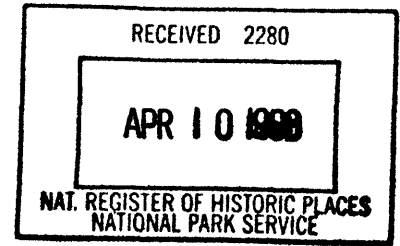


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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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 any 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 Calkins-Orvis House

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 210 West Nichols NA not for publication

city or town Welsh NA vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Jefferson Davis code 053 zip code 70591

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_ statewide X locally. (\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Gerry Hobdy*

3/31/98

Signature of certifying official/Title Gerry Hobdy, LA SHPO, Date  
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 for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this 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 Keeper

Date of Action

*Boe*  
Edson H. Boell 5.8.98

**Calkins-Orvis House**  
Name of property

**Jefferson Davis Parish, LA**  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

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

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

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.)  
  
NA

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**  
  
0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Domestic  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sub. Single Dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Domestic  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sub. Single dwelling/hotel  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick  
walls weatherboard  
roof asphalt  
other shingles

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

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CONTINUATION SHEET**Section   7   Page   1  

The Calkins-Orvis House (1901) is a one-and-a-half story frame residence located on a corner lot in an old residential neighborhood of the small community of Welsh. Despite its symmetrical articulation, the house is squarely in the Queen Anne Revival tradition. Alterations have been relatively minimal, and most that have occurred date from the 1920s.

The Calkins-Orvis House is not typical of turn-of-the-century Louisiana, a difference which undoubtedly can be explained by the fact that its original owner was from Minnesota. It is articulated as a steeply pitched gable end block with an enormous dormer front and rear. Each dormer features a band of windows under a vertical gable whose shape is accentuated with gable end returns and a band of rectangular-shaped shingles. The face of the gable (above the windows) has particularly three-dimensional shinglework formed by two patterns. Spreading below the front dormer is a porch which extends around each side of the house by two or three feet. The boxed porch posts are very simple, featuring a slight chamfer as their only decoration. There are two entrances on the facade -- one leading to a stair hall, the other to the living room. A large three-part window lights the living room.

The side elevations feature a very distinctive and unusual treatment in their steeply pitched gables. Each gable's shape is emphasized by a section of shingled surface that extends beyond the main wall plane. The sloping sections and the bottom of the gable peak feature a rectangular shingle pattern while the peak has scalloped and pointed shingles. Each side elevation also has a one story polygonal bay, one at the rear and one at the front. Finally, there is a small one story service wing at the rear.

The house has a more interesting floorplan than its squarish footprint would suggest (see attached). This is partially due to the previously mentioned side polygonal bays -- one at the end of a large front living room, the other in a back bedroom. A diagonally placed corridor with various turns in it cuts across from the entrance/stair hall to the rear dining room. This severs the living room from the rear bedroom (on the other side of the hall) at a 45 degree angle. Overall, the living room has a total of nine different wall planes and the bedroom has eight (if the bays are included).

A two-flight staircase with turned balusters ascends to a capacious attic with a small hall from which three bedrooms fan off wedge fashion. This too makes for a polygonal character; indeed, all of the attic bedrooms have between five and six sides.

The house's single fireplace is set in the living room and features a golden oak mantel with a mirrored overmantel. The composition is set within Ionic columns featuring egg and dart molding in their capitals. The mantel is also embellished with a dentil band and bead and reel molding and has a cast-iron insert ornamented with classical motifs. The focus of the dining room is a built-in oak china cabinet with glass doors featuring prism-like angle cuts. The house's door and window frames are of oak and are of a simple design. Varnished oak doors have five horizontal panels.

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Virtually all alterations since construction occurred in the 1920s after the Orvis family purchased the house. (They purchased it in 1920 and lived there until sometime in the 1960s.) Because the alterations were made not that long after the house was built and are well crafted, they would not have been recognized without the recollections of a family member. They include:

(1) Adjustment of the upper level windows: The band of windows in the front and rear dormers was increased from three to five windows, and new multi-pane casement windows were inserted. Also, the eastern side elevation at the attic level originally had two windows (per an old photo). This was changed to a band of five casement windows matching those on the dormers. Finally, a window was added to the western elevation to provide further light for the stairhall.

(2) Two sets of pocket doors were sealed into the walls with an oak facing to cover their location, and the openings were fitted with glass multi-pane oak doors.

(3) The opening between the living room and the porch received French doors.

(4) Openings fitted with double doors were cut in the angled walls of the upstairs bedrooms.

Alterations of a more recent vintage include the sandblasting of the weatherboards and the conversion of a butler's pantry to a bathroom, although the beaded board built-in cabinets were retained. There is also an appendage to the rear service wing of unknown origin. One wonders if it is a former dependency connected to the house and reworked.

Assessment of Integrity:

As noted above, the 1920s alterations were very cleverly done and do not detract from the house's appearance. Most importantly, the house retains all of those features which define its very distinctive character.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "X" next to 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" next to all that apply.)      NA

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a 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**

1901  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1901  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

NA

- 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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The Calkins-Orvis House is of local architectural significance as a landmark in the turn-of-the-century residential heritage of Welsh. This status is based upon its unusual massing (most notably the distinctive treatment of its side gables) and its profusion of intricate shinglework.

Like much of southwestern Louisiana, Jeff Davis Parish, where Welsh is located, was not settled until the late-nineteenth century. And its early residents were largely from the Midwest. The parish traces its origin to the building of the Southern Pacific Railroad across the region in the early 1880s. This transportation artery as well as a considerable influx of Midwesterners with progressive farming techniques made possible a major rice boom in the late-nineteenth century. Towns sprang up along the railroad in the 1880s, with Welsh being platted in 1884. Almost all of its early settlers were from northern and midwestern states, lured there undoubtedly by the immigration arm of the Southern Pacific and by relatives already in the area. The small town in the heart of the rice belt was incorporated in 1888, receiving its name from Henry Welsh, the community's first mayor and recognized founder. The greatest period of growth occurred between 1900 and 1910, when the population almost quadrupled (320 to 1250).

Although a small town, Welsh historically would have had a respectable number of turn-of-the-century homes, given the foregoing developmental history. And given the fact that areas of northern or midwestern settlement in Louisiana typically had some of the state's most interesting Victorian-era residences, one suspects that Welsh once must have had various landmark homes, or certainly more than it retains today. A windshield survey of the town made it abundantly clear that there are two, possibly three landmark residences -- the Calkins-Orvis House, a two story symmetrical house with a double gallery in the Eastlake taste, and a boxey two story house which is unornamented except for two small but distinctive bays in the Italianate taste. There is also an elaborately massed Queen Anne house across the street from the Calkins-Orvis House, but according to locals, it is the top story of what was a two story house. Other than the foregoing, Welsh's residences are largely unadorned two story boxey houses or low-key cottages or bungalows.

As explained in Part 7, the Calkins-Orvis House is very distinctive and is clearly Queen Anne in spirit. Although symmetrical, its massing is quite elaborate, featuring steeply pitched side gables and huge cross gable dormers. Pronounced side bays add irregularity at the ground level. Perhaps more importantly, the house exemplifies the Queen Anne style's avowed aversion to a flat or "boring" wall surface. For example, instead of the more typical gable with shinglework, great visual interest is provided by a large shingled area on each side elevation which juts beyond the main wall plane and follows the shape of the gable. Three types of shingle patterns are used. The large front and rear dormers display a particularly rich, textured treatment, with three patterns of shingles, one of which is used to outline the shape of the gable. All in all, the house's shingled areas are quite pronounced and collectively exhibit five different shingle patterns. Clearly, flat or "boring" walls have been avoided at considerable extra trouble. In so doing, the builder created what is definitely a landmark within Welsh.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Historical Note:

The house's name recognizes the Fred Calkins family, the original owners, and the Orvis family, who purchased it in 1920 and lived there for decades.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1910 photo of house, copy in Register file.

Typescript recollections of LeRoy Orvis, whose parents bought the house in 1920. Copy in Register file.

Windshield survey of Welsh conducted by National Register staff and extensive staff knowledge of the region's history and its patrimony.

*Jefferson Davis Parish Resources and Facilities.* Jefferson Parish Planning Board, 1947.

Boundary Description:

Lots 3 and 4 and the west 5 feet of Lot 2, Block 42, Town of Welsh, bearing the municipal address of 210 West Nichols.

Justification: Boundaries follow property lines.

Calkins-Orvis House  
Name of property

Jefferson Davis Parish, LA  
County and State

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### 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property**      less than an acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing

1    15    517020    3344640

3    \_\_\_\_\_

2    \_\_\_\_\_

4    \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ 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.)

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title    National Register Staff

organization    Division of Historic Preservation      date    March 1998

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

city or town    Baton Rouge      state    LA      zip code    70804

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### Additional Documentation

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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)

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### Property Owner

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

name    Barbara Watkins

street & number    210 West Nichols      telephone    (318) 734-3100

city or town    Welsh      state    LA      zip code    70591

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**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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



Calkins-Orvis House, Welsh, Jefferson Davis Parish, Louisiana

Floorplan -- First Floor

