

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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JUN 14 1988

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Spell House
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number LA Hwy 5 (south) N/A not for publication
city, town Keachi vicinity
state Louisiana code LA county DeSoto code 031 zip code 71046

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Leslie P. Tassin June 8, 1988
Signature of certifying official Leslie P. Tassin, LA State Historic Preservation Officer Date
Div of Historic Preservation, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. Alabama Byrum 7-14-88
 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:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls weatherboard

roof asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Spell House (c.1850) is a single story frame Greek Revival residence located in rolling farm country near the small community of Keachi. Although the house has received several alterations over the years, its rural Greek Revival character remains largely intact.

The Spell House has a somewhat complicated history, with the following being the most likely scenario given the architectural evidence. Apparently the house began as a symmetrical five bay clapboarded structure three rooms wide and one room deep with a central entrance under a single bay pedimented portico. The chimneys on this main block are against the outside end walls, and each originally had an aedicule style mantel. (One of the two mantels remains.) The portico has square posts and matching pilasters with heavy molded capitals. The pediment has a somewhat truncated look with an oversized architrave and a tiny bolection molded tympanum. The house is surmounted by a more or less full entablature and a pitched roof. Evidently there was no rear gallery or portico.

About fifteen feet to the rear of the house was a galleried dependency one room deep. This dependency has pediment-shaped window and door surrounds (matching those in the main block) and a central chimney. The two mantels are in the aedicule style, but with a slight pointed arch forming the base of the entablature. This Gothic Revival feature may indicate that the dependency was built a few years after the main house, but it is not certain.

It is also not certain whether the dependency stood as an independent unit or not. This would have been an unusual arrangement, although not unknown. It is possible that the dependency was linked to the house by a galleried breezeway, but this seems unlikely for the following reasons: (1) The rear of the house has a full entablature and clapboards indicating that it was once fully exposed to sight and weather. (2) If the gallery ceiling of the dependency is extended forward to intersect the rear of the house (as it would have done had there been a breezeway), the ceiling cuts off the upper foot of the rear doorway, which is obviously original. (3) The entablature and roofline which presently link the dependency and the house have an awkward appearance and show signs of having been patched in.

The linking of the dependency and the main house probably took place in the early twentieth century. Presently there is a bedroom set between the two parts of the house with salvaged doors and doorways. There is also an extended gallery which links the rear door of the house with the dependency gallery. More recently a kitchen lean-to has been added to the rear of the main house opposite the dependency, and a small

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Spell House, DeSoto Parish, Louisiana

Section number 7 Page 1

portion of the dependency gallery has been enclosed for a bathroom. In addition, the front entrance has been reworked in some manner because the door is recessed about a foot. Also, the clapboarding around the door may not be original. (Normally the wall under a portico or gallery is flushboard, not clapboard.) The paneled wainscotting found in two of the principal rooms is early twentieth century. More recently, the entire dependency gallery has been enclosed with picture windows and the rear of the dependency has had a lean-to attached. Also, only one of the two original mantels in the main house remains. The other mantel is aedicule in shape, but has a Dutch Colonial scroll cut across the base of the entablature. It could be an altered original mantel or one made of salvaged parts.

In addition, the present owner remembers that when he was a boy his father detached two rooms from the rear of the dependency, moved them, and rebuilt them as quarters houses. Whether or not these two rooms were original to the dependency is not known. The quarters houses in question subsequently burned.

Assessment of Integrity:

Despite this admittedly complex history of architectural development, the character-defining elements which establish the Spell House as an example of the rural Greek Revival are all plainly evident. These include the five bay facade, the portico, three of the four mantels, and the pediment-shaped door and window surrounds. Very importantly, virtually all of the "surgery" the house has undergone has been to the rear and not visible from the principal view. For these reasons, in the opinion of the State Historic Preservation Office, the Spell House easily retains enough architectural integrity to merit listing on the National Register.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
architecture

Period of Significance
c.1850

Significant Dates
c.1850

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Spell House is locally significant in the area of architecture because it contributes to the distinctly Greek Revival architectural heritage of DeSoto Parish.

Northern Louisiana parishes such as DeSoto were settled between roughly 1830 and the 1850s by individuals from Alabama, Georgia, and other nearby states. Of course, Greek Revival was literally the rage at the time, and DeSoto settlers embraced it with a vengeance. Although many examples from this architectural flowering have been lost, including the impressive Keachi Female College, an astounding number survive. Excluding New Orleans, DeSoto is one of three parishes considered to be major centers of Greek Revival architecture in the state. Whereas other parishes average about a half dozen Greek Revival residences, DeSoto boasts at least twenty, not to mention three churches, a temple fronted store, and a Masonic hall. Although a few of DeSoto's Greek Revival houses are impressive two story examples, none are grand "Gone With the Wind" piles. The one or one-and-a-half story examples tend to be galleried cottages (often with a hipped roof), although a few have a pedimented portico. It is also important to note that the Greek Revival in DeSoto was a rural phenomenon guided by local builders and carpenters who interpreted the style in their own way. This special heritage really represents the parish's architectural apogee. With the exception of a few landmarks, there has not been an architectural flowering in the parish since then.

In the opinion of the State Historic Preservation Office, all surviving examples of the style are significant because they contribute to the parish's architectural identity as a center of Greek Revival architecture. Except for the five two story examples, it would be rather arbitrary to separate the other roughly comparable residences into gradations of importance. Distinguishing features of the Spell House are its portico, mantels, and pediment-shaped door and window surrounds. The slender portico is of particular interest because it takes its dimensions from the central room rather than encompassing the three central bays as it would in "mainstream" Greek Revival. In this the Spell House is typical of rural Greek Revival architecture in DeSoto Parish and indeed much of northwestern Louisiana.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Conveyance and land records research done by owner. Summary in National Register file, Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office.

DeSoto Parish Historic Structures Survey, Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office.

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property @ 1 acre

UTM References

A

1	5
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4	1	3	8	0	0
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3	5	6	0	3	5	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description Please refer to enclosed scaled sketch map. Boundaries were drawn to encompass the nominated building and its immediate setting. Following property lines would have meant nominating hundreds of acres of vacant land.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification Boundaries were drawn to encompass the nominated building and its immediate setting. Following property lines would have meant nominating hundreds of acres of vacant land.

See continuation sheet

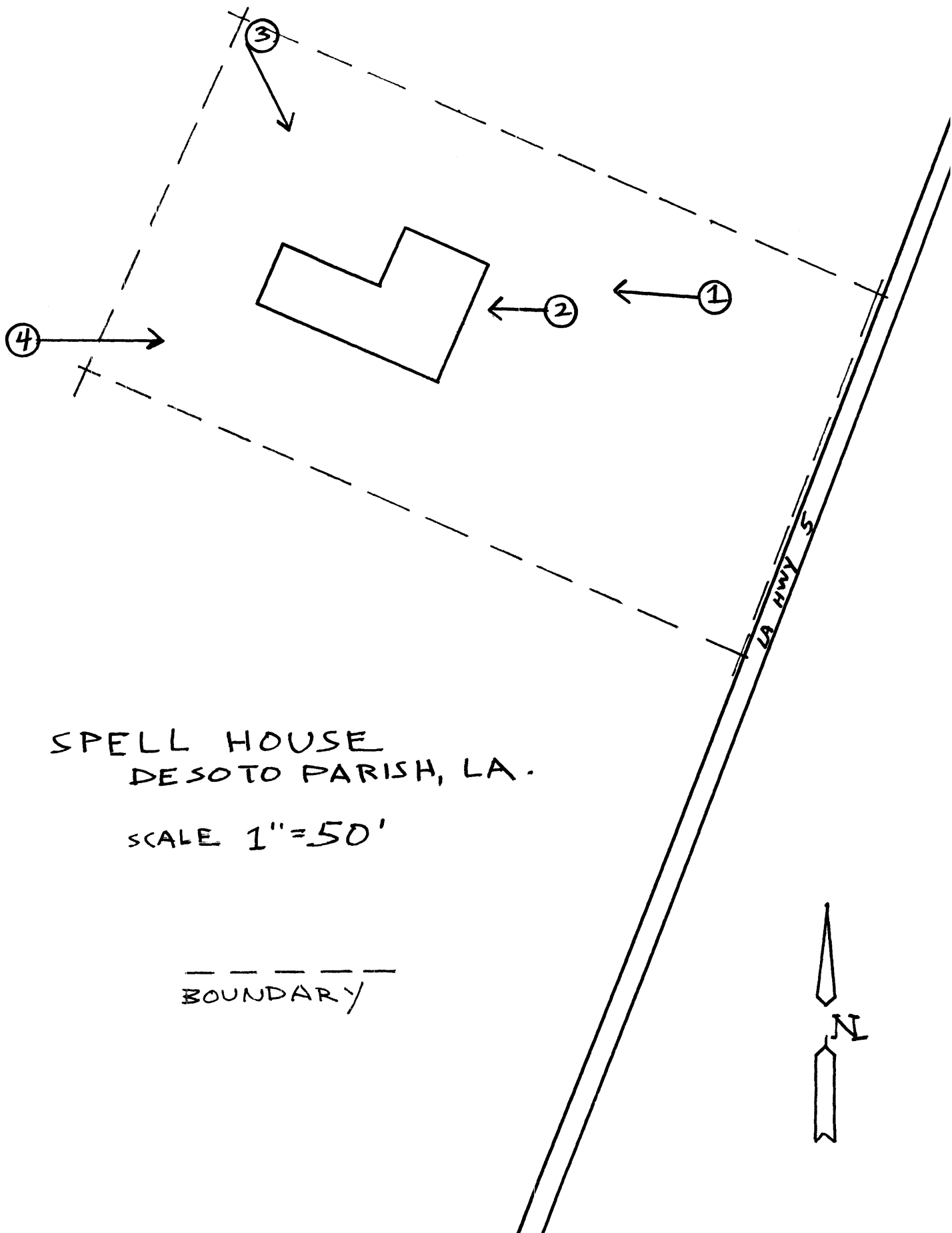
11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff

organization Division of Historic Preservation date April 1988

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

city or town Baton Rouge state Louisiana zip code 70804



SPELL HOUSE
DESOTO PARISH, LA.

SCALE 1"=50'

BOUNDARY