

## Louisiana National Register Review Committee Meeting

April 4, 2019, 11:00AM  
Capitol Park Welcome Center  
702 N. River Rd  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

### Minutes

Chairman Lynn Lewis called the April 4, 2019, regular meeting of the National Register Review Committee to order at 11:05AM. In addition to Mr. Lewis, members present included Ava Allmont, Tarah Arcuri, Dr. Robert Carriker, Guy Carwile, Peggy Lowe, Martha Salomon, and John Sykes.

Mr. Lewis asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Peggy Lowe so moved and Guy Carwile seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Nicole Hobson-Morris welcomed the members of the public to the meeting and did a general announcement concerning updates within the Division of Historic Preservation. She also introduced Emily Ardoin, the new National Register Coordinator.

Mr. Lewis asked for a motion to approve the minutes from December's meeting. Mr. Sykes so moved and Ms. Arcuri seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Nicole Hobson-Morris welcomed the audience and committee members to the meeting. She also introduced all of the committee members.

Under New Business, 4 nominations were presented to the committee.

#### Ruston Power & Light Plant, Lincoln Parish

Presented by Kristi Lumpkin, nomination preparer

The Ruston Power and Light Plant was first constructed in 1900 and expanded in 1939-41, 1959, and 1968 and includes three contributing buildings and one non-contributing structure. The original power plant building retains a central c. 1900 section and a 1959 and 1968 wing. The 1930-49 meter house is perhaps the most highly detailed building architecturally on the property despite also being the smallest. There is also a 1940-41 warehouse and a 1959 reservoir that held water for the plant. The property sits just north of the railroad that runs through the center of Ruston and just a few blocks outside of the Downtown Ruston Commercial National Register Historic District. The buildings and reservoir are all over 50 years old and retain many original features including exterior brickwork, windows, doors, and overall layout. The resources are very industrial in nature and retain a good degree of integrity. Thus, they are eligible for listing on the National Register.

The Ruston Power and Light Plant is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of industry for its association with the history of electric power and running water in Ruston and the city's growth during the first half of the 20th century. It is the primary historic site in the parish associated with electric power. The power plant on the site was Ruston's primary electric generator from 1900 until 1973, at which time the city's demand outgrew the plant's capacity, and the nominated plant became vacant. During that time, the power and light plant was integral to the city's power system. The period of significance begins in 1900, when the power plant was built, and ends in 1968, the fifty-year cut-off.

Peggy Lowe asked who will be responsible for the maintenance of the plant going forward. Kristi stated that the City of Ruston currently still owns the plant; however, DEQ remediation is ongoing, and the city has a letter of intent from a potential purchaser. Lynn Lewis asked if the million-gallon reservoir replaced the 100,000-gallon reservoir in the same location. Ms. Lumpkin and Brian Davis of the Louisiana Trust, also in attendance, said they believe it did. Mr. Lewis requested that the 3 maps in the nomination be oriented the same way in the final submission. Ms. Lumpkin stated that could be done. Mr. Lewis also asked whether any historic photos were

found. Ms. Lumpkin and Brian Davis both stated that they were unable to find any historic photos in various resources, including period newspaper articles. Mr. Davis noted that period descriptions of the plant appeared to focus more on the function and capacity than on the design of the building. Gabrielle Begue, also in attendance, noted that she had a similar experience when completing prior research for the Baton Rouge Power Plant. Guy Carwile requested that the original name of Louisiana Tech University in the nomination be corrected to Louisiana Industrial Institute. Mr. Carwile also requested that the description of the "X brick pattern" be revised to "diagonal brick pattern comprised of headers of contrasting colors." Mr. Carwile also requested that the photos in the nomination be labeled and that the exterior photos be larger. Mr. Carwile asked about the intent of the potential purchaser of the building. Ms. Lumpkin stated that the purchaser intends to convert the main building into residential use with mixed-use retail elsewhere on the property.

Guy Carwile then moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO and Dr. Carriker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### Claiborne Cottage Hotel, St. Tammany Parish

Presented by Gabrielle Begue, nomination preparer

The Claiborne Cottage Hotel occupies a wooded, 7.3-acre site on the east bank of the Bogue Falaya River across from downtown Covington, St. Tammany Parish, in an area that was historically part of the Town of Claiborne. The property consists of 2 contributing resources: a 2-story brick masonry building that was constructed in 1818-19 as the St. Tammany Parish Courthouse and converted into Claiborne Cottage Hotel in 1880; and a 1-story wood-frame cottage constructed c. 1889 as part of the hotel's expansion. Both buildings are currently vacant and/or used for storage. One non-contributing resource, the 2-story Chimes-Covington Restaurant, was constructed in 2012 approximately 100 feet northwest of the hotel. Claiborne Cottage Hotel was established in this rural, river-adjacent setting as a health resort during the height of St. Tammany's era as a health tourism destination, known as the "Ozone Belt," which capitalized on the area's piney, "ozone"-laden air and artesian spring water as a cure for all ills. The hotel's success soon led to the construction of several other buildings on the site, including the c. 1889 cottage; the others are no longer extant due to fire or demolition. Despite the construction of the restaurant and the paving of some sections of the site for parking, the setting still conveys the bucolic feel that drew tourists to the hotel for more than four decades. The hotel building and cottage were updated to serve as a private residence in the 1940s, and the cottage was expanded with rear additions, but both buildings remain recognizable from the period of significance as defined in this document and are eligible for listing in the National Register.

The Claiborne Cottage Hotel property in Covington, St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana, is eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion A in the areas of commerce and health/medicine as an important and rare survivor of the resorts associated with St. Tammany Parish's history as the "Ozone Belt," a health tourism destination that garnered national attention and contributed significantly to the local economy in the late 19th and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. At its zenith, the Ozone Belt contained numerous resorts of varying size and specialization, with the majority located in or near Covington and Abita Springs. Claiborne Cottage Hotel was among the most prominent and enduring of these resorts, and it is one of only five confirmed to have survived into the present day. As such, Claiborne Cottage Hotel is not only any important example of a resort from the Ozone Belt era, but also one of the very few resources remaining in the parish to communicate this major period in the parish's history. The period of significance begins in 1880, when the former courthouse building on the property was converted into a hotel, and ends in 1930, when the hotel is presumed to have closed.

Gabrielle Begue noted that potential future plans for the property include a restaurant operated by the Chimes owners in the cottage and an event venue in the main building. Guy Carwile requested clarity in the labels on the additions to the cottage on sheet SK1.0 included in the nomination draft. Dr. Carriker asked whether any other similar health resort buildings in the area are already listed on the National Register. Ms. Begue stated that the Southern Hotel in Covington and a few others are contributing buildings in existing National Register districts, but she is not aware of any other individually listed properties. Lynn Lewis asked if all of the related health resorts in this period were located in Covington. Ms. Begue stated that they were located throughout St. Tammany Parish. Guy Carwile asked for clarification on the long, linear building in historic images. Ms. Begue stated that this building was lost to fire in 1912 and that it was the main building of the hotel when it stood;

however, the hotel was established in the extant courthouse building. Liz Dyer Spedale of DNA Workshop, an architect working with Ms. Begue on plans for the property, was also in attendance.

John Sykes then moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO and Dr. Carriker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Non-Residential Mid-Century Modern Architecture of Baton Rouge Multiple Property Submission, East Baton Rouge Parish + 233 Ferdinand Street, East Baton Rouge Parish

Presented by Gabrielle Begue, nomination preparer

The “Non-Residential Mid-Century Modern Architecture in Baton Rouge, 1945–1975” Multiple Property Documentation form incorporates shared historical themes, patterns, and trends for historic properties within three tiered contexts:

- I. The Modern Architecture Movement in the United States, 1920–1975
- II. Non-Residential Modern Architecture in Louisiana, 1930-1975
- III. Non-Residential Mid-Century Modern Architecture in Baton Rouge, 1945–1975

This nomination is based on the outcome of a student-led survey of 114 Mid-century Modern buildings completed in Summer 2016 under the supervision of Jessica Richardson, National Register Coordinator, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation. Particular attention was given to buildings at imminent risk of demolition. This survey was not intended to be exhaustive but serves as the basis for this multiple-property submission.

Mid-century Modernism extolled a radically new approach to architecture through design, structure, and materials that intersected with the distinct freshness and forward-looking energy of post-World War II culture. These characteristics and qualities are conveyed in Baton Rouge’s non-residential Mid-Century Modern architecture, which exhibits minimalist and innovative forms, essential structure, new materials, and functional design. These buildings, including commercial/trade buildings, banks, civic buildings, schools, hotels, doctors’ offices, churches, and theaters, are products of events, trends, and individuals that shaped Mid-century Modernism in Baton Rouge.

The historic context for the “Non-Residential Mid-Century Modern Architecture in Baton Rouge, 1945–1975” multiple property submission possesses a local level of significance, and individual properties may be significant at the national, state, or local level. Each of the three historic contexts begins at a date specific to that context and ends in 1975, marking the increasing presence of Postmodernism.

Constructed in 1958-59, the Courthouse Office Building at 233 St. Ferdinand Street in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, is a 2-story triangular office building occupying a triangular block in the Beauregard Town neighborhood of downtown Baton Rouge. It was designed by local architectural firm Wilson & Coleman in the Mid-century Modern style and is constructed of steel and concrete with a uniform blond-brick veneer. The building is bordered by St. Ferdinand Street to the west, Somerulos Street to the east, and Louisiana Avenue to the south, and sits adjacent to the East Baton Rouge Parish Courthouse (1923), the 1970s-era civic and River Center complex, and several other municipal- and state-government facilities which it was intended to serve. Past tenants include a variety of law offices and other professional and government services, including, most recently, the offices of the East Baton Rouge District Attorney. The building is currently vacant. The exterior remains virtually unchanged since its construction. Similar to many other Mid-century Modern office buildings, the building’s interior was designed to accommodate a variety of tenant build-outs, but the primary historic interior spaces, including the entrance lobby, corridors, elevators, and stairwells, are intact. Because of its high degree of integrity, the Courthouse Office Building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Courthouse Office Building is significant at the local level under Criterion C in the area of architecture because it embodies key characteristics of the Modern movement as it manifested in Baton Rouge in the post-World War II period. It is directly associated with the historic context “Non-residential Mid-century Modern

Architecture in Baton Rouge, 1945-1975” and meets the registration requirements of Property Subtype – Commercial Buildings found in Section F of the MPS cover. The period of significance is 1959, when the building was placed in service.

Ms. Begue noted that the Arts Council of Baton Rouge will be the future occupant of the building. John Sykes asked if the floor finish in the hall was added later. Ms. Begue stated that believed it was added later. Guy Carwile requested that plans include the structural steel columns because the Statement of Significance mentions steel framing as a key characteristic under Criterion C. Mr. Carwile also requested that the relationship between the exterior reveals on the building and the column grid, if their locations do correspond to one another, be noted in the architectural description.

Regarding the Multiple-Property Documentation Form, Mr. Carwile requested that Richard Neutra, Rudolph Schindler, and Erich Mendelsohn be included as influences. He also requested clarification in the architectural description about structural glass vs. opaque glass and that “butt windows” be changed to “butt-glazed windows.” Mr. Carwile asked if a map would be included to show the distribution of the surveyed buildings. Ms. Begue stated that there was no intention to complete a map because of time constraints, current availability of the students who completed the survey, and to avoid confusion because the list is not exhaustive.

Peggy Lowe asked for confirmation that 1969 is the correct construction date for the Chase Bank south tower shown in the presentation. Nicole Hobson-Morris stated that the north tower of the building was constructed in 1980, and the south tower was constructed in 1969. Ms. Lowe inquired about the process for individual buildings to be listed under the MPS. Ms. Hobson-Morris explained that the MPS provides the historic context for individual nominations, and individual nominations must show that the properties meet the registration requirements outlined in the MPS. Ms. Lowe asked if any buildings that would fall under this MPS are already listed individually. Ms. Begue stated that the MPS includes a list of several related buildings that are listed individually and that some others are already included in historic districts.

Tarah Arcuri then moved that the *Non-Residential Mid-Century Modern Architecture of Baton Rouge* MPS nomination be recommended to the SHPO and Peggy Lowe seconded. The motion passed unanimously. John Sykes moved that the 233 Ferdinand nomination be recommended to the SHPO and Dr. Carriker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Nicole Hobson-Morris introduced Carrie Broussard, the new Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Office of Cultural Development.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:49AM.