

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received DEC 23 1985

date entered JAN 23 1986

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

1. Name

historic Bywater

and/or common Bywater Historic District

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by the Mississippi River, Press Street,
North Villere Street, and Poland Street, N/A not for publication

city, town New Orleans N/A vicinity of

state LA code 22 parish Orleans code 071

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name MULTIPLE OWNERSHIP

street & number

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. N/A

street & number

city, town _____ state _____

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

A Survey of Community Development Neighborhoods to Identify Potential National Register
title Historic Districts and Individual National Register Properties has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date August 1978 - December 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission

city, town New Orleans state LA

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Bywater Historic District is an urban area of approximately 120 blocks with a mixed commercial-residential character. It began in the early nineteenth century as a Creole downriver suburb of the original City of New Orleans. Settlers included Creoles, "free persons of color," Germans, Irish, and later on Italian immigrants. The resulting historic district mainly represents the mid-nineteenth century through the early twentieth century with a historic period defined as 1807 to 1935. Since that time Bywater has not suffered a significant loss of integrity. In fact, the intrusion rate is only 13%.

Geographical Setting

Zimpel's 1834 map of New Orleans reveals that most of the present Bywater district had been subdivided into lots and streets by then. In a familiar New Orleans pattern, adjacent low-lying plantation land was given a street grid and gradually engulfed by development. The year 1807 was chosen as the beginning of the historic period because it is the date of the earliest known subdivision plan in the district. The original plan for what was then called Faubourg Clouet was made by Barthelemy Lafon in 1807 and redesigned by him in 1809. It encompasses the Clouet-Louisa-Piety Streets section of the district.

Bywater grew without benefit of grand squares, crow's feet, or other Baroque planning devices. The street grid was decidedly speculative, and as it filled in, the district acquired its present tightly packed urban character. Most of the buildings are set directly on the street and very close together. There are few front yards, and those which do exist are very small. Although the district is set by the Mississippi River, the high levee prevents a direct river view. Vistas within the district are fairly channeled and directional rather than broad and spreading. This is because of the visual trench effect created by the aforementioned urban density and the massing of the district's abnormally tall houses. Despite the fact that most (about 90%) of the district's buildings are single story, virtually all are raised well above grade and most have high cornice lines because of their high ceilings.

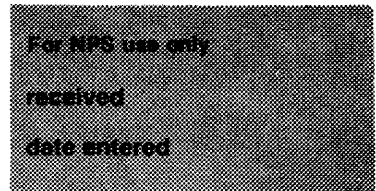
Historic Surveys

Bywater was first surveyed in 1978 by the architectural firm of Koch and Wilson. This was part of a citywide survey effort conducted within the Community Development Block Grant areas for environmental review purposes. The survey produced a breakdown of the buildings according to twenty style/period categories as well as a color coded map. In March of 1984 the Bywater Neighborhood Association approached the State Historic Preservation Office and requested that the area be listed on the Register. The National Register Coordinator made a windshield survey of the area and cut preliminary boundaries. For a time the Register staff considered using the Koch and Wilson material as the official district survey but in the end decided to make a new survey of its own. The district effort did not get fully underway until the summer of 1985, by which time the Koch and Wilson report was seven years out of date. In addition, Koch and Wilson broke the district down into multitudinous style/period categories, some of which overlapped. The staff decided that this complex system of categorizing the district was too unwieldy for National Register purposes.

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7. Description (cont'd) New Orleans, LA

In September of 1985 three members of the state Register staff conducted a building by building survey of the district. They also refined the boundaries somewhat. Each structure was examined from the exterior and rated according to a system of seven building type categories and seven period/style categories. The survey produced two coded maps and a count of the various types and styles. It did not produce a written inventory, but this would have been an overwhelming task given the fact that the district contains over two thousand buildings. Moreover, Bywater is a large urban area containing numerous very similar elements. In cases like this, breaking the elements down into distinct categories provides a better description than one could get from a straight inventory. Of course, this method of describing a large urban district has been previously approved by the National Park Service, and, in fact, has already been used successfully for four Register districts in Louisiana.

Building Types

Major building types include Creole cottages, shotgun houses, camelback houses, side hall plan houses, bungalows and commercial buildings. There is also a category known as "other" which includes the following: local landmarks, institutional buildings, some intrusions, rare types such as central hall plan houses, and a few buildings which defy categorization by type.

1. Creole Cottages (178, or 8% of the building stock)

Strictly speaking, Creole cottages are an early nineteenth century phenomenon (Photo 1), but the form was perpetuated until much later. Greek Revival and Italianate examples abound in the district (Photos 2-6). The Creole cottage form denotes a one-and-one-half story gable-ended residence built up to the front property line. Its plan does not use hallways. Although early Creole cottages are found throughout the district, they are more numerous in the western half. Presumably this is because the initial development in the area took place from west to east.

2. Shotgun Houses (1249, or 61% of the building stock)

The shotgun is the most conspicuous building type in the district. In the archetype, a shotgun is a narrow one-story dwelling usually without halls (Photos 7-12). The survey includes within this category variations such as the double shotgun (Photos 13-21) and the narrow two story single or double house without halls, although these two story "shotguns" are rare in the district. The overall shotgun collection denotes a lower-middle and middle class neighborhood. Double shotgun houses require less land per living unit than singles; hence speculators in poor areas tended to crowd more living units in by building exclusively doubles. Virtually all the shotgun houses in Central City, a poor area, are doubles, whereas in Bywater 47% of the shotgun houses are singles.

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Continuation sheet Bywater Historic District Item number 7 Page 2

New Orleans, LA

Description (cont'd)

3. Camelback Houses (67, or 3% of the building stock)

The camelback is a single or double shotgun with a two-level portion over the rear rooms (Photos 22 & 23). The second level provides one or two bedrooms. Although it is difficult to generalize, essentially the camelback type denotes a more affluent occupant than does the ordinary shotgun house. The earliest camelbacks seem to have come about when a shotgun was added to an earlier two story structure. It also appears that the process was reversed sometimes and a camelback was attached to an earlier shotgun. The camelback appears in the district with the same popular stylistic traits as the shotgun.

4. Side Hall Plan Houses (121, or 6% of the building stock)

Until the late 1800's most prosperous American citizens of New Orleans lived in side hall plan houses. The fact that relatively few were built in Bywater confirms its lower-middle to middle class status. Moreover, most of the relatively few side hall houses which do exist in the district are one story (Photos 24-27).

5. Bungalows (82, or 4% of the building stock)

For purposes of this submission, bungalows are defined as single living units one story high, two rooms wide, and two or more rooms deep (Photo 28). Shotgun houses with the familiar bungalow details are listed as shotgun houses. Bungalows are larger and reflect a more affluent occupant. In contrast to upper-middle class neighborhoods in New Orleans, one does not generally find raised bungalows in Bywater. Virtually all of the district's bungalows are elevated the normal two, three or four feet above grade.

6. Commercial Buildings (215, or 11% of the building stock)

Although most of Bywater's intrusions fall into this category, the district does contain a goodly number of older commercial buildings which form a vital element in its historic streetscape. Most of the older commercial structures follow the domestic model--i.e., outwardly a house but with a corner entrance, a gallery over the sidewalk, and perhaps a few display windows (Photos 29-32). About half of these domestic-looking buildings are one story and about half are two stories. In addition, there are some larger commercial buildings of the more conventional type as well as a few warehouses (Photos 33 & 34). On the whole, commercial buildings are distributed throughout the district. Most, although not all, are set at street corners.

7. The aforementioned "other" category accounts for 139 buildings, or 7% of the building stock.

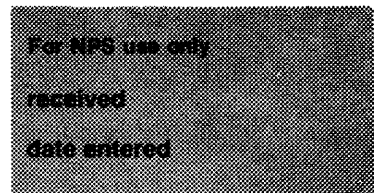
Styles

Major styles include Greek Revival, Italianate, Eastlake, bungalow and twentieth century eclectic. There is also a "plain or other" category and of course an intrusion category. These identified styles are relatively well-known

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Continuation sheet Bywater Historic District Item number 7 Page 3
New Orleans, LA

Description (cont'd)

and require little additional comment or explanation. However the following should be noted:

1. With the exception of Creole cottages with Greek Revival details, building styles tend to be fairly evenly distributed in the district.
2. The Italianate category includes the early classical-looking Italianate (Photo 24) as well as the later florid, heavily bracketed Italianate (Photo 25), although the overwhelming majority are in the latter group. Unlike Italianate houses in much of the rest of the country, virtually all of Bywater's Italianate houses are more or less symmetrical. This no doubt reflects the area's architectural conservatism as well as its tight urban pattern of growth.
3. The Gothic Revival and the other Downingesque stick styles are almost unknown in the district. This is true of the rest of New Orleans as well as the state as a whole. It is a somewhat puzzling phenomenon given the fact that the district blossomed in the mid to late nineteenth century. Explaining this is a major scholarly problem in the study of New Orleans' patrimony. There is no easy answer, but it probably has something to do with the area's architectural conservatism. Also, the picturesque Downingesque styles would undoubtedly have been difficult to adapt to the tight urban pattern of growth found in the area.
4. The bungalow style which appears in the survey takes in all bungalows and Arts and Crafts houses. On the whole, this group is not markedly different from other houses of this ilk in other parts of the country.
5. The term twentieth century eclectic refers to the general body of revival styles which were fashionable in the first thirty-five years of this century. It includes late Gothic Revival, neo-classical, Colonial and Mission styles (Photos 35-39).
6. The "plain or other" category refers to contributing elements which do not fit into one of the above style categories. The overwhelming majority are buildings with no stylistic details (Photo 14).

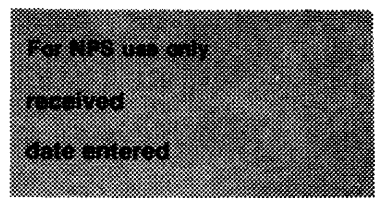
Style/period categories in the district break down as follows:

Greek Revival	38 buildings	2%		
Italianate	853 buildings	41%		
Eastlake	53 buildings	3%		
Bungalow	339 buildings	17%	Intrusions	266 buildings 13%
20th century eclectic	146 buildings	7%		
Plain or other	356 buildings	17%		
<hr/>				
TOTAL NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING ELEMENTS	1,785 buildings	87%		

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New Orleans, LA

Description (cont'd)

Landmarks

Landmarks in the neighborhood tend to be institutional buildings, particularly churches (Photos 40-42). There are also a few large old warehouses along the Mississippi River (Photo 34). Most of the district's landmarks are noteworthy only for their size and scale and do not seem to be obvious candidates for individual listing in the Register (Photos 43 & 44).

Building Materials

The overwhelming majority of the district's buildings are of wood construction with some kind of wood skin. Most of these feature ordinary frame construction, but many of the earlier ones are built of "standing planks." This technique involves the use of thick vertical planks placed upon the sill to form the substance of the wall. The planks are then treated with some kind of exterior sheathing, usually clapboards. Of course, it is impossible to tell how many standing plank houses there are in the district because their outward appearance is identical to that of ordinary frame houses. One can only make the general comment that in the early and mid nineteenth century the technique was very common. A few of the very early residences are brick, as are most of the institutional buildings.

Contributing Elements

Bywater represents an important collection of buildings from the period of 1807 to 1935. The period of significance ends in 1935 when the modernist movement was taking root in New Orleans. The district is a "tout ensemble" with a cohesive and unified character. Hence any 50+ year old building which falls into one of the aforementioned style or type categories is considered a contributing element if it has not been altered beyond recognition.

Intrusions

Most of the district's intrusions fall into the commercial category, although some are modern residences or older residences which have been significantly reworked. Overall, the district's intrusion rate is thirteen percent, which is relatively low for a historic district in Louisiana. (The typical district has an intrusion rate of 20% to 30%.) Virtually all of Bywater's intrusions are one or two stories high and hence they conform to the historic streetscape scale. Moreover, most are not significantly larger than the surrounding contributing elements. Given this, it is fair to say that the impact of intrusions in the district has been minimal. (See intrusion photos 45-52.)

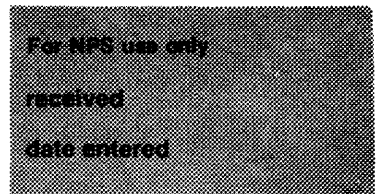
Assessment of Integrity

Buildings in the survey were rated according to the period they presently portray and not the date they were built. Hence badly altered older structures were counted as intrusions. Essentially Bywater's contributing elements have

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Continuation sheet Bywater Historic District

Item number 7

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New Orleans, LA

Description (cont'd)

undergone four basic types of alterations since the district's historic period. These include residing (usually in asbestos), replacement of windows and/or doors on the principal elevation, replacement of gallery columns, and the installation of aluminum awnings. No precise figures exist, but it is thought that these alterations have occurred in less than 20% of the district's buildings. Again, it is important to note that the style and architectural importance of each building had to be easily discernible or it was rated as an intrusion. Hence, overall the district's architectural character remains intact. (See photos 53-58 for altered contributing elements.)

NB: FOR THE RECORD, THIS SUBMISSION ALSO INCLUDES A BOUNDARY MAP, A STYLE/PERIOD COLOR CODED MAP, A BUILDING TYPE COLOR CODED MAP, A SET OF GENERAL VIEW PHOTOGRAPHS, A SET OF PHOTOS REFERENCED IN THE TEXT, AND A USGS MAP.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1807-1935 **Builder/Architect** N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Criterion C

The Bywater Historic District is architecturally significant on the state level as well as in the Gulf Coast region as a whole. It has an unusually fine collection of shotguns, a noted regional house type. Moreover, it is a superior concentration of 50+ year old structures within the context of Louisiana.

Bywater is significant in the Gulf Coast area because of the preponderance of shotgun houses among its collection of building types. The district is 64% shotgun houses, which qualifies it as one of the more concentrated collections in the region. The 64% figure comes from adding ordinary shotgun houses (61%) and camelback houses (3%).

But beyond this, Bywater's shotgun houses are distinguished from most other regional collections by their age and quality. The vast majority of shotgun houses in the Gulf Coast region date from the twentieth century and feature bungalow details, if they are styled at all. Bywater is one of very few areas which have a significant component of pre-bungalow era shotgun houses -- i.e., Greek Revival, Eastlake, and/or Italianate. Approximately 45% of Bywater's shotgun houses fall into this early period. Secondly, the shotgun house is normally thought of as a working class house type. Hence most collections of shotgun houses in the Gulf region are very plain. New Orleans is about the only place where shotgun houses are associated with the middle and even upper middle classes. This is particularly true of Bywater, a lower middle-middle class area. Most (about 70%) of the district's shotgun houses feature some sort of recognizable architectural style and many (at least a third) are fairly elaborately styled. This is in sharp contrast to most other collections across the Deep South.

The importance of Bywater on the state level as a collection of historic structures can be seen if one compares it with other older communities in Louisiana. Sixty-eight communities were incorporated in the state prior to 1880. Another twenty-four were incorporated between 1880 and 1900. Add to these the dozen or so older neighborhoods of New Orleans and one has close to one hundred townscapes which were well established by the end of the nineteenth century. In addition, ninety-three communities were incorporated in Louisiana between 1900 and World War I. These older communities represent the bulk of Louisiana's patrimony.

Bywater is conspicuous among this group because very few of these communities feature pre-Queen Anne Revival structures (i.e., Italianate, Greek Revival, etc.) as part of the overall building mix. By contrast, Bywater contains a significant mix of Italianate or earlier structures (43%). Hence the district has a richer and more varied mixture of older structures than comparable communities across the state.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Koch and Wilson. A Survey of Community Development Neighborhoods to Identify Potential National Register Districts and Individual National Register Properties, Prepared for Historic District Landmarks Commission, City of New Orleans, August 1978-December 1979.

Toledano, Roulhac, Evans, Sally Kittredge, and Christovich, Mary Louise. New Orleans Architecture The Creole Faubourgs. Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 1974.

10. Geographical Data

Survey of Bywater by Louisiana National Register Staff, September 1985.

Acreeage of nominated property @290 acres

Quadrangle name New Orleans East, LA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

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7	8	5	1	8	0
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3	3	1	9	5	4	0
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7	8	6	9	4	0
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3	3	1	9	1	0	0
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C

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7	8	6	5	6	0
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3	3	1	7	7	2	0
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7	8	4	7	4	0
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3	3	1	8	0	4	8
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Verbal boundary description and justification

See boundary map and Item 10 continuation sheet.

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

state	code	county	code
state		code	county

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff ASSISTED BY BYWATER
Division of Historic Preservation NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

organization State of Louisiana date July-August 1985

street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone 504-922-0358

city or town Baton Rouge state LA 70804

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Robert B. DeBlieux*

Robert B. DeBlieux

title State Historic Preservation Officer date December 17, 1985

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the National Register date 1-23-86

f. Allman Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
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New Orleans, LA

Boundary Justification:

Boundaries were drawn to encompass the mix of building types and styles described in Item 7. In most cases the boundaries are fairly obvious. The western boundary more or less abuts the Faubourg Marigny Historic District (N.R.). Here and there it retreats back from the Marigny district line in order to exclude vacant land or modern buildings. The southern boundary follows the Mississippi River levee. We feel it is important to recognize the presence of the river because without it, the plantations that became the district would never have developed. The district abuts the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal to the east (see USGS map). The boundary line cuts inward at the southeastern corner to exclude a modern military facility and a modern lock facility (see USGS map).

The boundary line above St. Claude (the northern boundary) was the most difficult to determine because there is no abrupt end to the district's character; it simply "peters out." Each streetscape was surveyed and where there was no longer a significant admixture of Italianate, Greek Revival, or Eastlake buildings, there the district was cut. These styles give the district its mixed nineteenth and twentieth century character, which is the source of its significance. Beyond the northern boundary the neighborhood has a pedestrian, purely twentieth century character.