NPS Form 10-900

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Natl. Reg. of Historic Places
National Park Service

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 National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Baton Rouge Electric Company (BRECO) Public Utilities Complex
Other Names/Site Number: Gulf States Utilities (GSU), Entergy
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

2. Location

Street & Number: 1509 Government Street
City or town: Baton Rouge State: LA County: East Baton Rouge Parish
Not for Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

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, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:
☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Kristin P. Sanders 5/16/17

Signature of certifying official/Title: Kristin Sanders, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer **Date**

Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title: **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

✓ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other, explain: _____

7-13-2017

Signature of the Keeper For **Date of Action**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply.)

	Private
X	Public – Local
	Public – State
	Public – Federal

Category of Property (Check only **one** box.)

	Building(s)
X	District
	Site
	Structure
	object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Non-contributing	
3	6	Buildings
0	0	Sites
0	1	Structures
0	0	Objects
3	7	**Total**

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.):
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/energy facility

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.): VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.): NO STYLE; MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
foundation: unknown
walls: brick, concrete
roof: concrete
other: wood, glass, steel, aluminum

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Baton Rouge Electric Company (BRECO) public utilities complex at 1509 Government Street in Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, includes three contributing buildings: a power plant constructed in 1915-16 and converted into an operations center in the late 1930s, a service building constructed in 1930-31, and a small c. 1930s garage. The property is oriented to face Government Street to the south and is bordered by South 15th Street to the west, Spain Street to the north, and a revocated portion of South 16th Street to the east. The buildings were designed and built by Stone & Webster, Incorporated, a prominent Boston-based engineering services company that built and owned or managed utility companies and streetcar systems throughout the United States. The property is currently vacant. As is the nature of industrial sites, the BRECO complex underwent some modifications as it was adapted to evolving technologies and the needs of the expanding community. Nevertheless, the property remains clearly identifiable as an early 20th-century historic public utilities complex and remains eligible for National Register listing.

Narrative Description

In 1907, Stone & Webster bought Baton Rouge Electric Company (then known as Baton Rouge Electric and Gas Company), whose property and assets at the time included a small power plant on residential North Boulevard at St. Joseph Street, an antebellum gas works, the city's one electric streetcar line (City Belt Line), all associated infrastructure, and the company's franchise with the City of Baton Rouge as exclusive purveyors of electric, gas, and streetcar service. In 1915, BRECO announced its move to the Government Street site, a sizeable parcel of land adjacent to the L. R. & N. (Louisiana Railway & Navigation Co.) rail line and passenger depot. This site provided ample space for a new, larger power plant, which would provide twice the capacity of the existing facility, and its proximity to the railroad line vastly improved drayage of fuel and other materials to and from the new site. Once the plant was placed into service, the old plant on North Boulevard was demolished to make way for new residential construction.

Power Plant (Photos 1-16):

The Baton Rouge Electric Company (BRECO) power plant is located near the southwest corner of the site and is oriented south to face Government Street. Completed in early 1916 as a steam-power plant, it is brick masonry construction with reinforced-concrete floors and roof and exposed steel roof trusses. Some steel columns are exposed, and others are encased in concrete. In keeping with power plants of the era, the

BRECO plant was designed for ultimate functionality. It has no overt architectural style, but its restrained exterior detailing, modest materials, and simple, heavy massing present a strong public face that communicates the power, quite literally, of the building's historic use.[1]

Although the building was constructed in 1915-16, it was expanded and otherwise modified on several occasions in the 1920s and 1930s in response to the city's enormous growth during that period, which demanded the generation of more and more electric power. Far from diminishing the building's integrity, these modifications were anticipated from the start and signify the electric company's symbiotic relationship to Baton Rouge's development into a modern city.[2] As Baton Rouge expanded and evolved, BRECO's infrastructure adapted to support it; in turn, BRECO's service helped make the city's growth possible.

In a 1917 issue of Stone & Webster's company journal, published less than two years after the company completed the BRECO plant, a Stone & Webster engineer summarized the key physical characteristics of a modern power plant:

> Unlike a great many buildings, a power station structure has no excuse whatsoever except to house its operating machinery. It should not have added to its proportions any size or embellishments other than those which come naturally to it. Its proportions must be those which its use indicates. It is a semi-public building and therefore its exterior should be dignified, but that dignity must be obtained only by that amount of good proportion and that quiet outside which the limits of the use of the building will permit. Internally there should be nothing except that which contributes to the operation of the station. There is no reason why all materials should not be frankly displayed in their true guise and appearance. The only veneer that is permissible is the paint for the protection of the materials and the diffusion of light.[3]

Consistent with these design principles, the BRECO power plant's form is a product of its function. The building consists of three defined sections: a recessed 2-story section to the west that housed the boiler room (built in 1924 per the 1923-1951 Sanborn map), a 3-story central section that housed the turbine room, and a recessed 2-story section to the east that housed support spaces (locker rooms, storage, offices, etc.), which was expanded northward (at the rear) to 3 stories in 1930-31 (see photo 3). All three sections are flat-roofed, rectangular masses that are unified by dark-red face-brick on the façade and side elevations, a molded cast-stone water table, cast-stone entrances and sills, a molded brick band at the 1st-floor level, and a cast-stone coping. Simple brick pilasters extending the height of the building alternate with the window bays on all four elevations to lend the exterior a regular rhythm. The facade of the prominent central section is further defined by layered-brick window bays, a stepped parapet, and a public entrance with an Art Deco-style cast-stone surround that was added in the 1930s, presumably to complement the restrained Art Deco detailing of the new adjacent service building (described below). The upper floors of the plant feature large rectangular metal windows to maximize natural light and ventilation. On the roof of the central section is a long row of clerestory windows with pivoting wood sashes that provide additional light and circulation to the former turbine room. Some 1st-floor windows were replaced in recent years with vinyl sash windows. On the 2nd level of the east elevation, three windows have been infilled with brick.

The building's rear elevation, which is the least visible from the public right-of-way, is tan-colored common brick rather than red face brick. The large metal windows on the upper floors of this elevation are similar to those on the façade except at the east section's 1930-31 addition, which features smaller rectangular window openings fitted with wood sash windows on the 2nd floor and replacement jalousie windows above. The rear entrance has been enlarged. The rear of the west section/boiler room was expanded northward in 1924 to make space for additional equipment, which was needed to meet the ever-increasing demand for power, including the new northbound "Dixie" streetcar line added that year. An L-shaped concrete loading platform was added to the rear of this section in the 1940s.

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[1] "The Work of Holabird & Roche, Architects," *The American Architect*, August 1920 (Vol 118): 171.
[2] "The Baton Rouge Electric Company," *Louisiana Chronicle Democrat Souvenir Edition,* May 5, 1916.
[3] Walter Goodenough, "The Economics of a Power Station," *Stone & Webster Journal* 20 (May 1917): 349-50.

Adjacent to the power plant there originally stood a 175-foot concrete smoke stack and a 35-foot-tall water tower. The smoke stack, defunct since the 1930s when the plant ceased generating electricity, was demolished at an unidentified date in the late 20th century, and the water tower was removed in the 1930s.

The interior of the power plant is distinctly industrial in character. Its structural elements, including its steel roof trusses and concrete and steel columns, are clearly expressed. The brick walls are exposed or painted, and the floors are concrete. Some mechanical equipment remains, and a variety of pipes and wiring run unconcealed throughout the space.

The interior of the building, like the exterior, is divided into three principal sections: the former boiler room to the west, the former turbine room at center, and a series of support spaces to the east (locker room, offices, storage, etc.). The boilers in the west section were pumped with water that was heated either by coal or oil to produce steam. This steam was fed into turbines housed in the central room, which provided the energy to spin the turbines' rotors. The spinning turbines fueled generators to produce electricity. The steam was then exhausted into the cooling tower, in this case the smoke stack that originally stood in front of the building, and the condensed steam was returned to the water supply to complete the circuit. A stack piercing the building's roof released the fuel exhaust from the boilers. Circular steel framing in the ceiling of the boiler room appears to indicate the location of this stack.

Between 1915 and 1930, the boiler and turbine rooms were undivided spaces open from floor to ceiling. In the late 1930s, the building was converted into GSU's operational headquarters (as further described in Section 8 below). This involved the removal of the boilers and turbines; the addition of partial 2nd and 3rd floors in the turbine room and reinforced-concrete columns to support the extra weight; and the addition of a full 2nd floor and freight elevator to the boiler room, where the lower portions of the steel columns were encased in concrete to provide additional support. The northern/rear section of the turbine room remains undivided from floor to ceiling, and the original overhead twenty-ton gantry crane, which ran the length of the room to transport equipment, is in place. Engaged brick columns support the rails along which the crane rolled. Between these columns at the 2nd level are expansive arches with cast-stone keystones; some of the arches are open and some are infilled with brick. To protect against boiler explosions, the arches along the firewall separating the boiler and turbine rooms have always been infilled with brick, while some of the arches along the opposite wall were infilled at a later date. The first floor of the eastern section, which housed the building's various support spaces, retains its original brick partitions, which divide the space into offices, mechanical rooms, and storage. As part of the building's 1930s conversion, the 2nd floor was subdivided with CMU partitions to create a control room. Throughout the upper floors of the building, there are a handful of later wood stud-frame partitions dividing the spaces.

Service Building (Photos 17-26):

The 2-story service building was constructed in 1930-31 directly east of the power plant and is oriented south to face Government Street. The walls, columns, floors and roof are reinforced concrete, and interior partitions are primarily hollow clay tile. The exterior is clad in red brick veneer. The 1st floor housed a garage for the company's fleet of service trucks and a storeroom for the company's supplies and merchandise, namely an assortment of electric appliances that BRECO sold to the general public. The second floor housed offices for company engineers and superintendents, meter repair shops, and testing laboratories.

The service building is a simple rectangular mass with a flat roof. Its restrained stylistic detailing is limited to the façade. The front entrance is defined by an Art Deco-style cast-stone surround, with a pair of wood entrance doors and a multi-light transom. The decorative brick cornice is organized in a zigzag relief pattern and topped with a cast-stone coping. Simple brick pilasters with cast-stone caps divide the façade into five bays. The façade windows are 1-over-1 wood sashes. On the side and rear elevations, the windows are steel and the parapet is capped with glazed terra-cotta tile. At the northeast corner of the building is an L-shaped concrete loading platform with a metal-frame overhang along the east elevation.

The 1st floor of the interior is characterized by concrete floors, painted brick or hollow clay-tile walls, and painted concrete ceilings. The east side of this floor is devoted primarily to storage areas where BRECO's merchandise and supplies were kept. The west side was a garage for the company's service trucks. Portions of this space were later partitioned into offices. Near the front entrance are a series of small office spaces with original wood doors and transoms; some of the ceilings have been dropped. Two stairwells and an original freight elevator provide access to the 2nd floor. The more formal front stairwell retains its original metal balustrade (see Photo 23). The freight elevator still features its original doors.

The upstairs floor plan is organized around a T-shaped corridor and remains largely intact. A number of offices are located near the front/south end of the building, and the meter repair shops and testing laboratories are located at the rear. The floors are asbestos tile or concrete. The ceilings are painted concrete; in some areas the ceilings have been dropped. Though covered or painted over, original features and finishes remain intact throughout the 2nd floor, including paneled wood doors and transoms, painted millwork, and glazed partitions. The late-20th century finishes such as dropped acoustic-tile ceilings, wood wall paneling, and wainscoting are easily removable and in several areas simply conceal the historic finishes.

Garage (Photos 27-28):

A 1-story brick masonry garage dating to the 1930s was constructed behind the service building. The perimeter walls are exposed red brick. The roof is flat with glazed terra-cotta tile capping the parapet. A modern overhead garage door is oriented to face the interior of the BRECO site facing west. The interior of the building is largely open in plan. The walls are exposed brick, the floors are concrete slab, and the ceiling is pre-cast concrete above exposed steel joists. In the late 20th century, a metal canopy and enclosed metal addition were added to the west and north sides of the garage, respectively. Nevertheless, it remains contributing because it is still identifiable on the exterior and interior as an early garage building, and the addition's subordinate location on the north elevation and its compatible scale do not detract from the garage's visual character.

Non-contributing resources *(Photos 29-32)*:

Non-contributing resources located within the boundaries of the historic property include 5 minimal, 1-story metal storage/repair buildings situated toward the rear of the site. Historical maps and the age of the construction materials indicate that these structures were added in the late 1960s and later. In addition, there is a small contemporary guard station situated at the west entrance to the site, and at the southwest corner are a small one-story metal building and a cellular tower, which were added c. 1990 via an easement that Entergy provided to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). These buildings/structures are considered non-contributing because of their age and because they are generic storage buildings that are not distinctive to the site's historic use as a public utilities complex.

Assessment of Integrity:

Location: The property possesses integrity of location because the buildings remain in their original locations.

Design, Materials, and Workmanship: The property possesses a good degree of exterior and interior integrity of design, materials, and workmanship to clearly communicate the buildings' historic use as a public utilities facility. The power plant and service building have a high degree of exterior integrity, including their brick exteriors, distinctive form and massing, detailed front entrances, arrangement of openings, and several doors and windows. The contributing buildings on the site have been subject to modifications over the years to support new technologies and the changing needs of the community. However, the majority of these modifications took place during the period of significance (1915-1967) and are associated with the buildings' historic changes in use. Modifications made after 1967 are largely reversible and in most instances conceal underlying historic fabric.

Setting: The property retains integrity of setting in that the surrounding neighborhood largely retains its historic character, with low-rise commercial buildings along Government Street and working-class housing to the north, east, and south. The railroad tracks are still in place to the west of the property, which were a deciding factor in relocating the power plant to Government Street in 1915. The small metal storage/repair buildings added to the rear of the site in the late 20th century are subordinate to the historic buildings in scale and quality of materials and do not detract from the property's historic visual character. The modern cellular tower is in keeping with the industrial character of the site, which at one time included a water tower and smokestack.

Feeling: The near-continuous use of the site as a public utilities complex since its construction, along with the buildings' distinctive massing, frank industrial character, and intact setting lend the site integrity of feeling.

Association: Although the buildings are currently vacant, the property's integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, and feeling combine to give it integrity of association. A former BRECO/GSU employee would easily recognize these buildings as their former place of work.

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.)

X	**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:

	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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.): Industry

Period of Significance: 1915-1967

Significant Dates: 1915-16, 1930-31, 1938-40

Significant Person (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above): N/A

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion D is marked above): N/A

Architect/Builder (last name, first name): Stone & Webster, Inc.

Period of Significance (justification): The period of significance begins in 1915, when the power plant was placed in service, and ends in 1967, the 50-year cut-off, although the buildings continued to serve as a public utilities complex until the 1990s.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary): N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Baton Rouge Electric Company (BRECO) public utilities complex is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of industry for its association with the history of electric power in Baton Rouge and the city's explosive growth during the first half of the 20th century. It is the primary historic site in the parish associated with electric power. The power plant on the site was Baton Rouge's primary electric generator from 1915 until 1930, at which time the city's demand outgrew the plant's capacity, and the Government Street property became the utility company's operational headquarters, a role it played for more than fifty years. During that time, the site was not only integral to the city's power system, but also served as the public face of the utility company for generations of Baton Rougeans. The period of significance begins in 1915, when the power plant was built, and ends in 1967, the fifty-year cut-off.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Electric Power in Baton Rouge and the History of Baton Rouge Electric Company (BRECO)

The Introduction of Electricity, 1889-1900

Electric power was introduced in the then-small town of Baton Rouge in 1889, when the Baton Rouge Gas, Electric Light and Power Company, an investor-owned public utility company and predecessor to Baton Rouge Electric Company, installed the first electric streetlights. Upon securing a 99-year franchise to provide Baton Rouge's electric power, the company erected a small 800-kilowatt power plant at North Boulevard and St. Joseph Street to generate enough electricity to run approximately 60 arc lights and 300 incandescent lights, as well as a limited amount of electric light for nearby commercial and industrial enterprises. Soon after the company was formed in February 1889, it merged with Baton Rouge's gas works, which had been in operation since before the Civil War.[4] Between 1889 and 1900, the utility company changed hands several times as various entrepreneurs and investors searched for a successful business model to suit the unfamiliar complexities of providing electric service. In 1892, the company began powering Baton Rouge's first electric streetcar line, the City Belt Line.[5]

At the end of the 19th century, Baton Rouge was still a small town with a rural character; a 1938 *States-Times* article described it as a "mud-streeted village …[that] hadn't emerged into a city at that time. Cotton farms and Cherokee briars flanked the section that now bounds the city proper."[6] In 1880, the city's population was 7,197; by 1900, it had grown modestly to 11,269.[7] Electric power was limited, unreliable, and an unaffordable luxury for most homeowners, which was typical of most American towns and cities, where gas remained significantly more popular than electricity for residential lighting because it was familiar, and homes were already equipped

[4] "The Gas, Electric Light and Power Co.," *The Advocate,* March 31, 1889.
[5] "A Big Deal," *The Advocate,* September 23, 1892. See also TheLeif.org, "Baton Rouge Streetcar Maps (1890-1936)," http://theleif.org/tools/baton-rouge-streetcar-map.php.
[6] Orene Muse, "Baton Rouge Electric Company Begins Second Generation," *State-Times,* March 17, 1938.
[7] Bennett H. Wall et al, eds., "Bourbonism, Populism, and a Little Progressivism, 1892-1924," in *Louisiana: A History*, *Sixth Edition* (West Sussex, England: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 258.

for gas.[8] In addition, the quality of service was mediocre at best. In 1894, Baton Rouge's *Advocate* investigated the electric company's lack of consistency with a touch of humor:

> [I]t would appear that the [electric light] company is running on a sort of elastic "moonlight schedule" which can be interpreted to mean anything the interpreter desires it to convey. Thus, whenever the city is plunged in darkness for hours at a time and any complaint is made, the ready answer is forthcoming, "Oh, well, we were running on the moonlight schedule last night, you know."[9]

After 1900, however, electric power would emerge as an indispensable commodity of the modern age, proving itself a key tool in Baton Rouge's transformation from a small town into an industrial capital.

The Growth of Baton Rouge and the Creation of Stone & Webster's Baton Rouge Electric Company, 1900-1930

In 1900, Baton Rouge Electric & Gas Company acquired the city's 99-year franchise and all utilities-related properties, assets, and rights-of-way. According to its charter, the company's purpose was manifold:

> To construct and carry on works to supply the City of Baton Rouge and neighboring towns, with electricity and gas; to generate manufacture, sell, utilize, and employ electricity and gas for light, heat and power, or any of them; to establish, build, purchase or lease, and operate, electric and gas plants and works, including electric railways to run and operate in the City of Baton Rouge and adjoining parishes, and the carrying of passengers and freight thereon for pay, and also to make, buy, sell, and deal in any and all kinds of electrical and gas patents, apparatus, and appliances, and do and perform all things appertaining and belonging to electrical and gas business.[10]

Like the companies that came before it, Baton Rouge Electric & Gas Company became the exclusive providers of the city's electric and gas service as well as its streetcar service. Then, in 1907, after seven years of operating on its own, Stone & Webster Incorporated, the large Boston-based engineering services company, purchased Baton Rouge Electric & Gas for $150,000 and renamed it Baton Rouge Electric Company (BRECO).[11] Founded in 1889, Stone & Webster was one of the country's first electrical engineering firms and benefited enormously from the nation's burgeoning enthusiasm for the new technology. At the time of the BRECO sale, it owned or managed 28 other streetcar and electrical systems in the country, from Tacoma to Tampa. It also provided construction services for numerous facilities; among its notable early 20th-century projects were the massive Keokuk hydroelectric power station in Iowa (1909-13) to Massachusetts Institute of Technology's new campus (1913-1916).[12] BRECO was Stone & Webster's first acquisition in Louisiana.

The Boston company's arrival in Baton Rouge and its purchase of the utility company was major news, with daily newspapers providing extensive and enthusiastic coverage of every detail. In one of its many reports, the *Daily State* explained in a front-page story that "the [Stone & Webster] company makes it a business of buying plants and putting them in first class condition. This is what will be done with the Baton Rouge plant….New cars will be put on the line, new rails put down, a new electric light plant built, and practically a new gas plant erected. The street carlines will also be extended."[13] That a national corporation like Stone & Webster chose to invest in Baton Rouge, a town of about 10,000 people, expressed confidence in the town's growth potential, and the company had the expertise in management, engineering, and financing that small companies like BRECO needed to expand and modernize and thereby realize that potential. Stone & Webster's predictions for the town's future were soon proven correct when, in 1909, John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company

[8] David E. Nye, *Electrifying America: Social Meanings of a New Technology* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1990), 8.
[9] "The Moonlight Schedule," *The Advocate,* November 25, 1894.
[10] "Charter of Baton Rouge Electric and Gas Co.," *Weekly Advocate,* May 5, 1900.
[11] Louis C. Hennick, *Street Railways of Louisiana* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 1998), 27; and "Old Officers of Electric Company Resign and New Officers Elected," *The Daily States,* February 15, 1907.
[12] "Railroad News from All Around," *Daily Picayune,* February 16, 1907; and David Neal Keller, *Stone & Webster, 1889-1989: A Century of Service* (New York: Stone & Webster Incorporated, 1989), 9-84.
[13] "Old Officers of Electric Company Resign and New Officers Elected," *The Daily States,* February 15, 1907.

opened a refinery north of town. According to historian Mark T. Carleton, with the introduction of Standard Oil of Louisiana, Baton Rouge "would change almost overnight from a town serving agriculture to a city flourishing with industry."[14] This industry, and the modern city that rapidly developed around it, needed significant electric power, and BRECO would be equipped to provide it.

BRECO's services were substantially and swiftly improved under Stone & Webster's watch, much to the town's approval. In 1911, the *State-Times Advocate* opined that

> [t]o Stone & Webster, the Boston street car and electric lighting specialists, Baton Rouge has felt thus far the kindliest spirit. The corporation purchased a plant and going business, which Baton Rougeans had shown their inability to manage and maintain, and have since then, spent considerable sums in betterment, have given infinitely better service than ever before was offered, both in street transportation, in electric lighting and in fuel and illumination gas.[15]

The article went on to appeal for a second streetcar line, which BRECO established two years later as the East Boulevard Line.[16] In addition, foreseeing the need for more power, Stone & Webster had long planned for a new, larger power plant, which was announced in 1915. First publicized in April of that year, the new plant was to be erected on a generous Government Street parcel conveniently located just east of the L. R. & N. (Louisiana Railway & Navigation Co.) passenger depot. Rather than simply rebuild on the location of the existing North Boulevard plant, which was to be demolished upon the new plant's completion, the company chose to move to Government Street because it offered ample space for the facility's anticipated future expansion. In addition, the new site's proximity to the railroad line would greatly improve drayage to and from the plant site as compared to the old site, which was a fair distance from railroad and streetcar lines.[17] The plant was to be modern and have a capacity of about 2,000 kilowatts, more than twice the amount of power of the old plant. The *State-Times Advocate* reported that "the erection of the power plant at a time when money is tight indicates that the Stone and Webster Company has great faith in the growth of Baton Rouge. The plant will be built to more than take care of the immediate needs of the city, but will allow for high increase in the city's development."[18] (Figure 1) The new facility was placed in service in December 1915, and its official grand opening was held in March 1916. In its coverage of the opening, the same newspaper wrote that

> The new power station, which is modern in every respect and represents the latest design in power plant engineering, was built by the Baton Rouge Electric company to provide for their increased patronage and is evidence of the faith the company has in the steady growth of the city in the future. The capacity of the plant is about double that of the old plant on North Boulevard. In addition to the operation of the street railway, the company has 1,842 electric customers.[19]

BRECO's faith in the town's "steady growth" was well placed, for the next few decades proved to be a period of immense progress. During this period, Baton Rouge transformed into a modern city, and the new Government Street plant played a central role in making this transformation possible. In addition to the introduction of Standard Oil of Louisiana, which injected an incredible sum of money into the town's economy and employed 1,800 people by 1915, the city also annexed several surrounding communities to add another 5,000 people to its population by 1930.[20] The population more than doubled between 1910 and 1930, from 14,897 to 30,729.[21] The BRECO plant was continuously modified to keep pace, supporting growing numbers of residential customers, a new streetcar line (the northbound "Dixie" line to Standard Oil opened in 1924), and several new industries following in Standard Oil's footsteps. In 1922, BRECO added another 1,500 kilowatt unit to meet

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[14] Mark T. Carleton, *River Capital: An Illustrated History of Baton Rouge* (Sun Valley, CA: American Historical Press, 1996), 157.
[15] "More Street Car Facilities," *State-Times Advocate,* October 18, 1911.
[16] TheLeif.org, "Baton Rouge Streetcar Maps (1890-1936)," http://theleif.org/tools/baton-rouge-streetcar-map.php.
[17] "Stone and Webster Co.'s New Power Plant," *State-Times Advocate,* August 25, 1915.
[18] "New and Modern Power Plant to Be Erected on Government St," *State-Times Advocate,* April 24, 1915.
[19] "Hundreds Visit New Power Plant," *State-Times Advocate,* March 18, 1916.
[20] "More Progress Looms for Baton Rouge with Approach of New Year," *State-Times Advocate,* December 31, 1930; and Carleton, *River Capital,* 157.
[21] Wall et al, eds., *Louisiana: A History*, *Sixth Edition,* 258.

demand, and just two years later, it added another 3,500 kilowatt unit, bringing the plant's total capacity to 6,500 kilowatts.[22]

After its first decades as a marvelous yet strange and unreliable luxury, electric power had been accepted as an engine of progress. It was now believed that a lack of adequate power hampered growth. Writing about one of BRECO's many phases of expansion, one 1923 newspaper editorial explained that

> [a] public utility must meet the growth of the city if the growth of the city is not to be stunted. Wise management therefore looks ahead—and makes provision for a continual program of development. They cannot wait until the need is pressing before making provision. Baton Rouge has been fortunate in the extensions which the Baton Rouge Electric company has made….[and] has received splendid service from this local utility. The enlargements in the gas and electric plants have generously taken care of the city's needs, but with the city's growth expansion is needed; and a million dollars in the next two years is perhaps not too much for the company to plan to spend for the extension and improvement of its service.[23]

BRECO understood that its service was linked to the city's future success. Throughout the 1920s, it spent millions of dollars not just on infrastructure in Baton Rouge but extensions into adjacent communities. Soon new electric lines radiated in all directions from the city. In 1925, BRECO acquired Port Allen's electric plant west of the city and extended its services there, followed by new lines reaching to Southern University, Baker, and Zachary.[24] In 1929-30, it acquired Denham Springs's electric and gas company, the small generating plant and distribution system in Maringouin, and an ice manufacturing business in Gonzales.[25] To the west and northwest, it extended service to Grosse Tete, the area around False River, and to Morganza, serving several communities and rural areas in between.[26] Miles of new transmission lines were strung up everywhere, heralding the modern age. Despite its best efforts, BRECO was eventually unable to meet such a high demand with its Government Street plant alone, and in 1929 it struck a deal with Gulf States Utilities of Beaumont, Texas, to buy additional electric power to route through its new lines.[27] By 1930, BRECO was servicing approximately 31 communities including Baton Rouge proper, and its electric customers had increased exponentially from just 672 in 1908 to 10,391.[28] Describing this era of the company's history, a 1938 newspaper article stated that "[f]ollowing the growth of the city, the Baton Rouge Electric company was quick step after step marching forward."[29]

During this period of expansion, one of the most significant sources of demand was the residential market. In the 1920s especially, house electrification was transitioning from a luxury into a necessity, as electricity became more familiar and, most importantly, more affordable, especially for urban consumers. This exponential increase in residential electric customers was typical of national trends. In the United States, home electrification soared from 10 percent in 1910 to 70 percent in 1930.[30] Appliances like electric stoves, refrigerators, percolators, and curling irons were being produced in mass quantities and at a variety of price points, making them more attainable than ever before (in Baton Rouge, BRECO was a primary purveyor of appliances through its showroom on Florida Street). A 1926 illustration in *Popular Science Monthly* captures how thoroughly electric power was changing the typical American home. The writer marvels that "electricity is

[22] Marcia Hammond, "Baton Rouge Electric Company," *Stone & Webster Journal* (April 1931): 256.
[23] "Extensions and Public Service," *State-Times Advocate,* April 23, 1923.
[24] Henry Ricks Fussell, *Kilowatts+Kilowatts+Kilowatts: The Story of Gulf States Utilities Company 1912-1947* (master's thesis, Lamar State College of Technology, 1966), 130-143.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Hammond, "Baton Rouge Electric Company," 257-260.
[27] Hammond, 257.
[28] Hammond, 257, 260.
[29] Orene Muse, "Baton Rouge Electric Company Begins Second Generation," *State-Times,* March 17, 1938.
[30] Nye, *Electrifying America,*16.

changing our homes so swiftly and yet so smoothly that the younger generation can scarcely conceive of homes as they were thirty years ago."[31] (Figure 3)

Baton Rouge newspapers in the 1920s and 1930s were filled with BRECO advertisements and articles touting the benefits and affordability of electric light and power at home. Often described as miraculous and magical, electricity was now a realistic modern convenience as well. A 1925 BRECO advertisement suggests in bold letters, "Let's Go Back to Candles….Your answer would be 'No.'…Electricity is the cheapest light that humanity has ever had. The average family pays less for electric light than for cream with the breakfast coffee."[32] (Figure 2) In an article entitled "Electricity, Magic Servant, is Always at Command of All Those Building Homes in Delmont Place," the *Morning Advocate* waxes poetic about the benefits of home electrification, particularly for housewives, and touts BRECO's role in making it all possible:

> "What is a home without a mother?" sang the orphan in the old sentimental ballad and this lament might appropriately be paraphrased, "What is home without electricity?"
>
> Electricity, the best and most natural artificial daylight, is an essential in the home where convenience, comfort, safety, and home-like effects are under consideration and the builders of Delmont Place have not neglected to furnish their customers and future buyers of lots with electrical facilities through the Baton Rouge Electric company, which supplied the suburb with the magic current….
>
> But wonderful as lighting by electricity seems, equally marvelous is the extent to which the housewife's burden has been lightened by this all-zealous servant. The vacuum cleaner has practically turned the old-fashioned broom into a relic of the past…
>
> It is the Baton Rouge Electric Company, part of the great Stone and Webster organization which extends to all quarters of the globe, that makes this service possible to the "Home Beautiful" and to all of Baton Rouge.[33]

BRECO after 1930

As BRECO entered the 1930s, this trend of expansion and progress continued unabated, as the company extended into other adjacent communities, new industries moved into the area, and residential electrification grew into a ubiquitous commodity.

A 1933 civic boosterism newspaper advertisement with the headline "We Believe in Baton Rouge!" focuses in particular on BRECO's many accomplishments, including its tireless expansion efforts: "As the city has grown in usefulness, beauty, and efficient service," the ad reads, "so have the public utilities located within Baton Rouge expanded, adding additional facilities to this already modern city."[34] (Figure 5) Between 1930 and 1933, despite the effects of the Great Depression, the company added 275 miles of transmission and distribution lines, including a connection to Louisiana Power & Light's system at Sorrento for emergency interchange (LP&L served north Louisiana and the extreme southeast portion of the state), and extensions down to Plaquemine, east to Doyle, and north to Norwood.[35] By 1938, it was furnishing electric power to 54 communities in addition to the city of Baton Rouge, including several rural areas that were electrified for the first time under the Rural Electrification Act of 1936.[36]

All of this expanded service was managed from the Government Street site, which was updated to better serve the company's changing needs. In 1930-31, at a cost of $86,000, BRECO constructed a 2-story service building adjacent to the power plant to centralize company operations.[37] Like the modifications to the power

[31] This *Popular Science Monthly* illustration, published on page 20 of its March 1926 issue, was reproduced in Merritt Ierley's *The Comforts of Home: The American House and the Evolution of Modern Convenience* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1999), 178.
[32] "Let's Go Back to Candles," *State-Times Advocate,* August 21, 1925.
[33] "Electricity, Magic Servant, is Always at Command of all the Building Homes in Delmond Place," *Morning Advocate,* August 9, 1925.
[34] "Electricity, Magic Servant, is Always at Command of all the Building Homes in Delmond Place," *Morning Advocate,* August 9, 1925.
[35] "We Believe in Baton Rouge," *State-Times Advocate,* July 14, 1933.
[36] "Electric Company Hearing April 4," *State-Times Advocate*, March 19, 1938.
[37] Hammond, 259-60; and "More Progress Looms for Baton Rouge with Approach of New Year," *State-Times Advocate,* December 31,

plant, the addition of this facility was a product of the city's ongoing growth and its increasing reliance on BRECO's services, which required the company to modernize and streamline. The new service building provided garage space for the storage and maintenance of BRECO's large fleet of service trucks previously housed in its old streetcar barn, which was subsequently demolished. All of the company's gas-related services were also moved into the new building. On the 1st floor was a large stock room to store supplies and electric appliances for sale in BRECO's downtown showroom. Office space, meter repair shops, and laboratories were housed on the 2nd floor. A small standalone garage building was soon added behind the service building. Merging all of these activities onto one site and thereby improving company efficiency allowed BRECO to better serve its ever-increasing customer base.

As the service center was going up, Stone & Webster constructed an immense "super-power" plant north of the city known as Louisiana Station. Constructed for the recently formed Louisiana Steam Products, Inc., a Stone & Webster subsidiary company, the primary purpose of the new facility was to provide wholesale steam and electric power to the nearby Standard Oil refinery and other industrial operations in the vicinity. At a cost of $6 million, the plant had a capacity of 45,000 kilowatts, a level of power that far exceeded what the existing Government Street plant could provide.[38] Since the latter was already struggling to meet the city's escalating demand, BRECO began purchasing Louisiana Steam Products' excess electricity for distribution on its vast network of transmission lines, and the Government Street plant was held in reserve.[39]

In 1935, Congress passed the Public Utility Holding Company Act to facilitate the regulation of public utilities, which had become tainted by corrupt business practices. Holding companies were forced to either limit their activities to a single state, thereby subjecting them to state regulations, or consolidate their holdings based on limited geographical areas. This landmark legislation was the first federal intervention into the world of public utilities and significantly altered their management nationwide, including Stone & Webster's interests. The company subsequently divested itself of its public utilities holdings, and in 1938 BRECO, Louisiana Steam Generating Corporation (the new name of Louisiana Steam Products), and Gulf States Utilities (GSU) of Beaumont, Texas, were consolidated under one of Stone & Webster's former subsidiaries, Engineers Public Service.[40] The new company took the GSU name, and former Stone & Webster employees became its head officers.[41]

This upheaval in public utilities management coupled with local demand resulted in the next significant phase in the history of the Government Street site. In the late 1930s, GSU updated BRECO's dormant power plant to function as its operational headquarters, housing offices, machine shops, a control room, and additional storage, among other uses. Like previous modifications to the site, this conversion from plant to operations center was a reflection of Baton Rouge's exponential growth during the first half of the 20th century. By the 1930s, the city's 1915 power plant—considered modern in every way and designed to expand well beyond its original capacity when it was completed—was already obsolete. No amount of updating could supply the city's demand, as the population increased more than fourfold between 1930 and 1950, from 30,729 to 125,629.[42] However, the level of electric supply that such a large customer base demanded did require a modern, well-equipped operations center, which became the Government Street site's role for more than fifty years. From the 1930s until the 1990s, when GSU was acquired by Entergy, the Government Street site provided the support functions that the utility company so critically needed. While Louisiana Station and GSU's other generating plants provided the power, the Government Street site served as the company's public face and provided the city with a centralized location for all other functions and services, from electric meter repair to service calls to management of the city's entire electric grid.

1930.
[38] Russell, *Kilowatts+Kilowatts+Kilowatts,* 133.
[39] "Super-power Station Here Fast Nearing," *State-Times Advocate,* April 11, 1930; and Russell, 138.
[40] Keller, *Stone & Webster, 1889-1989,* 162-64; and "Local Power Utilities Are to Be Merged," *State-Times Advocate,* February 23, 1938.
[41] Keller, 164.
[42] U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Population of the 100 Largest Urban Places: 1950," https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab18.txt.

In the late 1960s and beyond, new metal shed-type buildings were added to the site as the need for storage increased, and some interior modifications were made to reflect the tastes of the period. In 1983, the section of South 16th Street running along the east boundary of the site was revocated by the City, and the land was incorporated into GSU's holdings. At that time, the site was extended east to South 17th Street, completing the property's current configuration.

Comparison to Other Public Utilities Complexes

As an early 20th-century public utilities complex, the Government Street site is the primary historic site associated with electric power in East Baton Rouge Parish. The significantly smaller North Boulevard power plant that preceded it was demolished in 1915. Louisiana Station, which still appears to be in operation, is not directly comparable because, as a wholesale power station designed for industrial supply, it is substantially different in character from the BRECO site. It is not readily accessible nor does it have any relationship to the public sphere. Louisiana State University constructed its own dedicated power plant to service its earlier campus north of downtown Baton Rouge (demolished), and built another campus plant after its move south in the 1920s. Today, all that remains of this latter plant is a smokestack.[43] The Dixie Electric Membership Corporation (DEMCO) was founded in 1938 as a co-operative of rural families who joined to run power lines into their communities using power it purchased wholesale. Originally located in a small wood-frame warehouse at 1900 North Street, the company moved its headquarters to 1900 Airline Highway in the early 1950s.[44] From these two sites DEMCO managed the power supply to a very small segment of East Baton Rouge Parish residents. All other power stations associated with Gulf States Utilities are located outside of the parish or in Texas; the oldest station, Neches Station in Beaumont, Texas, was built in the 1920s, and the newest station, River Bend Station in St. Francisville, Louisiana, was constructed in the 1980s.

The Government Street site, by contrast, was an integral part of electric power supply to the entire city of Baton Rouge from 1915 onward. Its former power plant and service building, the two primary buildings that define it as a historic public utilities complex, both possess sufficient exterior and interior integrity to convey their historic significance. They are sited near the front property line in engagement with Government Street, and the site also retains its visual and spatial relationship with the street, signifying its historic role as a semi-public facility.

Conclusion

The BRECO public utilities complex is the product of a historic era in Baton Rouge's growth and development. As Baton Rouge evolved from a small town at the turn of the 20th century into a modern, industrial-fueled capital, BRECO grew with it, expanding its facilities and services as the community demanded. The electric power that BRECO provided developed from a novel luxury into a catalyst of progress and an indispensable commodity of the modern age. Once the power plant became obsolete after 1930, the Government Street site grew to function as the utility company's operational headquarters, a role it played for over fifty years. More than any other site in the parish, the BRECO complex embodies Baton Rouge's history of electric power, and is therefore eligible for listing in the National Register.

Developmental History/Additional historic context information

See above.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

__X_ 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 # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

_x__ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
_X__ Other
Name of repository: ___East Baton Rouge Parish Library, Baton Rouge Room Collection

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): ___N/A_____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 3.165 acres

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates **(Note: Numbers correspond to locations on enclosed survey map dated 6/21/2002)
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 30.444792 Longitude: -91.173396
2. Latitude: 30.444831 Longitude: -91.172265
3. Latitude: 30.443808 Longitude: -91.172218
4. Latitude: 30.443778 Longitude: -91.173360

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)
The BRECO site consists of "Tract 3" as drawn on the enclosed survey map dated June 21, 2002, and is bounded by Government Street to the south, South 15th Street to the west, Spain Street to the north, and a revocated portion of South 16th Street to the east.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.) These boundaries consitute the historic boundaries of the site as it appeared during the period of significance. The site was expanded east in 1983 ("Tract 2" on the enclosed survey map) when the City revocated a portion of South 16th Street, but this portion of the lot is not included within the boundaries for the nomination.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Gabrielle Begue/Principal
organization: Clio Associates LLC
street & number: 1139 Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard
city or town: New Orleans state: LA zip code: 70113
e-mail: gabrielle@clioassociates.com
telephone: (504) 858-4426
date: January 10, 2017

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Baton Rouge Electric Company (BRECO) Public Utilities Complex
City or Vicinity: Baton Rouge
County: East Baton Rouge Parish
State: Louisiana
Name of Photographer: Gabrielle Begue
Date of Photographs: August 24, 2016

01 of 31
View from corner of Government Street and S. 15th Street. Camera facing northeast.

02 of 31
Rear/north and west elevations of power plant. Camera facing southeast.

03 of 31
Rear/north elevation of power plant. Camera facing southwest.

04 of 31
Façade/south and east elevation of power plant. Camera facing northwest.

05 of 31
Front entrance to power plant. Camera facing north.

06 of 31
West wall of turbine room looking toward boiler room. Camera facing west.

07 of 31
Turbine room looking east toward 1st and 2nd floor support spaces. Camera facing east.

08 of 31
1930s partitions, 1st floor of turbine room. Camera facing east.

09 of 31
1st floor of boiler room. Camera facing south.

10 of 31
Freight elevator, 1st floor boiler room. Camera facing west.

11 of 31
Storage room, 2nd floor east section. Camera facing south.

12 of 31
View of turbine room from 2nd floor of east section/storage area. Camera facing west.

13 of 31
View of 2nd and 3rd floor partitions in turbine room from 2nd-floor stair landing. Camera facing southwest.

14 of 31
2nd floor of boiler room showing exposed steel framing. Camera facing northeast.

15 of 31
View of gantry crane from 3rd floor. Camera facing northwest.

16 of 31
Exposed steel framing and clerestory windows, 3rd floor of turbine room. Camera facing southwest.

17 of 31
Façade and east elevation of service building. Camera facing northwest.

18 of 31
Front entrance to service building. Camera facing north.

19 of 31
Façade and west elevation of service building. Camera facing northeast.

20 of 31
Storage area on 1st floor of service building. Camera facing south.

21 of 31
Front offices on 1st floor of service building. Camera facing west.

22 of 31
Garage in 1st floor of service building. Camera facing south.

23 of 31
Stair to 2nd floor service building. Camera facing southwest.

24 of 31
2nd floor office in service building. Camera facing southwest.

25 of 31
2nd floor meter repair/labs, service building. Camera facing north.

26 of 31
2nd floor meter repair/labs, service building. Camera facing west.

27 of 31
1930s brick garage with metal-frame addition and canopy. Camera facing northeast.

28 of 31
Garage interior. Camera facing southeast.

29 of 31
View of non-contributing sheds. Camera looking northwest.

30 of 31
View of non-contributing sheds. Camera looking north.

31 of 31
View of non-contributing guard station. Camera looking southwest.

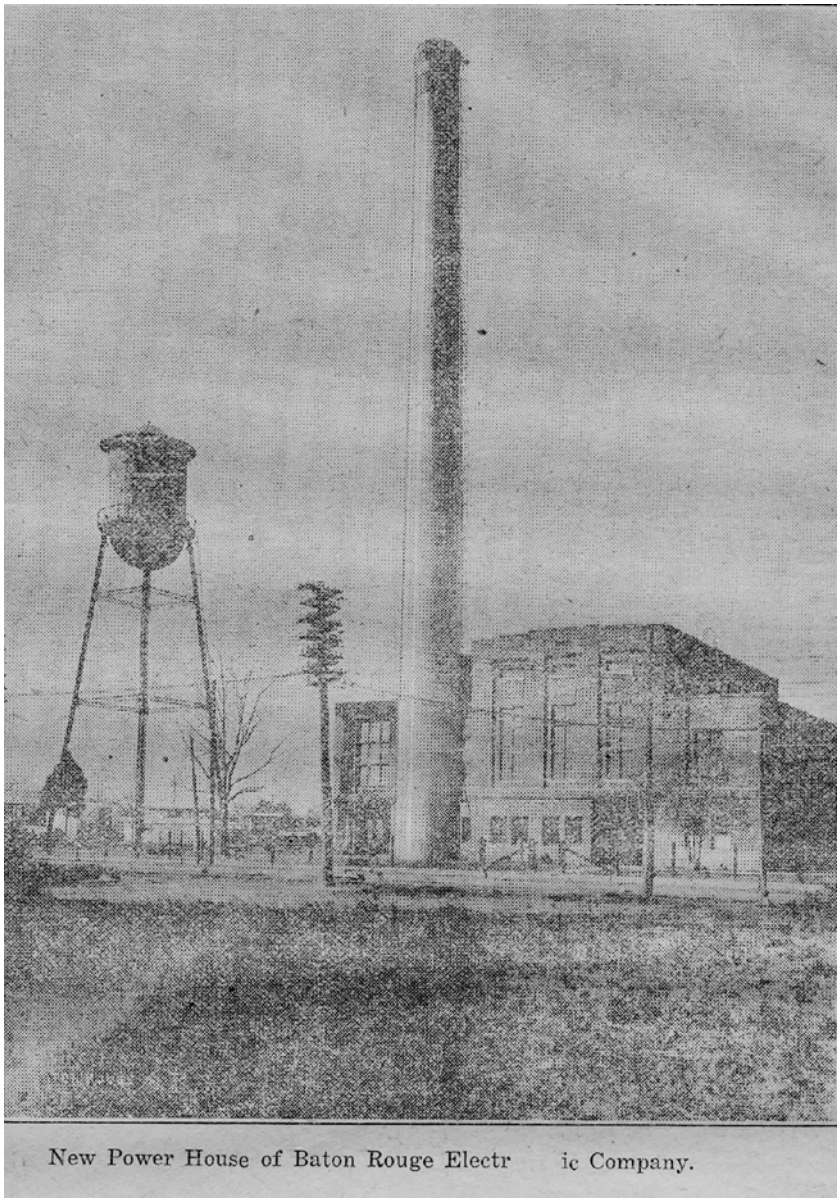
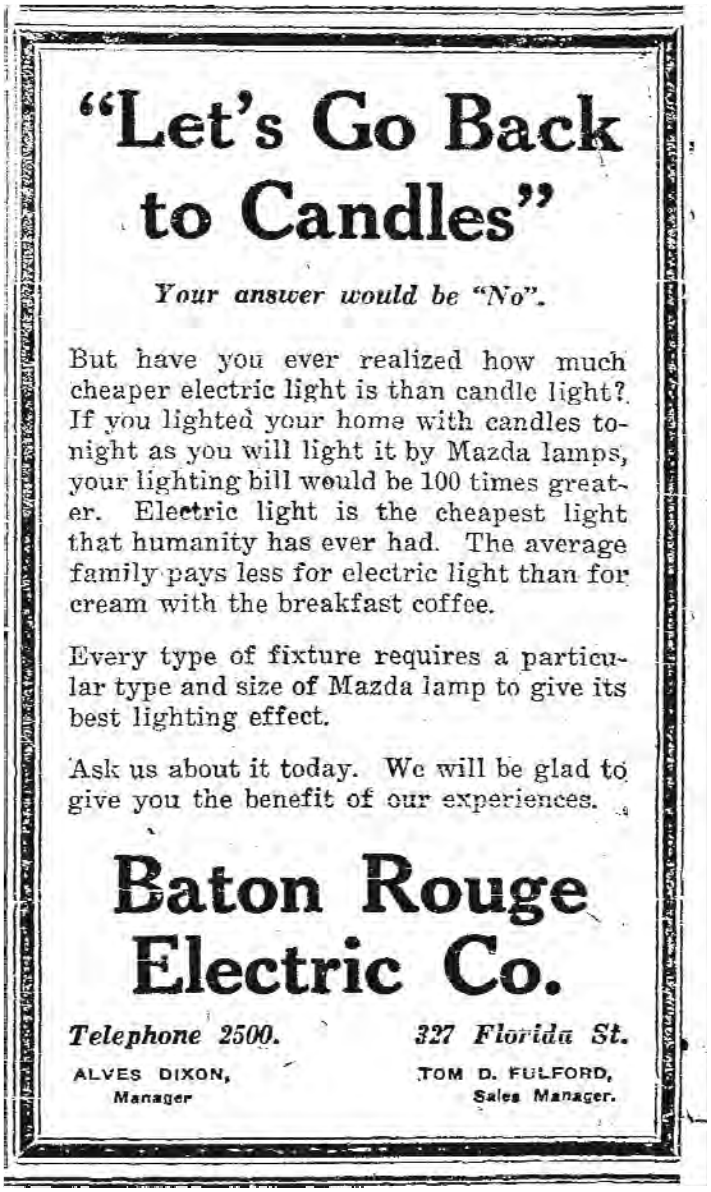


Figure 1. The Baton Rouge Electric Company (BRECO) power plant shortly after it was completed in 1916. *Louisiana Chronicle Democrat Souvenir Edition*, May 6, 1916. From the Baton Rouge Digital Library, East Baton Rouge Parish Library, http://batonrougedigitalarchive.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15196coll2/id/464/rec/1.



"Let's Go Back to Candles"

Your answer would be "No".

But have you ever realized how much cheaper electric light is than candle light? If you lighted your home with candles tonight as you will light it by Mazda lamps, your lighting bill would be 100 times greater. Electric light is the cheapest light that humanity has ever had. The average family pays less for electric light than for cream with the breakfast coffee.

Every type of fixture requires a particular type and size of Mazda lamp to give its best lighting effect.

Ask us about it today. We will be glad to give you the benefit of our experiences.

Baton Rouge Electric Co.

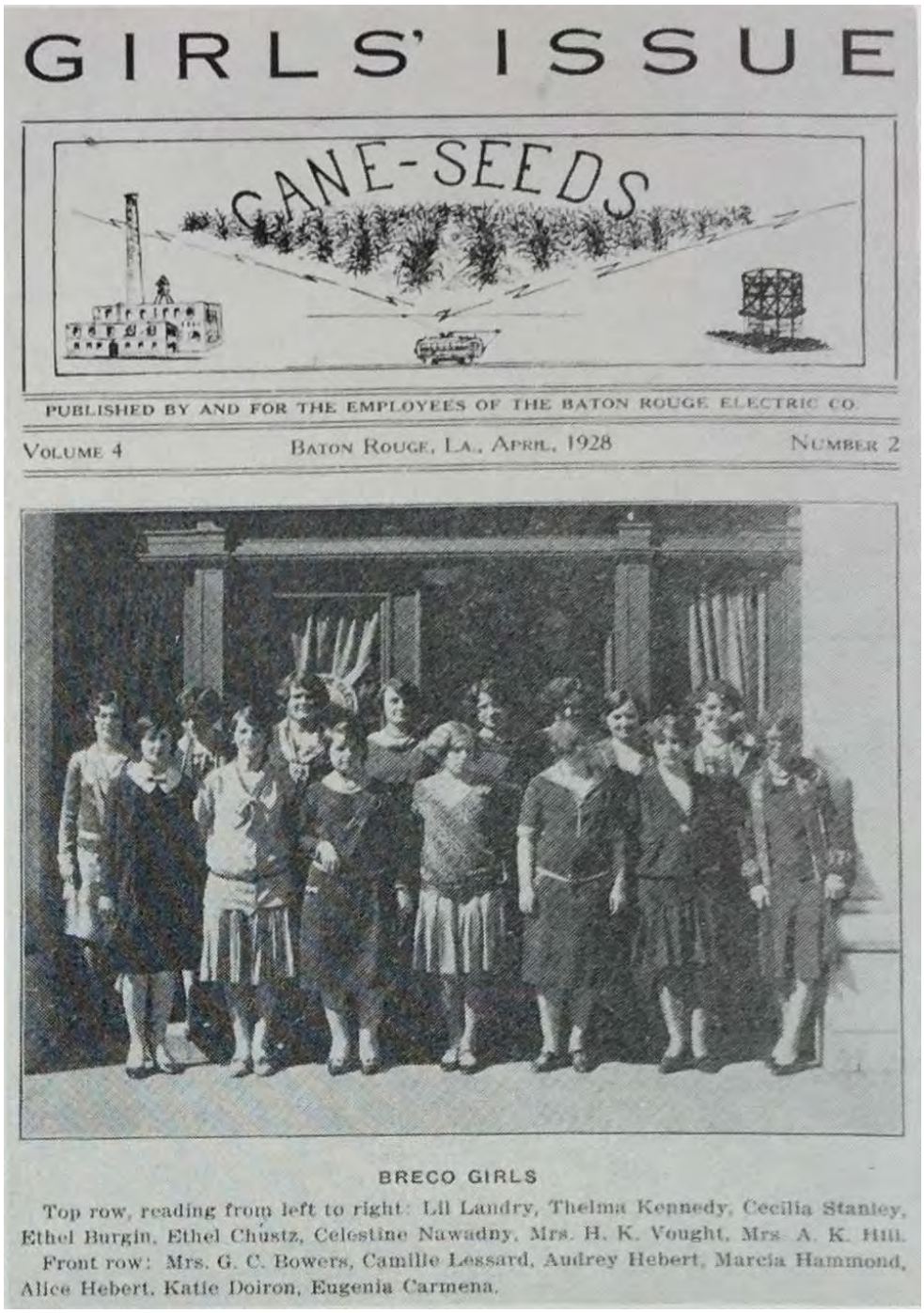
Telephone 2500. *327 Florida St.*

ALVES DIXON, Manager

TOM D. FULFORD, Sales Manager.

Figure 2. One of BRECO's many advertisements touting the benefits and affordability of electric light and power for residential customers. *State-Times Advocate*, August 21, 1925.

Figure 3. This illustration published in the March 1926 issue of *Popular Science Monthly* shows how residential electrification revolutionized daily life. BRECO powered this revolution for Baton Rouge area. "Marvels of the Electric Home," *Popular Science Monthly* 108 no. 3 (March 1926): 20.



GIRLS' ISSUE

CANE-SEEDS

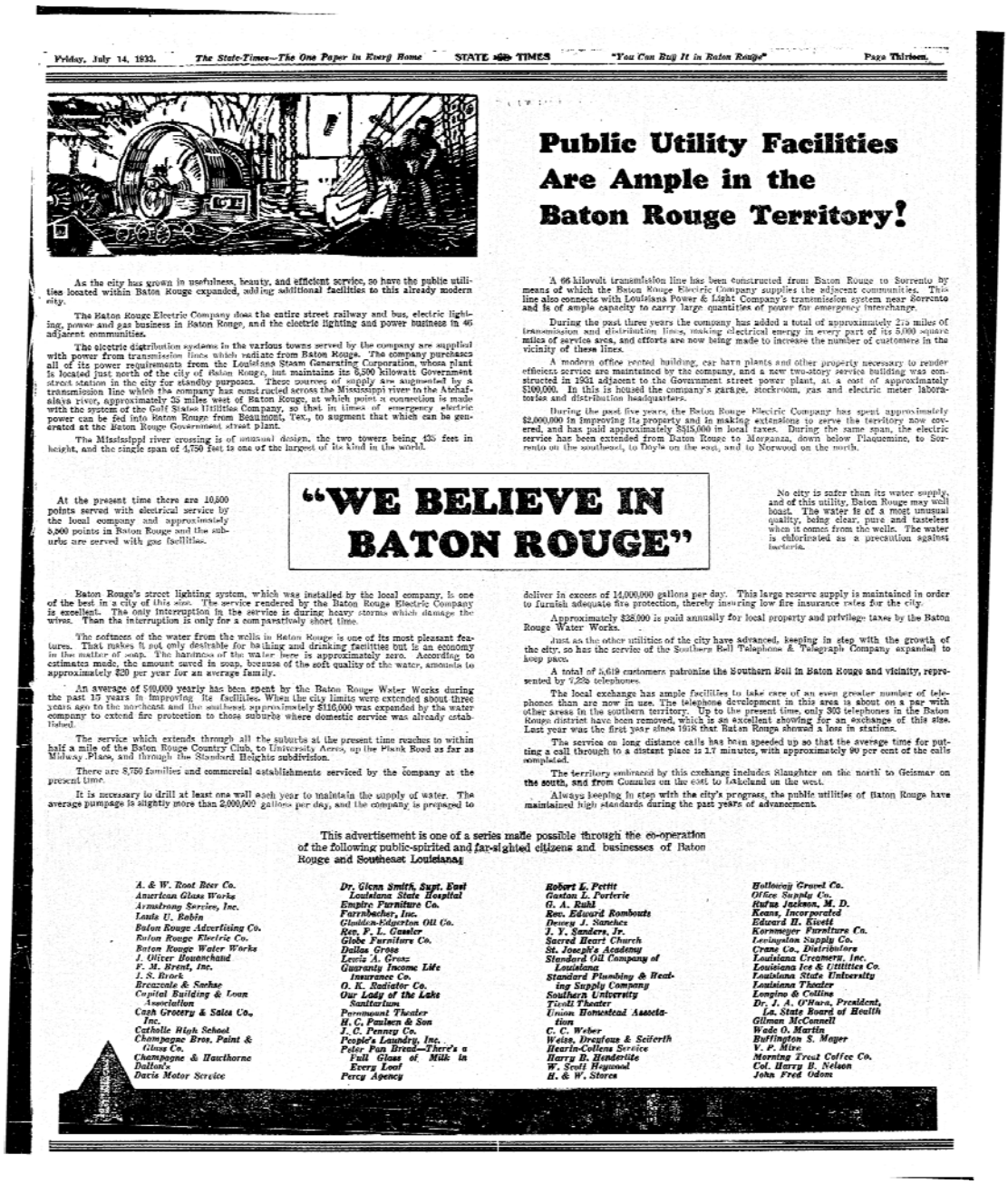
PUBLISHED BY AND FOR THE EMPLOYEES OF THE BATON ROUGE ELECTRIC CO.

VOLUME 4 BATON ROUGE, LA., APRIL, 1928 NUMBER 2

BRECO GIRLS

Top row, reading from left to right: Lil Landry, Thelma Kennedy, Cecilia Stanley, Ethel Burgin, Ethel Chustz, Celestine Nawadny, Mrs. H. K. Vought, Mrs. A. K. Hill.
Front row: Mrs. G. C. Bowers, Camille Lessard, Audrey Hebert, Marcia Hammond, Alice Hebert, Katie Doiron, Eugenia Carmena.

Figure 4. Front cover of the April 1928 issue of *Cane Seeds*, BRECO's short-lived company magazine. The cover photograph was likely taken in front of the company's downtown showroom. A sketch of the power plant building viewed from the northeast is visible in the lower left corner of the masthead. From a reproduction in Gulf States Utilities' October 1954 issue of *Plain Talks*.



Friday, July 14, 1933. The State-Times—The One Paper in Every Home STATE TIMES "You Can Buy It in Baton Rouge" Page Thirteen.

Public Utility Facilities Are Ample in the Baton Rouge Territory!

As the city has grown in usefulness, beauty, and efficient service, so have the public utilities located within Baton Rouge expanded, adding additional facilities to this already modern city.

The Baton Rouge Electric Company does the entire street railway and bus, electric lighting, power and gas business in Baton Rouge, and the electric lighting and power business in 46 adjacent communities.

The electric distribution systems in the various towns served by the company are supplied with power from transmission lines which radiate from Baton Rouge. The company purchases all of its power requirements from the Louisiana Steam Generating Corporation, whose plant is located just north of the city of Baton Rouge, but maintains its 6,500 kilowatt Government street station in the city for standby purposes. These sources of supply are augmented by a transmission line which the company has constructed across the Mississippi river to the Atchafalaya river, approximately 35 miles west of Baton Rouge, at which point a connection is made with the system of the Gulf States Utilities Company, so that in times of emergency electric power can be fed into Baton Rouge from Beaumont, Tex., to augment that which can be generated at the Baton Rouge Government street plant.

The Mississippi river crossing is of unusual design, the two towers being 435 feet in height, and the single span of 4,750 feet is one of the largest of its kind in the world.

A 66 kilovolt transmission line has been constructed from Baton Rouge to Sorrento by means of which the Baton Rouge Electric Company supplies the adjacent communities. This line also connects with Louisiana Power & Light Company's transmission system near Sorrento and is of ample capacity to carry large quantities of power for emergency interchange.

During the past three years the company has added a total of approximately 275 miles of transmission and distribution lines, making electrical energy in every part of its 5,000 square miles of service area, and efforts are now being made to increase the number of customers in the vicinity of these lines.

A modern office rented building, car barn plants and other property necessary to render efficient service are maintained by the company, and a new two-story service building was constructed in 1931 adjacent to the Government street power plant, at a cost of approximately $300,000. In this is housed the company's garage, storeroom, gas and electric meter laboratories and distribution headquarters.

During the past five years, the Baton Rouge Electric Company has spent approximately $2,000,000 in improving its property and in making extensions to serve the territory now covered, and has paid approximately $315,000 in local taxes. During the same span, the electric service has been extended from Baton Rouge to Morganza, down below Plaquemine, to Sorrento on the southeast, to Doyle on the east, and to Norwood on the north.

At the present time there are 10,600 points served with electrical service by the local company and approximately 5,500 points in Baton Rouge and the suburbs are served with gas facilities.

"WE BELIEVE IN BATON ROUGE"

No city is safer than its water supply, and of this utility, Baton Rouge may well boast. The water is of a most unusual quality, being clear, pure and tasteless when it comes from the wells. The water is chlorinated as a precaution against bacteria.

Baton Rouge's street lighting system, which was installed by the local company, is one of the best in a city of this size. The service rendered by the Baton Rouge Electric Company is excellent. The only interruption in the service is during heavy storms which damage the wires. Then the interruption is only for a comparatively short time.

The softness of the water from the wells in Baton Rouge is one of its most pleasant features. That makes it not only desirable for bathing and drinking facilities but is an economy in the matter of soap. The hardness of the water here is approximately zero. According to estimates made, the amount saved in soap, because of the soft quality of the water, amounts to approximately $20 per year for an average family.

An average of $40,000 yearly has been spent by the Baton Rouge Water Works during the past 15 years in improving its facilities. When the city limits were extended about three years ago to the northeast and the southwest approximately $110,000 was expended by the water company to extend fire protection to those suburbs where domestic service was already established.

The service which extends through all the suburbs at the present time reaches to within half a mile of the Baton Rouge Country Club, to University Acres, up the Plank Road as far as Midway Place, and through the Stanford Heights subdivision.

There are 8,750 families and commercial establishments serviced by the company at the present time.

It is necessary to drill at least one well each year to maintain the supply of water. The average pumpage is slightly more than 2,000,000 gallons per day, and the company is prepared to deliver in excess of 14,000,000 gallons per day. This large reserve supply is maintained in order to furnish adequate fire protection, thereby insuring low fire insurance rates for the city.

Approximately $38,000 is paid annually for local property and privilege taxes by the Baton Rouge Water Works.

Just as the other utilities of the city have advanced, keeping in step with the growth of the city, so has the service of the Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company expanded to keep pace.

A total of 5,619 customers patronize the Southern Bell in Baton Rouge and vicinity, represented by 7,282 telephones.

The local exchange has ample facilities to take care of an even greater number of telephones than are now in use. The telephone development in this area is about on a par with other areas in the southern territory. Up to the present time, only 303 telephones in the Baton Rouge district have been removed, which is an excellent showing for an exchange of this size. Last year was the first year since 1918 that Baton Rouge showed a loss in stations.

The service on long distance calls has been speeded up so that the average time for putting a call through to a distant place is 2.7 minutes, with approximately 90 per cent of the calls completed.

The territory embraced by this exchange includes Slaughter on the north to Geismar on the south, and from Gonzales on the east to Lakeland on the west.

Always keeping in step with the city's progress, the public utilities of Baton Rouge have maintained high standards during the past years of advancement.

This advertisement is one of a series made possible through the co-operation of the following public-spirited and far-sighted citizens and businesses of Baton Rouge and Southeast Louisiana:

A. & W. Root Beer Co.
American Glass Works
Armstrong Service, Inc.
Louis U. Robin
Baton Rouge Advertising Co.
Baton Rouge Electric Co.
Baton Rouge Water Works
J. Oliver Bouanchaud
F. M. Brent, Inc.
J. S. Brock
Brezzeale & Sachse
Capital Building & Loan Association
Cash Grocery & Sales Co., Inc.
Catholic High School
Champagne Bros. Paint & Glass Co.
Champagne & Hawthorne
Dalton's
Davis Motor Service
Dr. Glenn Smith, Supt. East Louisiana State Hospital
Empire Furniture Co.
Farrenbacher, Inc.
Gladden-Edgerton Oil Co.
Rev. F. L. Gaseler
Globe Furniture Co.
Dallas Gross
Lewis A. Grant
Guaranty Income Life Insurance Co.
O. K. Radiator Co.
Our Lady of the Lake Sanitarium
Paramount Theater
H. C. Paulsen & Son
J. C. Penney Co.
People's Laundry, Inc.
Peter Pan Bread—There's a Full Glass of Milk in Every Loaf
Percy Agency
Robert L. Pettit
Gaston L. Porterie
G. A. Ruhl
Rev. Edward Rombouts
Benny J. Sanchez
J. Y. Sanders, Jr.
Sacred Heart Church
St. Joseph's Academy
Standard Oil Company of Louisiana
Standard Plumbing & Heating Supply Company
Southern University
Tivoli Theater
Union Homestead Association
C. C. Weber
Weiss, Dreyfous & Seiferth
Hearin-Collens Service
Harry B. Henderlite
W. Scott Hammond
H. & W. Stores
Holloway Gravel Co.
Office Supply Co.
Rufus Jackson, M. D.
Keans, Incorporated
Edward H. Kiesh
Kornmeyer Furniture Co.
Lexington Supply Co.
Crane Co., Distributors
Louisiana Creamery, Inc.
Louisiana Ice & Utilities Co.
Louisiana State University
Louisiana Theater
Longino & Collins
Dr. J. A. O'Hara, President, La. State Board of Health
Gilman McConnell
Wade O. Martin
Buffington S. Mayer
V. P. Mire
Morning Treat Coffee Co.
Col. Harry B. Nelson
John Fred Odom

Figure 5. This full-page newspaper advertisement published in July 1933 boasts of the many ways BRECO has improved Baton Rouge over the years, including its tireless expansion efforts. *State-Times Advocate*, July 14, 1933.

Baton Rouge Electric Company Public Utilities Complex

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

Latitude: 30.444313 Longitude: -91.172817

Baton Rouge Electric Company Public Utilities Complex

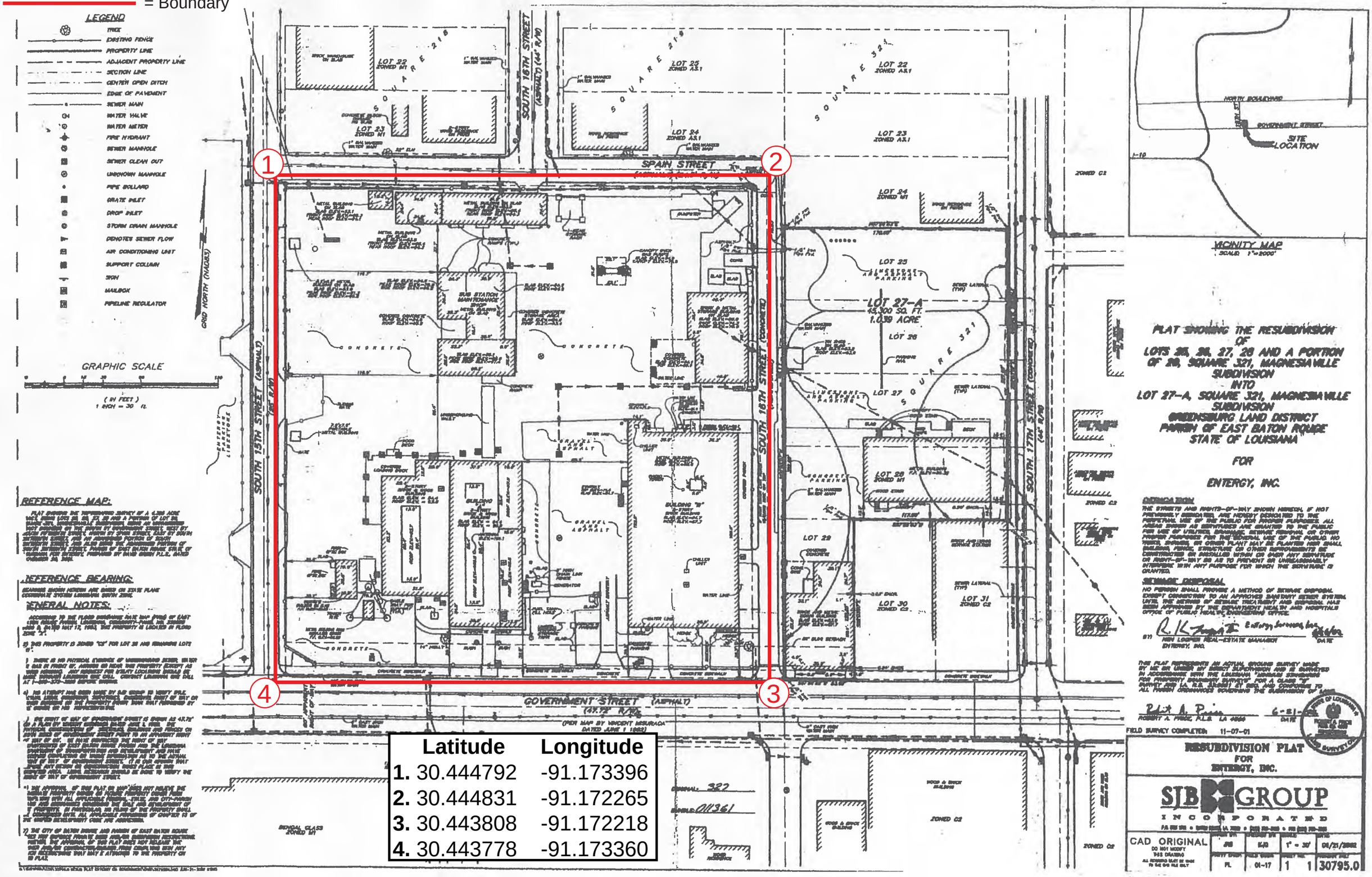
East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

Latitude: 30.444313 Longitude: -91.172817

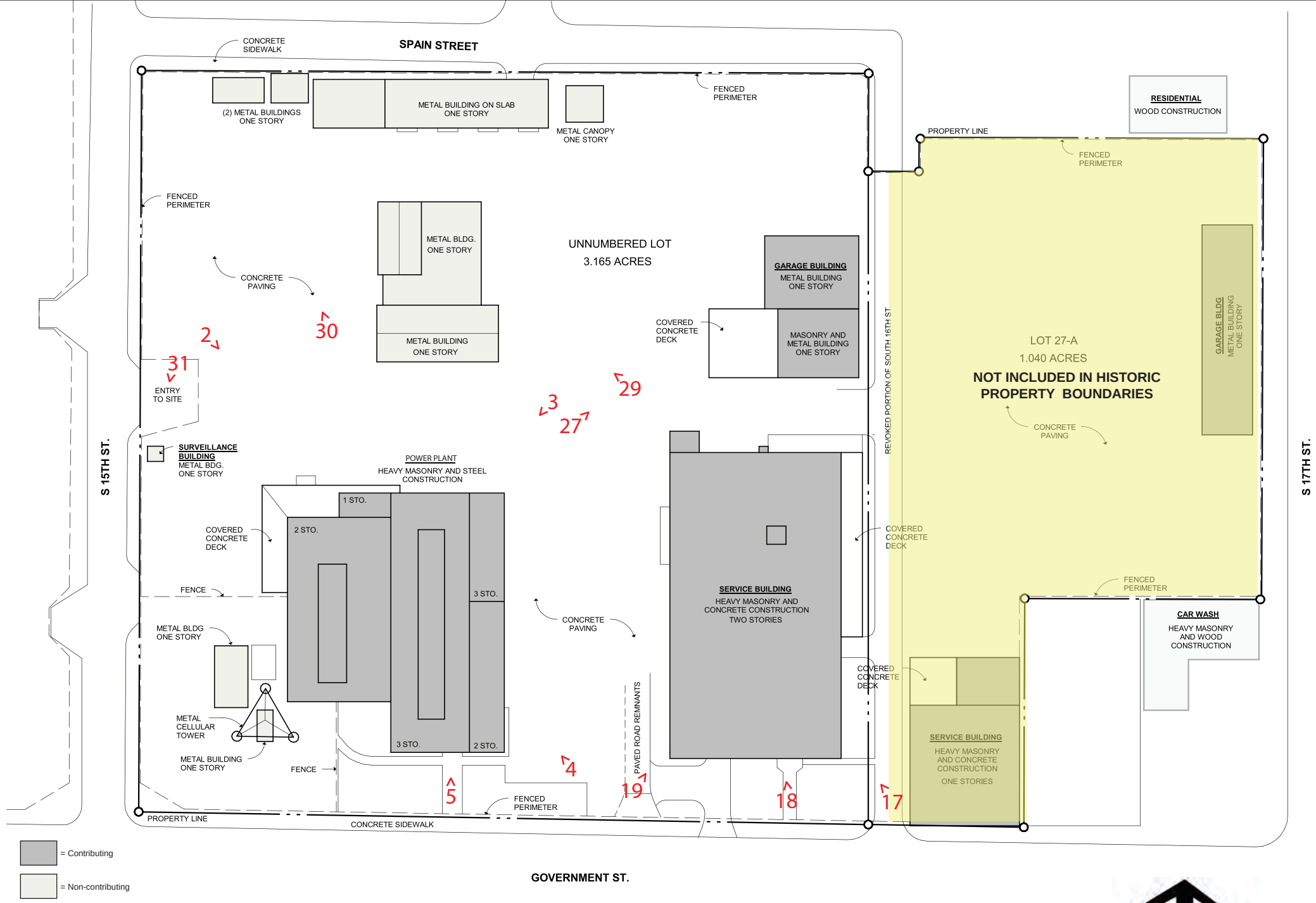
BRECO Public Utilities Complex, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

= Boundary

SITE SURVEY - LARGER PARCEL



	Latitude	Longitude
1.	30.444792	-91.173396
2.	30.444831	-91.172265
3.	30.443808	-91.172218
4.	30.443778	-91.173360



BRECO Public Utilities Complex - East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
Resource and Exterior Photo Sketch Map

DNAworkshop
DYKE NELSON ARCHITECTURE
235 S. 14TH ST. BATON ROUGE, LA 70802

BRECO Public Utilities Complex
East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
Power Plant Building, First Floor
Interior Photo Key

1 FIRST FLOOR PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"

DNAworkshop

1509 GOVERNMENT STREET, BATON ROUGE, LA

DYKE NELSON ARCHITECTURE 235 SOUTH 14TH ST. BATON ROUGE, LA 70802 DNA-WORKSHOP.COM [225] 224 3363

REVISIONS

JOB NUMBER: 16-017
ISSUED: 07/22/16

ISSUED FOR:
CONSTRUCTION

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

A1.0

PHASE: CD

BRECO Public Utilities Complex
East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
Power Plant Building, Second Floor
East Section Interior Photo Key

N

1 SECOND FLOOR PLAN - EAST
1/8" = 1'-0"

8/2/2016 10:12:49 AM

DNAworkshop

1509 GOVERNMENT STREET, BATON ROUGE, LA

DYKE NELSON ARCHITECTURE 235 SOUTH 14TH ST. BATON ROUGE, LA 70802 DNA-WORKSHOP.COM [225] 224 3363

REVISIONS

JOB NUMBER: 16-017
ISSUED: 08/01/16

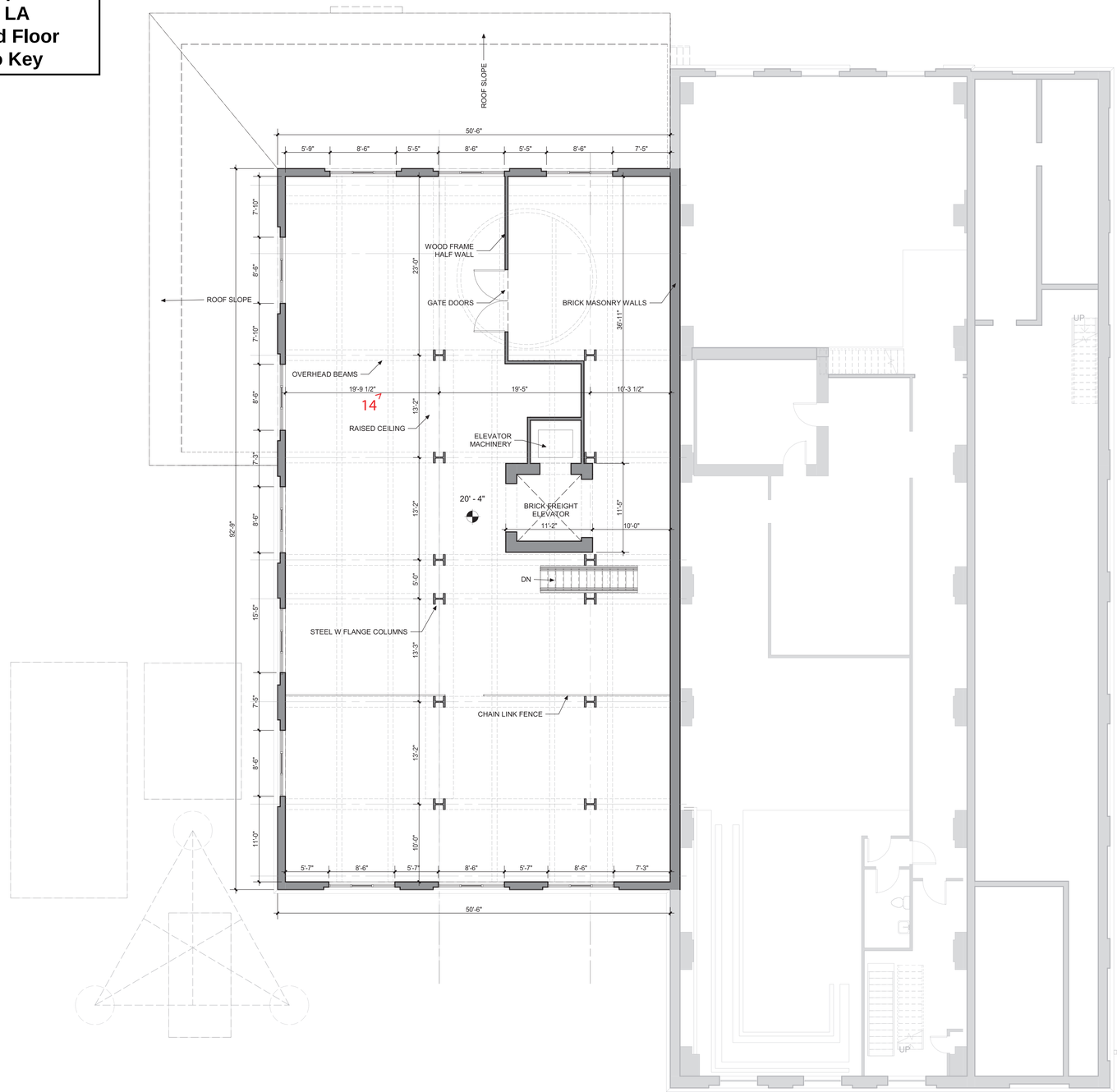
ISSUED FOR:
CONSTRUCTION

SECOND FLOOR PLAN - EAST

A1.2

PHASE: CD

BRECO Public Utilities Complex
East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
Power Plant Building, Second Floor
West Section Interior Photo Key



N

1 SECOND FLOOR PLAN - WEST
1/8" = 1'-0"

DNAworkshop

1509 GOVERNMENT STREET, BATON ROUGE, LA

DYKE NELSON ARCHITECTURE 235 SOUTH 14TH ST. BATON ROUGE, LA 70802 DNA-WORKSHOP.COM [225] 224 3363

REVISIONS

JOB NUMBER: 16-017
ISSUED: 08/01/16

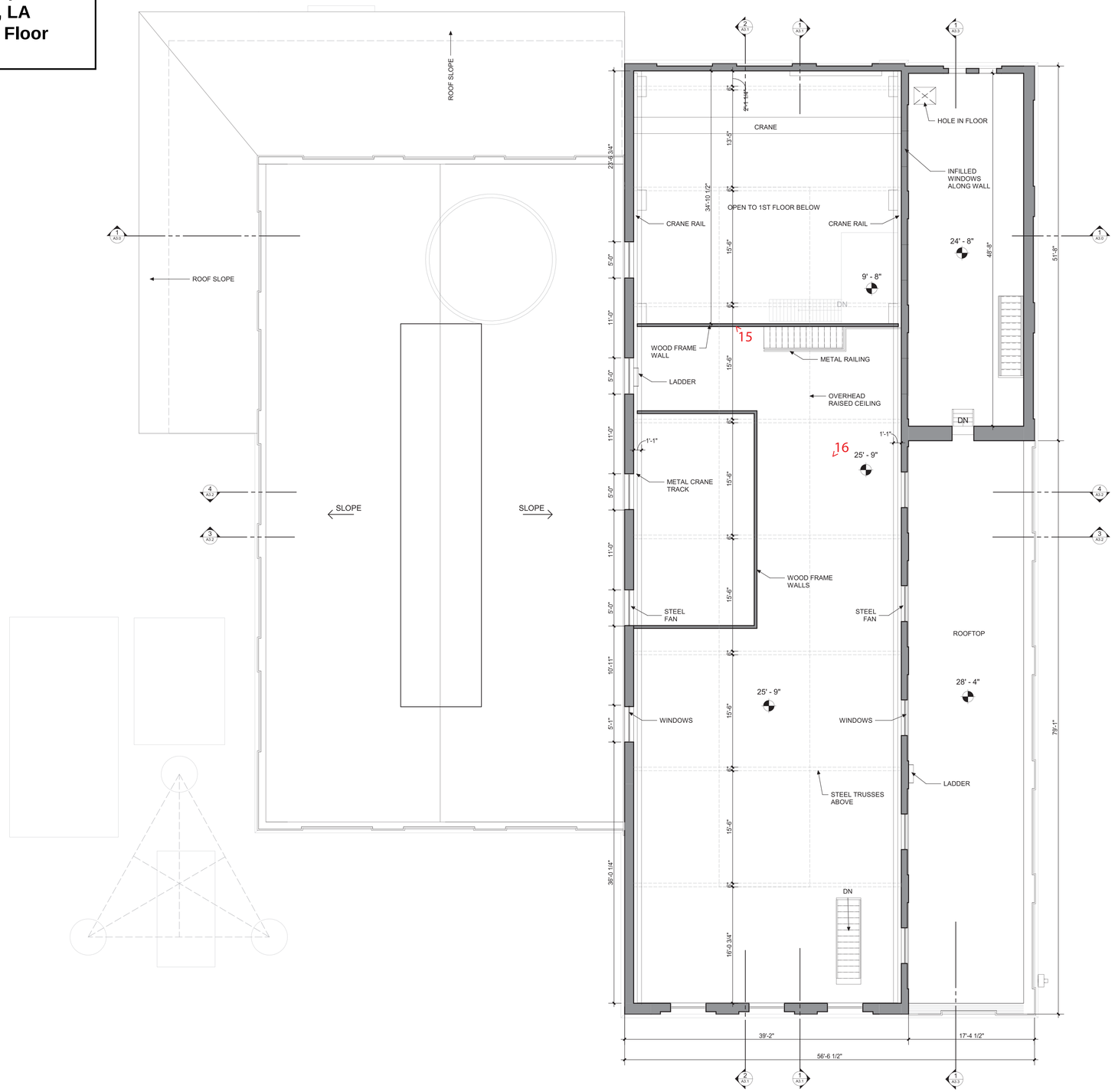
ISSUED FOR:
CONSTRUCTION

SECOND FLOOR PLAN - WEST

A1.1

PHASE: CD

BRECO Public Utilities Complex
East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
Power Plant Building, Third Floor
Interior Photo Key



N

1 THIRD FLOOR PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"

DNAworkshop

1509 GOVERNMENT STREET, BATON ROUGE, LA

DYKE NELSON ARCHITECTURE 235 SOUTH 14TH ST. BATON ROUGE, LA 70802 DNA-WORKSHOP.COM [225] 224 3363

REVISIONS

JOB NUMBER: 16-017
ISSUED: 08/01/16

ISSUED FOR:
CONSTRUCTION

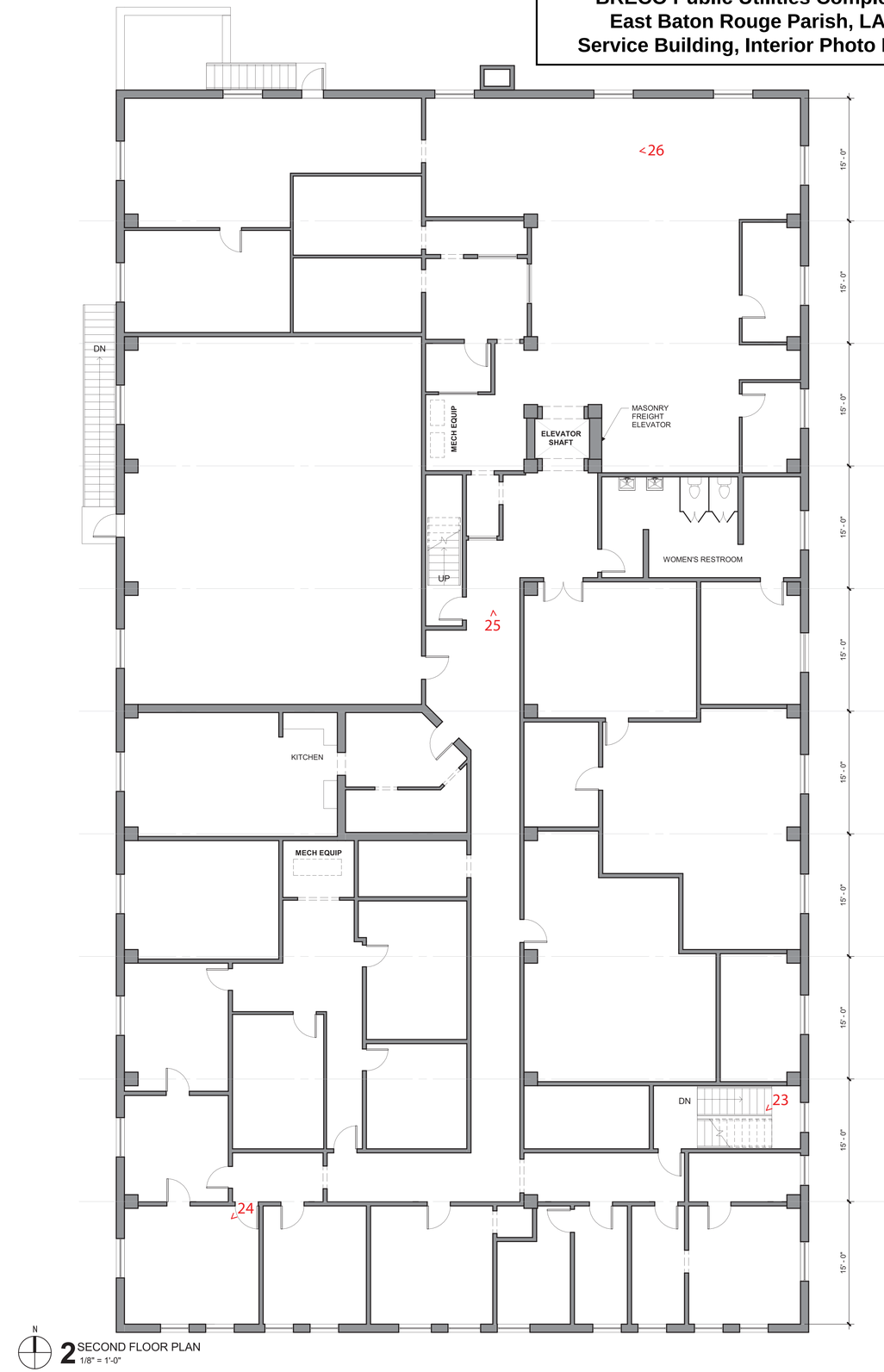
THIRD FLOOR PLAN

A1.3

PHASE: CD

BRECO Public Utilities Complex
East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
Service Building, Interior Photo Key

1 FIRST FLOOR PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"



2 SECOND FLOOR PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"

DNAworkshop

1509 GOVERNMENT STREET, BATON ROUGE, LA

DYKE NELSON ARCHITECTURE 235 SOUTH 14TH ST. BATON ROUGE, LA 70802 DNA-WORKSHOP.COM [225] 224 3363

REVISIONS

JOB NUMBER: 16-017

ISSUED: 08/09/16

ISSUED FOR:

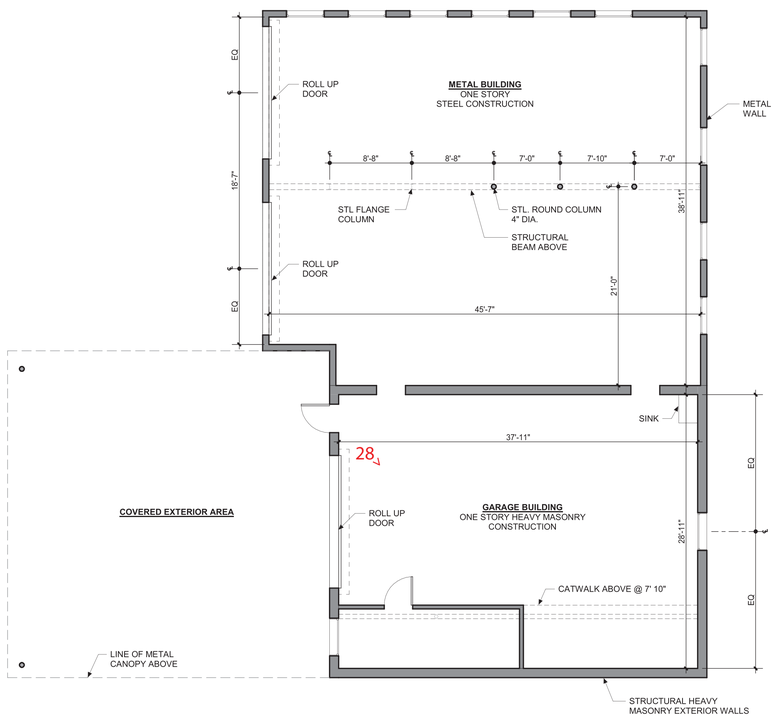
PERMITTING

FLOORPLAN 1

A1.0

PHASE: CD

BRECO Public Utilities Complex
East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
Garage, Interior Photo Key



1 GARAGE BUILDING - FLOOR PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"

DNAworkshop

1509 GOVERNMENT STREET, BATON ROUGE, LA

DYKE NELSON ARCHITECTURE 235 SOUTH 14TH ST. BATON ROUGE, LA 70802 DNA-WORKSHOP.COM [225] 224 3363

REVISIONS

JOB NUMBER: 16-017
ISSUED: 09/02/16

ISSUED FOR:
CONSTRUCTION

Unnamed

103

PHASE: CD


1509
DO
NOT
ENTER


NORTHERN
CRANE


FALLOUT SHELTER
1519


06


THIS FLOOR
WILL SAFELY
SUSTAIN A LOAD
OF LBS.
PER SQUARE FOOT.


METER
DEPT.
EXIT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Baton Rouge Electric Company (BRECO) Public Utilities Complex

Multiple Name:

State & County: LOUISIANA, East Baton Rouge

Date Received:	Date of Pending List:	Date of 16th Day:	Date of 45th Day:	Date of Weekly List:
6/2/2017	6/28/2017	7/13/2017	7/17/2017	

Reference number: SG100001311

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

__ Appeal	X PDIL	__ Text/Data Issue
__ SHPO Request	__ Landscape	__ Photo
__ Waiver	__ National	__ Map/Boundary
__ Resubmission	__ Mobile Resource	__ Period
__ Other	__ TCP	__ Less than 50 years
	__ CLG	

__X__ Accept _____ Return _____ Reject __7/13/2017__ Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: Important buuilding in local infrastructure

Recommendation/ Criteria Accept / A

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

BATON ROUGE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION REPORT FOR:
BATON ROUGE ELECTRIC COMPANY (BRECO)
NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION

NAME OF CLG: East Baton Rouge Parish Historic Preservation Commission
PROPERTY NAME: Baton Rouge Electric Company (Entergy site)
PROPERTY ADDRESS: 1509 Government Street
DATE SENT:
DATE OF NATIONAL REGISTER REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING:
Does the nomination meet the Criteria for Listing on the National Register of Historic Places?
Yes X No____ Criterion: A X B ____ C ____ D____

Has public comment been included? Yes X No____ Explain:
A public hearing was held by the East Baton Rouge HPC on March 15 and public comments were received.

☒ The Commission recommends that the property or properties should be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Commission would like to make the following recommendations regarding the nomination (use additional sheets if necessary):

☐ The Commission recommends that the property or properties should not be listed on the National Register of Historic Places for the following reasons:

☐ The Commission chooses not to make a recommendation on this nomination for the following reasons:

J. Susannah Bing
Historic District Commission Chair (Print Name)

Signature

3/22/17
Date

Sharon Weston Broome
Chief Elected Official (Print Name)

Signature

4-4-17
Date

BILLY NUNGESSER
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana

OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM
OFFICE OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

RENNIE S. BURASCH
DEPUTY SECRETARY

DATE: May 26, 2017

TO: Mr. James Gabbert
National Park Service Mail Stop 7228
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

FROM: Nicole Hobson-Morris, Director NHM
Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation

RE: BRECO Public Utilities Complex, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

Jim,

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the National Register Documentation for the BRECO Public Utilities Complex to be placed in the National Register of Historic Places. Should you have any questions, please contact me at 225-342-8172, or nmorris@crt.la.gov.

Thanks,

Nicole

Enclosures:

x CD with PDF of the National Register of Historic Places nomination form
X CD with electronic images (tiff format)
x Physical Transmission Letter
x Physical Signature Page, with original signature
X Other: correspondence

Comments:

_____ Please ensure that this nomination receives substantive review
_____ This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
_____ The enclosed owner(s) objection(s) do_____ do not_____ constitute a majority of property owners. (Publicly owned property)
_____ Other: