

NATIONAL REGISTER REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING – MINUTES
Thursday, December 1, 2022 - 11:00 AM
State Library of Louisiana
701 N 4th Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Dr. Robert Carriker called the December 1, 2022, regular meeting of the National Register Review Committee to order at 11:06 AM. In addition to Dr. Carriker, members present included Ava Alltmont, Guy Carwile, Dr. Fallon Aidoo, Peggy Lowe, Brian McGowan, Martha Salomon, Dr. Rebecca Saunders, Dr. Matthew Savage, and John Sykes.

Dr. Carriker then asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Dr. Rebecca Saunders so moved, and Brian McGowan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Nicole Hobson-Morris welcomed the audience and committee members. Division of Historic Preservation staff in attendance included Nicole Hobson-Morris (Director) and Krystal Cox.

Dr. Carriker asked for a motion to approve the minutes from August's meeting. Martha Salomon so moved, and John Sykes seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Valence House, Jefferson Parish

Presented by Krystal Cox, co-nomination preparer

The Valence House remains one of the oldest surviving French Creole houses in Grand Isle. Although its exact construction date is unknown, the house was built in the mid-to-late 19th century, most likely between 1870 and 1888, and continues to reflect the local architecture of the period. The Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) for Louisiana Coastal Vernacular: Grand Isle, 1780- 1968,” lists the building in its historic building inventory as potentially eligible for National Register listing under Criterion C in the context of Mid-19th Century Development. Built initially from scrap lumber, the house referred to as the Lee-Andy Valence House in the MPDF has undergone several changes to its materials during the last 150 years. However, it retains its overall form and design, reflecting typical French Creole building practices that withstand local weather and climate conditions. These include a steep roof to shed heavy rain, a raised foundation to withstand high water, and solid shutters to protect doors and windows from high winds. The Valence house has also retained other features indicative of French Creole houses in Grand Isle described in the MPS, such as a brick pier foundation, wood clapboard siding, a side gable roof, four pairs of French doors opening onto a porch, and an interior consisting of two rooms at the front with a center chimney between them. Overall, it retains a remarkable degree of integrity, given its age and location on a hurricane-prone island.

Constructed circa 1870, the Valence House is significant at the local level under Criterion C: Architecture as a prime example of the Louisiana Coastal Vernacular style. The Valence House has direct associations with the historic context from the Mid-19th Century Development (1812-1880) as defined in the “Louisiana Coastal Vernacular: Grand Isle, 1780-1968” Multiple Property Submission. Therefore, it meets the registration requirements of the Building Property Type found in Section F of the MPS. The Valence House is eligible under Criterion C because it retains many original design features, materials, and examples of mid-late 19th century craftsmanship. The period of significance is 1870, the year it was estimated to have been built.

Dr. Carriker asked committee members for questions and comments. Dr. Rebecca Saunders asked for clarification on piers depth in relation to chimney depth. Answer unknown. Krystal invited building owner, Mr. Valence to comment and discussed structural details of beams and piers. Dr. Matthew Savage posed the question of how many Grand Isles Creole house are still surviving to add as additional information to support

the historical importance of nomination as a surviving rarity. Dr. Aidoo suggested emphasizing the foundation and piers as a significant design point of the resource. Dr. Aidoo also suggested additional documentation from the Disaster Recovery Office for the property. Committee posed interest in understanding how the structure has survived so many storms despite other similarly aged and newer constructions being destroyed. Brian McGowan asked what the future use of the property will be. Mr. Valence answered that his goal is to preserve the property. Guy Carwile suggestions to reword description of “clapboards with standard reveal” to “clapboards with a standard exposure” as well as rewording the description for the lack of a porch railing. Mr. Carwile also suggested changes to the description of the “flush tongue and groove siding” to note the “beaded edging”.

Dr. Carriker opened to public comment. Raymond Berthelot, Louisiana State Parks Historic Sites System, suggested inclusion of previous owners’ notes on the properties significant historical features and a site for archeological research. Dr. Aidoo asked for clarification on any additional property surveys that may have been done and suggested future archeological and engineering research.

Martha Salomon then moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO, and Dr. Matthew Savage seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Maison Daboval, Acadia Parish

Presented by Denise and Jerrell Underwood, nomination preparers

Maison Daboval is located in the town of Rayne, LA, at 305 East Louisiana Avenue. The house was constructed in 1892 and sits on its original site in downtown Rayne. The two-story frame Victorian house currently serves as an owner-occupied Bed and Breakfast. The owners occupy the one-story rear section of the house, while the Bed and Breakfast operates within the two-story portion. The main house retains its exterior and interior historic features, including Victorian columns at the upper floor gallery, two-over-two wood windows, and transoms over the doors with side lights. On the interior, wood floors exist throughout the original house. The original staircase featuring turned balusters invites guests to the second level. The house was constructed with nine bedrooms, and an external outhouse to accommodate the Dabovals and their 14 children. The interior rooms maintain their original window and door trim and 14-foot-high ceilings. The house is beautifully decorated to reflect its construction era and promote its Victorian-era charm. Maison Daboval maintains its historic integrity and is eligible for listing in the National Register. The extant carport or garage at the rear of the property is non-historic.

Maison Daboval is significant under Criterion B at the local level in the areas of Exploration/Settlement, agriculture and commerce. The house is the only known extant resource associated with Emile Daboval, Jr., an influential resident of Rayne. He moved to the community less than a decade after it was incorporated. Daboval, a New Orleans native, accomplished much during his lifetime, including serving as one of the city’s earlier mayors and managing a successful rice mill, said to be the first outside New Orleans. However, his most significant contribution to the people of his adopted home was likely the egg carrier he invented, which provided local farmers with a resource to support their egg shipments to communities east and west of Rayne and guaranteed access to much needed additional income (Stutes, 2020).

Dr. Carriker asked committee members for questions and comments. Guy Carwile suggested a wording change to the metal roof from “standing seam” to “overlapping ribbed metal panels”, add “vertical beaded board” to “wainscoting”, and change “slender turned columns” to “slender turned colonettes”. John Sykes noted adding a caption to the family photograph within the nomination packet. Dr. Aidoo proposed a question on whether the house contains anything that was produced at the mill in terms of artifacts, etc. Dr. Savage asked what the current function of the property is in and future plans of the property. Ms. Underwood explained the current function as a bed & breakfast with future plans to open the property as a possible educational site for school field trips.

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

Dr. Rebecca Saunders then moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO, and Peggy Lowe seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Division of St John Historic District Update, St Tammany Parish
Presented by Ellen, co-nomination preparer

The revised Division of St. John Historic District encompasses 19 full blocks and 11 partial blocks in the original Covington town site, including 284 buildings, 3 objects, 5 sites, and 7 structures. Eighteen blocks retain their central ox lot. Most properties are commercial or residential, but resources historically in agricultural, educational, funerary, governmental, health care, industrial, recreational, social, and transportation use are also present. Four distinct areas are being removed from the district (Figure 5). Three of the boundary decrease areas were developed with buildings that intersect the NRHP boundary and the fourth has a high concentration of demolitions and infill development. The revised list of contributing resources includes resources built between 1813 and ca. 1970. Those built after 1930 include examples of one- and two-part commercial block buildings and standalone commercial buildings, some in the Colonial Revival, Contemporary, Creole/French Colonial, Mansard, Streamline Moderne, Post-War Modern, and Spanish Colonial Revival styles; single- and multi-family residences, including examples of Craftsman-style bungalows and the Creole/French Colonial and Minimal Traditional styles; governmental buildings, including a Craftsman-style fire station, a Colonial Revival-style post office, a Post-War Modern-style city hall, and a Post-War Modern-style courthouse; a health care building with a bungalow plan; a Post-War Modern-style communications building; a two-part commercial block theater building; a Gothic Revival church; and Brutalist and a Late Modern-style sculptures.

The Division of St. John Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1982, significant at the national level under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and significant at the local level under Criterion C for Architecture. The interpreted POS from the prior listing is ca. 1817 to 1930, the oldest and most recent resources inventoried in the original nomination as contributing. The Division of St. John Historic District (Additional Documentation) adds significance at the local level under Criterion A in the Area of Commerce, with a POS from 1876 to ca. 1968. The POS end date corresponds to the opening of a new local indoor shopping mall, a major factor in the Division of St. John's decline as the commercial hub of Covington. This additional documentation extends the district's POS under Criterion C (local level) for Architecture from ca. 1850 to ca. 1970, more accurately reflecting the continuum of significant architectural development within this important local governmental, commercial, and residential core. The architectural context is updated to reflect the expanded period. Finally, this additional documentation clarifies that the Criterion A, Community Planning, level of significance is local. The 1982 nomination argued the district's national importance as an example of an ox lot plan, but the document did not include a national level comparative context to support that claim. The POS for community planning begins in 1813, the year in which the Division of St. John was planned. The ox lots, a newly added contributing site, date to this year. Expanded statements of significance and explanation of the new POS are enumerated in the subsections that follow.

Dr. Carriker asked committee members for questions and comments. John Sykes asked for clarifications on the guidelines regarding the decreased boundary portion of the HD and requirements. Nicole Hobson-Morris explained that the decrease is required on the basis that the original boundary map was incorrect and the resources outside of the new boundary are all non-contributing. The recommendation is that the Local Historic District take on the decreased part of the nomination boundary to retain local historic integrity. Guy Carwile suggests numbering the images provided within the nomination. Dr. Savage seconded Carwile's suggestion on numbering the images. Dr. Savage also asked for clarification on the time frame of the contributing resources both expanding the POS before and after the original period stated in the 1980 nomination. Dr. Aidoo

requested the extension of the POS be supported with updated records and deeds for the properties being listed along with additional research on demographics of occupancy and ownership of the properties. Also suggested looking into the restrictions of the land grants.

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

Dr. Fallon Aidoo then moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO, and Ava Allmont seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The committee paused for a 10 minute break, no time stated. Dr. Carriker called the meeting back to order, no time stated.

First National Life Insurance Building, Orleans Parish

Presented by Jessica Richardson, nomination preparer

The First National Life Insurance Building, 1000 Howard Avenue, is located at the southeast corner of Howard Avenue and Loyola Avenue just south of the Central Business District of New Orleans. The building, which comprises a 12-story office tower and an attached 3.5-story parking garage, is roughly one block west of the Upper Central Business District National Register Historic District. Across Howard Avenue is the National Register-listed Plaza Tower (1969, NRHP, 2013), and across Loyola Avenue is the Union Passenger Terminal Station (1954). Built in 1960-62, the tower is designed in the modular grid modern or Miesian style and retains a high degree of exterior integrity. Constructed by the First National Life Insurance Company, the building housed a branch of the National Bank of Commerce, insurance companies, including the headquarters of First National Life, and a variety of other commercial businesses through 1989, when it was purchased by the Archdiocese of New Orleans. The three street facing elevations (façade/north, east, and west elevations) feature a curtain wall composed of gray-glass spandrel panels and square clear-anodized aluminum-frame fixed and operable-awning windows on each floor. The larger first and second floors create wings on the east and west elevations and feature the same grid pattern as the tower's upper floors. A flat aluminum-frame porte-cochere covers the main entrance, which is accessed via a curved driveway on each side as well as a set of flagstone-paved steps. At the rear of the building, there is a 3.5-story concrete parking garage that was completed in 1960-62 to provide tenant and visitor parking as well as a drive-through teller for the bank branch. The exterior of the tower retains a high degree of integrity with some minor damage to windows due to Hurricane Ida in 2021. The interior was designed with emphasis on the main lobby entrance and elevator lobby on the first floor, as well as the elevator lobbies on each of the upper floors. Outside of that, each individual floor was left open for tenant build outs, which changed frequently through the 1990s. Because of this, none of the interior partitions beyond the primary historic circulation core and entrance corridor are historic. Intact historic interior features include the flagstone flooring throughout the main lobby, extruded-aluminum elevator doors and white marble wall cladding in the ground-floor elevator lobby, reddish-brown marble wall cladding in all upper-floor elevator lobbies, the bank vault and night drop box on the first floor, and several features at exterior walls, including insulated wall panels, aluminum base plates and wrapped sills, and some plaster. For these reasons, the building is eligible for listing in the National Register.

The First National Life Insurance Building is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an exemplary example of Modernist architecture, in particular the International Style and its Miesian subtype. Within the context of New Orleans, the building is a prime example of the commercial property type found in the "Non-Residential Mid-Century Modern Architecture in New Orleans, 1935-1975" Multiple Property Submission and meets the registration requirements of this property type. First National's construction, from 1960-62, was directly related to the growth and modernization of the city's Central Business District after World War II, particularly the construction of commercial skyscrapers as the economy boomed and new industries were attracted to the city. The role of the automobile, the rise of post-war suburbs, and the

construction of Interstate 10 in 1960-62 fueled the development of commercial skyscrapers with integrated parking to make it easier for employees and visitors to access these buildings. These modern new buildings were often designed in the Modernist style of the day and First National is a prime example of a Modernist skyscraper, purposefully planned adjacent to the new Interstate 10. The building included not only the prime amenities of both a surface lot and a parking garage, but also the hallmark characteristics of a Modernist skyscraper including an emphasis on verticality with a horizontal base, the use of polished granite and marble on the interior and exterior, modular panels and windows to create a grid pattern, clean lines, and an emphasis on detailing the public areas and leaving interior space design up to the tenants. The period of significance is 1960-62, covering the years of construction.

Dr. Carriker asked committee members for questions and comments. Guy Carwile suggested changing the description of the “reddish-brown marble” to “pinkish-tan marble”. Also suggested the perforated screens on the garage are “pre-cast” rather than “cast-in-place” and the addition of the “brutalist” before the John Hancock Life Insurance Building. Dr. Savage asked why this property is not included in the historic district one block away. Ms. Richardson explained this was due to the large amount of empty space (large surface parking lots) between this particular building and the boundary of the existing historic district. Brian McGowan mentioned New Orleans has typically built architecture on top of African American neighborhoods. He asked if this property fell into this category of new architecture replacing historically significant New Orleans history. Ms. Richardson explained that she would need to conduct more research on that. She explained that the future plan for the building is to retain its historical integrity and turn it into a hotel. Dr. Aidoo mentions while relating this structure to other insurance buildings historically, to make a note that the displacement of neighborhoods as a result of development plays a significant role in the history of the building and its impact on the surrounding area. Mentions possible research on documenting the architectural culture as well. Ava Allmont requested the original architectural drawings of the structure. Dr. Savage seconded Dr. Aidoo’s comments on how the structure’s impact and the context of mid-century modernists architectural styles on the area. Martha Salomon made comments on the architectural details in conjunction with Guy Carwile’s comments.

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

Dr. Matthew Savage then moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO, and Martha Salomon seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Closing Announcements:

Ms. Hobson-Morris announced that the next National Register Review Committee meeting was scheduled for Thursday, April 27, 2023.

Adjournment: 12:59 PM