

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Arlington (1829) is a large brick and frame plantation house with an unusual design. It is set on gently rolling farmland approximately two miles west of the town of Washington. There have been some changes since construction; however, none of them have substantially diminished the features which make Arlington architecturally significant.

The 2½ story house has solid common bond brick walls on the first story and brick sides with frame front and back walls on the second. The first and second stories have central halls with two rooms on each side. All fireplaces are set against the exterior side walls of the house. One of the downstairs fireplaces is twice as wide as any of the others. The room in which it is located was the original plantation kitchen, which is highly unusual inasmuch as most plantation kitchens were separate buildings. Originally the kitchen had a dirt floor, which is now bricked over. Another unusual feature of the house is its cellar which is set opposite the kitchen. The original cellar stairs descend between the front and rear rooms on the north side of the house. The second floor is reached by means of an original rear gallery staircase. Most of the mantels are simple massive aedicule motifs with heavy cyma recta moldings or plain beveled molding. Most of the windows and doors have shoulder molded frames. The only exception is in the parlor on the second story where the windows and doors have full entablatures with drip cornices. Windows are six over six and doors have four panels.

The five bay facade has an unusual, perhaps unique, one bay, three story porch composed of brick columns which terminates in a single massive pedimented dormer. The rear porch is a more conventional gallery with brick columns below and wooden Doric pillars above. The only unusual feature is a pair of three foot deep closets at either end of the upper gallery. These are much smaller than a normal cabinet.

In the late nineteenth century the following changes were made:

- (1) The present staircase with its heavy turned newel post was installed in the hall.
- (2) The second floor parlor received plate glass windows and a marble mantel.

Twentieth century changes include:

- (1) The bricking over of the dirt floor in the kitchen.
- (2) The installation of salvaged cast-iron balustrades on the second story of the aforementioned single bay porch.
- (3) The installation of a set of French doors complete with transom and side lights on the facade of the massive dormer atop the main facade.
- (4) The installation of latticework on a small portion of the second story rear gallery.

Assessment of Integrity

None of these changes have substantially diminished the five features which give Arlington its architectural significance. These features include the cellar, kitchen, portico, cabinets and rear gallery stairs.

Although the floor was bricked over, the kitchen is still easily recognizable as such. Despite the changes, the portico retains its stature as a unique feature. Its uniqueness did not depend upon

the windows of the dormer or the design of the balustrade. The cabinets, stairs and cellar have been unaffected by the changes.

Specific dates 1829
Builder/Architect Builder - Major Amos Webb

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)
Criterion C

Arlington is architecturally significant on the state level for two reasons:

(1) It is a landmark in the assimilation of the Greek Revival taste into native Louisiana plantation house architecture. This process is an important aspect of Louisiana's architectural heritage.

(2) It is extremely unusual to find an interior kitchen and cellar in an antebellum plantation house in Louisiana.

When the Anglo-American Greek Revival influence came to Louisiana in the 1820's, it was not totally absorbed. During the next thirty years a number of Greek Revival "deviations" were created in which Greek Revival and native Louisiana characteristics were mixed. This body of architecture is a major part of Louisiana's material cultural identity.

Arlington is a landmark within the context of this architectural heritage because it is an important example of the grafting of French Creole and local features onto a basic two-story Greek Revival central hall plan plantation house. These features include the small cabinets, the rear gallery stairs, and the use of brick construction on the first story and wood frame construction on part of the second story.

Another local characteristic (though not necessarily Creole) is the large central dormer. At Arlington it is exaggerated into a unique fully developed two-story portico.

This set of features, particularly the unusual closet size cabinets and the unique dormer-portico, produces a design which deviates from the Greek Revival norm more than most other examples of Greek Revival adaptation in Louisiana. Hence Arlington is an important part of the state's distinctive architectural heritage.

Arlington is additionally significant because it has an interior kitchen and cellar. These two features are virtually unheard of in pre-1870 Louisiana plantation houses.

Major Bibliographical References

Chain of Title, St. Landry Parish Courthouse