

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

JUN 20 1983

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Magnolia

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number LA Highway 311 N/A not for publication

city, town Schriever vic X vicinity of

state LA code 22 parish Terrebonne code 109

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
			<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. M. L. Shaffer, Jr. home: (504) 446-1493 work: (504) 447-7288

street & number Star Route Box 620

city, town Schriever N/A vicinity of state LA 70395

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Terrebonne Parish Courthouse

street & number Main Street (no specific address) P. O. Box 1569

city, town Houma state LA 70361

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title LA Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records LA State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge state LA

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Magnolia Plantation House (c.1855) is a frame, two-story, Greek Revival residence set in a fifty acre park of live oaks. It is located amid cane fields approximately four miles south of the town of Thibodaux. Despite several changes, the house retains its National Register eligibility.

The scale of the house is very large, with fourteen foot ceilings and a central hall fourteen feet wide. In addition, most of the major rooms are twenty-five feet square. On the ground story there are two rooms on the north side of the hall which connect by means of massive sliding doors. South of the hall are four rooms which terminate in a single story rear wing.

The five-bay facade features a two-story gallery with heavy Doric posts upstairs and down. The gallery terminates with a heavy entablature and a denticular cornice. The sides and rear of the house are trimmed with Greek Revival details, but they are not articulated with monumental galleries. However, there are small single story porches on the south and rear sides of the house.

The stair hall is separated from the central hall by an elliptical arch resting upon cast plaster consoles. The stair hall terminates in a 180 degree curving wall similar to an apse. The thickly proportioned staircase follows the curve of the rear wall in a graceful ascent. Instead of a single newel, the stair terminates in a 360 degree curving balustrade. The most interesting aspect of the stair hall is its rear exit where both the door and the door frame are steamed to exactly conform to the curve of the rear wall.

The interior cornices are heavy and richly molded. Most of the original mantels survive. On the ground story the three original mantels are of white marble in the Rococo Revival style. The two other mantels on the ground floor date from the late-nineteenth or early-twentieth centuries. On the upper story the mantels are of wood and feature a relatively simple aedicule style. Most of the major ground story rooms feature Rococo Revival ceiling medallions.

Other noteworthy details include:

1. the six panel doors;
2. the transoms above the doors;
3. the cast-iron balustrades on the front gallery;
4. the six over nine floor-length windows on the lower front gallery;
5. the remaining windows, most of which are six over six;
6. the exterior window frames, many of which feature pediment shaped tops;
7. the rear porch, the upper portion of which has a clapboard area with transoms cut in; and
8. the movable louver shutters.

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**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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Continuation sheet

Magnolia

Item number 7

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7. Description (cont'd)

Since construction, the following changes have been made in the house:

1. Sometime before about 1900, two of the ground floor mantels were replaced, as previously mentioned.
2. A small service building was moved up to the rear porch and joined by means of a shed roof.
3. The large room in the aforementioned rear wing has been subdivided into a kitchen, a bathroom, and a closet.
4. The lower front gallery has been screened in.
5. Much of the exterior has been aluminum sided.

Assessment of Integrity

Despite these changes, Magnolia retains its obvious identity as a substantial Greek Revival plantation house. In the opinion of the State Historic Preservation Office, this identity is well established by the aforementioned historic features. In any case, most of the changes should be regarded as minor. The only major change has been the installation of the aluminum siding. Although the siding is pervasive, it is of similar character to the original clapboarding. Moreover, it is hardly recognizable to the casual observer.

Outbuildings

To the rear of the house are three historic dependencies. These include:

- (1) an antebellum wash house with a new roof and a small tin-sided addition;
- (2) a c.1900 privy; and
- (3) a c.1900 board and batten cabin which was moved from elsewhere on the plantation to its present location c.1930.

These buildings are listed as contributing elements because they contribute to one's appreciation of Magnolia as a plantation house. They illustrate the fact that houses like Magnolia invariably had numerous dependencies, though many have lost them.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates c.1855 **Builder/Architect** Builder: Thomas Ellis

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Criterion C

Magnolia Plantation House is locally significant in the area of architecture as probably the finest example among the few surviving Greek Revival residences in Terrebonne Parish.

Terrebonne Parish developed during the first half of the nineteenth century as a center for the growing and refining of sugar. Like most of Louisiana's sugar parishes, the parish's economy boomed in the thirty years or so prior to the Civil War. As a result, during this period a large number of Greek Revival plantation houses were built which represented something of an architectural "flowering" for the parish.

The importance of Magnolia within this context can be illustrated by examining the census schedules of 1860. On the eve of the Civil War, there were forty-four large slaveholdings (i.e., fifty or more slaves) in the parish. Of these, the average size per slaveholding was 115.2 and only six involved individuals who did not reside in the parish. In addition, there were undoubtedly numerous slaveholdings of less than 50. Given the above, it is clear that there must have been numerous Greek Revival plantation houses and cottages in Terrebonne Parish on the eve of the Civil War (probably at least sixty). However, as far as the State Historic Preservation Office can determine, there are only six remaining examples. Consequently Magnolia is of special importance in the architectural heritage of the parish.

In addition, of the six which do survive, Magnolia is probably the finest. It is one of only two which possess a two story front gallery. Moreover, it has high style features seldom found on plantation houses. These include: (1) the cast-iron balustrades; (2) the Rococo Revival marble mantels; (3) the highly unusual curving rear wall of the stair hall with its steam fitted door and frame; and (4) the elliptical arch in the central hall with its cast plaster consoles.

Historical Note:

It is commonly held that Magnolia was built in 1834; however, the architectural evidence suggests c.1855. Magnolia was built for Thomas Ellis and remained in his hands until 1874, when he sold it to Captain John Jackson Shaffer, C.S.A. Captain Shaffer's descendants still occupy the home.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Louisiana Historic Standing Structures Survey, Terrebonne Parish,
Menn, Joseph K. The Large Slaveholders of Louisiana - 1860, Gretna: Pelican
Publishing Company, 1964.

Stahls, Paul F., Jr. Plantation Homes of the Lafourche Country. Gretna: Pelican
Publishing Company, 1976.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property approximately 50 acres

Quadrangle name Gibson, LA

Quadrangle scale 1:62,500

UTM References

A

15	710800	3289300
Zone	Easting	Northing

B

15	7111150	3289300
Zone	Easting	Northing

C

15	710850	3288650
Zone	Easting	Northing

D

15	711200	3288650
Zone	Easting	Northing

E

Zone	Easting	Northing

F

Zone	Easting	Northing

G

Zone	Easting	Northing

H

Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

Please refer to attached sketch map. The boundaries were drawn to encompass the fifty acre park of live oaks which forms the impressive setting for the plantation house and its dependencies.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff
Division of Historic Preservation ASSISTED BY OWNER

organization State of Louisiana date March 1983

street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone (504) 342-6682

city or town Baton Rouge state LA 70804

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Robert E. DeBlieux, Deputy SHPO

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 6/8/83

For NPS use only

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

Patrick Andrews date 8/14/83
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

Site boundaries are parallel to BLDG. FACADES, DISTANCES AS SHOWN. THE HOUSE FACES RT. 311

NOT TO SCALE

N
Magnolia Plantation
Scriever, Louisiana
VICINITY

