

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

DEC 19 1994

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Nicholson School

other names/site number Nicholson Elementary School

2. Location

street & number 1143 North Street N/A not for publication

city or town Baton Rouge N/A vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county East Baton Rouge code 033 zip code 70802

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Gerri Hobdy 12/16/94
Signature of certifying official/Title Gerri Hobdy, Date
LA SHPO, Dept. of Culture, Recreation & Tourism
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 - determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 - determined not eligible for the National Register.
 - removed from the National Register.
 - other, (explain:)

for
Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper Entered in the National Register Date of Action 1-24-95

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1 | | buildings |
| | | sites |
| | | structures |
| | | objects |
| 1 | 0 | Total |

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/School

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Beaux Arts

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls brick

roof other: tar and gravel

other stone

Narrative Description

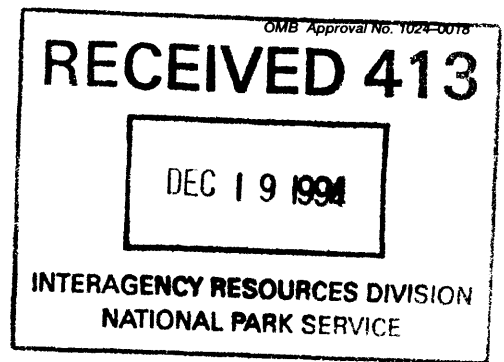
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Nicholson School, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

Section number 7 Page 1



The Nicholson School (1922) stands within a small school ground in one of Baton Rouge's older residential neighborhoods. A restrained example of the Beaux Arts style, the two story brick structure features stone decorative elements. The building has experienced little significant change since its construction and easily retains the integrity required for National Register listing.

Although at first glance the school's appearance is that of a rectangular mass, the facade is actually divided into a series of projecting and receding surfaces. These include a large projecting central block flanked by two narrow sections whose facades stand several feet back from the larger mass. The central block is subdivided into three planes, with its slightly projecting central surface suggesting the idea of an entrance pavilion. Features of the Beaux Arts style found on the building include this highly decorated pavilion and the use of urns atop the main block's parapet. Classical elements used to create the pavilion's Beaux Arts styling include:

- 1) two engaged, colossal columns with stylized capitals featuring acanthus leaves, additional elongated leaves, and bell flower motifs.
- 2) slender reeded pilasters separating the windows which pierce the facade between the colossal columns. The capitals on these pilasters are smaller versions of those found on the columns.
- 3) colossal brick pilasters separating some of the windows on the central mass. Their capitals feature geometric motifs.
- 4) a full entablature consisting of a molded stone architrave, a brick frieze featuring bas relief roundels and lozenges, and an overhanging stone cornice.
- 5) a stepped parapet with stone coping. Portions of the entablature and parapet protrude to mark the locations of the engaged columns. The parapet also protrudes slightly at the corners of the main block. These parapet protrusions are decorated by geometric motifs executed in stone.
- 6) an ornamental fan form composed of elongated leaves and bell flowers. The fan form's surround features bead and reel molding and a keystone decorated by a bas relief bell flower.

CONTINUED

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Nicholson School, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

Section number 7 Page 2

- 7) an egg and dart band above a rectangular panel containing the school's name, and a Vitruvian scroll band beneath the panel.
- 8) three shield shaped plaques, and a series of stone lozenge shaped motifs within brick panels between the first and second story windows.

Classical features found on the rest of the building include the continuation of the entablature and parapet, both of which encircle the building, a brick belt course, a watertable, and additional lozenge shaped stone plaques within brick panels located between the first and second floor windows of the side elevations. The structure also contains bands of large, multi-paned windows. Although the rear elevation's cornice is made of stone, the entablature and watertable on this elevation are made of brick. In addition, the rear walls are constructed of less expensive brick than that found on the facade and side elevations.

The school's floorplan is typical of the period and consists of classrooms lining each side of long central hallways on each floor. Additional classrooms are found on the upper floor of the building's two narrow wings. The western wing's lower floor houses the school's library, while the eastern wing contains the cafeteria. An auditorium projects from the rear elevation to form a middle wing.

Alterations to the school's exterior have been minor. They include the replacement of the two original front doors with fire doors, the erection of a metal canopy above one wing door, the painting of the rear elevation, and the construction of two small one-story concrete block additions attached to the cafeteria and auditorium wings. The most serious interior changes have occurred in the auditorium. The areas beside the stage have been converted into offices, and the area under the balcony has been subdivided. The balcony itself has been converted into a classroom entered from the hallway of the second floor. Other interior changes include the suspension of pipes from the ceiling, the installation of linoleum and dropped tile ceilings throughout, the covering of the wooden stairways with rubber matting, the paneling of the school office, and the installation of an alarm system.

Although at first glance the list of alterations appears long, in reality the changes are minor in nature and have no effect upon the building's National Register eligibility. As one of a limited number of major examples of the Beaux Arts/Neo-Classical taste within the City of Baton Rouge, the Nicholson School is a strong candidate for National Register listing.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations N/A
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

architecture

Period of Significance

1922

Significant Dates

1922

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Architect: William T. Nolan

Builder: Burkes & Haley,
General Contractors

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Nicholson School
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property @ 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff

organization Division of Historic Preservation date November 1994

street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone (504) 342-8160

city or town Baton Rouge state Louisiana zip code 70804

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Dr. Bernard J. Weiss, Superintendent, East Baton Rouge Parish School System

street & number P. O. Box 2950 telephone (504) 992-5400

city or town Baton Rouge state Louisiana zip code 70821

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Nicholson School, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

Section number 8 Page 1

The Nicholson School is locally significant in the area of architecture as one of a limited number of major examples illustrating the Beaux Arts/Neo-Classical taste in Baton Rouge.

Although the official founding date of the community is recognized as 1719, Baton Rouge has retained only a relatively small number of historic commercial and institutional buildings with their integrity intact. Those which remain are generally found in one of three locations--the Central Business District, the Louisiana State University Campus, and older residential neighborhoods which stand near downtown. The low survival rate is due largely to the fact that the city remained prosperous after the Depression and into the 1950s and 1960s. As a result, the community's older commercial and institutional buildings suffered considerable alteration and demolition.

Although there are various buildings in Baton Rouge which display the Beaux Arts and Neo-Classical tastes (chiefly the latter), most examples are low-key, featuring only sparingly applied details such as pilasters used for accent. Less than ten are fully articulated examples of these classical styles. This number is verified by a survey of downtown Baton Rouge and the National Register staff's familiarity with the rest of the city. Nicholson is one of these Beaux Arts/Neo-Classical landmarks. Though not the largest or grandest, it has the most elaborate detailing, featuring a number of classical motifs. This can be seen in the school's finely executed central pavilion, which exhibits engaged colossal columns; reeded pilasters; a full entablature; a stepped parapet; an ornamental fan form composed of elongated leaves and bell flowers; and examples of bead and reel, egg and dart, and Vitruvian scroll molding. These features make Nicholson School an important example of the Beaux Arts/Neo-Classical taste within the City of Baton Rouge and, thus, a legitimate candidate for National Register listing.

Historical Note

Nicholson School is named for Louisiana educator James William Nicholson. Nicholson moved as an infant with his family from Alabama to Claiborne Parish, Louisiana in 1844. Extremely intelligent, he entered college at age fourteen but left two years later to join the Confederate Army. After the war he completed his training and was awarded a Master's degree from Homer College in 1867. Ten years later he was elected chairman of the mathematics department at Louisiana State University, which he also served twice as president (1883-1884 and 1887-1896). After his second term as university president, he resumed chairmanship of the mathematics department. Nicholson died in 1917.

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Continuation Sheet**

Nicholson School, Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

Section number $\frac{9}{10}$ and Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Staff knowledge of the City of Baton Rouge.

Architectural and Historical Survey of Downtown Baton Rouge. Foundation for Historical Louisiana and City of Baton Rouge - Parish of East Baton Rouge, July 1984.

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

Description: Refer to attached sketch map.

Justification: The property is bounded on the south by North Street. The eastern and western boundaries follow fence lines/property lines. The northern boundary cuts closely to the rear of the school to exclude non-contributing buildings on the property.

Nicholson School
Baton Rouge
East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

