

Louisiana National Register Review Committee Meeting

April 7, 2016, 1:30pm
Capitol Park Welcome
Center 702 N. River Rd
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Minutes

Chairman J. Lynn Lewis called the April 7, 2016 regular meeting of the National Register Review Committee to order at 1:32 p.m. In addition to Mr. Lewis, members present included Turry Flucker, Dr. Rebecca Saunders, Martha Saloman, John Sykes, Sue Turner, Dr. Robert Carriker, Dr. Matthew Savage, and Peggy Lowe. Kelly Rich and Tarah Arcuri were unable to attend.

Mr. Lewis asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Dr. Savage so moved, with John Sykes seconding. This motion passed unanimously.

Deputy Assistant Secretary Kristin Sanders welcomed the audience and Committee members as well and Jessica Richardson, National Register Coordinator, introduced all Review Committee members present to the audience.

Lynn Lewis asked for a motion to approve the minutes of December's meeting. Peggy Lowe so moved, with Dr. Saunders seconding. This motion passed unanimously.

Under New Business, Tax Incentives Director Alison Saunders made a short presentation updating the committee and attendees on recent tax credit projects that were also National Register nominations. Following this presentation, the Committee considered seven new National Register nominations.

Friendship CME Church, Claiborne Parish

Presented by Evelyn Lewis, nomination preparer

The Friendship Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church is located in Lisbon, Claiborne Parish, Louisiana, within a village that has historically been centered on oil and timber. Nestled among the hills of northwestern Claiborne Parish, the church has long been the focal point of the small community of African-Americans. The community itself is Friendship, so named because of the church. Built in 1933, after the previous church building was destroyed by a tornado, the new church was a wooden structure. In 1966, indoor restrooms and a kitchen were added. Aluminum siding was added in 1981 as well as new windows, set within the original window openings, and some interior cosmetic updates including paneling and carpet. The foundation, the height, the length, the width, and the overall form of the Friendship CME Church has remained the same since it was originally. Renovation was primarily done to the interior of the church and was mainly cosmetic. No further renovations to date have taken place since 1981, and its original floor plan from 1933 remains the same.¹ It is easily recognizable to past members of the Claiborne Parish Civic League, those involved in the Claiborne Parish Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, and those who grew up in Friendship. The church retains its historic integrity on both the interior and exterior and remains eligible for listing on the National Register.

The Friendship CME Church is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage: Black at the local level based on its history associated with the Civil Rights movement in Claiborne Parish. The period of significance for the church is 1965-1973 to reflect the years that the major contributions to the Claiborne Parish Civil Rights Movement occurred after being planned at the church. The church served as the only house of worship in the parish that opened its doors and welcomed local activists. The church had significant people as its members including Fred Lewis, president of the Claiborne Parish Civic League and the local Deacons of Defense chapter. Mr. Lewis had a significant impact on the community, both within Friendship and parish wide. The church is an important reminder of the Civil Rights movement that took place in Claiborne Parish as well as in north Louisiana. It not only served as an integral meeting place in the parish, but it also was the place where the Deacons for Defense Chapter was created, and was the place where many important Civil Rights

¹ George A. Kinsey. Interview with E. Lewis. October 24, 2015.

events were planned. Listing the property on the National Register will chronicle an important chapter in Claiborne Parish history and will pay homage to the brave people who fought to make better lives a possibility.

The committee asked how the old Mr. Kinsey is and Ms. Lewis responded he is around 79-80 years old. Dr. Saunders commented that the church appears to be in good shape and is the motivation for listing for tax credits or to just raise the profile. The response was that both would be great. Peggy Lowe asked about the Friendship baseball park and if it was still there and Evelyn replied that there is a baseball park today, but it is not on the same site as the historic one. There was further conversation about how important local baseball parks can be to a community.

John Sykes moved that the nomination be recommended to the State Historic Preservation Officer. Turry Flucker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Chickama, Rapides Parish

Presented by Paul Smith, nomination preparer

Situated several hundred feet off Chickamaw Road on a wooded 10 acre plot in rural south Rapides Parish, Louisiana on part of what was previously a large farm which itself had been subdivided from an even larger 19th century plantation, this two story wood frame house on brick piers is a typical early 20th century central Louisiana vernacular farm house built in 1913. The house is in good condition having been well maintained over the years and retains most of its original architectural features, namely windows, exterior and interior doors, mantles, stairs, wood trim, and finishes. Access to the house is from Chickamaw Road via a circular gravel drive flanked at the entrance by two brick columns. Despite minor floor plan alterations, Chickama retains a high degree of integrity and remains eligible for listing on the National Register.

Chickama is eligible for listing on the National Register at the local level under Criterion C: Architecture. It is significant as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the transitional Colonial Revival Style and vernacular design. In particular, Chickama is a vernacular farmhouse of the early 20th century with applied transitional Colonial Revival details. The design and form of the house relates to the earlier Queen Anne style floor plan, but the exterior details relate more to the newer Colonial Revival style (at the time). Thus, Chickama is a prima example of the transition between the two styles as applied to a vernacular farmhouse in rural Rapides Parish. The period of significance for Chickama is 1913, the date of the house's construction.

Sara Fuhrer, the owner, was in attendance and spoke in support of the nomination and she added that the house was built in 1913, not 1914. Peggy Lowe asked if it will be Ms. Fuhrer's residence and she replied that it already is. Peggy Lowe then moved that the property be recommended to the State Historic Preservation Officer and Dr. Saunders seconded. There were six yays and one nays. The motion passed.

Patterson Commercial Historic District, St. Mary Parish

Presented by Jessica Richardson, National Register Coordinator

The Patterson Commercial Historic District consists of four contributing buildings situated along both sides of Main Street. Two are bounded by the Lower Atchafalaya River on the east, on the north by Morey Park, on the south by a vacant bar, and on the west by Main Street. The other two buildings are bounded on the east with Main Street, north by an Insurance Business, on the south by a vacant lot, and on the west by residential properties from the back street. The site is flat with concrete, very little grass and a few small trees. The four commercial style buildings are all made of brick with extra accent details. The oldest building was constructed c.1895 (Hausmann Dry Goods, 1109 Main). The other buildings date from c. 1906, 1912, and 1915. Together they form the main central business district of what was once a bustling cypress lumber town of the early 1900's. One building has recently been restored leaving most of the historic architectural features intact. The other three having suffered deterioration during the years of vacancy, but they are still in good condition and are definitely easily recognizable to any person from the period of significance. Thus, they retain their National Register eligibility. There are two small buildings – two sheds behind 1110 Main Street - that are no longer standing, but do appear on current satellite images of the area.

The Patterson Commercial Historic District is locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of commerce and entertainment/recreation because it served as the commercial and entertainment center of the city. The four buildings located within the district served as banks, central businesses like a pharmacy and telegraph exchange, a post office, opera house/theater, and a dry goods store during the period of significance. The oldest building in the district dates to c. 1895 and the youngest building dates to c. 1912. The period of significance for the district dates from 1895-1935, encompassing the years that the buildings were constructed and functioned in these important roles within the city of Patterson.

There were no questions. Dr. Saunders moved that the property be recommended and Dr. Savage seconded that the property be recommended to the SHPO. The motion passed unanimously.

George Lincoln House, Plaquemines Parish

Presented by Rod and Kerry Lincoln, nomination preparers

The George Lincoln House, located in southern Plaquemines Parish, began construction in 1930 in the rural Mississippi River community of Nairn, Louisiana. The property was originally 27.7 acres with 95 feet of river front extending to the brackish water swamp of the Gulf of Mexico. The land featured about 15 acres of orange groves in front of and behind the house. George Lincoln was a third generation citrus farmer. The house was built during the Great Depression by local contractors John and Elmore Edgecombe for their childhood friends George and Marie Cognevich Lincoln. The house was damaged by Hurricane Katrina when it was floated off of its piers by 20 feet of water, but it stayed intact and was replaced on its original piers in its original place with relatively little damage done to the original historic features. One of the porch columns was rebuilt, but the exterior and interior retain many original Craftsman bungalow elements as well as integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, materials, design, and workmanship. For these reasons, it is eligible for listing on the National Register. Today, the area surrounding the house and property is still orange groves and some modern residences.

The George Lincoln House is of local significance in the area of architecture as it embodies the characteristics of the Craftsman style within Plaquemines Parish. The parish has a handful of earlier homes in the French Creole, Greek Revival, and Italianate styles, but has very few early 20th century American styled homes. Due to the parish's location on the Gulf of Mexico and Mississippi River, its historic building stock has suffered tremendously over the years due to storms and flooding. The Lincoln House is a rare survivor of the Craftsman style and retains many original features such as eave brackets, exposed rafter tails, multi-lite original wood windows, built in cabinets as interior room dividers, and wood paneled interior doors with transoms. The period of significance for the house is 1930, the date of its construction.

Martha Saloman asked about the walls and if the ventilation system Kerry described (being open from the ground to the attic) really works. Kerry responded that yes, the cool air comes in from below and the hot air goes out through the attic vents, which can be closed in the winter to keep the warm air in. Several members of the review committee complimented Kerry and Rod on their work on the house and on maintaining it in an almost original condition. They stated that was the most affordable way to rehabilitate the house and they did so in order to pass it on to Kerry's son for future care. Dr. Savage then moved that the property be recommended to the SHPO and Martha Saloman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Governor House Hotel, Orleans Parish

Presented by Harriet Swift, nomination preparer

The Governor House Motor Hotel (herein referred to as the Governor House) is a six-story motor hotel on New Orleans's most prominent street, Canal Street, and located beside the elevated Interstate 10 roadway. When it was built in 1964, the Governor House was the first motor hotel (or motel) in the downtown area, known as the Central Business District. The steel-frame building is clad in old brick and designed in the French Quarter Revival Style, making prominent use of iconic elements such as French doors, shutters, arched openings, and balconies. The French Quarter motif is an instant billboard for the hotel, inviting guests by invoking the romance and charm of New Orleans's historic past. The building's exterior has not been altered since the hotel opened in 1965. The interior has undergone periodic updating but the building's centerpiece, the four-story atrium surrounded by guestrooms, is intact. The building is almost unchanged since it opened to guests 51 years ago and is thus eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The Governor House, 1630 Canal Avenue, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the local level because of its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of American history in the area of commerce. The Governor House Motor Hotel was the first motel or motor hotel built in New Orleans's central business district and marked the end of the dominance of old-line hotels. The automobile-oriented travel of mid-century America also represented an acceleration and popularization of leisure and business travel which fueled New Orleans's tourism industry which became the city's dominant industry. The Governor House is also eligible under Criterion C, architecture, at the local level as a building that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction. The building is a strong example of the French Quarter Revival style, the local architectural response that evolved in the 1950s and 1960s as an effort to integrate new construction into the Vieux Carré and the surrounding built landscape. The Governor House was one of the first hotels of the 1960s hotel-building boom to use the historicist style in a determined effort to give the new building a clear sense of place.

Turry Flucker asked what the use of the hotel will be and Richard Choate, the architect for the project, answered that it will be reused as a hotel. Peggy Lowe commented on how it is interesting how the building is a motor hotel but in a denser urban setting. Dr. Savage provided firsthand experience about the building as he worked in historic preservation in the city in the 1980s and 1990s when this building was heavily criticized as distracting from the other mid-century modern architecture on that end of Canal Street. It was a distinct juxtaposition being designed in the French Quarter revival style. Dr. Saunders then moved that the property be recommended to the SHPO and Peggy Lowe seconded. There were six yays and one abstention. The motion passed unanimously.

Lafitte Avenue Project Buildings C-47, E-45, and #46, Orleans Parish Presented by Jessica Richardson, National Register Coordinator

Jessica Richardson started the presentation off by stating that the Review Committee had already seen this nomination at the last meeting, but that NPS had asked for the criterion to be changed from A to C, architecture. Thus, the nomination has only been changed in Section 8, to reflect this different criterion.

The Lafitte Avenue Project Buildings C-47, E-45, and #46 of the former Lafitte Avenue Project are located on 1.1 acres of the original 27.2-acre site adjacent to three National Register Historic Districts (NRHD) – Esplanade Ridge, Mid-City, and Parkview. The development, now named *Faubourg Lafitte*, is bounded by Lafitte Avenue (formerly Carondelet Walk), Orleans Avenue, North Claiborne Avenue, and North Rocheblave Street. The Lafitte Avenue Project Buildings C-47, E-45, and #46, completed in 1941 in the utilitarian style, are located on the same block, situated along Lafitte Avenue. The two former residential buildings and former administration building feature brick exteriors, tile side-gable roofs, brick chimneys, and porches with wrought iron columns and railing with ornamental grillwork, distinctive characteristics of the high-density urban subtype as defined in Section F of the *United States Housing Authority (USHA)-funded Public Housing in Louisiana, 1935-1950 Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF)*.² Although the overall site has experienced extensive demolition, Buildings C-47, E-45, and #46 remain eligible for National Register listing as they retain the architectural and historic character of USHA-funded urban public housing buildings in Louisiana built between 1929 and 1950.

The Lafitte Avenue Project Buildings C-47, E-45, and #46 are of local significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The three remaining buildings of the original Lafitte Avenue Housing Project in Orleans Parish are appropriate, intact examples of the high-density urban subtype as defined in Section F of the *United States Housing Authority (USHA)-funded Public Housing in Louisiana, 1935-1950 Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF)*. The Lafitte Avenue Project Buildings have direct association with the historic context developed as part of the MPDF and individually meet the requirements set forth in the MPDF building subtype, High-Density Urban. Buildings C-47, E-45, and #46 represent the purpose-built USHA-funded public housing buildings designed in the utilitarian style “to serve the need of the submerged middle class, who were temporarily outside of the labor market during the Depression.”³ The three extant buildings retain their original architectural

² National Register of Historic Places, USHA-funded Public Housing in Louisiana 1929-1950, Louisiana (MPDF), National Register #14000692, Section F page 20-27.

³ National Register of Historic Places, USHA-funded Public Housing in Louisiana 1929-1950, Louisiana (MPDF), National Register

composition and materials, such as brick exteriors, tile side-gable roofs, brick chimneys, and porches with wrought iron columns and railing with ornamental grillwork, all characteristics described in the MPDF. The period of significance is 1940 to 1941, the dates of construction.

Dr. Savage added comments concerning public housing projects in New Orleans and their history, which started off positive for the first decade or so, but then declined after that. Martha Saloman asked why so many of these projects have been demolished rather than rehabilitated. Jessica Richardson stated that in her understanding, there were many political, and mostly social, motivations to demolishing the buildings, with Turry Flucker agreed with. Turry offered further commentary on the history of these developments and their history within the city of New Orleans.

Dr. Savage moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO and Peggy Lowe seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

ODECO Building, Orleans Parish

Presented by John Camp and Beth Jacob, nomination preparers

The fourteen-story office building located on the corner of Canal and South Robertson streets in downtown New Orleans was constructed between 1966 and 1969 for local developer William P. Bosworth, Jr. The structure was named the ODECO Building for its lead tenant, the Ocean Drilling & Exploration Company, which leased office space on the upper floors of the building until 1993. The building was designed by New Orleans architect Paul Mouton; his brother, William J. Mouton, Jr., served as the structural engineer. The building's structural system consisted of a steel frame with hollow-core precast concrete floors, while the foundation system incorporated an innovative type of precast concrete piling known as "Brunspiles". Despite minor alterations to the ground floor, the building's original façade remains largely intact. It features an aluminum and glass curtain wall, set within white metal-clad columns that clearly articulate the building's 3- by 5-bay organization and rectangular massing. The building's appearance is generally representative of the late International Style, although the three stucco-clad arches projecting from the base and penthouse levels on the Canal Street elevation suggest a New Formalism influence.

The ODECO Building is locally significant under Criterion C, in the area of engineering, because it is considered to be an important work by the structural engineer William J. Mouton, Jr. (1931-2001). Mouton, who was based in New Orleans, was nationally recognized for his achievements in the areas of tall building foundation design; precast concrete building systems and components; and the design of steel truss systems, spaceframes, and domes. The ODECO Building is significant in that it embodies three key themes that characterized Mouton's work. First, it is an excellent example of the efficient and economical construction for which Mouton was well known; second, it is an important example of Mouton's early experimentation with precast concrete building components; and third, it represents an early use of Brunspile foundations, which Mouton pioneered in his work on the Plaza Tower. Additionally, while Mouton worked on a range of building types, from domed arenas to parking garages, he only designed two high-rise office towers: the ODECO Building, and the previously mentioned 45-story Plaza Tower. The ODECO Building's period of significance extends from 1966, when the building was announced, to 1969, when construction was completed.

Lynn Lewis asked about the concrete flooring planks and if they were indeed hollow. John answered that yes, they are hollow block and plank construction. Lynn further asked if the building ever collapsed. Harriet Swift, presenter of the Governor House nomination, commented that the Governor House suffered a partial collapse, not ODECO. Dr. Savage asked about the intended purpose of the rehabilitation of the building and John Campo responded, with insight from the developer in the audience, that it will be a dual branded hotel. Dr. Carriker asked what it meant to be a master engineer as compared to a master architect and it that meant he held a lot of patents, etc. Jessica Richardson added that this was new territory so like a master architect, an engineer could be considered a master for their work in the field. John Campo also added that yes, Mr. Mouton, the engineer, held at least 20 patents for engineering inventions.

Dr. Savage moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO and Turry Flucker seconded. There were six yays and one abstention.

After the last presentation, Jessica Richardson announced that all of the December nominations have been approved.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:51 p.m.