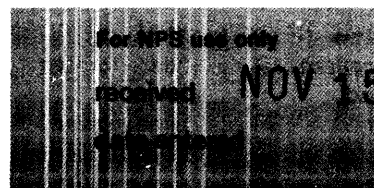


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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



1. Name

historic N/A

~~and/or~~ common Old Federal Building

2. Location

street & number 162 South Court Street N/A not for publication

city, town Opelousas N/A vicinity of ~~congressional district~~

state LA code 22 county St. Landry Parish code 097

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant at present

4. Owner of Property

name Acadiana Equity Partners

street & number 201 W. Main Street, P. O. Box 3668

city, town Lafayette N/A vicinity of state LA 70502

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Landry Parish Courthouse

street & number Corner of Court and Landry Streets P. O. Box 750

city, town Opelousas state LA 70570

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records LA State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge state LA

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Old Federal Building (1893) is a semi-monumental three-story brick structure located in downtown Opelousas. Although it has been enlarged once and renovated more than once, the exterior has maintained its original Romanesque Revival styling. Overall the building retains enough significant features to merit listing in the National Register.

The Old Federal Building has a complicated history. It began in 1893 as a two-story Romanesque Revival courthouse. Offices were downstairs and the courtroom and related spaces were upstairs. The courtroom was taller than the other rooms and was consequently set in its own raised pavilion. The building featured brick denticular cornices and an asymmetrical system of hip roofs. The lower story had segmentally arched windows and the upper story had round arch windows set in groups. In addition, the main entrance was articulated with a broad brick arch which had elaborately ornamented terra cotta spandrels. The spandrels had swirling naturalistic brincade and a pair of round panels which contained patriotic symbols (i.e., a great seal and a feathered eagle). The courtroom was the only noteworthy interior space. It had an extremely deep cove molded ceiling, a pair of ceiling medallions, and a triple set of arched windows in the front.

In 1932 the building was renovated and enlarged to provide for a larger courtroom and a post office downstairs. Although this was a substantial and all-encompassing renovation project, great care was taken to duplicate the original narrow, mortar brickwork and the original fenestration style in the new construction. As a result, the 1932 work is virtually indistinguishable from the 1893 work even to a trained observer.

In the course of the renovation, the following changes were made:

- (1) A three-story addition was built at the rear.
- (2) The courtroom was extended northward over an old side wing. The original interior and exterior details were duplicated in the enlarged courtroom.
- (3) New hip roofs were added to the original portions of the building. All roofs were treated with decoratively cut exposed rafter ends. Although this feature did not exist on the original building, it certainly was in keeping with the style of the late-nineteenth century.
- (4) The entire ground story was reworked to provide for a post office and for mail sorting space.
- (5) The chimneys were replaced.
- (6) New doors, doorways, and baseboards were installed throughout.
- (7) The side entrance on Landry Street was moved to the rear addition.

CONTINUED

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Old Federal Building

Item number 7

Page 2

7. Description (Continued)

In the 1960's the building was again renovated. Much of the lower story was gutted. In addition, the courtroom was treated with fiberboard ceiling tiles and the front windows were blocked up with concrete modular units. Finally, a rear loading dock was installed.

Assessment of Integrity:

Extant noteworthy Romanesque Revival features of the Old Federal Building include:

- (1) the finely crafted broad entrance arch with its cast cement foliated impost and elaborate terra cotta spandrel panels;
- (2) the string courses;
- (3) the round arch windows with brick hood molds;
- (4) the finely crafted Baltimore brickwork; and
- (5) the fenestration pattern.

The building's architectural significance is based upon these extant exterior features. Although the roofline features are not original, they contribute to the building's Romanesque Revival appearance. They do not detract from the Old Federal Building's standing as a work of architecture in the Romanesque Revival mode.

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 1893 **Builder/Architect** Jeremiah O'Rourke, Supervising Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Criterion C

The Old Federal Building in Opelousas is significant on the state level in the area of architecture because there are relatively few surviving Romanesque Revival buildings in Louisiana and it is a superior example of that style.

Firstly, the Old Federal Building is, within the context of Louisiana, an unusual surviving example of Romanesque Revival architecture. Like the rest of the country, Louisiana went through a stage in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries in which the Romanesque Revival style was in vogue for public and institutional buildings. The extent of the loss of building stock this created can be seen, for example, if one examines Louisiana's parish courthouses. At one time there were sixteen Romanesque Revival parish courthouses in Louisiana. Today there are four examples remaining.

Secondly, the Old Federal Building is superior among the surviving examples because of its superb terra cotta ornamentation. It should be noted in this regard that terra cotta ornamentation is seldom found on Louisiana's surviving Romanesque Revival structures. For example, none of the state's surviving parish courthouses has any terra cotta ornamentation of any kind.

9. Major Bibliographical References

St. Landry Parish Conveyance Records

Opelousas Rotary Club Sketchbook and Tourist Guide of Historic Opelousas and Surrounding Area, 1976 (This contains a sketch of the building's original 1893 appearance.)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. .27 acre

Quadrangle name Opelousas, La.

Quadrangle scale 1=62500

UMT References

A

1	5	5	8	8	0	0	0
Zone		Easting			Northing		

B

Zone		Easting			Northing	

C

Zone		Easting			Northing	

D

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 sketch map.

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 Mrs. Sammie Chachere

organization N/A date April 1982

street & number Rt. 7, Box 17 E 22 telephone 318-942-3630

city or town Opelousas state LA 70570

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 B. DeBlieux

Robert B. DeBlieux

title State Historic Preservation Officer date November 4, 1982

For NPS use only

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

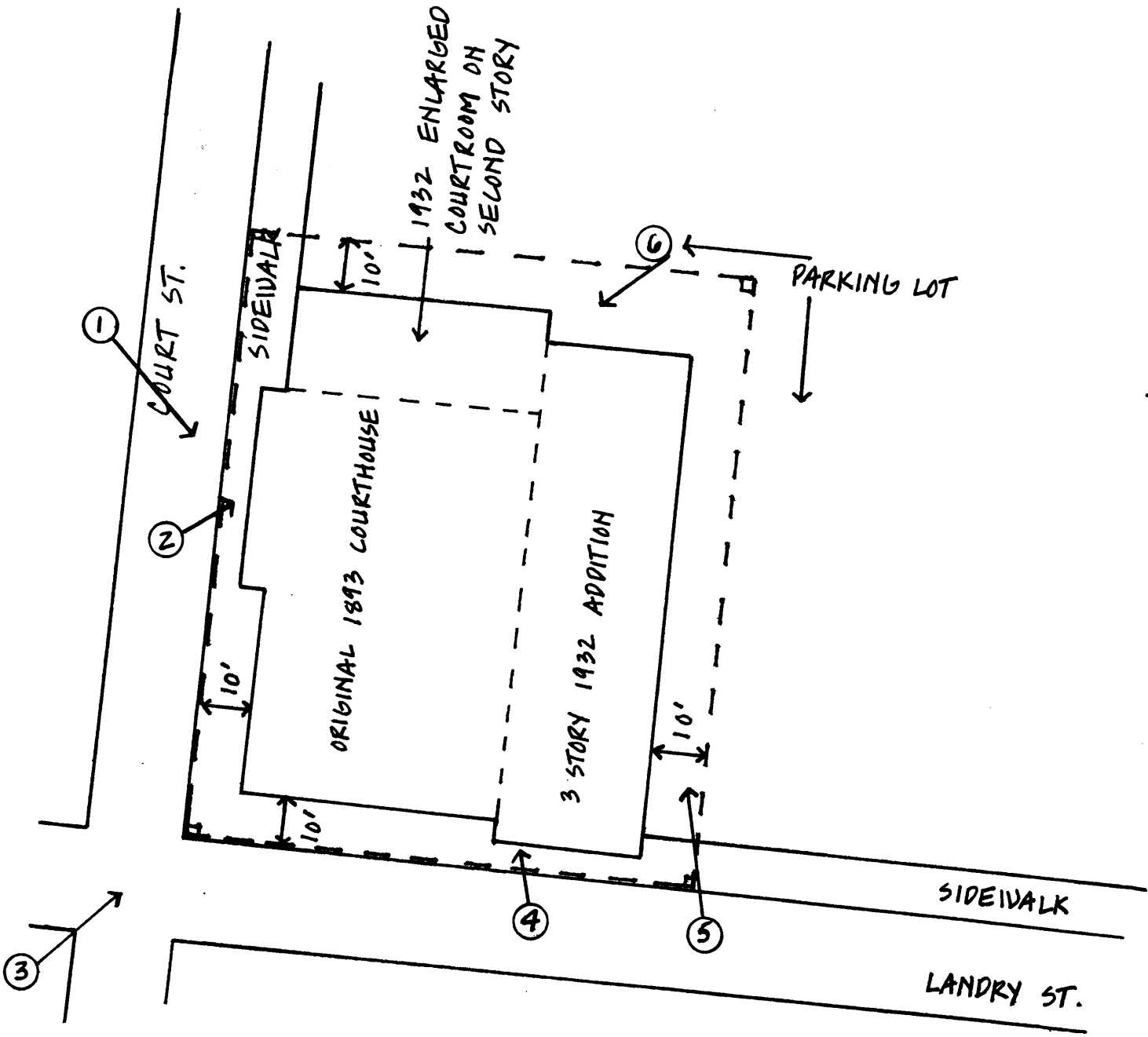
Ruth Gouvens date 12/28/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Patrick Andrews date 12/27/82

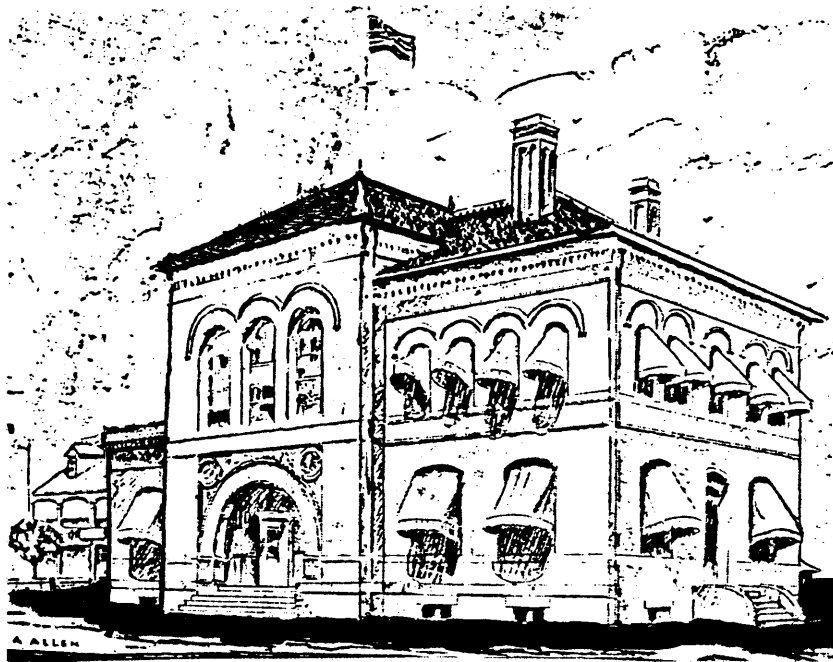
Chief of Registration

OLD FEDERAL BUILDING
OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA



NOTE: SITE BOUNDARIES
PARALLEL BLDG. FACADES AT
DISTANCES SHOWN, FOLLOWING
THE INSIDE CURBLINE ALONG
THE SIDEWALKS.

SCALE 1" = 30' APPROX.
N



ORIGINAL APPEARANCE