

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

Sister Stanislaus Memorial Building, New Orleans, Orleans Parish, LA

Page 1

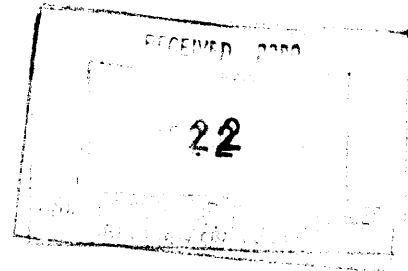
United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Sister Stanislaus Memorial Building

Other Name/Site Number: Charity Hospital School of Nursing



2. LOCATION

Street & Number 450 South Claiborne Ave.

Not for publication: NA

City/Town New Orleans

Vicinity: NA

State: Louisiana Code: LA County: Orleans Code: 071

Zip Code: 70112

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.

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

Nationally: Statewide: X Locally:

Jonathan Fricker

Signature of Certifying Official/Title Jonathan Fricker Deputy SHPO, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

10/21/03

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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

Signature of Commenting or Other Official/Title

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

Sister Stanislaus Memorial Building, New Orleans, Orleans Parish, LA

Page 2

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
Determined eligible for the National Register
Determined not eligible for the National Register
Removed from the National Register

Other (explain):

Edson F. Beall
Signature of Keeper

12/5/03
Date of Action

5. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

- Private:
Public-Local:
Public-State: X
Public-Federal:

Category of Property

- Building(s): X
District:
Site:
Structure:
Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

- 1
sites
structures
objects
1

Non contributing

- buildings
sites
structures
objects
0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: NA

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

Sister Stanislaus Memorial Building, New Orleans, Orleans Parish, LA

Page 3

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: domestic Sub: institutional housing
Current: work in progress Sub:

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Art Deco

Materials:

Foundation: concrete
Walls: brick
Roof: other: tar and gravel
Other: limestone

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

Sister Stanislaus Memorial Building, New Orleans, Orleans Parish, LA

Page 4

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The ten-to-sixteen story, Art Deco Sister Stanislaus Memorial Building was built in 1938 for the Charity Hospital School of Nursing. The Charity Hospital campus is located on the western edge of the New Orleans Central Business District. The façade of the steel frame, masonry Sister Stanislaus Building is quite close to an elevated freeway. (There is but a two-lane street between the two.) The most notable exterior alteration is the defacement of one side elevation with the construction of an unsympathetic addition which reads as a separate building (see below). It no longer communicates with the candidate on the interior (see below) and is being excluded from the nominated acreage.

The Sister Stanislaus Building is constructed on a steel frame, with brick curtain walls, metal panels and limestone accents. The building is given a uniform (sculpted white mass) appearance through the extensive use of paint. The brick walls are, and always have been, painted to resemble limestone.

The building has a T-shaped footprint, with a broad frontal mass and a rear wing. Its floorplan is that of double loaded corridors with scores of small dorm rooms. (The dorm room configuration is currently being changed.) Functionally, the T shape and double loaded corridors reflect a large institutional building constructed before air-conditioning when all interior spaces were given access to outside light and air through operable windows – in this case, brushed aluminum casement windows.

The Sister Stanislaus Memorial is designed in the fashion of a New York style skyscraper. As such, it makes extensive use of cutaway masses and strong vertical articulation. While the front main block is quite broad, the architects achieved verticality via a central tower (in and of itself a New York skyscraper) and a repetitive pattern of piers and shafts. The boldly formed, quite sculptural tower, thrusts forward and above the main building block. The main building block ascends to a height of ten stories. Then the central tower, about a fourth of the façade width, ascends a further six stories in four receding stages. This dramatic effect is achieved at the expense of six stories of extra construction, high in the air, for a minimal amount of usual floor space.

Strongly articulated super-imposed piers ascend the façade of the tower to provide a dramatic upward thrust. These are continued by three similar pier combinations on the recessed portion of the tower that makes the final ascent. Further visual energy is derived from a twelve story shaft of three-sided, forty-five degree cut, bay windows set on either side of the tower. These form a visual transition from the tower to the main building mass. They are also the only window units on the building not set off by piers. Finally, they form a contrasting horizontal element. (A similar bay treatment is found at the rear, but with windows only on the upper two stories.)

Strong vertical lines are given to the main building mass (including the rear wing) by a repetitive system of wide piers and thin shafts that set off the many narrow windows. On the large front part of the building's T shape, the piers and shafts thrust skyward from a one story base.

At the base of the central tower is the main entrance set in a forward projecting, three-bay, two story pavilion. The otherwise severe, squared off pavilion culminates on each bay in a stylized cascading design (almost as if a waterfall were frozen in place). These designs break through the parapet wall and register as fluted recesses below, as they continue through a window and end at a door on each bay.

The building retains one of its strongly Art Deco side entrances. Here a rounded pavilion projects

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

Sister Stanislaus Memorial Building, New Orleans, Orleans Parish, LA

Page 5

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

forward and above the building's one story base. At the center of the composition is a projecting section with strong vertical lines. It contains the door and a window above. The top is a flowing stylized keystone that registers as a fluted recess below (at the top of the door).

The Sister Stanislaus Building, slated for demolition several years ago by a different user agency, is now undergoing a multiple phase renovation to serve as student housing for the LSU Health Sciences Center. Work is in progress on the upper dorm room floors, which will have a completely modern character. (The halls remain, but the rooms have been reconfigured.) Surviving notable features on the ground story lobby include rounded piers with brushed aluminum bands defining some doorways, a decorative tile pattern on the walls, and terrazzo floors with a geometric pattern. As part of the in-progress renovation, the building's countless casement windows have been sealed on the interior and the opening mechanisms removed.

The most notable exterior alteration is the previously referenced unsympathetic side addition. It is physically attached to the candidate only at the ground level and via a connecting hallway at an upper level (see photo 6). Now under the jurisdiction of a separate state entity (Delgado Community College), it no longer communicates with the candidate on the interior. Because of the foregoing party wall condition, it will be excluded from the nominated area. When Delgado constructed the addition, a flat-roofed canopy was added at ground level to the adjacent section of the Sister Stanislaus Building. This will be removed. Regrettably, the side addition meant the loss of a side pavilion identical to the one that remains.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

Sister Stanislaus Memorial Building, New Orleans, Orleans Parish, LA

Page 6

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Applicable National Register Criteria: A__ B__ C X D__

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): NA A__ B__ C__ D__ E__ F__ G__

Areas of Significance: architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1938

Significant Dates: 1938

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: Architects: Weiss, Dreyfous and Seiferth

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

Sister Stanislaus Memorial Building, New Orleans, Orleans Parish, LA

Page 7

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The Sister Stanislaus Memorial Building is of statewide architectural significance as one of Louisiana's very finest expressions of the Modernistic taste (Art Deco)– some would say its finest because it is so close to the New York skyscraper ideal. Authorship goes to Weiss, Dreyfous and Seiferth, a prolific New Orleans architectural firm known in particular for their many projects for the Huey P. Long administration – most notably, the State Capitol, also an Art Deco skyscraper (see below).

A broad and general term for a genre of architecture and decorative arts in the 1920s and '30s, Modernistic represents an idea of beauty fairly easy to recognize but difficult to define. It was universal in that it embraced everything from cigarette lighters to very large buildings. Perhaps it can be summarized as the use of repeating geometry to achieve a dynamic (modern) effect. Broadly known as Art Deco today, it provided an alternative to historic revival styles. But it also provided the traditional architect a style that enabled him to be “modern” without sacrificing the symmetry, placement of ornament, and massing-based-upon-masonry tradition he was accustomed to.

A signature of the genre, dramatic massing, found perhaps its highest and best expression with the emergence of the New York style skyscraper. It was a look much admired, one richly conveyed in the visionary renderings of Hugh Ferriss. Here monumental buildings looked as though they had been sculpted from a single block to produce a dramatic cutaway mass bathed in light.

In contrast to the world of New York and Hugh Ferriss, Louisiana was architecturally conservative in the late 1920s and '30s. With some notable exceptions such as Huey Long's State Capitol, the state is not a mecca for Art Deco enthusiasts. In compiling a list of major examples for a nationwide Art Deco inventory, the staff of the State Historic Preservation Office found about 40. A major example is in contrast to innumerable buildings across the state that could be described as “hesitantly Art Deco” – i.e., an Art Deco touch here and there (mainly ornamentation).

With but few exceptions, Louisiana's major examples are public buildings whose erection was made possible by federal relief funds. For instance, eleven of the state's sixty-four parish courthouses were constructed at this time in the Art Deco style. Other examples include schools, hospitals, municipal auditoriums, etc. There are very few major commercial examples.

Of the roughly forty major examples, Sister Stanislaus ranks among the very finest due to its scale, complexity, and the dynamism of its massing. It is one of only five skyscrapers in the style, and obviously a skyscraper presents more possibilities for operatic massing than does a low, two or three story school or courthouse. Of the five skyscrapers, Sister Stanislaus has the most complex and dramatic massing, with more receding stages and more vigorous juxtaposition of forms. This is no functional architectural box styled with surface ornamentation. Instead, it is a dramatic sculptural statement. The massing is quieter, the sculptural effect less pronounced, on the other four skyscrapers (Louisiana State Capitol, Baton Rouge; Commercial National Bank, Shreveport; National American Bank Building, New Orleans; and Francis Hotel, Monroe). The State Capitol in particular relies more heavily upon bas relief and figure sculpture. Indeed, it is fair to say that of all the Modernistic buildings in Louisiana, Sister Stanislaus comes closest to the ideal – Hugh Ferriss' vision of a monumental cutaway mass bathed in ethereal light.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

Sister Stanislaus Memorial Building, New Orleans, Orleans Parish, LA

Page 8

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Historical Note:

The candidate was built in 1938 to house the Charity Hospital School of Nursing. It was, and is, one of several Charity buildings from the late 1930s funded through the New Deal's Public Works Administration, including the main hospital building. (The entire complex is not being nominated at this time because the other buildings are under separate state agency jurisdiction. There is also new construction in the complex – for example, to the rear of Sister Stanislaus.)

In 1950, the candidate was renamed in honor of Sister Stanislaus, who died the previous year. She had been head of the School of Nursing for some time and was widely regarded for her commitment to medical care for the poor.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

Sister Stanislaus Memorial Building, New Orleans, Orleans Parish, LA

Page 9

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Scully, Arthur. Draft National Register nomination. Copy in National Register file, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.

Louisiana SHPO staff knowledge of Art Deco architecture in the state.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register. (partially)
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other (Specify Repository):

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreege of Property: approx. 1 acre

UTM References: **Zone Easting Northing**
 15 781780 3317200

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundary is shown as a broken line on the attached sketch map. As shown, the southern boundary is a party wall.

Boundary Justification: Boundaries were chosen to encompass the nominated resource, while at the same time excluding new construction in the area. (As noted elsewhere, Sister Stanislaus is one building in a large complex of buildings owned by the State of Louisiana.)

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

Sister Stanislaus Memorial Building, New Orleans, Orleans Parish, LA

Page 10

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: National Register staff

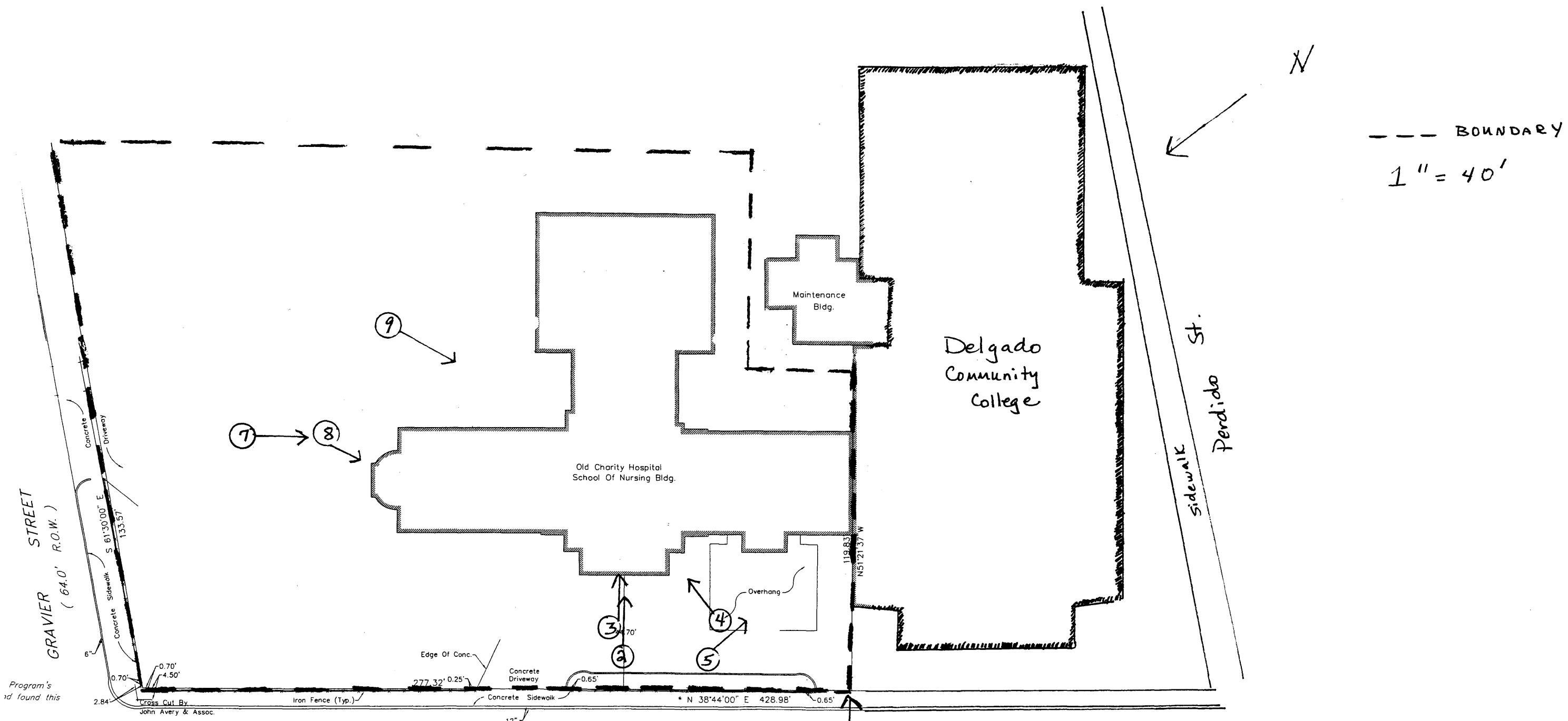
Address: Division of Historic Preservation, P. O. Box 44247, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Telephone: (225) 342-8160

Date: July 2003

PROPERTY OWNERS

Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center
Office of the Vice Chancellor
433 Bolivar Street, Room 803
New Orleans, LA 70112



Sister Stanislaus Memorial Bldg.
 (Charity Hospital School of Nursing)

Orleans Parish, LA