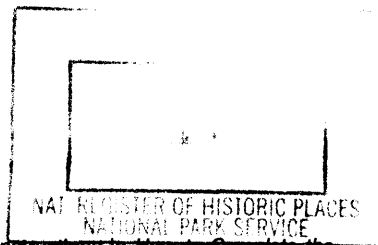


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Assumption Parish Courthouse and Jail

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 4809 La. Hwy. 1 N/A  not for publication

city or town Napoleonville N/A  vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Assumption code 007 zip code 70390

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jonathan Fricker 1/10/97  
Signature of certifying official/Title Jonathan Fricker, Deputy SHPO, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism Date  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Edson R. Beall Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 2-14-97

Assumption Parish Courthouse and Jail

Name of Property

Assumption Parish, LA

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Government - courthouse

Government - correctional facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Government - courthouse

Government - correctional facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Romanesque

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls stucco

roof asphalt

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Assumption Parish Courthouse and Jail, Assumption Parish, LA

Section number 7 Page 1

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The Assumption Parish Courthouse was built in 1896, while the nearby jail is an earlier structure which was in place by at least 1885. Based on the architectural character of the jail, it is being given a c.1880 date. Both the courthouse and jail are two-story buildings in the Italianate style. The courthouse is completely sheathed in stucco; except for a small frame tower rising from one corner, the jail is also stucco-sheathed. Both buildings have received modern additions, including a hyphen-like connector which now joins the two. The resulting complex stands in downtown Napoleonville on a large parcel which faces Bayou Lafourche and LA Highway 1, which parallel each other. Although this location was donated to Assumption Parish for use as the courthouse site in 1818, other public and private structures have been added to the block's corners in recent years. As a result, the courthouse now appears crowded on the block and the jail is cut off from its visual relationship with the bayou. Despite the alterations and the crowding, the two historic buildings retain enough integrity to be eligible for National Register listing.

The courthouse has the appearance of an Italian villa. Its Italianate stylistic features include:

- 1) an asymmetrical footprint which gives the building a picturesque appearance. The footprint consists of a square shaped main block with a tower and stair hall attached to its facade. The main block's first floor contains parish offices flanking a central hall. One large courtroom fills the original portion of the main block's second floor.
- 2) an overhanging roof surmounting the main block,
- 3) the above mentioned tower, or campanile, which features a hipped roof with overhanging eaves; paired, shaped rafter tails resembling brackets; and a Palladian window on three elevations. The ground floor level of the tower serves as an open vestibule-like space as well as a connector between the main block and the stair hall. The tower's second story, which is enclosed, opens into the stair hall and serves as the staircase's upper landing. It also functions as an anteroom for the courtroom. The tower's third level, reached by a ladder, is unused.
- 4) Round arched openings forming the two portals piercing the tower's ground floor level. Because of the building's stucco covering, the actual structural elements

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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Assumption Parish Courthouse and Jail, Assumption Parish, LA  
Section number 7 Page 2

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which form each arch are hidden. However, each is articulated on the structure's surface by a semi-circular band of molding attached to the flat surface of the tower wall. A second, recessed band, is located several inches below the raised one. This treatment gives each arch shaped opening the suggestion of corbeling. Both arched bands spring from paneled piers with molded capitals.

Although predominantly Italianate in design, the courthouse does show slight influence of the Romanesque Revival style in the massiveness with which the round arch entrances and the Palladian windows are articulated. This is particularly true of the latter. Inscribed within large square motifs, each has a central portion with a heavily molded arch and a large keystone. This arch springs from even heavier molded entablatures which surmount the two smaller windows completing the Palladian motif. The entablatures, in turn, are supported by short, thick pilasters which appear to stand on a double belt course encircling the tower at this spot. Other features of interest on the tower's exterior include a more simple belt course and a metal balcony marking the location of the second floor and a clock located between the second floor windows and the upper belt course.

Interior decorative features found in the courthouse include beaded board wainscoting in the central hall and offices, pronounced molded lintels and transoms above interior doors, semi-circular fanlights above double doors leading from the vestibule to the central hall and from the vestibule to the stair hall, and an Eastlake style balustrade on the staircase. There is also an elaborate Colonial Revival surround with a broken pediment, an urn, Corinthian capitals, fluted columns and dentils surrounding the door to the vault in the Clerk of Court's office. The wainscoting and molded lintels found on the first floor are repeated in the second floor courtroom, which also has a molded chair rail and exposed ceiling beams. Mantels found throughout the interior of both floors are unusual for the building's 1896 date of construction because they are in the older Federal style. They feature molded mantel shelves, molded and paneled pilasters on high bases, and sunburst motifs gracing raised entablature panels. No documents concerning the courthouse's construction have been located, and no parish official now serving knows the origin of these mantels. One is tempted to speculate that they were salvaged from the parish's previous courthouse--a Greek Revival style building constructed some time after the 1818 donation of the land as the courthouse site.

The courthouse has received a number of alterations since its construction. The most significant is the mid-1970s attachment of the hyphen-like connector mentioned above. It consists of a first floor addition to the Parish Tax Assessor's office, a partially enclosed parking garage at

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Assumption Parish Courthouse and Jail, Assumption Parish, LA

Section number 7 Page 3

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ground level between the new offices and the old jail, and a new jail filling the connector's second floor. Other alterations to the courthouse are as follows:

- 1) the construction of two one story additions on the building's south side. The first was in place by the 1960s, with the second being constructed around 1985.
- 2) the addition of a staircase and a handicap ramp across the rear
- 3) changes to windows and doors as a result of the foregoing additions
- 4) an interior modernization which lowered the ceiling height through the installation of a dropped tile ceiling and placed tile flooring over the original floors
- 5) the loss of the building's very tall chimney
- 6) a courtroom modernization which added a new judge's bench with accompanying wooden backdrop, florescent lights, carpeting, and exposed air conditioning ducts on the room's north side.

Additional alterations include the conversion of some office space into restrooms and the subdivision of the original offices by the installation of counters.

There is no known documentation on the exact date of construction for the originally separate jail. It appears on the first Sanborn map for Napoleonville, dated 1885. Based upon the architectural character of the building, a date of c.1880 is being used. The two story rectangular shaped jail is covered by a gabled roof whose end walls rise to form gable parapets. The gable ends are treated as pediments with thick raking cornices and entablatures. A lunette graces the front gable; an oculus is found on the rear.

The building's most interesting feature is its frame tower, which rises from the structure's southeast corner. With its overhanging hipped roof, paired brackets and semi-circular windows surmounted by semi-circular window hoods, the tower reflects the Italianate styling found on the courthouse. The tower rises from a molded base distinguished by corbeled motifs. Below the

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**United States Department of the Interior  
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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Assumption Parish Courthouse and Jail, Assumption Parish, LA  
Section number 7 Page 4

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tower and gables, the building's walls feature both rounded and square shaped windows, corner pilasters with molded capitals, and a raised entablature which encircles the structure. The building's second story windows extend upward into this entablature.

Although the jail's design clearly provides for a tower, it is not absolutely certain that the present tower is original. While its Italianate detailing would be appropriate for a building in place by 1885, an old photo shows the tower's sides covered in imbricated shingles, a Queen Anne style feature found in rural Louisiana mainly in the 1890s and early years of the twentieth century. In short, either the tower is a complete turn-of-the-century replacement of the original or the tower's sides received imbricated shingles at that time.

Non-historic alterations to the jail include:

- 1) the addition of the hyphen-like connector, which resulted in the closing of all but one window on the jail's south side, the conversion of the remaining first floor south side window into a door, and the conversion of an original door on the facade into a window.
- 2) the attachment of an unsympathetic two-story wing to the rear wall
- 3) the addition of a handicap ramp on the north side
- 4) the closing of several windows, including the formerly glazed lunette
- 5) the replacement of the tower's imbricated shingles with conventional clapboards and the filling of the upper portion of the tower's arched openings
- 6) the conversion of the interior into offices with linoleum floors, lowered tile ceilings and paneled walls.

Assessment of Integrity:

Many of the alterations to the courthouse and jail are admittedly impossible to mitigate. Yet the architectural features which make the buildings significant remain mostly intact and visible. Indeed, the courthouse's campanile, with its Italianate roots and unusual interpretation of

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**United States Department of the Interior  
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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Assumption Parish Courthouse and Jail, Assumption Parish, LA  
Section number 7 Page 5

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the Palladian window, remains the forceful visual element which its builders intended it to be. It clearly articulates the message that the building is a place of importance, and its distinctive appearance is the first feature to catch the eye of a person passing by or visiting the structure. The jail's architecturally significant features, including the pedimented parapets and the corner tower, also survive. Although its original shingling has been replaced, this alteration does not seriously reduce the tower's visual impact. In fact, the tower can still be seen rising above and behind the modern building which stands nearby. And the bars left in place in the still exposed windows still clearly reflect the structure's historic use as a jail. As landmarks in the architectural patrimony of Assumption Parish, the courthouse and jail are viable candidates for National Register listing.

**Non-contributing Element:**

Located in the corner of the nominated acreage, in front of the jail, is a low-key modern one story brick building.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
[X] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations N/A

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1896 (courthouse)

c.1880 (jail)

Significant Dates

1896 (courthouse)

c.1880 (jail)

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Architect: Harrod & Andry

Builder: M.T. Lewman & Co. (both for courthouse)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 #

Primary location of additional data:

- [X] State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:



10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .9 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 1 | 5 | | 6 | 9 | 0 | 6 | 8 | 0 | | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 0 |  
Zone Easting Northing  
2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  
Zone Easting Northing  
4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register staff

organization Division of Historic Preservation date October 1996

street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone 504-342-8160

city or town Baton Rouge state LA zip code 70804

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Assumption Parish Police Jury, Attn: Bettie T. Monson, Secretary/Treasurer

street & number P. O. Box 518 telephone (504) 369-7435

city or town Napoleonville state LA zip code 70390

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Assumption Parish Courthouse and Jail, Napoleonville, Assumption Parish, LA

Section number 8 Page 1

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The Assumption Parish Courthouse and jail are locally significant because they are landmarks within the architectural patrimony of that South Louisiana parish.

Assumption is one of Louisiana's older parishes, having been legally established in 1807. Its early population consisted of persons of French, Spanish, Acadian, and German descent. This mixture was expanded by the addition of Anglo-Americans after Louisiana became, first a territory (1803), and finally a full-fledged state within the United States (1812). Agriculture has always been the parish's economic mainstay, with sugar cane the dominating crop. Perhaps as a result of its rural focus, the parish has never developed large communities. It appears that Napoleonville did not become the parish seat until 1818, when Maxill and Caroline Bourg donated a tract of land along the west bank of Bayou Lafourche to serve as the permanent location for the courthouse. Before that date parish leaders had held court wherever they pleased, including one site on the east bank of the bayou three miles south of town. The site donated by the Bourgs has remained the location of the courthouse, perhaps because the Bourgs stipulated in their act of donation that the land should revert to their heirs if the seat of justice should ever be moved.

Despite its long history, Assumption Parish has few real architectural landmarks. This is partly due to its very rural nature, with the small town of Napoleonville being the only place of any size, and its population is only 802. The Division of Historic Preservation's Standing Structures Survey for the parish records approximately 2,000 buildings defined as historic (50 years old or more). According to survey records, the vast majority of Assumption's residences consists of small Creole cottages, shotguns, bungalows, and simple versions of Queen Anne Revival and Eastlake cottages. A handful of the latter display well-developed gallery decoration, and a few houses have projecting Queen Anne bays. Nevertheless, most of the parish's domestic architecture can only be described as undistinguished. The survey also shows that, for the most part, the region's commercial buildings also fall into the undistinguished category. Against this background the parish's few landmark buildings assume added importance. These include two major antebellum Greek Revival plantation houses found along Bayou Lafourche, one otherwise simple cottage whose major feature is a large octagonal turret reflecting the influence of the Queen Anne Revival style, a handful of architecturally important churches, two historic school buildings (one a restrained version of the Beaux Arts style, the other displaying a restrained Neo-Classical design), a small Neo-Classical style bank, two Romanesque commercial buildings, and the Italian villa style parish courthouse with its accompanying Italianate jail. And the courthouse assumes additional importance because it is the only building in the parish to be articulated in the

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**United States Department of the Interior  
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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Assumption Parish Courthouse and Jail, Napoleonville, Assumption Parish, LA

Section number 8 Page 2  
9 1

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Italian villa mode. This is in marked contrast to the Italianate as it is typically found in the parish and indeed the state as a whole--i.e., a symmetrical building to which Italianate details have been applied. With its picturesque asymmetrical villa-like articulation, the courthouse is easily one of the parish's most convincing renditions of the popular revival styles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The jail, with its complementary styling, adds to the overall architectural interest of the property. As landmarks of Assumption Parish's architectural heritage, the courthouse and jail are legitimate candidates for National Register listing.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Assumption Parish Development Board and Louisiana Department of Public Works, *Assumption Parish, Louisiana Resources and Facilities*. n.p., 1965.

Brasseaux, Carl A., Conrad, Glenn R., and Robinson, R. Warren. *The Courthouses of Louisiana*. Lafayette, LA.: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1980.

Division of Historic Preservation, *Historic Standing Structures Survey of Assumption Parish*.

Gilbert, S. F. *History of the Town of Napoleonville*. Napoleonville, LA.: n.p., 1936.

Site visit by National Register staff.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Assumption Parish Courthouse and Jail, Assumption Parish, LA  
Section number 10 Page 1

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**BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

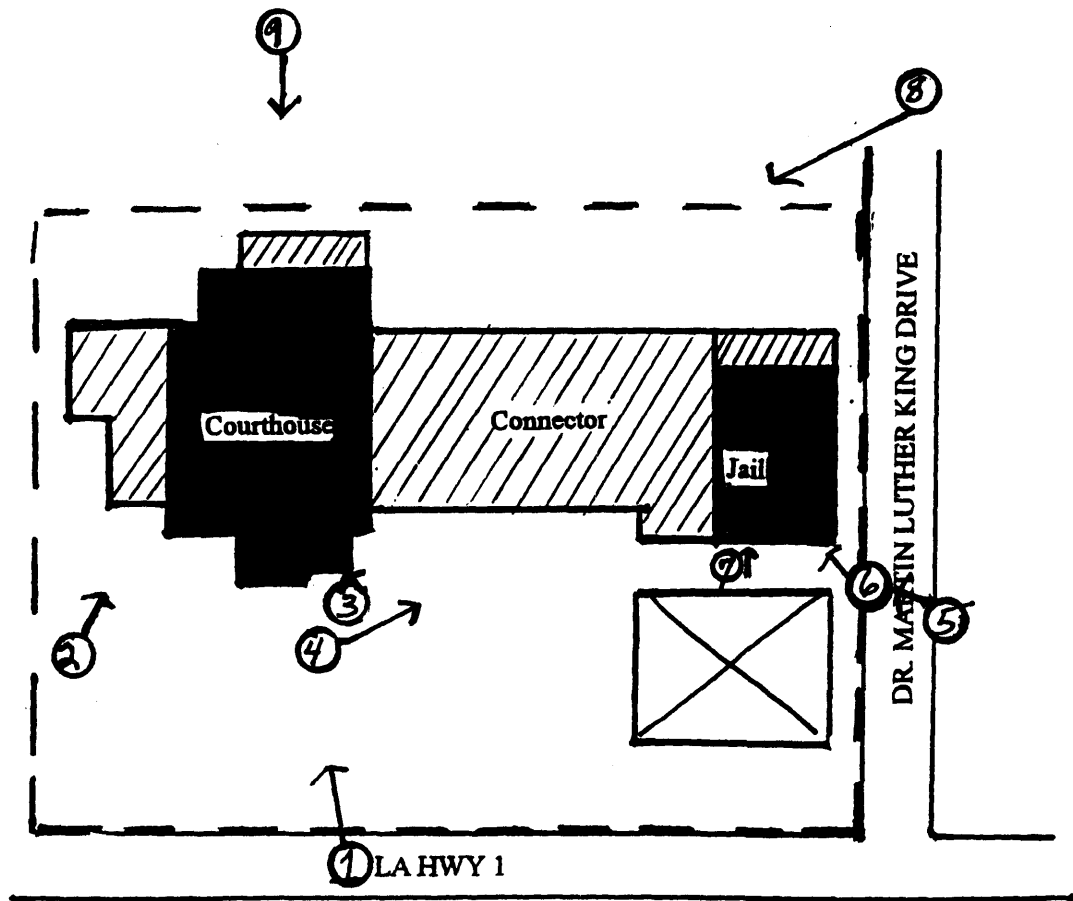
Please refer to attached sketch map.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

Boundaries follow property lines to the northeast and northwest. The southeast and southwest boundaries cut close to the nominated resources in order to exclude non-contributing elements. The non-contributing element in front of the jail was included within the nominated acreage because is an integral part of the property (i.e., within the principal view shed).

# ASSUMPTION PARISH COURTHOUSE & JAIL

Napoleonville, Assumption Parish, LA



Bayou Lafourche

SCALE: 1" = 50'

BOUNDARY:

CONTRIBUTING ELEMENT

ADDITION:

NON-CONTRIBUTING ELEMENT

