DATA SHEET

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries · complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Louisiana
COUNTY:	Lafayette
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	JUN 1 0 1975

1. NAME

COMMON:

Old Lafayette City Hall

AND/OR HISTORIC:

Lafayette City Hall

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

217 West Main

CITY OR TOWN:

Lafayette

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:

7th - John Breaux

STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Louisiana	22	Lafayette	055

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
☐ District ☒ Building ☐ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object	☒ Public Public Acquisition: ☐ Private ☐ In Process ☐ Both ☐ Being Considered	☐ Occupied ☒ Unoccupied ☐ Preservation work in progress	Yes: ☐ Restricted ☐ Unrestricted ☒ No

PRESENT USE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

☐ Agricultural	☐ Government	☐ Park	☐ Transportation	☒ Comments
☐ Commercial	☐ Industrial	☐ Private Residence	☐ Other *(Specify)*	Building
☐ Educational	☐ Military	☐ Religious		presently
☐ Entertainment	☐ Museum	☐ Scientific		condemned

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:

City of Lafayette

STREET AND NUMBER:

Lafayette Parish Courthouse

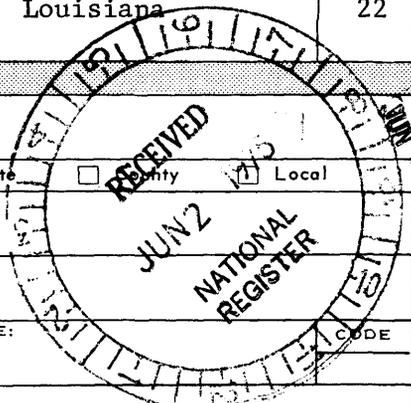| CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE
Lafayette	Louisiana	22

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

Clerk of Court's Office, Lafayette Parish Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

Courthouse Square

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE	CODE
Lafayette	Louisiana	22

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: ☐ Federal   ☐ State   ☐ County   ☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE

CONDITION	*(Check One)*					
	☐ Excellent	☐ Good	☒ Fair	☐ Deteriorated	☐ Ruins	☐ Unexposed

	(Check One)		*(Check One)*	
	☐ Altered	☒ Unaltered	☐ Moved	☒ Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL *(if known)* PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The building is typical of most two-story masonry commercial buildings erected in small towns of the South at the turn of the century. It is of very modified rococo design.

The architect was George Knapp of Lafayette. Other local firms used were the A. J. Moss and Emile Mouton Lumber Company for lumber and hardware, Gaston Landry for the painting chores, and the Paxton Brick Company for the bricks.

The building was constructed on a small parcel of land. The front and east sides of the structure were built on the property line. The west side has a 3-foot alley separating this building from its neighbor and, at the rear is a 30-foot back yard, where in 1908, the prison cells were erected. These cells have since been demolished. The two-story brick edifice is 25 feet wide and 40 feet deep, with 12 inch load-bearing exterior walls. The roof is flat with brick parapets on the front and two sides.

The first floor has a small open entry with two doors, one that enters in to the first floor, and the other to the stairway. The small entryway has a ceramic tile floor with a cast iron threshold.

The door to the stairway leads to the narrow stairs leading to the second floor. The stairs are of wood construction with a 3/4" wood beaded pine side wall and ceiling. At the head of the stairway is a large room located at the rear of the building. This room enters into two smaller front rooms which lead to a very unique semi-circular balcony with attractive wood-turned balusters. Also, in these two front small rooms there previously existed two 3-foot high wrought iron hand rails, which marked the entrance to the doors that lead to the balcony.

The building is erected on a brick chain wall with continuous footing underneath. The first and second floors are constructed with wood floor joists which span from the 12 inch exterior brick walls to interior bearing partitions. There is a shallow wood truss roof spanning the width of the building. The finished floors are made of wood. The ceilings are tongue and groove pine. The rear wall was plastered about 1947 for waterproofing purposes, because roof water poured over it. The roof is pitched from front to rear. The exterior brick walls are tied every eight course of brick for wall reinforcement.

The first floor facade has two large double hung windows with wood sash and open entrance. The windows have semi-eliptical-shaped colored glass transoms. Brick arches above these windows and above the open entrance contain lighter colored brick dentils. These dentils also occur between the windows and at the corners of the building. Window sills are plaster over brick.

The second floor facade has a simi-circular balcony with wood-turned balusters and a semi-circular brick arch above. The balcony is covered with a peculiar inverted funnel-shaped zinc roof. There is a double hung window with wood sash on each side of the balcony. These windows have a plaster over brick sill and a semi-eliptical brick arch at top. Over each window is an ornamental design of the same colored brick as used in the dentils. At the very top of the building and in the center is a brick semi-circular section of the parapet wall. This section has brick dentils and is higher than the regular parapet wall.

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7. Description   Old City Hall   Page 2

   The brick used on facade is a larger type than used on the
sides of the building. A special feature to be noted is that the mortar
joints on the facade brick are considerably thinner than the mortar
joints on the sides of the building.

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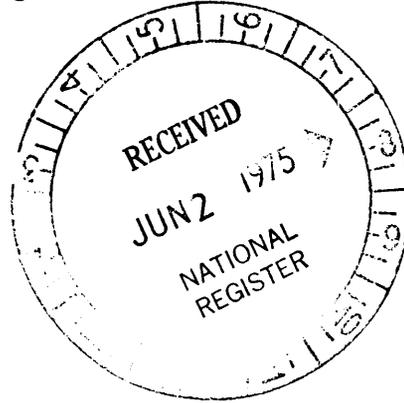
PERIOD *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

☐ Pre-Columbian | ☐ 16th Century ☐ 18th Century ☒ 20th Century
☐ 15th Century ☐ 17th Century ☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) *(If Applicable and Known)*   Built 1898

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

Aboriginal
☐ Prehistoric
☐ Historic
☐ Agriculture
☐ Architecture
☐ Art
☒ Commerce
☐ Communications
☐ Conservation

☐ Education
☐ Engineering
☐ Industry
☐ Invention
☐ Landscape
   Architecture
☐ Literature
☐ Military
☐ Music

☒ Political
☐ Religion/Phi-
   losophy
☐ Science
☐ Sculpture
☐ Social/Human-
   itarian
☐ Theater
☐ Transportation

☐ Urban Planning
☐ Other *(Specify)*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Old City Hall is significant because of its role in the development of the City of Lafayette. Originally constructed to house the Bank of Lafayette, it served the city in an official capacity for many years.

The Old City Hall building first opened its doors on June 21, 1898, as the Bank of Lafayette. The lot on which it was built is right across the street from the Courthouse Square, the most historic site in Lafayette. Since 1835, there have been four courthouses built on this same square and it currently accomodates the present courthouse for the Parish and City of Lafayette. This land was donated to the City in 1825 by Jean Jacques Mouton, father of Alexandre Mouton who later became Louisiana's 9th governor, and probably the most prominent figure in Lafayette's history. Around this square, Lafayette's present Central Business District is built.

The architect was an extremely interesting person and a prominent figure in the development of the Central Business District of Lafayette. His name was George Knapp and he came to Lafayette from Evansville, Indiana in 1887, married a local girl in 1892 and made this community his permanent home until his death in 1949. He also laid plans for the Masonic Temple, Old Post Office, Gordon Hotel, Convent Building, the original Jefferson Theatre and other landmarks included in the Central Business District. Knapp also built many homes here and in New Iberia which are extant today.

Knapp, a hump-backed man who personally inspected every step of the building processes for everything he planned, was later selected as the City's Building Inspector and well served this position for a number of years. These are astonishing accomplishments for a "self-taught" architect. He learned every bit of his profession through International Correspondence School courses. The actual books he studied from have been handed down to his relatives and are still available today.

When the Bank of Lafayette opened its assets totaled $25,000 divided into 250 shares of $100 each. Its first president, Crow Girard, was one of the persons responsible for the creation of the University of Southwestern Louisiana which presently enjoys a 10,000+ enrollment. Girard, dedicated to the future prosperity of Lafayette and the formation of an educational facility here, donated a twenty-five acre plot of land on which the University presently stands. He is still remembered, as Girard Hall and Girard Park on campus are named after him.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. The Center: A History of the Development of Lafayette, Louisiana by J. Phillip Dismukes
   Publisher: City of Lafayette pp 40-43
2. The Attakapas Country - Harry L. Griffen
   Publisher: Pelican Publishing Company pp 109, 110, 52, 99
3. Clerk of Court Records - Lafayette Parish Courthouse
4. Mrs. Cas Chargois - Personal interview
5. Wilmont Dalferes, former Lafayette judge - Personal interview
6. Mrs. Frank Addison - Step-granddaughter of George Knapp - Personal interview

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY		O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES	
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		15/594300/3343620	
NE	° ' "	° ' "			
SE	° ' "	° ' "			
SW	° ' "	° ' "			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than 1

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Timothy Meaux, Special Services Coordinator

ORGANIZATION
City of Lafayette

DATE

STREET AND NUMBER:
733 Jefferson

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE	CODE
Lafayette	Louisiana	22

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐   State ☐   Local ☒

Name _Jay R. Broussard_

Jay R. Broussard
State Historic Preservation Officer
Title

Date May 29, 1975

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

_____
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 6/9/75

ATTEST:

_____
Keeper of The National Register

Date JUN 9 1975

GPO 931-894

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Form 10-300a
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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8. Significance   Old City Hall   Page 2

On June 6, 1904, the Bank of Lafayette formally increased its stock
to $50,000 and two years later its officials realized that their facility
was no longer large enough to handle their volume of business. Thus, on
June 26, 1906, the building was sold to the "Corporation of the town of
Lafayette" for $4,500. This sale marked the creation of Lafayette's
first City Hall and was to be used by the City Council for the next
thirty-three years. In 1908, a parish prison was built in the rear of the
building and remained there until less than 15 years ago.

Shortly thereafter changes were initiated which rearranged the total
governmental structure of Lafayette. The Council-Mayor form of government,
originally chartered in 1869, was viewed as incapable of efficiently
handling the problems of a growing town of 6,000 people. In 1912, a
Council-appointed commitee was organized to view the problem. It recommended
a complete change to the trustee-form of government, that the Chief of Police
be appointed by the Trustee of Public Safety (or Mayor), that the City should
have exclusive control of all primary schools within the city limits, that
a civil service for municipal employees be established, and that a paid
municipal fire department be authorized. These recommended changes,
constituted one of the most thorough revisions and reorganizations of
Municipal government in the existence of the City, and after authorization
was given by the State Legislature, the changes were accepted by vote of
the citizens.

The building was used as City Hall until 1939 when WPA funds were
issued to Lafayette to build the present City Hall. During the transition
period of 1933-41 to the new facility, the lower floor was used by a
local women's organization (LeVingt Quatre) as a library and from 1942-53,
it was utilized as the Lafayette Municipal Library. From 1953 until late
1972, the Planning Commission used the top floor and the Municipal
Government Employees Civil Service Board, which was created in this same
building, was stationed downstairs from 1959-69. Since 1972 the
building has been declared unfit for any type of occupancy.

The Lafayette Bicentennial Commission has plans to restore the building
for use as a Tourist Information Center and a Museum of local culture and
history.

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8. Significance   Old City Hall   Page 3

While the building is typical of two-story commercial structures

of its era in function and basic design, the facade decoration is believed

to be architecturally unique in this area. Easily recognizable, the build-

ing has long been regarded as a landmark by the townspeople. The architect's

local stature is perhaps best evidenced by his years as the City Building

Inspector.

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