

Louisiana National Register Review Committee Meeting

April 23, 2014 1:00pm
First Floor Conference Room, State Library of Louisiana
701 North Fourth Street
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Minutes

Acting Chairperson Mr. Gary Cooper called the April 23, 2014 meeting of the National Register Review Committee to order at 1:07 p.m. In addition to Mr. Cooper, members present included John Sykes, Mrs. Sue Turner, Mrs. Peggy Lowe, Dr. Matthew Savage, and Mrs. Martha Salomon.

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

National Register Coordinator Jessica Richardson then introduced all Review Committee members present to the audience.

Division of Historic Preservation Director Nicole Hobson-Morris welcomed the audience and Committee members, and she then recognized that this meeting would be Mr. Cooper's last meeting. She read a proclamation from the Lieutenant Governor honoring Mr. Cooper and his service to the National Register Review Committee.

Mr. Cooper asked for a motion to approve the minutes of November's meeting. Dr. Savage so moved, with Mr. Sykes seconding. This motion passed unanimously.

Under New Business, the Committee considered eight National Register nominations.

Arcadia Colored High School Historic District, Bienville Parish

Presented by Laura Ewen Blokker, Southeast Preservation and nomination preparer

The Arcadia Colored High School Historic District consists of four contributing buildings set on approximately 4.6 acres bounded by Crawford Avenue on the west and Napoleon Street on the east and is located on 6th Street in Arcadia, Bienville Parish, Louisiana. The site is flat and grassy with a scattering of mature oak trees. The four buildings are nondescript, one-story, brick and concrete block educational facilities of the 1940s – 1950s. The earliest building was constructed c. 1942 and the other three were built in the 1950s with the last completed c. 1955. Together, they form the remainder of what was once a denser school campus. They have suffered some deterioration during years of vacancy, but would be easily recognizable to any alumni or person familiar with the Arcadia Colored High School (formerly known as Bienville Parish Training School and later known as Crawford High School) during the period of significance. Thus, they retain their National Register eligibility. There are no non-contributing elements.

The Arcadia Colored High School Historic District is locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of education and ethnic heritage because it provided very important educational opportunities for African Americans within the Bienville Parish region. Most significantly, it was the first and for many years, only school in Bienville Parish to offer secondary education for African American students. As the Bienville Parish Training School and later, the Arcadia Colored High School/ Crawford High School, it provided students with a well-rounded educational foundation that enabled them to progress to college and pursue many different professions. The campus' oldest building has a period of significance commencing with its construction c. 1942 and terminating fifty years ago, in 1964. The three younger buildings that date to the Arcadia Colored High School era have a period of significance beginning with the c. 1951 construction date of the classroom and administrative building and also terminating in 1964.

Mr. Cooper asked if there were any questions or comments from the audience or review committee. There were none. Mr. Sykes then moved that the candidate be recommended to the State Historic Preservation Officer. Dr. Savage seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Northwestern State University Historic District, Natchitoches Parish

Presented by Tom Whitehead and Andrew Ferrell, NSU and NCPTT and nomination preparers

Located in the community of Natchitoches in Natchitoches Parish, Northwestern State University (NSU) of Louisiana currently has a small collection of National Register-listed properties. Its Normal Hill Historic District achieved listing in 1980 due to the architectural designs of its oldest historic buildings and their role as the first major state-supported Normal school for the preparation of teachers. Normal Hill contained the oldest portion of the university's campus and consisted of three large buildings set around a quadrangle and three monumental Greek Revival columns surviving from an earlier building. The University's 1927 President's Home, located on University Parkway approximately 400 feet northwest of the columns, and its 1923 Women's Gymnasium received individual Register listings in 1984 in recognition of their architectural designs. The creation of this new district, called the Northwestern State University Historic District, will include the original 1980 Normal Hill Historic District and the two individually listed properties. The purposes of this new submission are fourfold:

1. To update the original Normal Hill Historic District nomination to reflect the loss of an important contributing resource.
2. To increase the boundaries of the existing district to accurately catalog the historic resources on the university campus.
3. To expand the district's period of significance to reflect the continued educational role of the campus from 1884 to 1955.
4. To recognize the significance of the architecture of the oldest buildings on the campus.

The Northwestern State University (NSU) Historic District is significant under Criterion A at the state level in the area of education. During the period of significance from 1884, the date the institution was established, to 1921, the year the school changed from strictly being a teacher's college to offering other degree programs, Northwestern played an important role as the first state-supported Normal School for the preparation of teachers as well as providing secondary, post-secondary and technical education all on the same campus. The campus was the first opportunity for public higher education west of the Mississippi River in Louisiana and also allowed many women to have their first access to training to become public school teachers. The district is also significant under Criterion C at the local level in the area of architecture. The proposed district includes the largest concentration of architect-designed buildings, structures, and sites in the city of Natchitoches as well as areas of campus that were designed by landscape architects. The buildings in the district display styles that reflect national trends in architectural styles at the time these buildings were constructed with some adaptations to fit with the existing styles on campus or with local building traditions. The period of significance ranges from 1913, the date of the oldest surviving building, to 1955, the end of the final major building campaign's construction. During the period of significance, NSU played an important role as the first major state supported Normal School for the preparation of teachers as well as providing secondary and technical education all on the same campus.

Mr. Cooper asked if there were any questions from the audience; there were none. Mrs. Lowe asked if the photos shown in the presentation were all of contributing buildings. Mr. Whitehead responded that the photos shown included the entire inventory of the district and included the non-contributing buildings as well. There were no other questions from the review committee.

Mrs. Turner then moved that the property be recommended to the State Historic Preservation Officer and Dr. Savage seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Noble Building, Calcasieu Parish

Presented by Lauren Harrell, architect and nomination preparer

The building owners, Rick and Donna Richard, were in attendance in support of the nomination.

The 1919 Noble Building is a two-story masonry commercial edifice with a rectangular plan and a flat roof. Constructed of load-bearing masonry, the primary façade is finished with unpainted buff brick and decorative brick panels above the windows. The roof is covered in asphalt roll roofing. Situated in downtown Lake Charles (Calcasieu Parish), Louisiana, next door to City Hall, the Noble Building is centered on the south side of a commercial block facing north on Pujoe Street. Although interior alterations have occurred in a portion of the ground floor commercial space, the building retains much of its architectural and historic integrity both inside and out and remains eligible for National Register listing.

The Noble Building is locally significant under Criterion B in the area of engineering because of its close association with Elmer E. Shutts, the first engineer for the Port of Lake Charles, which is one of the driving forces behind the industrial economy that thrived in Lake Charles during the historic period and beyond. Industrial operations replaced the lumber trade as the economic engine of Calcasieu Parish in the late 1920's and early 1930's and continues today as the main economic generator in the area. Elmer Shutts maintained his business, F. Shutts & Sons, in the lower floor of the Noble Building from c. 1937 until his retirement in 1967. The engineering firm continued in the building until 1975.

Mrs. Richardson added that the first office building of Mr. Shutts is gone and the house he lived in with his family has been significantly altered. Additionally, the Noble Building is the building where he made his contributions to the port itself. Additionally, in doing the research for this nomination, no other port employee served as long as Mr. Shutts. In trying to compare the contributions Shutts made, all other port employees tended to stay for just a couple years and move on, but Shutts' contract was continually renewed.

Mr. Cooper asked if there were any questions or comments from the audience or the review committee. Mr. Cooper wanted to add that the Richards own several other buildings that have been listed on the National Register as well as have been rehabilitated with tax incentives including the Cash Grocery in Lake Charles and the Calcasieu Marine Bank. Gary also asked the Richards if they knew Elmer Shutts in person. They did not, but they did know some of his descendants. Mr. A.C. Boudier, an audience member, added that he knew Elmer Shutts and that he was also on the board of directors of the bank in Lake Charles. Mr. Shutts made so many contributions besides his contributions at the port and was a very humble man. Mrs. Lower asked if there are any buildings associated with the Port that are named after Mr. Shutts and Ms. Harrell added that over the course of time, the Port formed its own engineering department and in doing so, Mr. Shutts name was lost. Mrs. Richard added that in doing research on this property at the Port office, they actually found the first paycheck Mr. Shutts ever received from the Port and it was framed at the office. They have taken a photo of it and plan to use it during the renovation of the building, which will be mixed use and include commercial spaces on the first floor and residences on the second floor. No walls on the second floor will be moved, but will be incorporated into the residential design.

Mrs. Saloman moved that the property be recommended and Mrs. Turner seconded that the candidate be recommended to the SHPO, which passed unanimously.

Dr. Louis A. Ducros House, St. Bernard Parish

Presented by Yolita Rausche, James Crouch, and William Hyland, nomination preparers

Set back from live oak-lined Bayou Road in the incorporated village of St. Bernard in southeastern St. Bernard Parish, the Dr. Louis A. Ducros House is a single story Creole cottage dating from the end of the 18th century. The original story and a half *briquette entre poteaux* structure, with its two wood frame one story additions, is clad with cypress siding. The rear gabled addition was originally a separate kitchen building with an integral gallery supported by chamfered columns. Located on the site settled by Los Islenos settlers from the Canary Islands between 1779 and 1783, this building, which received an addition and some updates c. 1909, survived intact until suffering damage in 2005 from Hurricane Katrina. A rehabilitation project in 2009 helped to restore many of the original elements of the building and today, the Ducros House displays a decidedly Creole identity and conveys significance part of the architectural patrimony of Isleño culture in St. Bernard Parish. Because of this strong cultural identity, the Ducros house is eligible for listing on the National Register.

The Ducros House is nominated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B under Health/Medicine at the local level for its association with Dr. Louis A. Ducros. Dr. Ducros was a prominent

physician in the 20th century history of St. Bernard Parish, who made significant contributions in the field of public health while living in and practicing out of the nominated property from 1909 until his death in 1945.

Mrs. Richardson added that even though there have been some changes to the building, Dr. Ducros' office and waiting room remain intact and these are the important spaces of the house. Additionally, Dr. Ducros was important in researching and implementing ways to prevent epidemics within the state and worked at stopping the spread and effects of yellow fever epidemics in St. Bernard Parish. At a time when many nearby cities were losing hundreds to thousands of lives to fever, not one St. Bernard resident died of yellow fever, thanks in part to Dr. Ducros' efforts.

Mr. Cooper asked if there were any questions or comments from the audience or the review committee. Dr. Savage asked if the 1974 renovation of the house into a library affected the exterior at all. Mr. Hyland responded that the exterior has remained as it was when Dr. Ducros was living there. Dr. Savage further asked about the damage done to the house during Hurricane Katrina. Mr. Hyland responded that there was lots of flooding to the house, but it didn't really damage the historic fabric and the historic fabric was not lost. This was the first time St. Bernard Parish had been hit by an actual hurricane; the parish had flooded before, but had not been directly hit by a hurricane like it was by Katrina. Dr. Savage asked that we add a photo of the Katrina damage as a figure to the nomination to help show the integrity of the building. Mrs. Richardson noted this and will do so.

Mrs. Lowe then moved that the candidate be recommended to the SHPO and Dr. Savage seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

A break followed the Ducros House discussion.

International Trade Mart, Orleans Parish

Presented by Jessica Richardson, National Register Coordinator

Constructed between 1964 and 1967, the International Trade Mart is a 33-story cruciform-shaped skyscraper standing on an irregularly shaped block at the foot of Canal Street where it meets the Mississippi River in downtown New Orleans (Orleans Parish). The building is in a commercial area and straddles the line between the French Quarter and the Central Business District. It is adjacent to the Port of New Orleans, to the Public Belt Railroad tracks, and has easy access to major traffic arteries. The reinforced concrete building's exterior is sheathed in precast concrete aggregate panels and glass windows. The concrete panels have vertical fins on their edges that project slightly from the surface to hold horizontal aluminum louvers to shade the windows. The style of the building is International Style. Although it is vacant, the building has undergone few exterior or interior changes and retains a high degree of exterior and interior integrity. The building's significance under Criterion A: History, in the area of events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, and exceptional significance under Criteria Consideration G is explained in the appropriate section of this document.

Although not fifty years of age, the International Trade Mart (ITM) qualifies for the National Register under Criteria A and C. The ITM was conceived and built to stimulate and promote international trade through the port of New Orleans. The building illuminates and reinforces the selection in 1718 of the site for New Orleans for its potential as a trading post and maritime port. Over the following centuries, international trade built New Orleans. The ITM building provided a headquarters for commercial and trade organizations, foreign consulates, maritime law firms, shipping companies, and diplomatic and trade related meetings and functions. Begun in 1964 and completed in 1967, the ITM played a major role in the growth and commercial activity of the port. Its purpose and significance is underlined by its prestigious site in the heart of New Orleans at the center of the port and in its accessibility to the city's business and cultural districts. In order to highlight New Orleans as one of the nation's foremost ports for international commerce and the crossroads of trade between the nation's interior and the world, master architect Edward Durell Stone gave the building a cruciform shape with four wings pointing to the four corners of the world. The building's setting and shape illustrate and symbolize its function as well as the city's role as a center for global trade. The symbolic importance of the ITM to the port and to the city of New Orleans cannot be over-estimated. The building was meant as a milestone to commemorate past growth and as a tool to stimulate future growth. Additionally, it is an impressive example of Edward Durell Stone's mature work. For these reasons, the building is eligible for listing at the local level under

Criteria Consideration G: exceptional significance. The period of significance encompasses the design and construction of the building.

Richardson discussed how the National Park Service returned the nomination from November and asked that the SHPO add in significance under Criterion C for architecture as Edward Durell Stone is considered a master architect and this building represents a fine example of his later work. Additionally, NPS asked that we expand the boundaries to include Spanish Plaza, which was part of the original design of the building and site. Dr. Savage asked if this would affect Spanish Plaza in any way. Mrs. Richardson said, no, as both are still city owned. He asked why NPS is requiring this and Richardson stated that it is because Spanish Plaza is part of the original, historic boundaries.

Mr. Cooper asked if there were any questions or comments from the audience or the review committee. There were no other questions. Mr. Sykes then moved that the candidate be recommended to the SHPO and Dr. Savage seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Nathaniel C., Jr., and Frances Curtis House, Orleans Parish

Presented by Lindsey Derrington, nomination preparer

The Nathaniel C., Jr. and Frances Curtis House (hereafter referred to as the Curtis House) stands at 6161 Marquette Place in the Audubon neighborhood of Uptown New Orleans, Louisiana. Nathaniel C. Curtis, Jr., FAIA, of the firm Curtis & Davis, designed the New Formalist house for his personal residence between 1959 and 1962 and it was completed in 1963. It consists of three flat-roofed, steel-framed pavilions connected by a low gallery and enclosed on three sides by an exterior brick wall. Interior living space totals approximately 4,100 square feet, not including a carport/storage wing. The pavilions have steel colonnades of wide-flange columns joined by round-arched steel channels on their north and south facades, which in turn support thick wooden roof joists that run through their interiors. Two one-story front pavilions contain the building's public spaces, with north and south facades framed in wood and glass curtain walls with sliding doors opening onto patios at each end. All other brick and stuccoed exterior walls run below large clerestories that wrap around the front pavilions' exteriors. The design of these pavilions emphasizes interior-exterior transitions, and all walls are painted white to reflect as much natural light as possible. Their interiors are delineated by wood-framed partitions which align with exterior walls, and most rooms feature original wooden casework and built-in furnishings. The depressed two-story rear pavilion, faced in stucco and brick, contains seven bedrooms and sparser fenestration. Its second story features extensive casework throughout though the drywall and casework on its lower story have been removed due to flood damage. Bathrooms on both floors retain their original colored tile work. The Curtis House retains high integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Designed by architect Nathaniel C. Curtis, Jr., for his family and completed in 1963, it is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The building is an excellent example of high style modern residential architecture in New Orleans and represents a maturation of the residential work of Curtis & Davis, of which Curtis was partner. Curtis & Davis was one of New Orleans' most important modernist firms of the mid-20th century, with a diverse portfolio including everything from award-winning schools to monumental civic landmarks. Its work was heavily rooted in regionalism, a design philosophy in which vernacular building practices and devices were adapted to the modern idiom. Curtis & Davis drew from New Orleans' architectural antecedents and sought to integrate its houses with existing landscapes, preoccupations embodied in the Curtis House, the firm's last residential design. The building consists of three flat-roofed pavilions opening onto four patios within an exterior brick wall. Clerestories and glass curtain walls flood interiors with natural light and enhance transparency between indoor and outdoor spaces. Graceful steel colonnades and a neutral color palette show the influences of New Formalism, while Curtis openly modeled the house after the inward-facing creole architecture of the city's French Quarter. The period of significance is 1963, the date of the Curtis House's construction.

Mr. Cooper asked if there were any questions or comments from the audience or the review committee. Mr. Sykes asked if the neighboring yellow house seen in photos in the presentation is considered offensive as compared to the Curtis House. Mrs. Derrington responded that it all comes down to a matter of taste, but that the neighboring house is a later, more modern house that is not architect designed. Mrs. Lowe asked how

many owners have lived in the house. Mrs. Derrington answered that Mrs. Curtis actually just moved out last year and the house was sold in December to the current owner, Mr. Lee Ledbetter, who is in attendance today in support of the nomination. In addition to Mr. Ledbetter, three of Curtis' children, Nell, David, and Stella are also in attendance and support the nomination as a honor to their father's legacy.

Dr. Savage moved that the candidate be recommend to the SHPO, and Mr. Sykes seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Pythian Temple, Orleans Parish

Presented by Wayne Troyer, architect

Located in what was considered in 1909 as the "heart" of the city of New Orleans and today is the central business district, the Pythian Temple is an eight story commercial style building constructed of steel, iron, brick, terra cotta, and cement. The buildings wide, high arched windows, greek key frieze, grand entrances and elaborate cornice made it a very grand building in its day. Originally seven stories tall, the building was typical of an early high rise commercial building featuring a flat roof, projecting cornice, and a height of between six and twenty stories. In 1923, the Colored Order of the Knights of Pythias celebrated paying off their debts by enclosing the roof and adding the eighth floor and its mezzanine to the top of the building. In 1957, the building was again altered with the addition of aluminum cladding placed on the exterior and a matching cladded addition (non-contributing) was added in 1961. This cladding was removed from the Pythian Temple in December of 2013 revealing that original features to the building did remain, including its arched windows at the second and tenth floors, original window openings, and decorative brick work at the second and seventh floors, remain. Despite the alterations made to the building in the 1950s and 1960s, the building in its stripped down condition still retains the grandeur of the proportions, the unique placement of windows, and the detailed brick work. These characteristics are in striking contrast to the modern structures that surround it. The Pythian Temple retains the historic integrity and look of the period of significance when it was occupied by the Colored Order of the Knights of Pythias from 1909-1941.

The Pythian Temple is significant under Criterion A in the area of social history and ethnic heritage: black, at the national level. The Colored Knights of Pythias, an international organization, chartered at the behest of President Lincoln and Congress to heal the wounds and discord after the Civil War, placed the cornerstone of the Pythian Temple June 4, 1909. The Pythian Temple is important to African American history in New Orleans and in the United States, as it served social and business needs to the black community in New Orleans.

Mr. Cooper added that he worked next door to this building for six years and had no idea the historic building was underneath the slipcover. He then asked if there were any questions or comments from the audience or review committee. Dr. Savage asked what was left of the Parisian Garden on the top floor. Mr. Troyer responded that there are the barrel vaults on the ceiling and parts of the mezzanine remaining. A member of the audience, Mrs. Yolita Rausche (presented on the Ducros House) asked what the building will be reused as. Mr. Troyer responded that it will be a mixed used development and that there is an adjoining building which will be incorporated. Dr. Savage asked if that building is part of the nomination. Mrs. Richardson added that it is part of the nomination, but is considered non-contributing.

Dr. Savage moved that the candidate be recommend to the SHPO, and Mrs. Lowe seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Schweggmann Bros. Giant Supermarket No. 1, Orleans Parish

Presented by Marc Robert, owner

The Schweggmann Brothers Giant Supermarket Number 1, located at 2222 St. Claude Avenue on the edge of the Faubourg Marigny National Register Historic District, is a simple, rectilinear single story masonry building with no architectural style. Devoid of embellishment, with the exception of pilasters on the façade and side elevations, the building has a wooden post-supported overhang with a metal roof along the western elevation. Built in 1945-46, the original building consisted of a main block fronting onto St. Claude Avenue with a circa 1946-47 ell addition extending perpendicularly from the main grocery space and fronting onto Marigny Street to

the east. As the Schwegmann Brothers grocery enterprise expanded in the 1950s and 1960s, so did their first store on St. Claude. During the 1950s and 1960s and ending by 1985, most of the entire square bounded by St. Claude and Elysian Fields Avenues and North Rampart and Marigny Streets was owned by the Schwegmann enterprise and included two simple, non-contributing concrete block buildings, both of which front on North Rampart Street, as well as parking and landscaped areas. From 1946 until 1997, the Schwegmann Bros. No. 1 catered to a working class community in an essentially unaltered building and environment. Because it has not been altered significantly over the years, this building retains a high degree of integrity and remains eligible for listing in the National Register.

In 1946, the first Schwegmann Brothers Giant Supermarket opened at 2222 St. Claude, an event which initiated the establishment of a chain by 1995 of eighteen Schwegmann stores located throughout the New Orleans area. Between 1946 and 1997, the name Schwegmann Giant Supermarkets became synonymous with the social history and culture of this region, especially New Orleans. There, shoppers "made groceries," as well as banked and purchased everything from crawfish and beer to gas and tires. Not only did the Schwegmann stores sell groceries, they also included jewelers, hair salons, florists, post offices, banks, and more. Before the days of super stores like Wal-Mart, Schwegmann's was operating as a one stop shopping experience. Schwegmann's is considered as New Orleans' first self-serving supermarket, which moved the family's business away from mom-and-pop stores into the supermarket business. John Gerald Schwegmann, Jr. (1911-1995), who with his two brothers, Anthony and Paul, founded Schwegmann's Number One, considered themselves and their stores as champions of the little man consumer and fought over the years to overcome price-fixing regulations in order to keep their prices low. Schwegmann stores were so well-known locally that business owners all over the city identified their locations as "just next door to" or "across the street" from a Schwegmann's.

Mr. Cooper asked if there were any questions or comments from the audience or the review committee. There were no questions. Mr. Sykes then moved that the candidate be recommended to the SHPO. Mrs. Saloman seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Jessica Richardson had a few short announcements. Of the nine nominations sent up to NPS from the November meeting, 7 have been listed. One, the International Trade Mart, was presented on today with additional information requested by NPS. The other, Olinde's was returned for a few minor changes that did not require review committee approval and has since been sent back to NPS for approval. We need to do ethics training again for the review committee and Mrs. Richardson will be sending additional info on this to the review committee over the next couple of months. Lastly, three committee members membership will be expiring in June of this year: Lynn Lewis, Mr. Cooper, and Mrs. Turner. Mr. Cooper is retiring after today's meeting and Mrs. Richardson will speak with Mr. Lewis and Mrs. Turner separately to decide about their futures on the committee. Also, the empty positions left by Mrs. Kramer and Mr. Martin will also be filled.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:12 p.m.