

NATIONAL REGISTER REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING – MINUTES
Thursday, July 25, 2024 - 11:00 AM
State Library of Louisiana
701 N 4th Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Dr. Robert Carriker called the July 25, 2024, regular meeting of the National Register Review Committee to order at 11:07 AM. In addition to Dr. Carriker, members present included Ava Alltmont, Dr. Keith Finley, Turry Flucker, Lynn Lewis, Peggy Lowe, Martha Salomon, Dr. Rebecca Saunders, and John Sykes.

Dr. Carriker then asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Lynn Lewis so moved, and Peggy Lowe seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Bailey Hall welcomed the audience and committee members. Division of Historic Preservation staff in attendance included Bailey Hall (National Register Coordinator) and Ameila Blackmon (student intern).

Dr. Carriker asked for a motion to approve the minutes from May's meeting. Rebecca Saunders so moved, and Turry Flucker seconded. The motion passed with one abstention from Dr. Keith Finley.

After this item, 10 nominations were presented to the committee.

First National Bank, East Carroll Parish

Presented by Jessica Richardson, nomination preparer

The First National Bank, 216 Lake Street, is a former community bank that occupies the southeast corner of Lake and Scarborough Streets in downtown Lake Providence, Louisiana. Located on a block that formerly had party wall buildings from Sparrow Street east to Scarborough Street, the block today only has two buildings remaining due to damage from fires and building loss. The bank is not located within the boundaries of the Lake Providence National Register Historic District. The boundaries of the district were purposefully drawn to exclude the bank building as it was not old enough to be considered historic at the time of the district's listing in 1979. This one-story building, designed by Rivers and Heuer of Monroe and built by Don Barron of Farmerville, is constructed of concrete, faced with brown brick, has a copper faux mansard roofline along the parapet, integrated brick planters at the front and west side, and a drive-through at the rear. The building is designed in a modernistic style with elements of the New Formalism style. Within many small Louisiana towns, the New Formalist style is not commonly used. The First National Bank retains sufficient integrity to communicate its historic significance as an integral part of Lake Providence's once bustling commercial district and has been a community fixture for over 120 years (65 in the current building). Therefore, it is eligible for listing in the National Register.

First National Bank is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Commerce for its role as one of two banking services in the city of Lake Providence during the period of significance and the only building that remains in use as a bank. Additionally, the bank was also used as a community gathering space for a variety of events from baby showers to gardening club meetings to professional organization meetings. The period of significance under Criterion A is 1968-1974, the current 50-year cutoff. The bank is also significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture as the only example of New Formalist architecture in Lake Providence. The bank is a simplified example of the style as applied to a building in a more rural setting than other places in the state. The period of significance under Criterion C is 1968, the year of construction.

Dr. Carriker asked committee members for questions and comments. Dr. Rebecca Saunders inquired about the purpose of the tax credit project. Ms. Richardson explained that the building will remain in use as a bank once the rehabilitation work is complete. John Sykes asked for clarification on the age of the building and the proposed period of significance.

Dr. Carriker opened to public comments. No public comments were made.

Lynn Lewis then moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO, and Martha Salomon seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Ryan Street Historic District, Calcasieu Parish
Presented by Beth Jacobs, nomination preparer

The proposed Ryan Street Historic District comprises portions of five commercial blocks within downtown Lake Charles, Louisiana. Centered on the 700 block of Ryan Street, the district's 26 resources include 18 contributing buildings constructed between 1900 and 1953, six non-contributing buildings, and two buildings previously listed in the National Register of Historic Places. While the majority of the contributing resources are one-, two-, and three-story brick buildings with retail storefronts on the ground floor, the district also includes two former banks and a former automobile dealership. In the early 20th century when most of the district's buildings were constructed, Ryan Street served as the primary spine of Lake Charles's bustling downtown. In the late 1940s and 1950s, the upper floors of some buildings were updated with stucco and metal-paneled slipcovers; most of these secondary facades have since been removed. In the late 1960s and 1970s, urban renewal projects intended to modernize Ryan Street and attract shoppers to downtown stores eventually led to numerous demolitions in favor of surface parking, primarily in the 800 through 1000 blocks of Ryan Street. Today, the resources that comprise the Ryan Street Historic District represent the most intact grouping of commercial buildings remaining within the city's historic downtown.

Over the course of the 20th century, downtown Lake Charles expanded in tandem with the city's growing population. Most development took place along Ryan Street, which had emerged as the city's primary commercial corridor. Retail establishments, offices, hotels, theaters, and government functions clustered along the four blocks spanning from Mill Street on the north to Kirby Street on the south, eventually spreading out along intersecting cross streets. By the 1960s, the primacy of Lake Charles's central business/retail district was being challenged by new suburban-style developments in other neighborhoods. Revitalization efforts in the 1970s—including the conversion of Ryan Street to a pedestrian mall in 1971—ultimately led to the loss of a significant number of older buildings within the city's historic core. Today, the Ryan Street Historic District is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Commerce as the most intact concentration of historic commercial buildings remaining downtown. The district's period of significance begins in 1900, the year of construction of the earliest extant buildings, and ends in 1971 with the implementation of urban renewal initiatives that drastically altered the city's historic core.

Dr. Carriker asked committee members for questions and comments. Lynn Lewis asked if there were other historic districts in Lake Charles. Ms. Jacobs explained that the existing districts were residential or outside of the proposed contiguous boundary. Keith Finley asked about the driving force behind the revitalization movement that occurred in the 70s. Ms. Jacobs explained that industrial development was a strong factor that drove people out of the town so these efforts were in an attempt to keep people downtown.

Dr. Carriker opened to public comments. Gina Lamacchia, Green Coast Enterprises, spoke in support of the nomination as an effort to secure tax credits to revitalize the historic buildings and the economy of downtown Lake Charles. Rebecca Saunders asked the developer if there was a plan to return parts of downtown to pedestrian. Jackie Dadakis, Green Coast Enterprises, spoke about the proposed plan to revitalize the downtown area through investments. Lynn Lewis clarified that pedestrian shopping areas were common in the 70s but were quickly realized to be impractical.

Rebecca Saunders then moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO, and Keith Finley seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Camp Grant-Walker 4-H Educational Camp, Grant Parish

Presented by Sarah Mason, nomination preparer

Grant Walker 4-H Recreation Center is a 52-acre historic section of the 80-acre camp located in the Kisatchie National Forest in southeast Grant Parish, Louisiana. The district is about 1.5 miles east of Pollock and about .8 miles west of Fishville. A large portion of the remaining buildings, structures, and sites within the camp date to the 1939 WPA improvements built in the "NPS Rustic" style. The original bunkhouses were demolished, and new ones were constructed in the 1980s and several large facilities were built as recently as 2015. Many of the more recently constructed facilities maintain the "rustic" style of the camp. The camp is set amidst towering pine trees, with Big Creek running towards the back of the property. Wood siding, stone masonry using Catahoula sandstone quarried from a nearby hill, and pine and cypress logs are the predominant materials.

Despite the new construction, the historic landscape and overall setting of the camp has been preserved, in addition to the distinctive WPA stone structures throughout the grounds. While the original WPA bunkhouses were demolished, a large percentage of WPA log buildings and stone structures remain utilizing native materials, which add to the camp's rustic environment. The district retains its historic integrity and overall WPA stylistic intent, even with its non-historic improvements, and is eligible for placement on the National Register of Historic Places.

Grant-Walker 4-H Educational Center is significant under Criterion A: History, for local significance in Education for its role in the history of the Louisiana 4-H organization as a center for agricultural education of Louisiana's youth for the past 100 years. Since its origins in 1922, Camp Grant-Walker has stood as a testament to the power of experiential education. Capitalizing on an idea first developed in 1902 with the creation of agriculture clubs in rural America, through the formalization of 4-H, Grant-Walker has developed into a highly successful forum for education of Louisiana's youth in a wide spectrum of important areas from agricultural techniques and home demonstration to healthy living and renewable energy. Grant-Walker has always provided young people opportunities to experience outdoor recreation and learn outdoor skills, in addition to exposure to the natural environment. As promised by a 4-H club supporter in a 1926 article about the camp, campers "see and learn things here that they would never learn in school." In addition to its significance in education, the site of Grant-Walker also is significant as a continuously used early 20th century public camp in the Big Creek area, many of which have since been abandoned or are now under private ownership. Due to the success of the 4-H program and LSU Extension Service, Grant-Walker has survived as a vestige of a time when the Pollock-Fishville area was a mecca for rest and outdoor recreation, during its heyday as a summer resort area. The period of significance is 1922 to 1974, from the very beginnings of the use of the site as a youth camp in 1922 until the 50-year historic cut-off mark, considering that the historic function and significance of the camp continued throughout that period and continues today.

Grant-Walker is also significant under Criterion C: Architecture, on a local level as a WPA-improved campground and example of the Rustic style as promoted by the National Park Service and Civilian Conservation Corps work in parks and campgrounds across the country in the early 20th century. It is a rare example of surviving and identifiable WPA work in Central Louisiana, made even more unique by the incorporation of native stone and timber in the buildings, structures, and sites. Adding to its significance is that the campground exists as an intact collection of stylistically and geographically related structures and buildings that work in harmony to create a unique sense of place, offering a natural haven for all who visit. The period of significance for Criterion C is 1938-1939, which encompasses the time during which the WPA improvements were made; most of the contributing structures, buildings, and sites date to this period.

Dr. Carriker asked committee members for questions and comments. John Sykes asked for clarification on the camp being the only 4-H camp remaining in Louisiana. Robert Carriker asked if there are other examples of WPA "Parkitecture" in Louisiana. Ms. Mason explained that this is the only collection of buildings of this style. Peggy Lowe asked if LSU still owns the facility. Martha Salomon asked where the stone for construction came from and Ms. Mason explained that all of the stone came from a quarry in Louisiana. Keith Finley added a note about the abundance of rock in the Kisatchie National Forest.

Dr. Carriker opened to public comments. Christine Bergeon, director of the camp, expressed her support for the nomination and gave a brief overview of the continued use of the camp that serves all 64 parishes. Toby Lepley, Associate Vice President & 4-H Program Leader, spoke in support of the nomination and briefly explained the care and maintenance of the camp.

Turkey Flucker then moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO, and Peggy Lowe seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The committee paused for a 5 minute break, no time stated. Dr. Carriker called the meeting back to order, no time stated.

Barret Elementary School, Caddo Parish

Presented by Bailey Hall, National Register Coordinator

Barret Elementary School meets the Register's significance and integrity requirements. This 5.69-acre property consists of a multi-floor school built in 1916 with physical expansion overtime allowing greater student capacity and expected facilities for a complete elementary school experience. The intent of its original construction was to be a neighborhood school and even with its physical expansions in 1939, 1966 and 1989; the original intent was kept. Two contiguous expansions – an auditorium and two storied building of classrooms in 1939 and cafeteria in 1989 as seen from the primary street view denotes the same architectural style and details, use of the same materials, workmanship, look, and reflects the master architect's intent from 1916. The third building – a combination kindergarten / library was constructed in 1966 and is connected to the original building by sidewalks and cannot be seen from the primary street view. The property with a total square footage of 43,688 was an active elementary school until 2016 thus keeping its feeling and association even with its enlargement over time. Its 100-year service has not subtracted from its historic integrity of the original Neo-Classical Revival public school building opened in 1916.

Barret Elementary School reflects the larger public education history and heritage of Caddo Parish and the City of Shreveport as explained in detail below in the Narrative Statement of Significance. The level of significance is Local. The school for 100 years participated in the public education of children in its assigned neighborhood school zone. The Period of Significance begins with the school's construction in 1916 and runs through to its closure in 2016. The design is the work of noted architect, Edward F. Neild, Sr. who made a difference in Shreveport and Caddo Parish in his design of numerous buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Quite a few of these National Register-listed historic properties are public schools. He became known as a master architect. Barret Elementary added to the ongoing development of public schools in Caddo Parish and to the academic success of several generations of Shreveport and Caddo Parish families.

Criterion C: The design of Barret Elementary School was the result of a noted local architect from Shreveport who would become a master architect with a nation-wide reputation. Edward F. Neild, Sr., FAIA (December 3, 1884 - July 6, 1955), made a difference and positive influence in designing the built heritage of present-day City of Shreveport. Many of his designed public and commercial buildings and residential dwellings in Shreveport, especially school houses are still in use with many on the National Register of Historic Places. Although residing in Shreveport, Mr. Neild was also known for designing "numerous civic, parish, and federal buildings, mostly in northwest Louisiana." He also designed or influenced educational buildings constructed on several college and university campuses as well as designing or providing architectural advice to civic, public, and private buildings in other states besides Louisiana. In 1948, Neild was "among twenty architects selected as fellows of the American Institute of Architects."

Dr. Carriker asked committee members for questions and comments. Turkey Flucker asked for clarification on the role of desegregation. Ms. Hall explained the nomination preparer noted little opposition from the community occurred outside of the population that moved out of the neighborhood. The committee asked for clarification on the addition of Criterion A for Education. Ms. Hall explained the addition was made to address comments requested from committee members at the previous meeting. Discussion among committee members regarding whether to drop Criterion A occurred due to a lack of supporting materials.

Dr. Carriker opened to public comment. No comments were made.

John Sykes then moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO, and Martha Salomon seconded. The motion passed with one opposed.

St Francisville Historic District Update, West Feliciana Parish

Presented by Jessica Richardson, nomination preparer

The purpose of this addendum is to update the period of significance for the St. Francisville Historic District, which was listed on the National Register in 1980 and was updated with a boundary increase in 1982 and has not been evaluated since that time. The district includes commercial, institutional, and residential buildings. The current period of significance (POS) is 1810-1930, following the Register's then 50-year guideline. The present submission will bring the period of significance to 1790-1974, the current 50-year guideline, which is documented as a logical end to POS based on St. Francisville's developmental history and resource construction dates. The period of significance now starts in 1790 based on research that reveals two resources were constructed c. 1790 and c. 1795. As part of the update, a new inventory is provided as well as a new district map.

When the St. Francisville Historic District was listed on the National Register in 1980 and increased in 1982, the district was listed under Criteria A: History, in the area of history and C: Architecture for its large collection of 18th, 19th, and 20th-century architectural styles. The original period of significance for the district was 1790-1930, encompassing the years that St. Francisville was first created through that 50-year guideline. The listed district includes residential, commercial, institutional, and public buildings.

This additional documentation will add additional historical background information to supplement the original nomination as well as to provide information as to why extending the period of significance to 1790-1974 is logical based on the city's development and extant historic resources. Based on the extant historic resources, there are two resources with construction dates of c. 1790 and 1795 (based on further research done since 1982) and there were 40 resources constructed after 1930 (the then 50-year guideline). Five resources were constructed from 1930-1940, nine from 1940-50, six from 1950-1960, five from 1960-1970, and four from 1970-1974. From 1980 to the present day, twelve resources were constructed, with most dating after 1990. It is important to note that this growth from the 1940s through the 1970s may appear small; however, within the city of St. Francisville, there were not an abundance of empty lots or widespread loss of former historic buildings. Thus, there was no place for widespread expansion within the historic district. Thus, while the numbers are small, they are steady and proportional for those three decades leading up to 1980.

This is a proposal to add 7 buildings to the St. Francisville Historic District, listed on the National Register in 1980 with a boundary increase in 1982 and a period of significance ending in 1930. This boundary increase is predicated on additional documentation to the district updating the period of significance to 1974. The existing National Register district includes commercial and residential buildings and is generally characterized by one- and two-story commercial buildings with some larger landmark commercial buildings from the early to mid-20th century, a variety of residences, and public and institutional buildings. The main thoroughfares in St. Francisville are Ferdinand and Royal Streets. The boundary increase area is located in four areas off of Ferdinand Street as seen on the submitted map – at the eastern end's intersection with Commerce Street, the end of Baton Rouge Street, the end of Feliciana Street, and the end of Hartson Street.

The St. Francisville Historic District Boundary Increase II is significant in the area of commerce as it contains two supporting resources which tell a continued story of development on the main commercial thoroughfare in Crowley's historic core. The boundary increase represents the economic growth of St. Francisville between 1927 and 1950 along the corner of Ferdinand and Commerce Streets. One of the buildings was constructed c. 1927 but was left out of the original district for reasons unknown. Only the area of significance, commerce, carries over from the original district to the boundary increase.

The St. Francisville Historic District was listed on the National Register in 1980 and expanded in 1982 under Criteria A: History, in the area of commerce, and C: Architecture for its large collection of late-18th, 19th, and 20th century architectural styles. The period of significance for the district was 1810-1930, encompassing the years that St. Francisville was first settled through the then 50-year guideline. Additional documentation has been submitted expanding the period of significance from 1790-1974 based on the city's development. This boundary increase will aim to include two more historic commercial buildings in the town that help to tell the story of St. Francisville's continued growth through 1974.

Dr. Carriker asked committee members for questions and comments. Peggy Lowe asked for clarification on the original boundaries and the boundary increase. Ms. Richardson clarified the boundaries with maps and explained the support from the community in the effort to expand the district.

Dr. Carriker opened to public comments. No comments were made.

Rebecca Saunders then moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO, and Lynn Lewis seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Closing Announcements:

Ms. Hall announced that the next National Register Review Committee meeting was scheduled for Thursday, November 21, 2024. A request for recommendations to fill the vacant seat on the committee was made. Ms. Hall asked committee members for historic resources they believe should be listed so that SHPO may provide these to students pursuing National Register projects. The 2025 meeting dates were shared with the committee.

Adjournment: 12:48 PM