

OMF NO. 1024-0018  
EXP. 12/31/84

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 Longbranch Hotel Complex

and/or common same

## 2. Location

street & number La. Hwy. 59 (Rangeline Road) at La. Hwy. 36 N/A not for publication

city, town Abita Springs N/A vicinity of ~~congressional district~~

state LA code 22 county St. Tammany Parish code 103

## 3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

street & number

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number 510 E. Boston, P. O. Box 1090

city, town Covington state LA 70433

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1981 ☐ 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 Longbranch Hotel Complex, located in Abita Springs about ten miles north of the northern shore of Lake Pontchartrain, consists of a two-story, galleried, frame hotel with one-story side and rear wings, a two-story guesthouse, and a springhouse pavilion. All of the buildings retain the integrity of their late-nineteenth century construction and forested setting. The complex is about one-half mile from the northern boundary of the Abita Springs National Register historic district.

The main block of the hotel was built in the winter of 1879 and 1880 and has sixteen rooms. Its metal roof is gabled in the rear and hipped in the front (photos 1 & 7). It is constructed of heart pine clapboard siding with cypress trim and rests upon brick piers. The facade of the building, which is the only elevation that has ever been painted, boasts an eight-foot wide, two-tier gallery with a Classical Revival parapeted cornice, square balusters, and six square columns on each story (photo 1). Central entrances on each story have transoms, and there are 6 over 9 floor-length windows with cypress shutters (photos 2 & 3). The interior features a central hall, pine plank flooring, cypress trim, simple raised panel doors, and plaster on wood lathe walls (photo 4).

There are two one-story wings on the hotel. The first projects perpendicularly from near the front of the main block. It was designed as the "bachelor's quarters" and has rooms of varying size opening onto a six-foot wide gallery with Stick Style trim (photo 5). A kitchen and dining wing is connected to the rear of the hotel's central hall. It features casement windows and a double paneled door (photo 6).

It is likely that these two wings were built shortly after the main block was constructed. About 1890, when the railroad from New Orleans to Abita Springs opened, the hotel underwent some expansion, and it is likely that the two wings were constructed at that time. Both of them make use of exterior vertical board siding, and the kitchen has casement windows which differ from those on the main building block. It is probable that the beaded wainscotting found in the hallways of the main block of the hotel building was also installed at this time,

Fifty-five feet west of the hotel is a two-story, gabled, clapboard guesthouse which was built c.1890. It features heavy brackets on the cornice of the front gable end and a seven-foot wide, two-tier gallery with chamfered columns and Stick Style trim. The facade has floor-length windows with shutters and a central entrance with a glass-paneled door with a transom and side lights. The building has a central hall plan with four rooms on each floor. The interior walls and ceilings are beaded (photos 8, 9, & 10).

About forty feet south of the guesthouse is the c.1890 springhouse pavilion, a twenty foot by twenty foot, hip roofed structure that is open on all sides. The square columns are braced, and the fascia line is adorned with sawn cypress darts. In the approximate center of the pavilion is a brick well (photos 11 & 12).

CONTINUED

## 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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** 1879–80, c.1890

**Builder/Architect** 1879–80 Builder: Joseph Gazin, New Orleans  
unknown for c.1890 construction

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Criteria A and C

The Longbranch Hotel Complex is significant on the local level in the areas of architecture and science. Architecturally, the main hotel is one of the most pretentious and sophisticated structures in St. Tammany Parish. The entire complex is significant in the area of science because it materially illustrates a specific era and once prevalent philosophy of American health care. It is the only remaining example of the once numerous hotels in Abita Springs which served the people of the New Orleans area who sought the curative powers of the clean air and mineral water offered at the town's resorts. Its heyday was the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

### Architecture (main hotel only)

The hotel, with its five-bay, two-tier, parapeted gallery, is one of the most impressive and pretentious structures in the parish. Though built in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, it is reminiscent of earlier residences in the New Orleans area that feature a sophisticated Classical Revival facade tacked to the front of a building with relatively plain side elevations. The Longbranch, which was always used as a hotel rather than a single family house, reads as a residence and the design of its facade was apparently an attempt to recall these earlier pretentious city houses.

### Science (all three structures in complex)

The Longbranch Hotel Complex is the only remaining example of the once numerous resort hotels which characterized Abita Springs during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Abita Springs was one of several resort communities located in the "Ozone Belt." People from the New Orleans area came to hotels like the Longbranch to partake of the supposed health giving powers of the ozone available in the area along the northern shore of Lake Pontchartrain. Victorian medical theory held that ozone in the air had special recuperative and regenerative powers when inhaled by the infirmed.

In addition to the ozone and rural surroundings, a special draw to Abita Springs was the sparkling mineral water that came from the local springs. Indian legend told of the curative power of the water, and as early as 1854, the area was promoted as a health resort. The town grew slowly after the Civil War, and when the Longbranch opened, the first line in its advertisement noted its proximity to the major spring in Abita. The railroad from New Orleans opened in about 1890 and brought larger numbers of people to the town and to hotels like the Longbranch, where they relaxed and sought the restorative powers of the water and ozone. The area was particularly attractive to New Orleanians during the summer when yellow fever was a threat.

(CONTINUED)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References ATTACHMENT VERIFIED

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property @ 2.7 acres

Quadrangle name Covington, LA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

Midpoint:

A 

1	5	7	8	4	0	6	0	3	3	7	6	0	9	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

See attached plat map and Item 10 continuation sheet.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title J. Buchanan Blitch, F.A.I.A.

organization Blitch Architects, Inc.

date March 1981

street & number 1070 St. Charles Avenue

telephone 504-524-4634

city or town New Orleans

state LA 70130

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ state X 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 10, 1982

For NPS use only

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



Keeper of the National Register

date 6/24/82

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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

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



Continuation sheet      Abita Springs      Historic District      Item number 4      Page 2

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4. Owners (Continued)

J. Buchanan Blitch  
Star Route 1, Box 230  
Abita Springs, LA 70420

Eduardo M. Camacho  
122 E. Randall Court  
Gretna, LA 70053

Clayton J. Charbonnet  
1817 Calhoun Street  
New Orleans, LA 70118

Warren E. Mouldoux  
1415 Frankfort St.  
New Orleans, LA 70118

Richard J. Schaff  
328 Arlington Drive  
Metairie, LA 70001

Mrs. Clay E. Thomas, Jr.  
7312 Stoneleigh Drive  
Harahan, LA 70123

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

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



Continuation sheet Longbranch Hotel Complex

Item number 7

Page 2

7. Description (Continued)

Integrity

The three late-nineteenth century structures in the complex retain a remarkably high degree of integrity and have received almost no alterations since the turn of the twentieth century. In addition to the complex's retention of its structural integrity, its wooded setting remains.

Minor alterations (since the c.1880 and c.1890 construction) include the installation of bagasse boards on several of the ceilings and the addition of bathrooms.

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

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



Continuation sheet Longbranch Hotel Complex

Item number 8

Page 2

8. Significance (Continued)

Significance in the area of science also encompasses the Longbranch pavilion, which is one of three extant pavilions in Abita Springs. These structures were built over the wells and springs which made the area famous. The other two are larger and more elaborate, and the main one (the Abita Springs Pavilion) is already listed on the National Register. The Longbranch pavilion is further removed from the main residential area of the town and was built mainly to serve Longbranch guests, so its size and simplicity is to be expected.

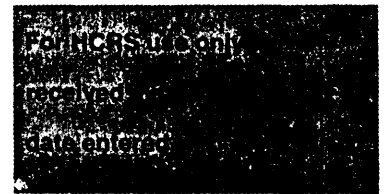
The fortunes of the Longbranch and the town declined after World War I. One of the major reasons for this was the advance of medical theory which eliminated such diseases as yellow fever and alleviated the medical need for refuges such as the Longbranch Hotel.

Relationship of Integrity to Significance:

As stated in Item 7, the Longbranch complex is remarkably intact and consequently is able to convey the full measure of its architectural and historical significance.

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

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



Continuation sheet Longbranch Hotel

Item number 9

Page 2

9. Bibliography

"A Documentation of Turn-of-the Century Treasures of an Historic Louisiana Community, Some existing, Some Lost Forever...", a research project of Leslie Anne Blitch, St. Scholastica Academy, 1978.

"Abita Springs", research project of Gary Connor, student of Tulane Architecture School, under sponsorship of Blitch Architects, Inc., 1973.

Court records and title research documentation related to Longbranch properties, St. Tammany Parish Courthouse, Covington, LA

Existing Land Use Study for Abita Springs, Louisiana, St. Tammany Parish Planning Commission, May 1979.

Ground-Water Resources of Tangipahoa and St. Tammany Parishes, United States Dept. of the Interior Survey in Cooperation with La. Dept. of Transportation and Development, 1978.

The Harlequin, Vol. I No. 15, circa 1900, Howard-Tilton Library, Tulane University.

Historic Preservation, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Volume 30, Number 4, October-December, 1978.

Historic Preservation Planning, Regional Planning Commission, June 1974.

Historical Preservation Survey, Abita Springs, La., Keith Villere, St. Tammany Parish Planning Commission, June 1980.

Louisiana: An Historic Preservation Plan, Volume II "Towards Preservation ...Problems and Projects in Louisiana", The Louisiana Historical Preservation and Cultural Commission, second edition, June, 1972.

St. Tammany Historical Society Gazette, "The Spring of Abita Builds a Town", Johnson, Paula Patecek, Volume 2, April 1977.

St. Tammany Parish Farmer, Microfilm #1-8, 1874-1905.

Times Picayune, "Abita Springs Once Famous Health Spa", March 13, 1977.

Taped reminiscences of early Abita Springs by Abita pioneers Mrs. Odette Loustalot (transcribed in 1979) and Mr. Laurence Flot (transcribed in 1978), each 120 minutes, covering period from 1895 to 1944. Historic archives of Blitch Architects, Inc.

Various promotional pamphlets advertising Abita Springs, 1900 - 1910, Historic Louisiana Collection, Howard-Tilton Library, Tulane University.



**United States Department of the Interior  
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**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Longbranch Hotel Complex

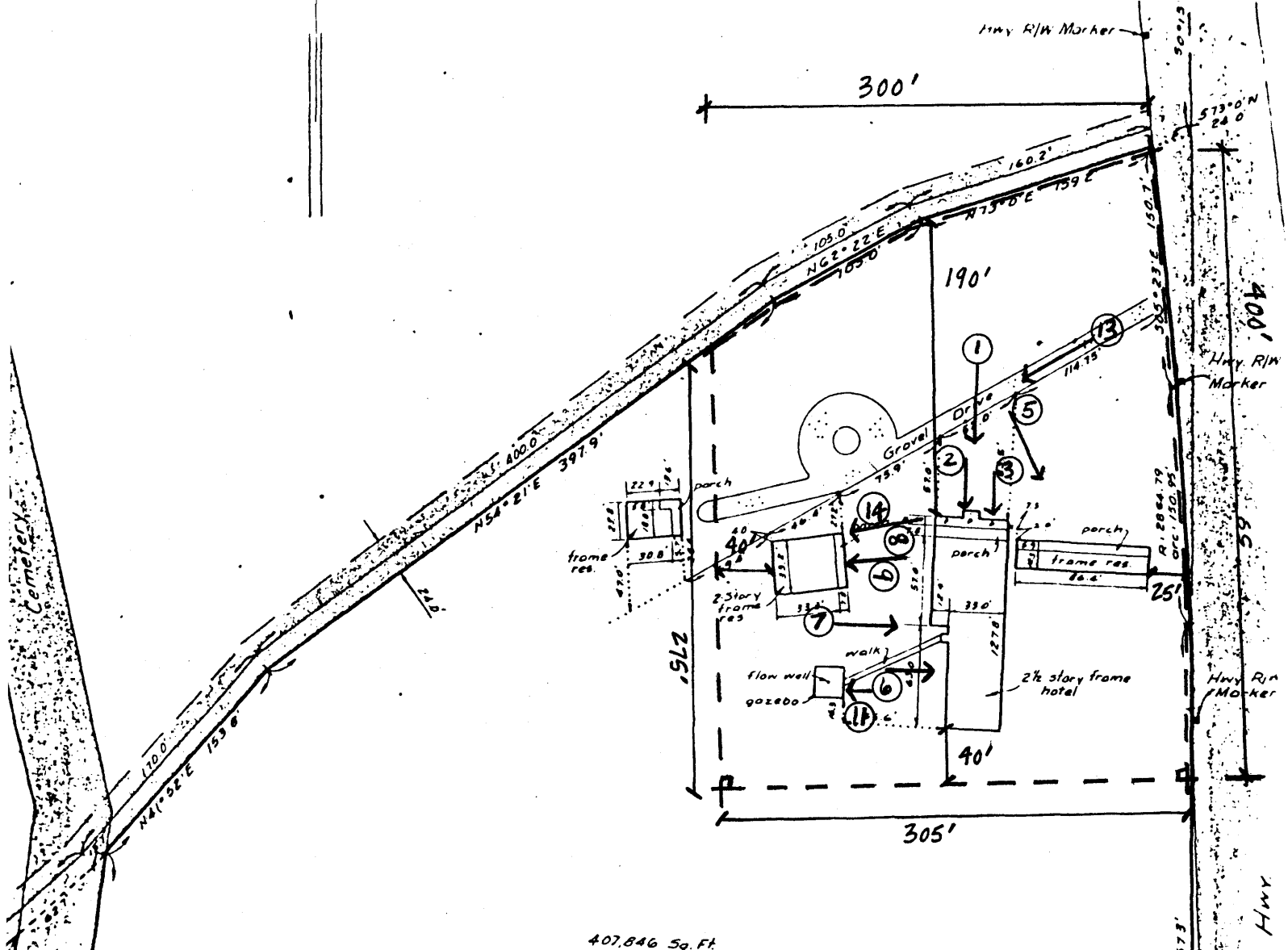
Item number 10

Page 2

10. Boundary justification:

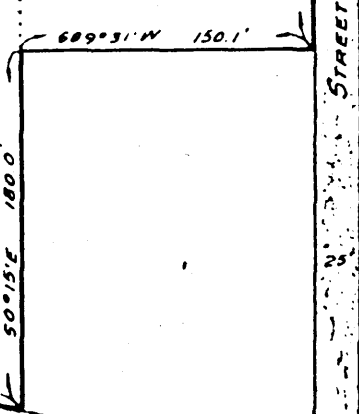
The boundary, as shown on the attached plat map, was drawn in order to include the significant historic buildings and sufficient acreage to illustrate the complex's rural wooded setting. The "bachelor's wing" of the hotel is treated as part of the main hotel building even though it is detached and could be considered a fourth building in the complex. It is so close to the main structure that it should be considered as an integral part of it.

The small modern cottage to the west of the complex has been excluded because it does not contribute to the architectural or historical significance of the property.



NOTE: SITE BOUNDARIES ENCOMPASS THE COMPLEX & ITS WOODED SETTING, AT DISTANCES SHOWN. THE USGS MAP DOES NOT ACCURATELY SHOW THE BLDG.'S LOCATION. THE PLAT MAP IS CORRECT.

PLAT OF LAND SURVEYED FOR  
**MR. WARREN E. MOULEDOUX**  
 Being Lots 1 thru 17 Park Villa Subdivision and part  
 of Sec. 36 T6S R11E, St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana  
*Eddie J. Champagne*  
 Surveyed by, Eddie J. Champagne, Surveyor  
 Scale: 1" = 100' Dwg. No. 4417  
 Date: October 10, 1978  
 Revised: Nov. 21, 1978



SEC. 36