings, etc.) reviewed by the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation personnel, the date of c. 1835 has been established for the building. The house's construction consists of a main block and a later constructed rear ell, with the main block showing influence of the Upland South Culture. Despite some alteration, the candidate retains its National Register eligibility.

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## Narrative Description

Piers and concrete cones support the main block structure and its five bay gallery. The gallery's outlining entablature is supported by six columns (which differ from the surviving period corner engaged pilasters) that were put in place during a 2008 re-creation of the gallery's porch. Unfortunately, the original gallery porch and columns were lost due to heavy deterioration over the previous century. During re-construction of the gallery's porch, houses of the same period and styling were studied by the present owner. Installing appropriate period-style columns matching the surviving corner pilasters is a definite plan for the future. The main block's foundation sills are notched as done in log construction. Six-by-six timbers have replaced original sills under the main block's gallery. The gallery ceiling is beamed and has narrow panels. Original corner engaged pilasters remain on each end of the flush board siding façade which greatly lends to the structure's original architectural significance. The unaltered original Greek Revival shouldered surround outlines the entryway's period double paneled doors. An upper transom and sidelights rest on inset decorative panels. The panels are repeated under the period nine-over-nine windows, which contain most of their original glass. Unfortunately, the shoulder molded surrounds outlining the façade's windows have been altered. Although the flat boards used to form the shape of the surround remain, the decorative moldings ornamenting the edges of the surrounds are gone. However, their ghost marks are clearly visible, making replication possible. The patch in the roofing above the main block's gallery is a recent result of removing a twentieth century dormer. Regrettably, the exterior chimneys (and most of their interior mantels) were lost many years ago.

Gable roofed side elevations are identical, as they both rise from brick and concrete piers with walls being covered in period cypress clapboards. There are three, nine-over-nine windows with simple hood moldings on the first floor of the left and right elevations. Except for the hood molds, the window surrounds are plain. Second level elevations include two, six-over-six windows with hood molds and otherwise plain surrounds plus a small attic window toward the rear. On both elevations, the second level windows are shuttered, as are those on the lower portion of the right elevation.

The main structure has a symmetrical plan of two rooms wide, and two rooms deep with a central hallway having a reversed staircase on the right wall. Ghost marks and outlines are clearly visible showing that the stairway originally was on the left wall near the entryway. This greatly adds to the house's history. This change caused the right rear room's width to be lessened. Flush boards run the length of the hallway and are present on the ceiling as well. Greek Revival shoulder molded surrounds are repeated around all of the main block's interior paneled doors and also around all of the first floor main block's windows. The front room on the right side of the central hallway (when facing the house) features a period fireplace and a Greek Revival shoulder molded mantel. A double doorway is at the back of the central hallway, which did lead to a back side gallery off the rear ell. Two rooms serve as living quarters on the second floor.

The rear ell's timbers and square nails suggest a pre-1880 construction date, post-dating the main block's construction. Clapboard walls rise from brick and concrete piers on the left, right, and rear elevations. The ell's roof is gabled, and there is a louvered vent at the rear wall's gabled peak. The right side elevation of the ell has an entablature beneath the eaves of the gallery roof. The rear ell is two rooms deep and is attached to the left side of the main block's rear elevation. However, it is set back behind the plane of the main block's side wall. Each of the ell's rooms previously opened onto a side gallery which was lost due to years of deterioration. The gallery's roof, eaves, and entablature are still intact, which leads greatly to the future re-creation of the ell's gallery porch.

There is a transom above the doorway at the back of the main block leading into the rear ell. The ell's front room, which serves as the dining room, has a Colonial Revival columned mantel. The rear room of the ell, which serves as the kitchen, retains the original fireplace foundation under the floor. Both rooms' windows are six-over-six with plain surrounds with some original glass remaining. Evidence of a left rear corner porch attached to the kitchen exists; it was lost when the kitchen was enlarged many years ago.

## Alterations and Assessment of Integrity:

In the interest of accuracy and clarity, this summary of alterations will repeat several items previously mentioned. These include: the modern columns which support the five bay gallery, the new gallery's porch construction (which resulted from past deterioration), the loss of the ornamental moldings on the façade windows' shoulder-molded surrounds, three exterior chimneys lost many years ago, the relocated stairway in the central hall and the lessening of the main block's rear left room as a result, the loss of the side gallery of the rear ell, and the enclosure of the small corner porch of the rear ell as part of the kitchen expansion. Although two small twentieth century windows now pierce the kitchen's back wall, these will soon be removed and replaced with a nine-over-six window found stored in the attic by the present owner.

Fortunately, none of these alterations is serious enough to prevent National Register eligibility. Of these changes, the losses of the front gallery's original columns and the front exterior windows' ornamental moldings are the most significant. However, architectural evidence survives to assist in accurately replicating these elements. This evidence includes the original corner pilasters and capitals (which would have matched the columns and accompanying capitals) on the façade, ghost marks of the missing moldings atop the exterior window surrounds, and original moldings ornamenting the interior door and window surrounds. The damaged ell gallery is not visible from the front of the home, and it also retains enough features (roof, ceiling, and entablature) to make future replication possible. Despite loss of the chimneys, one original brick fireplace and its Greek Revival mantel remain in the house's main block to illustrate how the lost mantels probably looked. The house clearly retains more than enough architectural features to identify it as a Greek Revival cottage, which is the basis of its eligibility. As an important and rare example of the style within Ouachita Parish, Bosco Plantation House is a legitimate National Register candidate.

#### Non-contributing elements:

Non-contributing outside elements include a mid twentieth century wood frame garage (obviously not contemporary with the house) which exists to the left of the house's main block, a set of six concrete posts (being counted as one object) which used to support a water tank probably dating from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and a concrete 8' x 11' structure bearing the inscribed date of 1947. The concrete building and posts are being recorded as non-contributing elements because they are constructed of substantial material and are located quite close to the house (at the left rear corner of the ell).

#### NOTES:

In photo No. 0001, which shows Bosco's façade, the two windows on the left side appear to contain modern horizontal window panes. This is an optical illusion caused by the lighting. Viewing this area of the digital photograph with the zoom mode shows the window glazing to match that in the windows on the façade's right side.

In Photo 0006, a storage container with the corporate name "Evergreen" is visible to the side of the house. This container actually stands outside the property/National Register nomination boundaries on a neighbor's land.

SIGNIFICANT DATES:	c. 1835
ARCHITECT/BUILDER:	Unknown
CRITERION:	C

#### **Period of Significance (justification)**

Circa 1835 is being used for the period of significance because architectural evidence in the house (see Part 7) points to that time period as its date of construction.

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

Bosco Plantation House is locally significant under Criterion C: Architecture, as an important and rare example among a very few surviving nineteenth century Greek Revival plantation houses in Ouachita Parish.

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#### **Narrative Statement of Significance** (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

The following narrative is adapted from "The Greek Revival Style," a historic context prepared in 2009 for the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation by Jonathan and Donna Fricker of Fricker Historic Preservation Services, LLC.

Grecian architecture with its columns, lintels and notions of ideal proportions is at least the remote ancestor of all classical styles from Roman to Renaissance to Beaux Arts, right down to twentieth century Neo-Classicism. Greek architecture did not become known in the West until about 1750-1760. It began when British architect James Stuart visited Greece with Nicolas Revett in 1751. After the trip, the two began preparation of a multi-volume book, *Antiquities of Athens*, which saw publication in 1762. Stuart also began designing small buildings in the Grecian taste. According to Penguin's *Dictionary of Architecture*, by Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, John Fleming and Hugh Honor, Stuart's garden temple at Hagley (England, 1758) is the earliest of these. The style "took off" in the 1780s and culminated in England and other European countries in the 1820s and '30s. In the United States, the heyday of the Greek Revival is generally recognized to be the period 1825 – 1855.

The Greek Revival has been hailed, from time to time, as America's first truly national style of architecture. For while its forms and elements were virtually all derived from Europe, the style was embraced here as nowhere else in the world. And it was enthusiastically accepted by the broad sweep of classes – like a popular movement – because it had pointed associations with democratic civilization and scholastic erudition. Moreover, of all the styles that gained favor prior to the Civil War, the Grecian is by far the most prolific, both in terms of numbers and geographical spread. Indeed, west of the Appalachians, Greek Revival buildings represent a great many communities' earliest architectural heritage.

The Greek Revival Style was spread primarily through architectural instructional pattern books with plates showing elevations, details and plans – in short, everything the local architect, builder, artisan or carpenter needed. Some of the most prolific were Asher Benjamin's *The American Builder's Companion*, John Haviland's *The Builder's Assistant*, and Minard Lafever's *Beauties of Modern Architecture*. The Grecian look was also spread through apprentice training which at the time was the primary means of training young would-be architects.

As a style, the Grecian tends to be stockier in its parts and less adorned than most of its descendents. It depends primarily upon the column and the lintel, or the entablature over a straight (not curved) range of columns. Columns themselves are true to the three ancient Greek orders: Doric, Ionic and Corinthian. The style depends secondarily upon a discreet number of openings in a relatively massive wall.

If the American Greek Revival could be said to have an emblem, it would be the Greek temple form with its strong columns and gently pitched pedimented roof. It was universal, applied to everything from churches, to courthouses, to office buildings, to residences, to privies, even to bird boxes. Greek Revival residences tended to follow traditional plans inherited from the Colonial Period. There was the British central hall, double parlor plan and its more urban (tightly packed lot) cousin, the side hall plan; but all took the temple form. Larger buildings, even three story collegiate buildings, were "shoe-horned" into Greek temples. Unlike in Europe, the great majority of these were not made of some fine stone, but of wood or brick.

In Louisiana and much of the South, the period of plantation wealth and the zenith of the Greek Revival style coincided. Realistic dates for the style's popularity here would be 1830 – 1861 (when the Civil War commenced and construction virtually ceased). But Greek Revival-looking buildings continued to be constructed in rural Louisiana for a couple of decades after the War's end. These, no doubt, were merely following established builder tradition and were probably no longer conceived of as Grecian. There were also periods of transition. In the early days there were Grecian looking buildings that had some hangover Federal Style features – most notably a Federal elliptically arched fanlight over the front doorway. Towards the end, with the rising tide of the Italianate taste, there were Grecian buildings with some Italianate features – most notably scroll brackets at the entablature level. In this transition phase, just when a building stops being mainly Grecian and starts being mainly Italianate, can be difficult to parse.

The Greek Revival probably came to Louisiana through Benjamin Henry Labrobe, America's first professional architect, one-time architect of the U. S Capitol, the designer of the country's first Greek Revival buildings, and a short-term resident of New Orleans. His design for that city's Waterworks (1811) included a strongly proportioned pedimented portico and an octagonal tower reminiscent of the Tower of the Winds in Athens. No longer extant, this may well be Louisiana's first building seriously incorporating elements of the Greek Revival. Aside from Latrobe, Louisiana was not a leader in the national Greek Revival movement. However, the state added considerable richness to the genre by becoming home to some interesting regional variations on the style, including the white columned mansion that became a symbol of the Antebellum South.

The majority of Grecian buildings here took their cue from the state's well established Creole tradition of galleried houses and cottages. Louisiana architectural historian Dr. Joan Caldwell notes, "Greek Revival tendencies found a ready reception in the South on two accounts: the style was revered for its Classical antecedent, and it lent itself to the Region's

climate. Columns, porticoes and porches were practical features that met the need for shade and were provisions that let leisure be taken and conversation enjoyed as a natural part of living. In Louisiana, where galleried houses were an entrenched tradition, the Greek colonnade became an easy graft.”

So it was that the Creole cottage was fitted up with strongly proportioned columns (sometimes just posts with molded capitals), a deep entablature, and perhaps Grecian door and window surrounds. These classical features were often striking, robust and boldly formed, lending an air of consequence to even the smallest “Grecian” cottages. Excluding New Orleans, easily the majority of Greek Revival buildings in Louisiana take the galleried cottage form. “Cottage” is something of a misnomer, for they are certainly not always small. Roofs are more often gable-end than hip. Usually the larger or grander examples feature a broad hip roof. The majority of these Greek Revival buildings were wooden rather than brick or plaster-over-brick.

In New Orleans the galleried tradition produced the now iconic double gallery house. Scattered across parts of the city by the hundreds (Garden District, Lower Garden District, etc), these two story wood frame houses feature a Grecian gallery on each level. Sometimes the columns are simple wooden pillars with molded capitals on both levels. On the finer examples, the columns are fluted, with the Ionic order on one level and Corinthian on the other. As the Italianate style began to be popular, double brackets might be added above the columns of an otherwise purely Greek Revival house.

Probably the most impressive Louisiana variation is what Henry Russell Hitchcock labeled the “peripteral mode.” This is a Grecian two-story building, most often a plantation house, without pediments, surrounded by colossal order columns. Peripteral houses are related to the grand two-story Creole plantation houses of previous generations, with their encircling galleries. (The only extant non-plantation houses in the peripteral mode are the East Feliciana and Claiborne parish courthouses.)

While the temple form (a pedimented portico spanning the entire façade) was used in Louisiana, it was not common. Most temple style Greek Revival buildings here feature a pedimented portico attached to a wider façade.

The majority of window and door openings (exterior and interior) on Greek Revival buildings in Louisiana are unadorned square head, or feature shoulder, or ear, molds. Shoulder molded openings on the interior sometimes feature side members that splay toward the bottom. Occasionally one sees openings where the top member has a slightly pointed top, in the manner of a pediment. Only in the most notable, generally architect-designed buildings, are openings ornamented with acanthus leaves, patera, or anthemions.

On the most basic of Louisiana Greek Revival houses the mantels might be the only interior features that could be categorized specifically as Greek Revival. The simplest, and most common, Greek Revival mantel is in the aedicule style (an entablature resting on two columns, seen as a unit). In the vast majority of houses, the “columns” are simple molded pilasters. On some finer homes the wooden mantels and door frames might be false-grained to resemble a different wood (*faux bois*) or marble (*faux marbre*). Only rarely does one see ornamentation such as Grecian fretwork. The most “high style” Greek Revival buildings in the state have plaster ceiling medallions formed of Grecian favorites such as anthemions or acanthus leaves. On the larger houses, pocket doors (in a Grecian frame) separate double parlors. Some otherwise Grecian residences in Louisiana featured the traditional Creole hall-less plan. But as the American taste finally triumphed in the 1830s and ‘40s, houses incorporated the American central hall or side hall plan.

Property types associated with the Greek Revival style in Louisiana include:

- Greek Revival historic districts
- Historic districts with a significant complement of Greek Revival buildings – most notably in New Orleans.
- Temple-form (temple spanning entire façade) commercial, public and residential buildings (unusual in Louisiana).
- Large two story buildings with a temple-style pedimented portico (i.e., a pedimented portico attached to a larger façade).
- Peripteral mode (plantation houses and 2 courthouses)
- Galleried public buildings
- One or one-and-a-half story houses (gable end and hipped roof) with a gallery spanning the façade.
- Double gallery houses (New Orleans) – a two story house with a gallery on each floor spanning the façade.
- Two story houses with colossal columns spanning the façade (with no pediment or portico). These are similar to the peripteral mode, but have colossal columns only on the façade.

- Churches. But with one exception (St. John's in Thibodaux), these are simple country churches with a temple shape.
- Occasionally in Northwest Louisiana, one finds the marriage of the Upland South dogtrot with the country Greek Revival style (a milled lumber dogtrot with a Greek Revival gallery and other details).
- Party wall commercial buildings (almost entirely in New Orleans). In general, these are similar to prototypes in other parts of the country – Greek Revival piers (granite or cast-iron) forming the shopfront with a three to five bay façade crowned with a heavy entablature (sometimes with a denticular cornice). Generally, these buildings do not have galleries.
- In New Orleans, free-standing, masonry, generally red brick, three-story houses with an entablature and a Greek Revival doorway.
- In New Orleans' Vieux Carre (mainly), party wall masonry buildings with Greek Revival details and cast-iron galleries across their street frontage. Sometimes these galleries are original; sometimes they were added later in the more florid Italianate taste.
- In South Louisiana (mainly New Orleans), above-ground tombs with either a temple shape (i.e., with a pediment) and Greek Revival details or a squarish mass with Greek Revival details. These tombs sometimes bear Grecian funerary details (for example, inverted torches).

Before the advent of large-scale railroad construction in Louisiana (1880s), Greek Revival buildings were generally confined to towns and rural regions reachable by water. With its location on the east bank of the Ouachita River, Bosco clearly reflects this stylistic distribution pattern. A one-and-one-half story, gable roofed cottage with a gallery spanning its façade, Bosco also clearly illustrates an important Greek Revival property type associated with Louisiana. Furthermore, it retains several important stylistic features, including its exterior entablature and corner pilasters with accompanying capitals, exterior and interior shoulder-molding surrounding doors and windows, one Greek Revival mantel ornamented by shoulder molding, and its center hall plan.

Unfortunately, is not possible to determine how many Greek Revival plantation houses there were in Ouachita Parish at any one time. The 1860 census indicated that there were twelve slave holdings in the parish of fifty or more slaves, all of which involved individuals who lived in the parish at one time. Presumably, there were also numerous slave holdings of less than fifty. Hence, it is a reasonable assumption that on the eve of the Civil War there were a fair number of plantation houses in the parish, 25 or 30 at least. It is also a reasonable assumption that those plantation houses built in the decades before the Civil War were in the Greek Revival style.

From among this group there are only six surviving in Ouachita Parish today, according to survey records. All but one still embody their essential historic appearance. Like Bosco, the other five houses are story-and-a-half Greek Revival galleried cottages. However, Bosco and Whitehall (National Register) are set apart because of their ornamented exterior and interior door surrounds, as those on the other houses are plain. The surrounds at Bosco are handsomely styled with Greek Revival shoulder moldings. Whitehall also has these features, with some of its surrounds having pediment shaped tops. However, upon recent viewing, Whitehall seems to have lost some of its historic appearance due to modern upgrading. This makes Bosco an even more important example of nineteenth century Greek Revival architecture which is presently recognizable. Bosco is truly a rare, ancient, and important survivor within the context of Ouachita Parish. This makes it a very worthy candidate for the National Register.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)**

One of the original 19 parishes in Louisiana, Ouachita Parish was named for an Indian tribe. Spanish explorer Hernando Desoto visited the area in 1541. French settlers arrived around 1720. In 1769, Don Alexander O'Reilly claimed the area for Spain. In 1785, Don Juan Filhoil established the first European outpost in Louisiana (called Fort Miro) within the parish. The settlement incorporated around 1820, at which time it chose the name Monroe in honor of the first powered steamboat to have steamed up the Ouachita River. The present boundaries of the parish were defined in 1839.

The parish has a total of 633 square miles, with about 20 percent of that being water. The twin cities of Monroe and West Monroe (situated on opposite banks of the Ouachita River) are the only communities of any size. These cities are the hub of commerce and manufacturing in northeastern Louisiana. Agriculture is an important industry in the parishes' rural areas. Monroe (the parish seat) is also the home of The University of Louisiana at Monroe.

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Whitehall Plantation House (Ouachita Parish, Louisiana) National Register nomination.