

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

For NPS use only

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

received MAY 21 1984

date entered JUN 21 1984

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

**1. Name**

historic Women's Gymnasium, Northwestern State University

and or common same

**2. Location**

street & number College Avenue Northwestern State University for publication

city, town Natchitoches N/A vicinity of

state LA code 22 county Natchitoches Parish code 069

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: unoccupied

**4. Owner of Property**

name Northwestern State University of Louisiana

street & number Office of the President 318-357-5701

city, town Natchitoches N/A vicinity of state LA 71497

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Natchitoches Parish Courthouse

street & number Church Street (no specific address) Box 476

city, town Natchitoches state LA 71457

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

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

date 1984  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records LA State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge state LA

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## 7. Description

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**Condition** excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved date N/A

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Northwestern State University Women's Gymnasium (1923) is a three story brick Jacobean Revival building located on the northern edge of the university campus. Despite some interior deterioration, the building retains its National Register eligibility.

The first story consists of classrooms, locker rooms and other service areas. The gymnasium space itself occupies the second and third stories. The gym features a running track around the upper level. The ceiling consists of open metal trusswork supporting a shallow gambrel roof. The only styled feature of the interior is the imperial staircase which ascends to the gymnasium space.

The exterior incorporates sixteenth and early seventeenth century architectural elements in a large rectangular more or less symmetrical mass to give the effect of a Jacobean country house. This effect is general and evocative rather than specific and archaeological. The red brick walls are contrasted with concrete trim which resembles limestone. Late Gothic features of the gym include the Tudor arches, the linenfold and cusp panels, the incorporation of groups of windows under a single pronounced hood mold and the use of several different shapes and sizes of windows. Renaissance features include the basic symmetry of the articulation, the elaborate use of quoining, the flat regular parapets with their blind arcade and strapwork panels, the shaped gable over the entrance, and the rooftop ball finials. The exterior also features numerous band cornices which divide the elevations horizontally in various places. This is a feature which appears both on late Gothic and early Renaissance buildings in England. The rear elevation of the gym is divided into modular bays by quoin pilasters of no particular historical derivation.

**INTEGRITY:**

The building has been little altered since construction. The roof and staircase are in need of repair. In addition, a rear metal fire escape has been installed, but this cannot be seen from any of the gym's principal views. In our opinion, the Women's Gymnasium has not suffered any significant loss of integrity.

## 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1923 **Builder/Architect** Favrot and Livaudais (Architects)  
**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)** Criterion C Frank Bethune (Contractor)

The Northwestern State University Women's Gymnasium is locally significant in the area of architecture because it represents the work of an important architectural firm and because it is a landmark in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century architectural heritage of Natchitoches Parish.

Although no specific study has ever been done on the firm of Favrot and Livaudais, there is general agreement that it was a high style, competent, professional group of architects and that it was extremely prominent in the early twentieth century. Practicing the historicism which was then in vogue, it grew to be perhaps the largest architectural firm in New Orleans, the state's largest, most cosmopolitan urban center. For many years Favrot and Livaudais and Emile Weil vied for business across Louisiana. It is an open question as to which of these firms ultimately had the larger practice, but there is no question that they were the two major architectural firms in early twentieth century New Orleans. Favrot and Livaudais' best known works include the Hibernia Bank Building and the Cotton Exchange Building, both of which are landmarks in the New Orleans central business district. The firm also designed numerous public buildings, including courthouses, schools and libraries across the state.

Favrot and Livaudais is most noted for its neo-classical and Renaissance Revival buildings, styles from which it apparently seldom deviated. The Women's Gymnasium is unusual, therefore, being an evocative reference to English Jacobean country houses. This, of course, can be seen in its use of Renaissance and late Gothic features on a large rectangular brick form.

The Women's Gymnasium can also be seen as a landmark in Natchitoches Parish in a more general sense. Of the several hundred late nineteenth/early twentieth century buildings in the parish, most are fairly ordinary builder vernacular structures such as builder late-Italianate, builder Colonial Revival, bungalow, etc. There are also numerous humble frame buildings which do not feature any particular styling. The Women's Gymnasium is conspicuous among this group because of its sophisticated and historically evocative design. It is one of very few buildings in the parish which represents the work of a high style academically trained architect. Unlike most of the contemporaneous buildings in the parish, which are essentially collections of standard manufactured details, the gym is consistently designed to portray a recognizable historical style of architecture-- i.e., Jacobean. It is, therefore, one of the parish's best exemplars of the historicism which was the leading trend in American architecture during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

National Register nomination prepared by Maxine Southerland, Director, Center for History of Louisiana Education, Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, Copy in Register file, LA State Historic Preservation Office.

Historic Standing Structures Survey, Natchitoches, LA State Historic Preservation Office. Personal communication with John Ferguson, former architectural historian with New Orleans

Historic District Landmarks Commission.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property @ 2 acres

Quadrangle name Campti, LA

Quadrangle scale 1:62,500

### UTM References

A 

1	5
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 Zone 

4	9	1	0	0	0
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 Easting 

3	5	1	2	8	0	0
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 Northing

B 

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

C 

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 Northing

G 

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

H 

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See enclosed sketch map for description.

Justification: Boundaries lines were drawn to discretely encompass the significant resource and its immediate surroundings. To have included all acreage under single ownership would have meant including the entire university campus.

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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# 11. Form Prepared By

Assisted by Maxine Southerland, Director  
Center for History of Louisiana  
Education, NSU  
Natchitoches, LA 71497

name/title National Register Staff  
Division of Historic Preservation  
organization State of Louisiana

date March 1984 318-357-4396

street & number P. O. Box 44247

telephone 504-342-6682

city or town Baton Rouge

state LA 70804

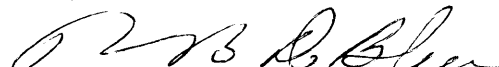
# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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 B. DeBlieux

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date May 16, 1984

### For NPS use only

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

Entered in the  
National Register

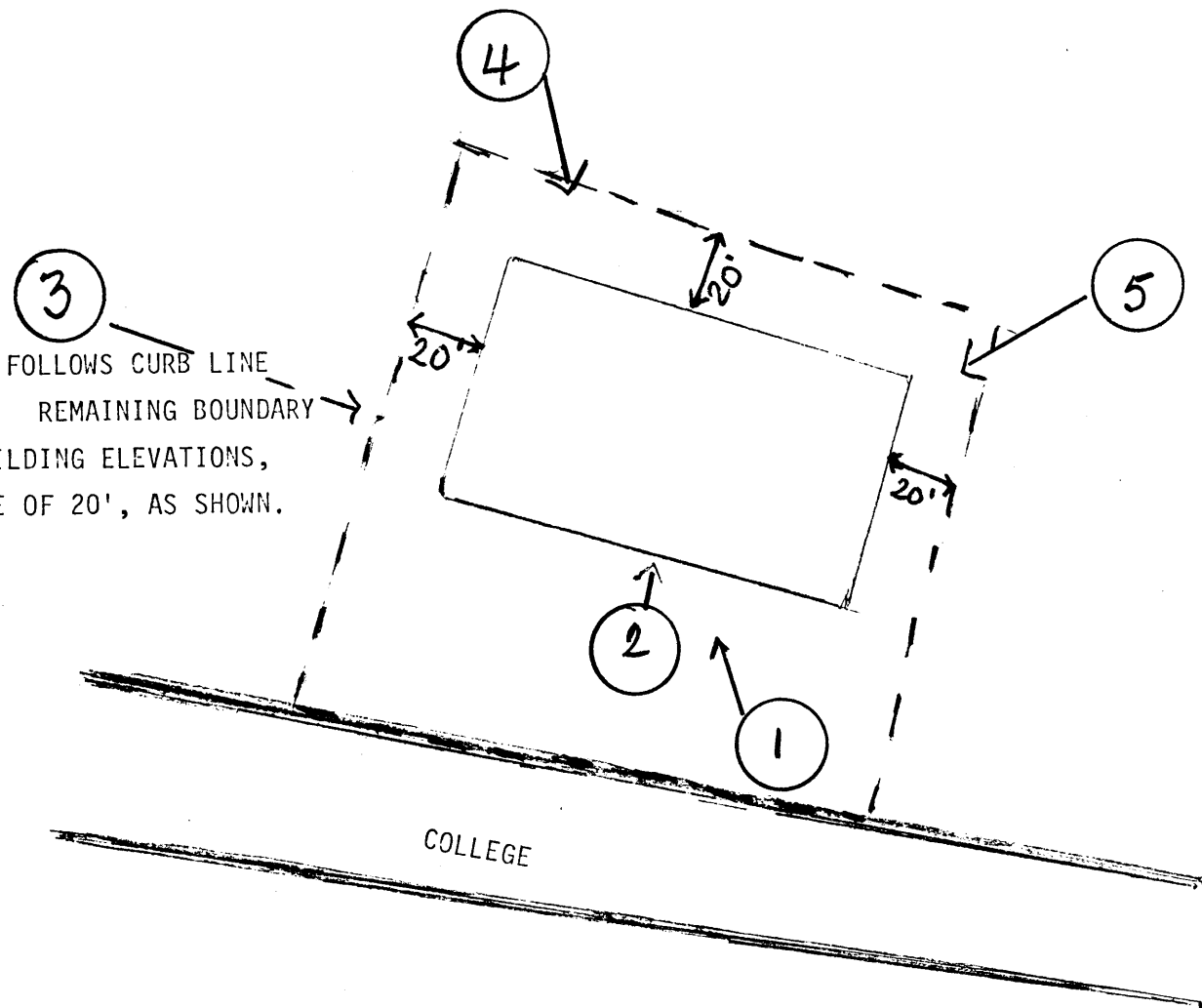
date 6/21/84

for  Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



NORTHERN BOUNDARY FOLLOWS CURB LINE OF COLLEGE AVENUE. REMAINING BOUNDARY LINES PARALLEL BUILDING ELEVATIONS, EACH AT A DISTANCE OF 20', AS SHOWN.

WOMEN'S GYMNASIUM  
 NORTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY  
 NATCHITOCHEES, NATCHITOCHEES PARISH, LA

NOT TO SCALE

