

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

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



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

1. Name

historic Conrad Rice Mill

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 307 Ann Street N/A not for publication

city, town New Iberia N/A vicinity of congressional district 3rd - W. J. Tauzin

state Louisiana code 022 parish Iberia code 045
~~county~~

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Conrad Rice Mill, Inc. Mike Davis, President

street & number P. O. Box 296

city, town New Iberia N/A vicinity of state LA 70560

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Iberia Parish Courthouse

street & number Iberia Street (no specific address) P. O. Drawer 1208

city, town New Iberia state LA 70560

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge state LA

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Conrad Rice Mill is located on Ann Street in a working class residential area of New Iberia. The present structure occupies some 10,000 square feet of ground space. It was built in three sections, beginning in 1914. The original section consisted of a two-story structure in front with a three-story rear structure directly behind it (Photo 1). In 1917 the three-story rear structure was extended sideways or northward. In 1930 a two-story storage building was erected to the south of the original structure (Photo 2). At the rear of this building is a gable roof tower which is part of a rice drying mechanism. The rice drying equipment is original to the building and operates to this day. At the front of the building is a covered area where trucks deliver rice to be processed. It contains a hopper into which rice is dumped, a scale for weighing the loaded trucks, and a hoist. The hoist is left over from the days before dump trucks had hydraulic lifts.

Much of the present rice milling process takes place in the 1914-1917 building. Operations conducted here include:

- * 1. the separating out of immature (green) grains of rice;
 - 2. the husking of mature grains;
 - * 3. the step-by-step removal of the bran coating;
 - 4. the application of a protein mixture to the clean grains;
 - * 5. the grading of rice into categories according to whether the grains are broken or whole;
 - * 6. the bagging and labeling of the processed rice;
 - * 7. the shipping of the bagged rice by means of the original carts and the original loading dock (Photo 2).
- * Indicates operations which are conducted with old machinery or old equipment.

All three parts of the rice mill are constructed of heavy timbers with corrugated siding of galvanized iron. Most vertical supports are 6" by 6" with angle braces framing into the beams. Vertical supports are heavier in areas where machines are mounted. In a few places the heavy tongue and groove floorboards have been reinforced with steel plates.

The most noteworthy aspect of the mill is the system of power transmission in the 1914-1917 portion. All of the older individual machines are run by means of a central power source. The central engine turns a system of rotating steel shafts which run throughout the building. These shafts have pulleys with leather belts attached. The belts run between the rotating shafts to turn machines (Photo 3). In some cases shafts turn other shafts by means of leather belts. Rotating shafts are secured to the vertical structural members by means of bolted bearings. Shafts run either along the tops or the bottoms of the walls, never in the middle. Leather belt pulleys vary in size from a few inches to several feet in diameter. At one time the main power source was a steam engine, but this has been replaced by an electric motor. The rice is moved through the various processing operations by means of metal pipes which work by means of gravity feed.

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Continuation sheet

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7. Description (cont'd)

Little of the structure has been replaced or altered. A side porch has been enclosed for storage, and a small amount of the siding has been replaced in kind due to rust. Throughout the mill the interior retains its cavernous, crowded, and scaffolding-like character.

Assessment of Integrity:

As has already been mentioned, the structure itself has only been minimally altered. Some of the original machinery is no longer in use. More importantly, the steam engine which originally drove the machinery has been lost. However, this has not lowered the value of the Conrad Rice Mill as an example of a belt drive factory. Most comparable examples have also lost their original power plants. It would not have been possible to continue to operate the mill under steam power. Moreover, the mill's significance is based on the belt drive system itself, not the source of power.

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH:

The Conrad Rice Mill (1914, 1917, 1930) consists of a pair of large, 2-3 story, frame, metal sided structures. Located in a working class residential area, the mill has been altered very little.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1914-1917-1930 **Builder/Architect** Phillip A. Conrad, Builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Criteria A and C

The Conrad Rice Mill is significant on the state level in the area of engineering because it represents a type of factory which was once common and is now rapidly disappearing. According to Robert Vogel, Engineering Historian of the Smithsonian Institution, the rotating shaft and belt drive system of power transmission was the "backbone" of American industry in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Beginning in about 1900 factories began to introduce the modern system in which each machine operates under its own power. Today less than one percent of American factories currently in production still operate under the shaft and belt drive system. Even these are disappearing year by year. The Conrad Rice Mill is extremely important in this regard because it still operates under the shaft and belt drive system and will continue to do so, both as a production facility and as a museum. It will therefore continue to exemplify a production system which has all but faded into the past.

The Conrad Rice Mill is also locally significant in the area of industry because of the role it has played in the history of rice production in Iberia Parish (which was and is second only to sugar). Before it was built, local rice growers had to ship their crops to New Orleans for milling. Therefore, its construction was a great step forward for rice producers in the parish. At the height of production there were a total of three mills in Iberia Parish. Today the Conrad Mill is the only one which remains. It is probably the most important visual reminder of the history of rice production in Iberia Parish.

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH:

The Conrad Rice Mill is of statewide significance in the area of engineering and of local significance in the area of industry, as follows:

- (1) It is significant on the state level in the area of engineering because it is a rare surviving example of a factory operated using the belt drive power transmission system.
- (2) It is locally significant in the area of industry because of its historic role in the production of rice in Iberia Parish.

Level of Significance:

A word of explanation is required regarding the designation of engineering significance on the state level. Although the Conrad Rice Mill is discussed within the context of the nation, the State Historic Preservation Office does not feel it can adequately prove national significance. Such an attempt would require an indepth survey and analysis of extant belt driven factories throughout the country. It is our general feeling that the Conrad Rice Mill is only an average example nationwide.

CONTINUED

9. Major Bibliographical References

Phone interview with Robert Vogel, Engineering Historian, Smithsonian Institution, October 19, 1981.

Research Report Prepared by Applicant. Copy located in Conrad Rice Mill National Register File, Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. .7 acres

Quadrangle name De Rouen, La.

Quadrangle scale 1=62500

UMT References

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6	7	5
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Verbal boundary description and justification

Please refer to sketch map.

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

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

name/title Mike Davis, President

organization Conrad Rice Mill date September 1981

street & number P. O. Box 296 telephone 318-364-7242

city or town New Iberia state LA 70560

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Robert B. DeBlieux*

Robert B. DeBlieux

title State Historic Preservation Officer date September 17, 1982

For HCRS use only

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

Bruce Van Donge date 11/10/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: *Patrick Andrews* date 11/8/82

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet Conrad Rice Mill

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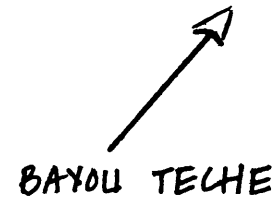
8. Significance (Continued)

Statistics do not exist regarding the exact number of belt driven factories remaining in Louisiana; however, the State Historic Preservation Office does feel that one is on safe ground in asserting that the Conrad Rice Mill is a very rare survivor of its type within the state.

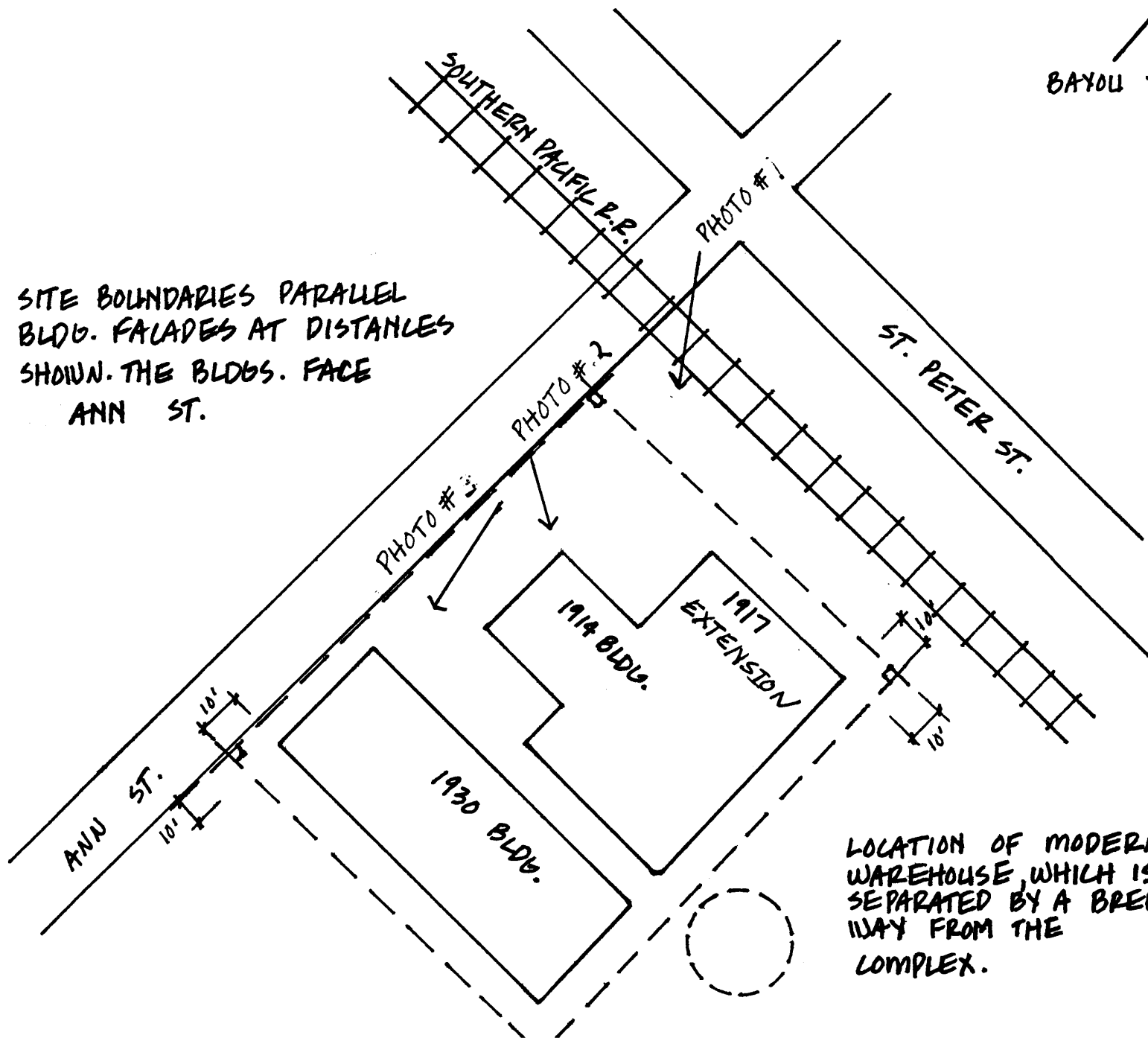
Given the above, we felt it best to nominate the mill for engineering significance on the state level.

Also, it will be noted that the mill is of statewide significance in the area of engineering and of local significance in the area of industry. "State" is checked in Item 12 because in cases where two levels of significance are involved, the standard procedure is to check the higher of the two.

CONRAD RICE MILL
NEU IBERIA, LOUISIANA



SITE BOUNDARIES PARALLEL
BLDG. FACADES AT DISTANCES
SHOWN. THE BLDGS. FACE
ANN ST.



LOCATION OF MODERN
WAREHOUSE, WHICH IS
SEPARATED BY A BREEZE-
WAY FROM THE
COMPLEX.

SCALE 1" = 50' APPROX.

