

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Arlington (c.1861) is a two-story, clapboarded, late Greek Revival mansion with an impressive pedimented portico both front and rear. It is located on the west bank of Bayou Teche on the outskirts of the town of Franklin. The house is set on a broad and spacious lawn at the head of a long oval shaped approach drive. The landscaping is of recent origin. Although the house has been altered somewhat, it retains enough outstanding features to merit listing on the National Register.

Arlington has an unusual cruciform plan. It has a wide central hall which runs from the front to the rear of the house and a secondary side hall set on axis which runs from side to side. This secondary hall contains the main staircase. The point where the halls cross is emphasized by a crowning ceiling medallion and a set of paneled pilasters. This hallway configuration is only partially repeated on the second story.

The house is articulated with an almost Palladian formality. The five-bay front facade has a three-bay, colossal, fluted, composite order portico which is repeated on the five-bay rear façade. Each of the side facades has a three-bay single story composite order loggia. These four columnar openings are linked by the previously described cruciform hall plan.

Noteworthy exterior features include:

1. the fluted wooden columns.
2. the carved wood composite order capitals.
3. the full entablature with its denticular cornice and gable end returns.
4. the cast-iron balustrades on the balconies and loggias.
5. the paneled pilasters set at the corners of the house and at the side edges of the porticoes. (This feature is repeated on the interior where the two halls cross.)
6. the aedicule motif window and door frames.
7. the tympana of the pediments with their inset denticular cornices and oval medallions. These medallions are inset with stylized immature Southern Magnolia leaves arranged in a star pattern.

Noteworthy interior features include:

1. the mansion's ten plaster ceiling medallions, several of which are extremely intricate and elaborate. They feature a wide variety of classical and Rococo motifs including bricade, acanthus leaves, anthemions, magnolia blossoms and leaves, egg and dart molding, bay leaf garlands, reeding, and vitruvian scrollwork.
2. the drip molded cornices.
3. the main stair with its massive turned newel post.
4. the Rococo Revival mantel in the library.
5. the folding doors between the halls and the major public rooms. When opened these lend a sense of spaciousness to the interiors.
6. the floor-length six over nine windows which communicate between the interiors and the various balconies and loggias.
7. the brass escutcheon plates on the four-panel doors. These are decorated with anthemions and scrolls. Each doorknob also features a sunburst motif.

Since the house was built, the following changes have been made:

1. In the early twentieth century the front and rear central doors were replaced with plate glass doors

2. At the same time the mantels in the dining room and parlor were replaced with a matching pair of elaborately decorated Edwardian copies of Adams mantels.
3. The shutters were also replaced in the early twentieth century.
4. Sometime later one of the ground story rear rooms was converted into a kitchen.

In 1965-66 the house was renovated. This work included the following:

1. The clapboard surfaces of the exterior were covered with aluminum siding. All the exterior ornamental woodwork was left exposed, including window frames, cornices, etc.
2. Much of the interior cornice work was found to be deteriorated and was replaced in kind.
3. A chair rail was installed in most of the ground story rooms.
4. The wooden floors were replaced.

Assessment of Integrity

Despite these alterations, Arlington still conveys the full measure of its architectural significance. There are three main features upon which this significance rests, all of which remain completely intact. These are: (1) the pedimented porticoes and side loggias, (2) the cruciform hall plan, and (3) the ceiling medallions.

One particular alteration, the aluminum siding, requires special mention. It should be noted that the siding does not cover any ornamental features, but is confined to the clapboarded areas. It has virtually no visual impact upon the observer. Indeed, it passes unnoticed unless attention, is specifically directed to it.

Specific dates	c.1861
Builder/Architect	Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)
Criterion C

Arlington is of statewide significance in the area of architecture because it is one of Louisiana's finest Greek Revival plantation houses. This can be seen not only in its outstandingly pretentious articulation but also in the richness of its ornamental features.

The grand Greek Revival plantation house is undoubtedly the most widely recognized historic archetype of the southern states. Arlington stands as one of Louisiana's finest examples for the following reasons:

1. The vast majority of even the state's largest Greek Revival plantation houses lack pediments and porticoes such as those at Arlington. Most do not conform to the classic plantation house image of a temple fronted mansion with colossal order pillars. Although there is no comprehensive statewide survey, one can get an idea of the rarity of this housetype in Louisiana by examining W. Darrell Overdyke's Louisiana Plantation Houses (1965). Of the seventy-one Greek Revival influenced plantation houses the book documents, only five have colossal order pedimented porticoes of at least four columns.

2. Arlington is an important part of this limited heritage because it is one of a small minority of examples which have a formally articulated facade on both the front and the rear. This, of course, denotes a greater degree of pretension than the standard plantation house with its single formal front and its rear kitchen wing. Arlington is truly a plantation house articulated in the grand manner.

3. Arlington is one of Louisiana's most richly ornamented plantation houses. It is one of a small minority of examples which have fluted columns and carved composite order capitals. In addition, its collection of ten plaster ceiling medallions is unsurpassed in the state in terms of variety (five different designs) and the intricacy of the decorative motifs.

4. Arlington's cruciform hall configuration denotes a degree of formality and sophisticated axial planning seldom found in Louisiana plantation houses. The State Historic Preservation Office is aware of only one other surviving example in the state and only two other examples which ever existed.

Major Bibliographical References

St. Mary Parish Conveyance Records