



1358

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Gentilly Terrace Historic District

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by Spain, Mirabeau, Eastern, and Gentilly Blvd. NA not for publication

city or town New Orleans NA vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Orleans code 071 zip code 70122

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination     request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant     nationally X statewide X locally. (    See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Jonathan Fricker*  
Signature of certifying official/Title Jonathan Fricker,  
Deputy SHPO, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

October 1, 1999  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property     meets     does not meet the National Register criteria. (    See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
    See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the  
National Register  
    See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the  
National Register
- removed from the National  
Register
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

*Edson H. Beall*  
Edson H. Beall 11/18/99

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- X private
public-local
public-State
public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
X district
site
structure
object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Table with 3 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing, and Resource Type (buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total). Values: 544, 121, 544, 121.

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Domestic
Education

Sub. Single Dwelling
School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Domestic
Education

Sub. Single Dwelling
School

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Craftsman
Colonial Revival
Tudor Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete, brick
walls weatherboards, shingles, stucco
roof asphalt, tile
other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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The boundaries of the Gentilly Terrace Historic District encompass 665 buildings, virtually all of which are residences. The focus of the nomination is a streetcar/ automobile suburb of the City of New Orleans platted in 1909 with the name Gentilly Terrace. A self-proclaimed "California style suburb," Gentilly Terrace's most important homes are those in the Craftsman or "California bungalow" style (39% of the total). Other styles include Colonial Revival, English Cottage, Spanish/Mediterranean, and a category being labeled "eclectic" because of numerous stylistic influences. Most houses are sheathed in wood (either clapboards or shingles), although there are a significant number of stuccoed residences. The scale is mixed one and two story. The non-contributing rate is a reasonable 18%.

### METHODOLOGY

The Division of Historic Preservation began its work in Gentilly at the request of local residents and the neighborhood association. The division's Register coordinator first surveyed an initial target area, coding buildings on a map by style and contributing/non-contributing. This enabled the boundaries to be refined. Additional fieldwork included photography, further examination of buildings, and research in various primary sources available in New Orleans.

### SETTING/GENERAL BACKGROUND

All of the nominated district except for the south side of Gentilly Boulevard (see map) was part of the Gentilly Terrace suburb mentioned above. The south side of Gentilly is being included in this submission because it differs little in character from the north side (similar architecture and houses raised above grade on terraces). It was part of another development platted in the same year as Gentilly Terrace.

Gentilly Terrace traces its origins to the February 25, 1909 incorporation of the Gentilly Terrace Company, which was created for the express purpose of buying and developing real estate, Gentilly in particular. It was directed and owned by three local

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men. Michael A. Baccich was the president, Edward E. Lafaye the vice-president, and R. E. Edgar de Montluzin the secretary-treasurer. (All three have streets in Gentilly Terrace named for them and all made their homes there.)

The area purchased by the company later that year appears to have been rural land devoid of development. Photos in a 1912 publication show a virtually tree-less site. Located about three miles as the crow flies from the New Orleans CBD and not far from Lake Pontchartrain, Gentilly was accessible by streetcar and automobile. Although the latter was in its infancy when Gentilly Terrace was established, each house has a driveway, and Sanborn maps show small garages in most back yards. (Some of the garages survive, but they were not included in the building count because of inaccessibility in many instances.) While the foregoing may seem ordinary, it is not within the context of most of the rest of New Orleans. Most of the city is very tightly packed and developed before the beginnings of the automobile age.

Much was made by the developers of the elevation of Gentilly Terrace, which is understandable only within the context of New Orleans, much of which is below sea level. Gentilly Boulevard, the district's major thoroughfare, is located on Gentilly Ridge, some of the highest ground in the city. A lengthy promotional booklet entitled "Gentilly Terrace: Here's Your Opportunity" emphasized that with terraced lots at an average of 27 feet above sea level, the new suburb was "the most elevated residential section in the City of New Orleans." In fact, the company's advertising slogan was "Where Houses Are Built on Hills." According to the promotional booklet, the lowest lots were terraced fifteen inches above street grade, while some were as high as sixty inches. The writer then contrasted this with "congested" New Orleans.

The bucolic, spacious nature of the new suburb was also emphasized by the locally published *Architectural Art and its Allies*. The May 1912 issue is devoted entirely to Gentilly Terrace. This document is particularly valuable because of its numerous photos (including interiors). The author of one piece extolled the many advantages of suburban living (then he stated, in its "infancy" in New Orleans) by comparing "high, cool, terraced suburbs" with the "crowded rows, and rows upon rows of cheap 'double cottages' [double shotguns]" in the city. In a foreword titled "The Old Order of Things is Disappearing," Mayor Martin Behrman expressed similar sentiments about "beautiful suburban communities like Gentilly Terrace."

Some 20,000 colored maps of the new subdivision were distributed in New

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Orleans. Copies of this poster-size print survive at the Historic New Orleans Collection and the city's notarial archives. The plat is quite regular within the context of New Orleans (i.e., not having to take into account the curves of the Mississippi). Each rectangular block is divided into lots measuring 25 x 120. Along the south side is curving Gentilly Boulevard, measuring 150 feet wide, with a narrow grassy median. Other wide streets with medians are Franklin Avenue and St. Roch Avenue. Subdivision restrictions included the purchase of a minimum of two lots and house cost minimums based upon location (\$2500 for streets, \$3000 for avenues, and \$3500 for Gentilly Blvd.). Houses on Gentilly tended to occupy more land and be larger, with at least two houses in estate-like settings. (One of the latter has been demolished, while the other survives but without its spacious setting.) In the early days of development lots in Gentilly Terrace were sold either vacant or with houses on them designed by the "architectural department" of the company. Incorporators Baccich and deMontluzin are given as the designers in a May 1912 source, although neither were trained architects.

Available primary sources reveal that Gentilly Terrace was almost exclusively residential. Surviving today is the original school located at the head of a large block. Early promotional literature references several squares being set aside for business purposes. The only known commercial venture, the Terrace Store and Sanitary Market, is shown in a May 1912 source as being under construction. A two story structure in the Craftsman style of California architects Greene and Greene, it looks like a house. Regrettably, it no longer survives.

Despite what would seem like an obvious appeal, Gentilly Terrace was slow to fill in. A February 1922 Sanborn map (the earliest to map the area) shows only about 125 houses. Even as late as 1939, certain sections were undeveloped. An appreciable amount of building occurred in the immediate post-World War II years (simple, unstyled houses typical of the period). Then there are numerous slab-on-grade ranch houses built even later.

Because of the foregoing slow pattern of development, it is impossible to include the entire suburb as platted in 1909 in the nominated district. Areas outside the boundaries are characterized mainly by less than fifty year old houses and small "no style" late-1940s houses.

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STYLISTIC OVERVIEW

Breakdown by Styles:

Craftsman/California Bungalow	258 buildings	39%
Colonial Revival	76 buildings	11%
Eclectic	51 buildings	8%
English Cottage	51 buildings	8%
Spanish Revival/Mediterranean	20 buildings	3%
No style	88 buildings	13%
non-contributing	121 buildings	18%

Craftsman/California Bungalow (39%)

Gentilly Terrace’s architectural significance rests mainly upon its superb collection of Craftsman or “California Bungalow” houses, which account for 39% of the overall building stock. The term “California Bungalow” is used throughout early promotional literature and other sources, with the developers avowing their mission of recreating the “California style” in Gentilly. In a section of their promotional booklet titled “Little California” the developers stated that while they did not “insist” upon the California bungalow style, they felt it would “prove the most desirable.”

Although not named specifically, brothers Charles Sumner Greene and Henry Mather Greene, who pioneered the style beginning in 1903, would have been a chief source of inspiration. According to family sources, deMontluzin and his wife traveled to California to study suburban development there before beginning Gentilly Terrace. An article in the May 1912 issue of *Architectural Art and its Allies* titled “Some California Bungalows in New Orleans” noted that it had been “necessary” to have the houses in

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Gentilly “erected by skilled foremen brought from Los Angeles.” “And after nearly a year’s experience it has proven necessary to retain the Los Angeles foremen on the work, for, although carpenter work may be carpenter work all over the world, and plans are plans, the California style has yet to be thoroughly understood by New Orleans mechanics, . . .”

The Craftsman houses in Gentilly range from high-style examples in the manner of Greene and Greene to more typical, vernacular examples (although even the latter are generally well-detailed). Of course, the earliest houses built by the Baccich and deMontluzin architectural department (some undoubtedly with California foremen on the job) are the district’s most impressive.

Particularly important examples will be described in the landmarks section below, but certain generalizations can be made at this point. The best of the California bungalows have very wide overhanging eaves, giving one story examples a particularly low-slung character, which of course is a hallmark of the style. Low pent dormers, which reinforce this look, are quite common. Many of the houses have the characteristic multiple gable bungalow roofline. Another “model” is a gable end house with wide overhanging eaves, a pent dormer and a Craftsman porch spanning either the entire facade or located asymmetrically to one side. (Here the porch is either encompassed by the main roofline or has its own sloping roof.)

A noticeable number of Gentilly’s California bungalows are sheathed entirely in shingles (as can be seen in the work of Greene and Greene), while the vast majority feature clapboards. Additional texture is provided by latticework seen in a number of houses in the peaks of gables. Front porch piers are typically brick or stucco. A few feature cobblestones or pebbles imbedded in brick – a quintessentially California bungalow style treatment. Piers, with wooden columns atop, are either squared-off or flared. There seem to be more of the latter, with some having an exaggerated flare. Some piers are quite prominent, beginning at the ground and rising almost to the roof. Other noteworthy features include various prominent wooden members, including multiple brackets at the eaves and decorative braces and stickwork in the front and side gables. Several have boldly formed corbelled brackets and consoles. A dozen or so have walls that flare near grade level and a few have Craftsman style porte-cocheres and pergolas.

A number of houses in the Craftsman/Bungalow category are a type of two-story house known in New Orleans as a “basement house.” This house type, which seems to

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be peculiar to the city, features a full story above-ground basement with the second story serving as the main living space. The front porch (in this case in the Craftsman style) is typically reached via a prominent flight of steps. While strongly articulated, basement houses in this category are more mainstream when compared to the high style examples of Gentilly Terrace's early years.

### Colonial Revival (11%)

Houses in this category range from those built in the neighborhood's early years through the Register's fifty year cutoff. The overwhelming majority are c.1910 through the 1920s. Many, perhaps a majority, are of the basement house type described above. Instead of being in the Bungalow style, porches typically feature grouped Tuscan columns, and front openings often have fanlights. There are a few 1920s Colonial Revival two story houses, some of red brick with "colonial" details.

### Eclectic (8%)

This category, which has been used previously for early twentieth century suburbs, covers houses with various stylistic influences, as was popular at the time.

### English Cottage (8%)

All contributing elements of this type in Gentilly are modest middle class dwellings. (There is one large Tudor Revival house on Gentilly Boulevard but it appears to be non-historic.) In short, none are "manor houses" of the type found in many early twentieth century subdivisions. Some of Gentilly's "English cottages" are typical of those seen elsewhere across the country in the 1920s – picturesquely massed houses with a roof ridge parallel to the street, steep front-facing gables and often a prominent front chimney. The most distinctive represent yet another version of the locally popular shotgun house type – in this case, the double shotgun. The standard model in Gentilly is in essence an English cottage, with its roof ridge running parallel to the street, tacked onto the front of the standard shotgun form whose roof ridge is perpendicular to the street. Unlike the standard English cottage, these examples are symmetrical, with a steeply pitched gable at the center where a door to each unit is located.

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### Spanish/Mediterranean (3%)

While only 3% of the district's houses have a Spanish or Mediterranean look, they are typically large houses built on principal streets. They have standard features such as stucco exteriors, red tile roofs, and an abundance of round arches.

### No Style (13%)

This category has a somewhat misleading title; it does not mean devoid of details necessarily. It has been used by the Division of Historic Preservation in recent twentieth century district nominations to encompass houses that cannot be "pushed" into a stylistic category. They may have various details that contribute to the neighborhood's historic look; however, the styling is not pervasive enough and/or emphatic enough to warrant a stylistic label. The "no style" category also includes legitimate historic houses that are indeed quite plain, although even they support the overall character of the district in areas such as massing, fenestration pattern, systems of porches, etc. For sample "no style" houses, see photos 6, 50 (foreground), 101, and 116.

### Non-contributing (18%)

This category includes buildings which are less than 50 years old and seriously altered historic houses. There are far more of the former. Almost all non-contributing elements are slab-on-grade small to medium size brick veneer ranch houses. There are also a few two story brick veneer non-historic residences. None of the non-contributing elements exceed the district's 1-2 story scale.

For the most part non-contributing elements are scattered here and there throughout the district. However, they do occur in "clumps" (three or four instances -- mainly one story ranch houses) on or near Gentilly Boulevard, generally where a historic house's property was subdivided or completely redeveloped at a later date (see photos 19 and 53).

## CONTRIBUTING ELEMENTS

Contributing elements are defined as buildings constructed between 1909 (when Gentilly Terrace was established) and 1949 (the Register's fifty year cutoff) which retain sufficient integrity. Each building in the district was examined by the state's

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Register coordinator and a professional judgment called was made as to when alterations were extensive enough to warrant non-contributing status. Regrettably, vinyl and aluminum siding appear with enough frequency to be noticed. This is especially disturbing when seen on Craftsman houses, where wood is such an important element. Some vinyl/aluminum sided houses are being classified as contributing, some as non-contributing. In cases where the decision was for contributing status, the house in question still had enough character-defining features to convey its Craftsman character, substitute siding notwithstanding. For example, there are vinyl or aluminum sided California bungalows that still have the characteristic low-slung massing and important details such as column-atop-pier porches, prominent brackets and braces, etc. Others were visually dominated by the siding or a combination of siding and other alterations – these obviously were counted as non-contributing.

### A DOZEN LANDMARKS

The following dozen buildings are among the very finest architectural landmarks in the Gentilly Terrace Historic District. All fit within the Craftsman/California Bungalow stylistic category.

(1) Gentilly Terrace Company House (Bihli House), 4615 St. Roch Avenue (photos 112-13). Individually landmarked by the Historic District Landmarks Commission, this is arguably Louisiana's finest California style bungalow. Built by the design department of the Gentilly Terrace Company, presumably as an on-site office and model, it was sold on April 18, 1912 to Henry W. Bihli for \$5,454.42. It appears in the previously mentioned May 1912 issue of *Architectural Art and its Allies*. The main body of the house is covered by a low pitch gable end roof that extends perhaps as much as two feet beyond each side elevation. The wide eaves are ornamented with large triangular brackets. The house's chief glory is its very intricately worked off-center front porch, a consummate piece of craftsmanship with an impressive structural quality. The pediment of the low pitched porch gable is formed of vertical slats placed with spaces between. A variety of wooden members, all quite prominent, jut out from the roofline and from the top of triple posts on brick piers with a very pronounced flare. A deep recessed area in the brickwork is found on the face of each pier. Other important features include a flared base, a buttressed brick chimneypiece on the Carnot Street elevation, and a projecting bay on the facade and Carnot Street

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elevation. The top member of each window and door frame protrudes beyond the side members, as is often seen in Craftsman houses, and as is seen in various Gentilly examples. The impressive interiors of the home are shown in the May 1912 issue of *Architectural Art and its Allies*. It is not known whether they survive.

(2) Bayhi House, 4437 Painters Street, H. Jordan Mackenzie, architect, 1910, (photos 75-76). Also landmarked individually by the HDLC, this is a particularly unusual house. Described in 1910 as being designed along the general lines of a Norwegian homestead of a century ago, the house fits within the overall Craftsman category, albeit a highly individual statement by New Orleans architect H. Jordan Mackenzie. The two-and-a-half story house rests on a base course of bricks, which were originally unpainted. The first floor is sheathed in clapboards and the second floor in shingles stained a reddish brown. Two massive stuccoed piers, set at an angle to the facade, form the first floor porch and support the open second floor porch area. The walls of the second story overhang those of the first by about a foot. The house's most interesting feature is the roofline, where two intersecting bow roofs provide for a half story. The gable ends of the bow roofs project out from the walls of the house by about two to three feet. Each of the three gables has a distinctive openwork vergeboard.

(3) 4478 Venus, identified in May 1912 *Architectural Art and its Allies* as the Henry Cucullu House (photos 70-71). This shingled one-and-a-half story house is set on a high stuccoed base. Numerous and varied projections make it particularly interesting. A gable end roof encompasses the main body of the house. A shed roof porch extends off the right two-thirds of the facade. Extending forward from one side of the porch is a gabled projection with a large round arch opening. The roofline is punctuated by a large gabled dormer which has a small open porch on one side. Each side elevation has a shallow squared-off bay under its own hip roof. The bays rest upon distinctive corbelled consoles. All roofs (main, porch, dormer, bays) have prominent decoratively cut rafter tails. Tall piers with short grouped posts frame the porch entrance.

(4) 4490 Venus (photos 67-69). Raised on a high terrace and framed by palm trees, this house at first may appear rather plain. Articulated in the manner of a galleried cottage (albeit a long, low-slung one), it features particularly interesting detailing on the porch piers and main side elevation. Thick coupled posts rest on fairly high brick piers. Extending from the front and side of each post is a bold corbelled bracket. All windows are of the casement type and design popular in Craftsman and

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Prairie-style architecture. The window on the Lombard Street elevation is shaded by a shed-roofed projection resting on over-sized brackets. The triangular brackets are ornamented with blocks of wood on their front face. Smaller versions of the same brackets ornament the side gables; a lattice design provides ventilation at the peak of each gable.

(5) 4489 Music (photos 97-98). This low-slung one story house is completely covered in shingles. A shed roof spanning most of the facade extends from the main gable end roof to form the porch. Atop the main roof is a very low pent dormer. Coupled posts with prominent corbelled brackets rest on high brick bases. Triangular brackets ornamented with wooden blocks accent the gable ends and a shed roof protecting a side window. Latticework is found in the gable peaks and dormer.

(6) Gentilly Terrace Elementary School, erected in 1914 and substantially enlarged in 1926, all designed by New Orleans architect E. A. Christy (photos 81-83). Were it not for a building plaque and Sanborn maps, one would never suspect that this quite large, stucco, two story school had been enlarged. The expansion was done in the same style with the same materials by the same architect. Set at the head of a large expanse of lawn, the school has both Craftsman and Swiss Chalet influences. Strong ornamentation is confined mainly to gabled projections on each elevation. Each features a very wide overhang ornamented with two vergeboards with a wave-like design -- one at the eave and one recessed. Five large, very prominent brackets with a curving design emphasize each gable. Additional ornamentation is provided by boards laid in a half-timbered manner and a horizontal band featuring a Vitruvian scroll design.

(7) 4630 Music (photos 99-100). Another particularly low-slung California bungalow, 4630 Music has a gable end roof with eaves wide enough to accommodate an elaborate system of brackets, struts and other wooden members in each gable -- the overall effect is strongly three-dimensional. A very low pent dormer is at the center of the facade. Extending in front of it is a low-pitched shed roof which protects a porch skewed to one side and spanning about two-thirds of the facade. Grouped posts rest on high brick piers. Each pier has a brick protruding prominently from each side.

(8) 4671 Venus (photo 65). Various California bungalows in Gentilly Terrace have an overall oriental feel -- in keeping with the style as practiced by architects such as Greene and Greene. The house at 4671 Venus is one such example. At the rear is a gable end roof with the roof ridge paralleling the street. Projecting forward from it and

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comprising the entire facade is a huge low pitched gable. Below it is a gabled porch with a very low pitch. The main gables (front and sides) have about a two-foot overhang and an abundance of brackets appearing singly and in pairs. There is also a gabled projection with struts ornamenting the eaves on one side elevation. An oriental feel is provided by the entrance porch. Thick stuccoed piers with a slight taper (one to each side) rest on low brick piers and extend to the porch eaves. Atop each pier is a system of struts, and resting above that is an openwork gable formed of wooden members arranged in a strong geometric design.

(9) R. E. E. deMontluzin House, 3635 Gentilly Boulevard (photo 14). This fairly large house located prominently on the corner of Gentilly Boulevard and Painters Street was the home of one of Gentilly Terrace's founders. Completely covered in shingles, it has a gable end roof with the ridge parallel to the street. At the center is a low pent dormer with rafter tails. Roof eaves extend about a foot and also feature decorative rafter tails. Extending from the front eave, at the center, is a shed roof covering a small recessed entrance porch and resting on large decoratively worked brackets. Both the front and primary side elevation feature a squared-off projecting bay resting on large stuccoed consoles with a corbelled design.

(10) 4460 Music (photos 91-92). This otherwise ordinary bungalow with a gabled facade facing the street is anything but ordinary because of its finishes. In true California bungalow style, the porch is made of rocks and pebbles embedded in concrete, including a tall pier at each side extending to the roofline, a squat pier to each side of the steps (designed for a planter or other decorative item), piers to each side of the steps and the areas below the porch floor. The house is completely covered in wooden shingles.

(11) 4433 Arts (photo 89). This distinctive stuccoed two story house defies easy categorization. At the facade the upper story extends forward on massive piers (one on each side) to cover an arched porch. The lower stage of each pier has the appearance of an irregular pile of cobblestones. The upper stage is brick with cobblestones irregularly inset. Then above this is a faceted stuccoed section which makes the transition from protruding pier to the main plane of the house. The house rests on a fairly high terrace, and piers at the edge of the terrace (one to each side of steps) are of brick with imbedded pebbles.

(12) 4757 Music (photo 107). Although covered in asbestos siding, the house is nonetheless an important Craftsman landmark in Gentilly. In fact, its wooden detailing

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is so strong that it overshadows the replaced sheathing. The roof ridge is perpendicular to the street with a single broad gable dominating the facade. The facade's eaves are quite wide even for Gentilly Terrace; the overhang, which is ornamented with numerous large brackets, is perhaps three feet. The gable roof cuts in on one side to extend well beyond the side of the house. The resulting overhang, located at the side of the front porch, rests on huge curving brackets. Rafters ornamenting the front eaves then extend out to become rafter tails at the overhang. The oriental-looking porch features slender grouped posts which extend to the porch floor. Atop the posts are various protruding wooden members. Spanning the area between the grouped posts are horizontal and forward-projecting wooden members laid in a pergola-like fashion.

**INFORMATION COMMON TO ALL PHOTOS:**

Photographer: Donna Fricker

Location of Negatives: LA SHPO

Date: May-June, 1999

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" next to the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

NA

(Mark "X" next to all that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

architecture

Period of Significance

1909-1949

Significant Dates

NA

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

NA

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

NA

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

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The Gentilly Terrace Historic District is of statewide architectural significance because within its boundaries is Louisiana's finest collection of Craftsman houses/California style bungalows. It is of local architectural significance as a good representative historic twentieth century neighborhood reflecting the range of styles popular at the time. Finally, with basement houses and English cottage style shotguns, it helps New Orleans convey its distinctive architectural identity. The period of significance spans from 1909 (when Gentilly Terrace was established) to 1949, the Register's present 50 year cutoff. In the opinion of the LA SHPO, to have used something other than the fifty year cutoff would have been arbitrary.

### STATEWIDE ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

With 39% of its houses in the California bungalow/Craftsman style, Gentilly Terrace is an excellent primer on a residential style which dominated the American market c.1910-c.1925. Of particular importance, of course, are the numerous first-rate examples. Simply put, Gentilly Terrace easily has within its boundaries more high style California bungalows/Craftsman houses than all of Louisiana. In fact, high style examples are an oddity in the state. And, of course, they would not be in Gentilly were it not for the distinctive origins of the subdivision. Numerous Gentilly houses are strongly suggestive of the work of Greene and Greene – they actually look like houses pictured in *The Craftsman* magazine. And while these stellar examples are numerically a small percentage of the whole, they have a strong presence because of their elaborate articulation. And, then there are many "lesser" California bungalows in the district that are considerably better than the typical vernacular example in Louisiana.

Gentilly Terrace's Craftsman houses on the whole exhibit a wider variety of character-defining motifs than is seen typically in Louisiana. Within many a block are low-slung houses with exaggerated splayed piers, extremely wide overhangs, and a number of prominent decorative wooden members in the porches and side gables -- struts, large grouped brackets (of varying shapes), corbelled wooden members in various places, latticework, etc. The very best examples display a quite elaborate articulation of wooden structural members and structural-looking members (see landmarks section). Some have an oriental look, as is seen in high style California examples. By contrast, the standard bungalow in Louisiana is the watered-down builder-type found by the thousands across the country. A typical example has piers with posts on top (piers more often squared off than splayed), exposed rafter tails, and a simple triangular bracket at the peak of the front gable and at each corner.

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Another factor distinguishing the Gentilly collection from the rest of the state is the use of different building materials. While shingled exterior walls were a hallmark of the Greene and Greene look, this richly textured treatment is extremely uncommon in Louisiana. In fact, there are more shingled period houses in Gentilly Terrace than in the whole of Louisiana. Also, the district has the state's only known use of a popular Craftsman look -- cobblestones or rocks embedded in brick. This treatment, for example, is recommended by Gustav Stickley and other Craftsman proponents as an effective way of "drawing closer the relationship between house and ground." Gentilly's handful of examples bear a marked similarity to those found in the pages of *The Craftsman*. They are particularly noticeable in Louisiana, where stone is not a native material.

### LOCAL ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Gentilly Terrace district is of local architectural significance because the neighborhood is, in effect, a window into the past, allowing one to appreciate the appearance of a period neighborhood. Because it did not develop as rapidly as its founders had hoped, it exhibits the wide-ranging eclecticism of a typical early twentieth century suburb. While 39% are in the Craftsman style, Colonial Revival (11%), the English cottage look (8%), and various Spanish and Mediterranean-influenced houses (3%) are also represented. Then, as was typical of the period, there are numerous houses (8%) which combine various stylistic influences. Gentilly Terrace is noteworthy in this regard as one of few historic neighborhoods in New Orleans that developed entirely in the twentieth century. In short, New Orleans is an old city with an average housing stock of about 100 years old, and there are few places to experience the look of an early twentieth century suburb. This is in contrast, for example, to Baton Rouge and Shreveport, where they are the norm.

Gentilly is also important on the local level because its basement houses (in the Colonial Revival and Craftsman styles) and "English cottage" shotgun houses contribute to New Orleans' distinctive architectural identity. Although a count of basement houses was not made, it is clear that they are an important archetype in the district. In some blocks, they are in the majority. The "English cottage" shotgun houses, although small in number, are particularly interesting because they show yet another generation of this pervasive New Orleans housetype. Unlike shotguns found elsewhere in the country, which tend to be unstyled, New Orleans' shotguns are highly

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decorated in whatever style was popular at the time (from Italianate forward). Until the fieldwork for this nomination, the SHPO thought that Craftsman/Bungalow was the last style grafted onto the shotgun form. Now it is known that at least in this neighborhood the 1920s English cottage style was adapted to the shotgun form as well.

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### BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Architectural Art and its Allies*. New Orleans, May 1912. A monthly journal published under the direction of the American Institute of Architects, Louisiana Chapter, the New Orleans Architectural Club, and the New Orleans Tree Society. As noted in the narrative, the May 1912 issue is devoted to the development of Gentilly Terrace, complete with numerous photos.

Enzweiler, Susan. "Gentilly Terrace: New Orleans' 'California Style' Suburb." *Preservation in Print*. May 1992.

*Gentilly Terrace: Here's Your Opportunity*. 1908 promotional booklet, copy in National Register file, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.

Gentilly Terrace poster-size broadside, 1908, showing plat, copy of plat portion in National Register file, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation. Originals at the Historic New Orleans Collection and the Orleans Parish Notarial Archives.

Gentilly Terrace advertisement. *The Daily Picayune*. September 1, 1909.

"Greater City's Spreading Suburbs." *The Daily Picayune*. September 1, 1909.

New Orleans Land Use Map, Real Property Inventory, September 15, 1939. Historic New Orleans Collection.

"New Orleans Undeveloped Property, 1926." Map contained in "Major Street Report," City Planning and Zoning Commission, 1927. Historic New Orleans Collection.

Sanborn Insurance Company maps, New Orleans, 1922 and 1929/corrected to 1940.

Gentilly Terrace Historic District  
Name of property

Orleans Parish, LA  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** approximately 160 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

1 15 783960 3323160

2 15 784940 3323200

3 15 784950 3322500

4 15 783960 3322420

     See continuation sheet.

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff

organization Division of Historic Preservation

date June 1999

street & number P.O. Box 44247

telephone (225) 342-8160

city or town Baton Rouge

state LA

zip code 70804

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

### Maps

A **USGS** map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.

### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Multiple Ownership

street & number \_\_\_\_\_

telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_

state LA

zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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### Boundary Description:

The boundary is shown as a broken line on the attached map.

### Boundary Justification:

Boundaries were chosen to encompass the concentration of historic buildings that make the district significant (as defined in Part 8). As noted in Part 7, they do not encompass all of the neighborhood as platted in 1909, nor all of what people today consider to be Gentilly Terrace. Also, as noted previously, this submission includes the south side of Gentilly Blvd., which was historically part of another, albeit contemporaneous, development. The south side of Gentilly was included because it looks very similar to the north side (similar archetypes and houses raised above grade on terraces). The boulevard in its totality, with mature trees and twentieth century houses raised on terraces, is a character-defining feature of the neighborhood.

Delineating the boundaries was not a simple "black and white" task because the historic character "peters out" rather than stops abruptly. The state's Register coordinator began by looking at the entire Gentilly Terrace plat, and in fact, blocks immediately beyond the recommended district were surveyed and mapped. This fieldwork helped immensely in clarifying the boundaries. For example, it became clear that Gentilly Terrace north of Mirabeau was characterized chiefly by a combination of less than fifty year old buildings, altered historic buildings, and modest unstyled cottages from the late 1940s. The same is true of the east side of Eastern Ave. (see map—eastern edge of district) and the western side of the district. In regard to the latter, one block of Spain was included because despite non-contributing buildings, the block had a respectable complement of the district's archetypes.

On the district's south side that portion of Gentilly Boulevard which retained integrity was included (for the reason noted above). The neighborhood immediately south of the district (behind the houses fronting onto Gentilly) was examined carefully, and the decision was made not to include it in this submission. While some streets feature a concentration of houses from the teens and twenties, they are not of the architectural quality of those found in the district. In short, they do not have the same character as the district. Secondly, there was a greater integrity problem in this neighborhood.