

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

USD/I/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

Carrollton Historic District Boundary Increase, Orleans Parish, LA

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

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JUL 24 2007

- 1. Carrollton Historic District Boundary Increase
2. bounded roughly by Claiborne, Nashville, Octavia, Grape and Lowerline New Orleans Louisiana LA Orleans Parish 071 70125

3. As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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 the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant statewide.

Jonathan Fricker (handwritten signature)

Jonathan Fricker, Deputy SHPO
Signature of certifying official/Title

7/20/07 (handwritten date)

Date

- 5. Add 811 contributing buildings and 211 non-contributing buildings.
7. Description:

This proposed boundary increase will add 1022 buildings to the existing Carrollton National Register historic district. Carrollton was listed on the Register in 1987 with 5,198 buildings. The roughly two-and-a-half square mile New Orleans district is predominantly residential, although there are a notable number of historic commercial and institutional buildings. Contributing elements in the existing district date from the 1840s through 1937 (the Register's 50 year cutoff at the time), with the majority (some 70%) dating to the early twentieth century. And the farther back from the Mississippi River, the more one sees purely early twentieth century streetscapes.

The 1022 buildings in the proposed expansion are residential, with the exception of four non-historic institutional buildings, one historic church, and a few historic commercial buildings (less than 5). Contributing buildings date from c.1915 to c. 1950. Like the existing district, some streets have a two story scale, while other streets have a mixed one and two story scale. Houses are just as likely to be sheathed in stucco as weatherboards. Red tile roofs are quite common. (Red tile roofs are not confined to Mediterranean-style houses. They appear often on Colonial Revival "basement houses." (See below for explanation of basement houses.)

The existing Carrollton district runs from the Mississippi River, the earliest area of development, some 2 miles inland to encompass a section of the city not drained and occupied until the early twentieth century. The proposed expansion is on the southeastern side of this later development (above Claiborne Avenue and below Lowerline -- see map).

The district takes its name from what was once the independent municipality of Carrollton, platted and named in 1833. Carrollton was incorporated as a town in 1845 and achieved city status in 1859. It was

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annexed to New Orleans in 1874. When doing the fieldwork for the Carrollton district in 1987, the staff of the Division of Historic Preservation chose the historic boundary of the town of Carrollton, Lowerline Street, for the southeastern boundary above Claiborne. (The southeastern boundary below Claiborne abutted an existing Register district with Lowerline as the demarcation.) What seemed like a reasonable and justifiable boundary at the time (historic boundaries are acceptable to the Register) seems arbitrary in retrospect. The houses don't look any different on one side of Lowerline from the other. The proposed expansion, on the southeastern side, abuts another existing Register district, Broadmoor, in some places and comes close to it in other places. (See boundary justification.)

While the existing Carrollton district does retain a few early buildings, the majority (some 70%) of its buildings date from the early twentieth century. And the farther back from the Mississippi River, the more one sees purely early twentieth century streetscapes - like those in the proposed expansion.

The piecemeal development of the expansion area is easily read in the streets. Several streets developed independently in the 1910s and 1920s as private residential parks, ranging from decidedly upmarket Versailles Boulevard (with a grassy median) to narrow, non-boulevard streets with smaller middle class houses such as State St. Drive and Vincennes Place. Between Versailles Boulevard and State Street Drive, and not accessible to either via cross streets, is Calhoun Street, a street of modest one story houses which was only nominally filled in by the 1930s. (For more on Calhoun Street, see the non-contributing section below.) The expansion's major cross street (east-west) is tree-lined Fontainebleau Drive. Fontainebleau begins on Carrollton Avenue in the existing district (marked with historic gateposts and an arch) and continues through the proposed expansion to end in the Broadmoor National Register district.

It is clear that the proposed expansion continues the architectural character of the Carrollton Historic District (specifically the large section above Claiborne where the expansion is located). Fifty-four percent of the existing district's buildings fall in the Colonial Revival, Bungalow, and Twentieth Century Eclectic (Historic Revival) categories. (This percentage would be even higher for the area above Claiborne.) Sixty-nine percent of the expansion's buildings fall into these three categories.

Typologically, the expansion contains a notable complement (13%) of an iconic local housetype found in the upper reaches of the existing Carrollton district - the basement house. A basement house (local term) is a type of two-story residence found almost entirely in New Orleans. It has a full story above-ground basement with the second story serving as the main living space. The basement story historically was given over to utilitarian spaces. The front porch is almost universally reached via a quite prominent flight of steps. Basement houses appear in the expansion in various early twentieth century styles (as they do elsewhere in the city), including Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and Mediterranean Revival styles.

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Like the existing district, the streets of the expansion also contain many bungalows and a large complement of two story houses (other than basement houses). Typologically, the main difference between the existing district and the expansion is that the latter has relatively few shotguns (5% or less) while 45% of the buildings in the existing district are shotguns. (On the whole, the expansion more closely mirrors the larger house streetscapes of the upper reaches of the existing district.)

Breakdown by Styles:

The state's National Register Coordinator surveyed the area in question building-by-building, using a stylistic coding system. While not identical to the one used in coding the existing district, it correlates fairly well. (Nineteenth century styles found in the existing district were not applicable. The Twentieth Century Eclectic category is broken down into specific stylistic references -- Mediterranean, English, etc.).

Colonial Revival	200	20%
Craftsman/Bungalow	241	24%
Mediterranean Revival	98	10%
Eclectic	120	12%
Misc. Historic Revival	32	3%
No Style	120	10%
Non-Contributing	211	21%

Colonial Revival (20%)

The proposed expansion contains twice the percentage of Colonial Revival houses as the existing district. Colonial Revival is being used in its broadest sense to cover a wide range of permutations from the 1910s through the 1940s. Examples include 1910s Colonial Revival "basement houses" (with tripled Tuscan columns and fanlights), a few houses with the Mt. Vernon look, a couple of houses in the Dutch Colonial vein, and numerous 1930s and '40s two story red brick houses evocative of Georgian or Federal architecture (some rather convincing). The latter feature the requisite broken pediment doorways, fanlights, pedimented entrance porches, etc.

Craftsman/Bungalow (24%)

Like the existing district, the expansion has a large number of houses in the Craftsman or Bungalow style. (Thirty-eight percent of the existing district's buildings are in this style, with 24% for the expansion.) This stylistic category includes classic one story bungalows (bungalow in type

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as well as style), basement houses with Craftsmen details, and standard two story houses with Craftsmen details. The majority of the district's Craftsmen houses are quite strongly styled, many bearing a strong resemblance to the California prototype. Unusual for Louisiana, the expansion boasts a handful of bungalows with shingled exteriors and/or piers formed of pebbles or some other rustic treatment.

Mediterranean Revival/ Spanish Revival (10%)

The 98 houses in this category make a stronger statement than their percentage (10%) might indicate. Virtually all (if not all) are two story houses (basement and standard two story), and most make quite a strong stylistic statement. Houses were placed in this category if they had a general Mediterranean or Italian look and feel. Typical characteristics include stuccoed exteriors; broad, spreading hip roofs (usually of tile) and an abundance of round arches (as windows, doors, and arcades). Front porch loggias with the arches springing directly from the piers (in the manner of the early Italian Renaissance) define many houses.

This category also includes about a half dozen houses that are more specifically Spanish in look and feel. (The most impressive of these is detailed below.)

Mediterranean Revival style houses predominate in one small residential park platted in September 1924 for the Trianon Development Corporation. French name notwithstanding, Trianon Park developed intentionally with houses in a general Mediterranean style (most but not all). Although the development was dubbed "Spanish-Moorish" in advertising, the only house with clear and compelling references to Spanish architecture is the large, rambling house at the head of the short street, #2 Trianon Plaza, built for Trianon Development in 1926. Complete with a tower and various Spanish-derived details, the Spanish Eclectic, white stucco, tile-roofed house was advertised in the *Times-Picayune* as "an exact reproduction of the haciendas of Southern Spain, complete in every detail." The architect, A. J. F. Lorber, was referenced with "a record of successes in Florida and New York."

Eclectic (12%)

120 early twentieth century houses in the expansion fall under the general "eclectic" category -- meaning that they combine motifs from various historic revival styles and cannot be pigeonholed into one specific style. (This category has been used successfully by the LA SHPO in previous early twentieth century district nominations.)

Miscellaneous Historic Revival (3%)

This category includes 32 houses whose historic revival styles occur in small numbers. Most of these reflect the popularity of the picturesque "English look" in 1920s America. Most are fairly typical one or one-and-a-half story English cottages marked by steeply pitched gables and a prominent front chimney. Two particularly distinctive examples are found near each other on upper Versailles Boulevard. One features deliberately

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stressed wooden lintels (in the manner of ancient English prototypes) combined with a quite prominent front chimney. Diagonally across the street is a stuccoed English cottage with Tudor arches, *faux* leaded glass windows, *faux* half timbering, and most interesting of all, a decorative balustrade above the porch roof with pierced quatrefoils.

There are also two large French Eclectic houses and six houses inspired by early Louisiana archetypes. Two are *faux* French Creole two story houses. Four mimic the look of French Quarter galleried dependencies (with the short end set parallel to the street). (Historic twentieth century houses in the French Creole manner or the New Orleans dependency style are not unique to this neighborhood. Not large in number, they are sprinkled around the city.)

No Style (10%)

This category has a somewhat misleading title; it does not necessarily mean devoid of details. It has been used by the LA SHPO in twentieth century district nominations to encompass houses that cannot be "pushed" into a stylistic category. They may have various details that contribute to the neighborhood's historic look; however, the styling is not pervasive enough and/or emphatic enough to warrant a stylistic label. The "no style" category also includes legitimate historic houses that are indeed quite plain, although even they support the overall character of the district in areas such as massing, fenestration pattern, porch systems, etc.

Non-contributing (21%)

The proposed expansion has a slightly higher rate of non-contributing buildings than the existing district (21% versus 15%). The vast majority are notably altered historic houses. A small minority are brick ranch houses sprinkled here and there. While a few of the latter are fifty years old, the category as a whole does not contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood. Hence all ranch houses are being counted as non-contributing.

The only large non-contributing buildings are four multi-story buildings with large footprints located in the northwestern section of the expansion (two school buildings, an administration building for the Archdiocese of New Orleans, and a housing facility for Notre Dame Seminary). While intrusive, they had to be included to link the expansion to the existing district.

Clearly there are more non-contributing buildings downriver of Versailles Boulevard. In particular, there is a break in character along the immediately adjacent street, Calhoun, which has a roughly 50 percent non-contributing rate. A conservative approach would have ended the expansion at Versailles. However, the next street beyond Calhoun, State Street, is lined with Carrollton archetypes, and its non-contributing rate of 24% mirrors that of the expansion as a whole. Early fieldwork revealed that the remaining two parallel streets, Vincennes and Nashville, while not of the quality of State Street, did contain a sufficient number of contributing historic houses to warrant inclusion.

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Faced with the foregoing, the state's National Register coordinator conferred with Dan Vivian, Louisiana's Register reviewer in the National Park Service. Vivian said there was ample precedent for districts to be listed where there was a break in character and the character picked back up again (as is the case with the expansion and with at least one listed Register district in Louisiana, the Main Street Historic District in New Iberia, Iberia Parish). On balance, the LA SHPO staff felt that "reaching" past Calhoun to include adjacent downriver streets (most notably, State Street) was warranted.

INFORMATION COMMON TO ALL PHOTOS:

Name of Photographer: Donna Fricker
Date Taken: April-June 2007
Negatives Location: LA SHPO

Note regarding building count: Many of the expansion's houses have historic garages at the rear. They were typically inaccessible from the street and are not included in the count.

Part 8: Statement of Significance

As noted above, the proposed expansion continues the architectural character of Carrollton, most notably that portion above Claiborne that developed in the early twentieth century. Specifically, it contributes to two arguments in the existing district's National Register statement of significance. Carrollton was listed of statewide architectural significance for the quality of its twentieth century historic revival buildings and on the local level for its collection of basement houses. (The latter were identified as New Orleans raised bungalows in the 1987 nomination. The staff of the LA SHPO now recognizes that so-called "basement houses" are not just in the bungalow style. They appear quite frequently in New Orleans in other twentieth century styles, most notably, Colonial Revival and Mediterranean Revival.) Separate and apart from the existing documentation, the expansion's 241 Craftsman-style houses (24% of the overall total) contribute to its credentials as an important historic twentieth century neighborhood.

The period of significance for the expansion spans from the date of the earliest Colonial Revival houses, circa 1915, to circa 1950. The later date was chosen to include numerous strongly styled 1940s "takes" on the "colonial" look. There may be a few ranch houses that would fall within the foregoing date range. However, as noted previously, ranch houses as a category are not contributing elements in the expansion because they do not contribute to the district's architectural character. (For the record, the ranch houses do not occur in concentration, being sprinkled here and there, and none appear to be individually eligible.)

Like the rest of the country, people who bought land in the area in question looked often to the past for architectural inspiration - whether it be the American colonial past (or what they perceived to be "colonial") or the exotic and faraway past of French chateaux, Mediterranean villas and "olde English" cottages. And, of course, "designing in the period" was assisted greatly by a rising generation of architects who could produce a

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design in just about any style from any period, whatever the client wanted.

Quoting from the existing nomination:

Carrollton's collection of twentieth century eclectic [historic revival] buildings is easily superior to most in Louisiana. Fifty-five percent of the examples are at least two stories, which is unusual even in the most pretentious early twentieth century neighborhoods in the state. Typically one finds a handful of two story eclectic [historic revival] landmarks in a sea of fairly ordinary cottages and bungalows. In addition, many of Carrollton's eclectic [historic revival] buildings are large and imposing with considerable ornamentation.

The same could easily be said of the twentieth century historic revival houses in the proposed expansion. Collectively, revival style houses account for 45% of the expansion's building stock, most of which are two story houses that make a strong stylistic statement, be they handsome "colonial"-style dwellings (in various permutations) or evocative, stuccoed, tile-roofed Mediterranean Revival houses. Sprinkled into this already rich mixture are a few Spanish haciendas, a couple of French Eclectic houses, various interpretations of the English look, and revivals of two iconic Louisiana housetypes: French Creole and the New Orleans dependency. In particular, upmarket Versailles Boulevard, and to a slightly lesser extent, Audubon Boulevard and Vendome Place, are lined with numerous impressive (and wide-ranging) historic revival style houses.

Architects and clients looked not only to the past for inspiration but also to the wildly popular California bungalow style, and the proposed expansion illustrates this period look quite well. There are 241 Craftsman style houses in the expansion, most of which are quite well detailed. Indeed, the expanded Carrollton district contains one of the state's best collections of Craftsman houses.

Finally, like the existing district, the expansion has an important collection of basement houses, a local archetype. Seven percent of the buildings in the existing district are basement houses; thirteen percent in the expansion. This large collection helps the city convey its distinctive architectural identity.

9. Bibliography

Sanborn Insurance Company Maps, 1951.

Cangelosi, Robert J., Jr. and Schlesinger, Dorothy G., compilers and editors. *New Orleans Architecture: The University Section*. Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Co., 1997.

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10. Add approx. 185 acres

UTMS for boundary increase:

A: 15/778180/3317540 B: 15/778520/3317900

C: 15/779160/3317360 D: 15/778720/3315780

Boundary Description: Boundary is shown as a broken line on the attached district map. Please see USGS maps (2) for the fullest appreciation of the expansion's physical relationship to the existing district.

Justification: Boundaries were chosen to encompass the concentration of historic buildings that contribute to the district's significance. The expansion abuts the Uptown National Register district on the south side (with Claiborne Ave as the demarcation). The south side boundary cuts in on Calhoun to exclude a modern commercial area. On the long east side the expansion either abuts the Broadmoor National Register district or in some instances, comes close to the Broadmoor boundary line. (There is a small area between the Carrollton expansion and Broadmoor not in a Register district. Although there are some well-preserved archetypes in the area in question, it has too many altered historic buildings and/or modest, plain 1940s cottages.) The boundary line on the north side of the expansion is irregular because the historic character ends in different places on different streets. The areas beyond the northern boundary have too high a percentage of notably altered historic houses combined with modest brick ranch houses.

11. Form Prepared By:

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