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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION - School

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION - School

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Moderne

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concretewalls concreteroof tar

other \_\_\_\_\_

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Port Allen High School (1937) is a one-story Modernistic cast concrete structure with a two-story central pavilion and third story frontal tower. The school stands well back from the nearest road in the middle of a large, shaded educational complex on the northeast side of Port Allen. Its only significant alterations are the addition of a porte-cochere and the covering of windows on the building's western elevation. Thus, the school retains its National Register eligibility.

The building's plan is basically symmetrical, with two one-story classroom wings projecting from opposite sides of the central block. A one-story pavilion terminates each wing, and a combination auditorium/gymnasium is joined to one end pavilion through a small lobby. Each classroom wing is divided by a hallway, while the central block houses a lobby, school office, restrooms, teacher's lounge, and twin staircases. The second floor of the central pavilion is one large open space; the third floor tower is merely an enclosed shell.

The school is constructed of cast concrete painted to present a gleaming white facade. Although the building is essentially horizontal, its stepped back central block culminates in a striking octagonal tower which soars above the structure below and reflects the geometric emphasis of the Modernistic style. Bold superimposed corner pilasters on both central block and tower, as well as a reeded vertical rectangular tower panel, reinforce the verticality and geometry of the design. The central block is further noteworthy for the fleur-de-lis, stylized pelicans, and stylized magnolia (all symbols of Louisiana) which decorate its facade at the point where it thrusts upward to form the tower. A bas relief roundel with book is centered between the pelicans and symbolizes the function of the building. A fluted panel stands above the main entrance, whose paired doors, transom and sidelights consist of rectangular panes held in place by brushed aluminum muntins. Other sections of the facade also display decorative geometric elements. Corner pilasters are used to emphasize the end pavilions and the gymnasium. Horizontal bands of cast concrete resembling streamlined rustication top the classroom wings, and rectangular indentations featuring bas relief octagons and chevrons are centered above the windows of each end pavilion. A bas relief figure of a basketball player decorates the area above the gym's outside door. Casement windows arranged in groups of five allow ample light into the spaces within each classroom wing. Similar windows in the central pavilion are paired. The tower is windowless.

Although the building's interior is mostly typical of schools of the period,

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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Port Allen High School, West Baton Rouge Parish

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its lobby is noteworthy as a continuation of the structure's Modernistic styling. Marble in two shades of gray sheaths the walls in a geometric pattern, and large granite block pilasters frame the front entrance. Two circular light fixtures suspended from the ceiling illustrate how the Modernistic style also influenced the design of building accessories.

Assessment of Integrity:

Through the years a series of minor alterations have been made to the school. These include construction of a porte-cochere whose cantilevers pierce the cast concrete on the building's west side, enclosure of the windows on the same side, erection of covered walkways surrounding the school on the three minor elevations, replacement of floor and ceiling tiles in the lobby and hallways, and a rewiring project in which conduits were nailed directly to the interior walls. Additions to the school were made by erecting separate, free-standing buildings. Therefore, none of the changes has seriously altered the building's integrity, and the facade remains entirely intact.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G    N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  
Architecture

Period of Significance  
1937

Significant Dates  
1937

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

Significant Person  
N/A

Architect/Builder  
Bodman & Murrell, Architects  
Caldwell Brothers and Hart Contractors

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Port Allen High School is locally significant in the area of architecture because it is an outstanding example of the Modernistic style and is probably the only early twentieth century architectural landmark within the context of West Baton Rouge Parish.

The parish is largely rural in nature, and with the exception of a handful of pre-twentieth century plantation houses and the 1937 high school, its building stock is unimpressive. As the parish seat, Port Allen is the only urban area large enough to have developed any architecture of distinction. Yet the town lacks a defined central business district, and the vast majority of its buildings are nondescript structures from the early twentieth century. Its few public buildings, all erected since 1950, are scattered throughout the small community. Thus, the very existence within the parish of a high style Modernistic structure reflecting the tastes of the 1920s and 1930s seems all the more remarkable.

The high school does, indeed, reflect the tastes of the high style architecture of the 1930s. It is conspicuous for its dramatically massed central block and tower, its stylized decorative elements incorporating symbols of Louisiana, its essentially unaltered state, and its parklike setting. The school may very well have been influenced by the recently completed Modernistic state capitol skyscraper across the Mississippi River in Baton Rouge.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Site visit and windshield survey of West Baton Rouge Parish by National Register staff.  
Building cornerstone.

- Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A
- 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property approximately 1.25 acres

UTM References

A 

1	5
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6	7	2	1	2	0
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3	3	7	1	3	6	0
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Zone      Easting      Northing

B 

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Zone      Easting      Northing

C 

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D 

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See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Please refer to enclosed sketch map.

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

Boundaries do not follow property line because to do so would also include a large campus complex with many modern buildings. The boundaries cut very closely to the side and rear of the school in order to exclude modern construction.

See continuation sheet

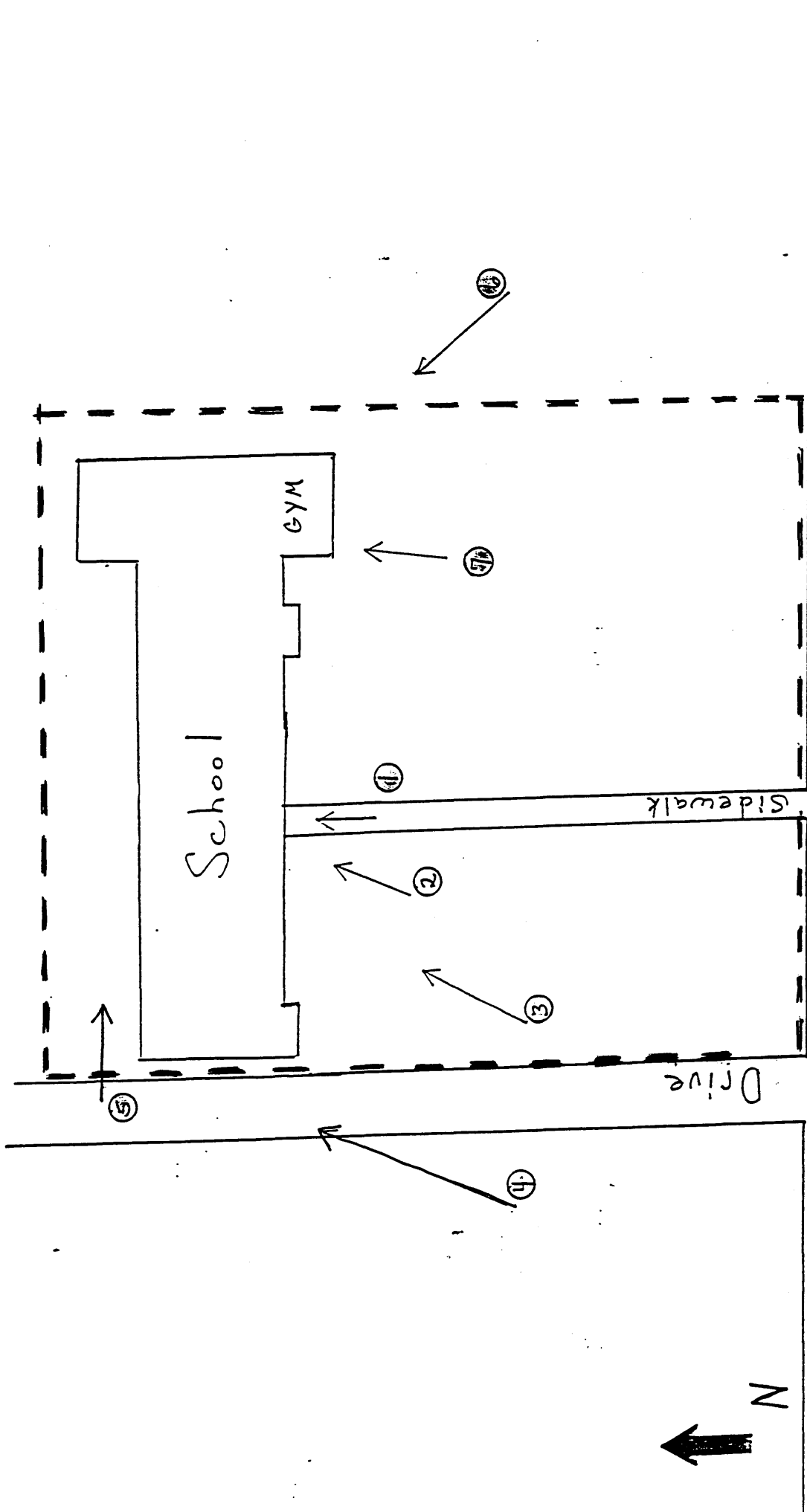
**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title National Register Staff

organization Division of Historic Preservation date February 1989

street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Baton Rouge state LA zip code 70804



Rosedale St.

West Baton Rouge Parish LA

Port Allen High School

Scale: 1" = 50'  
 --- BOUNDARY