

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 Gordy House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 503 Charity St. N/A not for publication

city or town Abbeville N/A vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Vermilion code 113 zip code 70510

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.)
Gerry Hobdy August 25, 1995
Signature of certifying official/Title Gerry Hobdy, Date
LA SHPO, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
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 certifying 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 H. Beall Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 9/29/95

Gordy House
Name of Property

Vermilion 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	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	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)

Domestic/single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne Revival

Eastlake

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other _____

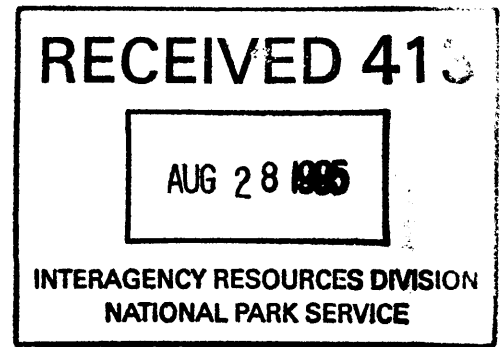
Narrative Description

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

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Gordy House, Abbeville, Vermilion Parish, LA
Section number 7 Page 1



The Gordy House (c.1888) is a two-story Queen Anne Revival style dwelling with notable Eastlake ornamentation. It stands on the corner of a busy intersection in a mixed-use neighborhood a few blocks from downtown Abbeville. Despite a 1920s remodeling which involved the enclosure of its double gallery and some later alterations, the house retains its National Register eligibility.

Although there is no one left in Abbeville who remembers how the house originally looked, Sanborn fire insurance maps and surviving architectural evidence indicate that it began as a two-story residence with prominently projecting rooms and a two story Eastlake gallery. This gallery had its own small attached entrance pavilion on the first level. The floorplan appears to have included an entrance hall from which a central hall extended toward the rear. This hall connected to a side porch which was located adjacent to the rear projecting room. Not including the entrance hall, the first floor contained four rooms, with one located on the west and three on the east side of the structure. Most of the house's original exterior character survives intact, as noted below.

The stylistic elements which give the house its Queen Anne character include:

- 1) a marked verticality,
- 2) an asymmetrical footprint, as previously noted. The house has a linear, gable end, main building mass with a boldly projecting polygonal bay with forty-five degree corner cuts on the front and a squared off gabled projection on the rear. The west side of the main building block is also articulated as a polygonal bay with forty five degree corner cuts.
- 3) a busy roofline created by the presence of cross gable massing and chimneys with corbeled tops,
- 4) the front door, which features a large pane of glass outlined by small panes of colored glass.

The home features vertical and horizontal boards emphasizing all its angles, thus suggesting the influence of the Stick style.

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Gordy House, Abbeville, Vermilion Parish, LA

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The home's surviving Eastlake features include:

- 1) at least two mantels:
 - a) one featuring paired, reeded pilasters rising from corbelled bases and surmounted by brackets instead of capitals
 - b) one featuring reeded pilasters, bull's eye and floral motifs on its corner blocks, and geometrically incised lines on its entablature
- 2) a staircase with two large turned newel posts,
- 3) the above-mentioned front door, which features Eastlake ornamentation in addition to its Queen Anne glass treatment,
- 4) brackets ornamented by plant motifs marking the 45 degree corner cuts of the polygonal bays, and
- 5) very elaborate ornamentation within the peaks of three of the home's four gables. Two are identical (those on the sides), and all three feature the same basic patterns. These motifs include spindle screens crowned by radial designs formed of small turned members, dowel rods, ball drop ornaments, and various cutout designs, including four leaf clovers, circles, and other geometric shapes.

As noted previously, the house originally had a two story Eastlake gallery, as is clear from the architectural evidence and Sanborn maps. The gallery began at the front gable, extended probably three bays across the front, and turned the corner to meet the side polygonal bay. According to the Sanborn maps, the loss of the gallery took place between 1923 and 1929. Architectural evidence indicates that various other changes were part of this 1920s remodeling project.

This work included:

- 1) the joining of the entrance hall to the parlor, which was accomplished by removing all but about the top three feet of the wall between the two, and the enlargement of the dining room, completed by removing all but about the top three feet of the wall between it and the central hall. Defining the edges of these newly created

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Gordy House, Abbeville, Vermilion Parish, LA

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- openings are Eastlake columns undoubtedly salvaged from the front gallery and split lengthwise to serve as pilasters.
- 2) the reconfiguration of the staircase. It is located in the former central hall (now part of the dining room), but is oriented toward the latter. This alteration necessitated the closing of a door between the hallway and west projecting room, and the replacement of the original back door with a large window.
 - 3) the previously mentioned enclosure of the two-story front gallery. This was done sensitively (or at least as sensitively as a porch enclosure can be done) because the clapboards match and original windows were re-used. The Eastlake entrance porch was reworked, and the old Eastlake door was moved forward. The newly created space on the first floor was added to the enlarged parlor, while the second floor space was used to create a small study and a large closet.
 - 4) the replacement of all door and window surrounds in the original parlor, entrance hall, and west projecting room. These newer surrounds feature reeded vertical and horizontal members, and bull's eye corner blocks. The original surrounds, featuring floral corner blocks, survive in the dining room.
 - 5) the conversion of the door connecting the west projecting room to the former gallery from a single door to double glazed doors
 - 6) the installation of a wall containing double glazed doors between the former entrance hall and central hall, and the construction of built-in shelves on either side of a new parlor mantel.
 - 7) the construction of a downstairs bath at the rear (northwest) corner of the home and a shed roof breakfast room adjacent to the rear projecting room.
 - 8) the attachment of a carport next to the new downstairs bath. It apparently connected to the lower story of the rear porch, but the porch's second floor remained open. Much later, this second floor porch was converted into a modern bathroom.

Few changes have been made by the current owners. They have replaced the carport,

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Gordy House, Abbeville, Vermilion Parish, LA

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moved the steps leading to the now totally enclosed former rear first floor porch, and modernized the kitchen.

Although the 1920s remodeling was admittedly extensive, the house retains sufficient integrity from its original period of construction to merit Register listing. Of course, the most notable integrity issue is the removal of the Eastlake porch. But despite this regrettable loss, the house, from the principal exterior views, looks much as it did originally. Very importantly, it retains the majority of those features that establish it as a significant example of its style and period within Abbeville (its striking verticality and asymmetrical composition, with a boldly projecting front polygonal bay, and its quite elaborate gable peak ornamentation). In short, it is a very important example of the Queen Anne taste within Abbeville even without its gallery. As one of the town's most significant examples of the Queen Anne and Eastlake styles, the Gordy House is a strong candidate for Register listing.

Non-Contributing Element

A one-story frame guest house also stands on the property. Although its appearance is historic, it was in reality constructed only within the last two years.

Gordy House
Name of Property

Vermilion Parish, LA
County and State

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.
- 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

c. 1888

Significant Dates

c. 1888

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

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Gordy House, Abbeville, Vermilion Parish, LA

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The Gordy House is locally significant in the area of architecture as a superior example of the Queen Anne Revival and Eastlake tastes within the parish seat of Abbeville. It derives this distinction largely from its striking verticality, complex massing and the elaborate and profuse ornamentation in its gable peaks.

Located on the Vermilion River, the town of Abbeville is much older than its present historic building stock would indicate. It traces its founding to 1843, when Father Antoine Desire Megret purchased a tract of land on the river for construction of a chapel. The town that developed was incorporated in 1850, and in 1854 it became the parish seat of newly created Vermilion Parish. Apparently the town was very small and grew slowly until the coming of the Iberia and Vermilion Railroad (soon to be the Southern Pacific) in 1892. With the coming of the railroad, Abbeville emerged as a major rice processing center. Like other southwestern Louisiana towns such as Crowley and Jennings, Abbeville benefitted enormously from the "Great Louisiana Rice Boom" of the turn of the century in which mechanized agricultural techniques previously used in the Midwest for wheat production were brought to the prairies of Acadiana for the large-scale production of rice.

Because of the railroad and the rice boom it made possible, Abbeville grew rapidly (from a population of 1200 in 1895 to 2500 in 1907) and prospered greatly, as can be seen in its historic building stock. Despite its early founding, there are believed to be no buildings in the town which predate c.1890. Queen Anne Revival houses such as the Gordy Home reflect the frenzy of building that occurred in Abbeville at the height of the rice boom (c.1895-c.1910). In fact, from the standpoint of residences, the town has a strong Queen Anne heritage. Based upon an almost comprehensive survey and extensive SHPO staff knowledge, it is estimated that there are 50 to 60 houses in the town which reflect the Queen Anne/Eastlake style, ranging from the extremely plain to the very elaborate. Put in perspective, these 50 to 60 houses represent about one-fourth to one-fifth of the town's overall historic building stock.

A review of these 50-60 examples by the State Historic Preservation Office revealed that roughly 18 were of sufficient quality to merit Register consideration. These 18 emerged as superior examples within Abbeville because of their massing and/or ornamentation, both of which are hallmarks of the style. The Gordy House ranks as one of these outstanding examples for three reasons. First, it is one of only seven two story Queen Anne houses remaining within Abbeville. Second, and partly related, is its marked verticality with complex asymmetrical massing, which is so typical of textbook examples of the style. (The more typical example in Abbeville, and indeed the state as a whole, is a horizontally articulated one story cottage with fairly simple massing.)

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Finally, the Eastlake ornamentation in the home's gable peaks is rare and superior within the context of Abbeville. Only a small minority of Queen Anne homes display such ornamentation, and that on the Gordy Home is easily the most elaborate and varied of that small group. Its special features include spoke motifs, abacuses, ball drop ornaments, scallops, and cutout designs such as four-leaf clovers, triangles, circles and floral motifs.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Division of Historic Preservation. Standing Structures Survey of Abbeville, Vermilion Parish, Louisiana.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1912, 1923, 1929.

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Gordy House, Abbeville, Vermilion Parish, LA

Section number 10 Page 1

Legal Property Description

Those certain three (3) lots of ground lying and being situated in the F. F. Young Addition to the Town of Abbeville, Vermilion Parish, Louisiana, and being designated as Lots 4, 5 and 6 in Block 1 of said addition, the said Lots 4 and 5 each measuring 60 feet north and south by the depth east and west of 120 feet, and said Lot 6 measuring 36 feet north and south by the depth of 120 feet east and west, and being bounded as a whole on the north by Lot 3 of said addition, east by Lots 11 and 12 and 10 of said addition, south by Charity Street and west by Valerie Street; together with all buildings and improvements thereon situated and thereto belonging.

Said lots being more particularly situated in Sections 47-49, Township 12 South, Range 3 East, Third Ward, Vermilion Parish, Abbeville, Louisiana.

Boundary Justification: Boundaries follow property lines.