

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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 Ruston High School

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 900 Bearcat Drive N/A not for publication

city or town Ruston N/A vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Lincoln code 061 zip code 71270

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.)

Jonathan Fricker September 2, 1992
Signature of certifying official/Title Jonathan Fricker, Date
Deputy SHPO, Dept of Culture, Recreation and 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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Sheloree Zylstra **Entered in the National Register** Date of Action 10/8/92

Ruston High School
Name of Property

Lincoln Parish, LA
County and State

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	
2	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	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)

Art Deco

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls brick

roof tar

other limestone

Narrative Description

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

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Ruston High School, Lincoln Parish, LA
Section number 7 Page 1

The Ruston High School (1939) is a large, sprawling beige brick and limestone building in the Art Deco style. The building appears from the front to be two stories; however, the ground slopes to the rear to expose a basement story. The high school's park-like setting in a hilly section of town is marred by front parking areas. Because of the undulating terrain, there are impressive views of the building from nearby neighborhoods. Despite various additions, the Ruston High School retains its Register eligibility as a major example of the Art Deco style within Louisiana.

As originally built, the high school had a very unusual shape. Please refer to enclosed sketch map. It was essentially an L-shaped building with an auditorium wing protruding from the front corner and a gym wing extending from the rear corner. Its footprint was basically an elongated W. Surprisingly, the grand five-part articulation one sees today is part of a 1968 building program wherein the original auditorium wing was complemented by a library wing and recessed behind it, a new gym. The original brick was duplicated, and the Art Deco style was used.

The building's centerpiece is a dramatic, boldly vertical, faceted tower rising a story above the main roofline. The limestone tower is framed by brick piers jutting above the main roofline to produce a setback effect. Superimposed pilaster strips framing the central doorway extend the full height of the tower. Located between them, at the third floor level, are vertical strips accented with prominent chevrons. The chevrons and the superimposed pilaster strips framing them extend above the parapet level. This treatment is present on all elevations. Around the top of the tower is a slightly recessed fluted parapet above a band of stylized chevron swags. Chevron swags also accent the second floor windows. Bas relief figure sculpture panels are located between the windows and doors. Depicted are young men and women in various school related activities.

Pilaster strips extending above the parapet separate and define the classroom windows on either side of the entrance tower. (They are also on the rear elevation.) Their repetitive pattern adds greatly to the visual energy of the building. Thrusting into the air to the right of the tower is what looks like a thin chimney, but is actually a decorative element. It is ornamented with a single chevron strip on each elevation.

The original front auditorium wing is also intensively articulated. A system of piers, superimposed pilaster strips and chevron strips like those on the tower define the three part entrance. Stylized chevron swags are also used. The windows on the side elevation facing the tower are accented with vertical reeded brick panels above and a limestone panel with geometric shapes below.

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Ruston High School, Lincoln Parish, LA

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The original gymnasium wing, located at the rear corner, is reached via a monumental flight of stairs. Its lobby, which is articulated as a separate mass, has a three part entrance similar to that of the auditorium wing. The gym's windows are defined by superimposed pilaster strips, also extending above the roofline.

The Ruston High School has several noteworthy interior spaces. The lobby has numerous corbelled arches and quite striking Art Deco chandeliers. The building also retains its original Art Deco light fixtures in the auditorium, auditorium lobby, and gym lobby. Floors are of terrazzo, with the main lobby, auditorium lobby, and gym lobby featuring an elaborate geometric pattern. The auditorium proscenium is formed of superimposed geometric shapes. The only non-Art Deco major space is the original library, which is paneled in wood and has a pointed arch fireplace.

As mentioned previously, the Ruston High School received a major frontal addition in 1968. In effect, a complementary wing was provided for the original auditorium wing. The wing is so convincingly done that even a trained observer would think it original upon first sight. The brick is identical in color, and the entrance is articulated in a manner almost identical to the rest of the building, including the familiar piers, superimposed pilaster strips and chevron strips rising above the roofline. There are even bas relief figure sculpture panels like those found on the tower. A noticeable difference that causes the observer to be suspicious is the lack of ornamentation on the side of the wing facing inward. While the flanking original auditorium wing is ornamented with vertical reeded brick panels and geometric shapes, the corresponding part of the 1968 wing is plain.

Set slightly back from the forward projecting section of the 1968 wing is a gym with its entrance located on the side. Its entrance pavilion also has Art Deco decorative elements similar to those found elsewhere on the building, although it is much blander.

The building has received two other additions. In the 1950s a large two story addition was made at the southwestern rear corner. The brick is lighter, and the wing is obviously modern. In 1988, a large two story wing was added to the rear of the building abutting the original gym wing. This wing connects to the rear of a two story brick home economics house built at the same time as the high school. Because the home economics house was originally free-standing and connected later, it is being counted as a separate entity, per the instructions in Bulletin 16. The home economics house is not Art Deco, but instead partakes vaguely of the French Revival style. It is being counted as a contributing element because it is contemporaneous with the high school and obviously historically related to it.

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Ruston High School, Lincoln Parish, LA
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Interior changes include celotex ceilings in the classrooms and dropped celotex ceilings in the hallways.

Assessment of Integrity:

Despite the various additions the Ruston High School has received, it remains an outstanding example of the Art Deco style within Louisiana. The 1968 addition does not pose a problem because it complements the original design. Fortunately, the intrusive additions have not seriously impacted the main elevation. The 1950s wing is set well back from the auditorium and is mainly noticeable from the rear, and the 1988 wing is completely to the rear.

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

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

N/A

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

architecture

Period of Significance

1939

Significant Dates

1939

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Architect: J. W. Smith & Associates, Monroe

Contractor: Caldwell Brothers & Hart

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Ruston High School
Name of Property

Lincoln Parish, LA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property @ 7 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	5	5	3	2	9	2	0	3	5	9	9	6	0	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

3

Zone		Easting						Northing						

4

Zone		Easting						Northing						

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Please refer to sketch map.

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 June 1992

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

city or town Baton Rouge state LA 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 Lincoln Parish Schools

street & number 410 S. Farmerville Street telephone (318) 255-1430

city or town Ruston state LA zip code 71270

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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Ruston High School, Ruston, Lincoln Parish, LA

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The Ruston High School is of state significance in the area of architecture as one of the most convincingly and intensively styled Art Deco buildings in Louisiana.

Louisiana for the most part was architecturally conservative in the late 1920s and '30s. With some notable exceptions such as Huey Long's State Capitol, the state is not considered 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 that there were about 40 in Louisiana. A major example is in contrast to innumerable buildings across the state that could be best 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 example, eleven of Louisiana'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 Louisiana's roughly 40 major Art Deco buildings, the Ruston High School is ranked among the very best by the State Historic Preservation Office. In our opinion, its architectural quality is equalled or surpassed by only six other buildings (the Port Allen High School, the Francis Hotel in Monroe, Neville High School in Monroe, the Shreveport Municipal Auditorium, the National American Bank Building in New Orleans, and the Louisiana State Capitol in Baton Rouge). These buildings are the state's most convincingly and intensively styled Art Deco buildings, largely because the two hallmarks of the style are present -- dramatic massing and extensive, stylized (usually geometric) ornamentation.

The Ruston High School is quite a textbook example of the style. The architect emphasized verticality throughout his design, culminating in a bold central tower. To those who note that Art Deco was first and foremost a style of decoration, the Ruston High School supplies an abundance of stylized geometric shapes on both the exterior and interior. Its period light fixtures are among some of the most interesting in the state. The Ruston High School is, quite simply, among the most Art Deco of Louisiana's Art Deco buildings.

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Ruston High School, Ruston, Lincoln Parish, LA

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Plaque bearing date of construction, architect, etc., located in lobby.

Photo of school before any additions were made.

Division of Historic Preservation staff knowledge of Louisiana's Art Deco architecture.

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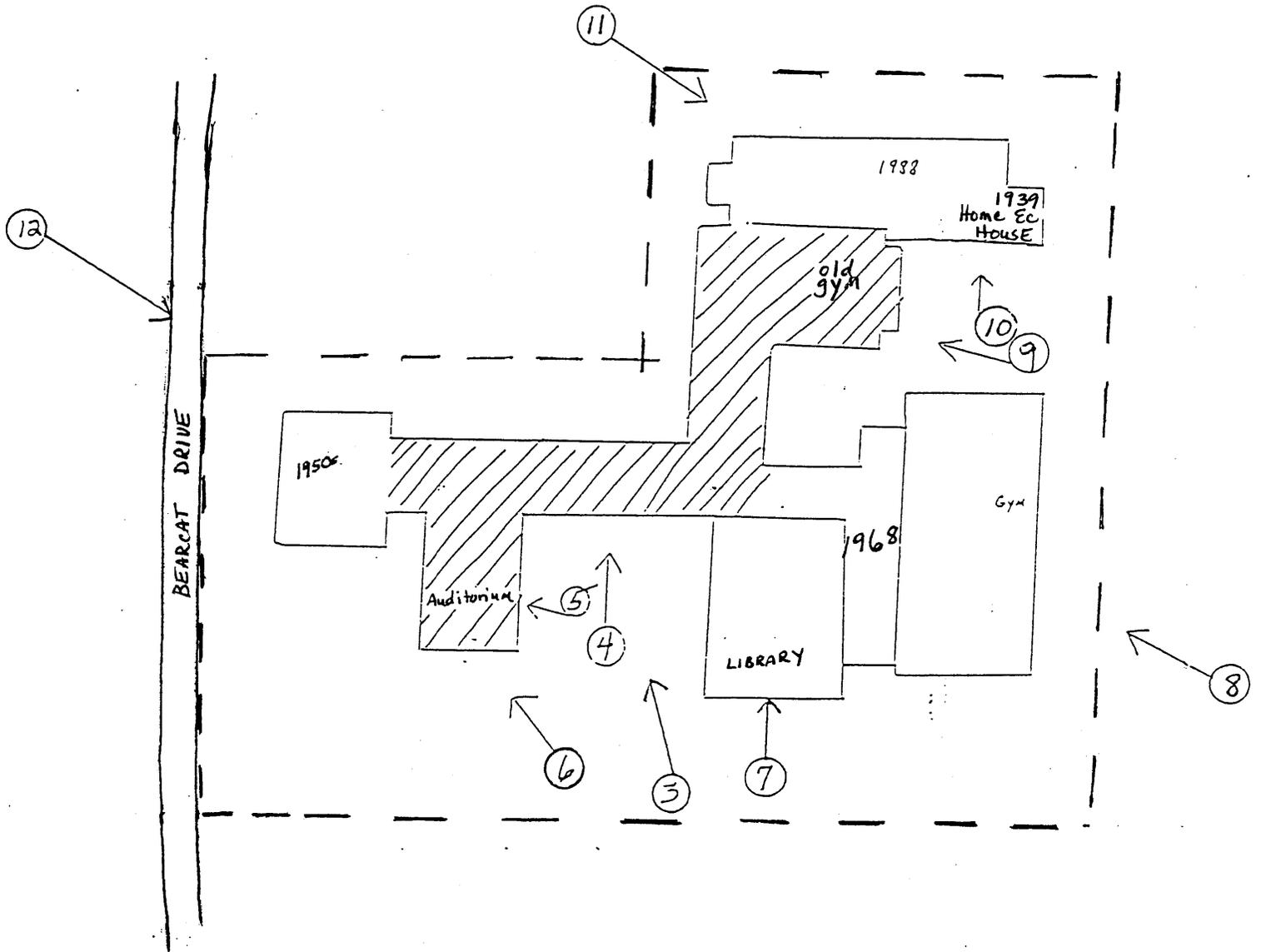
Ruston High School, Lincoln Parish, LA
Section number 10 Page 1

Boundary Justification

Boundaries were chosen to encompass the significant resource. They do not follow property lines because of the presence of non-contributing elements on the school property. The boundary line is irregular at the rear because of an adjacent non-contributing element.

Ruston High School

Lincoln Parish, LA



 ORIGINAL HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING

N 

1" = 125'

--- BOUNDARY