

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received JUL 2 1986  
date entered

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

1. Name

historic

and/or common Holy Cross Historic District

2. Location

street & number roughly bounded by the Mississippi River, Delery Street,  
Burgundy Street and the Industrial Canal N/A not for publication

city, town New Orleans N/A vicinity of

state LA code 22 county Orleans Parish code 071

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	chiefly residential
<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 type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	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 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

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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 Holy Cross Historic District represents the final stanza in the eastward expansion of the old City of New Orleans to the St. Bernard Parish line. The district consists of about 60 blocks with a mainly residential character. Opinions differ as to when the area began to develop as a suburb, but most agree that the process was underway by the mid-nineteenth century. With a few exceptions, the present historic building stock represents the period c.1880 to 1936. Since that time Holy Cross has not suffered an unacceptable loss of integrity.

### Geographical Setting

In the early nineteenth century the area of Holy Cross was characterized by long narrow plantation parcels. The Maurice Harrison map of 1845 still shows this agricultural land use, but things were beginning to change. In a familiar New Orleans pattern, adjacent low-lying plantation land was given a street grid and gradually engulfed by development. The year 1850 was chosen as the beginning of the historic period because that is when development apparently began in earnest. In addition, the district's oldest buildings date from that period. (No plantation associated buildings remain.)

Holy Cross 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 urban character. Although the area grew to resemble the urban character found in other New Orleans neighborhoods, there are two fundamental differences. The lots are somewhat larger and the blocks are somewhat less filled in. Moreover, until the 1940's parts of the neighborhood were given over to truck farming on vacant lots. In some ways the district is a village on the edge of a large city. This separateness was enhanced in 1912 when a wide industrial canal was built between Holy Cross and the rest of New Orleans.

The district takes its name from Holy Cross High School. In 1859 the Brothers of the Holy Cross took over the Reynes plantation and established a boys' boarding school, which thrives to this day, although the present main building dates from 1895. The Holy Cross school grounds give one a sense of the extent and configuration of the plantations which once characterized the area, although, as previously mentioned, no actual plantation buildings survive.

### Surveys

Holy Cross 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 the summer of 1985 the New Orleans Office of Housing and Community Development funded a re-survey using urban planning students at the University of New Orleans. This second survey updated the earlier material and produced a preliminary National Register application. In February of 1986 the City of New Orleans officially approached the State Historic Preservation Office and asked that Holy Cross be considered for the Register. Following this, the National Register staff made a thorough check of the proposed district, refining the boundaries and checking and correcting the University of New Orleans survey on a building-by-building basis.

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Continuation sheet Holy Cross Historic District Orleans Parish, LA Item number 7 Page 1

7. Description (cont'd)

The University of New Orleans-State Historic Preservation Office survey rated each structure according to a system of seven building type categories and seven period/style categories. The survey produced two color coded maps and a count of the various types and styles. It did not produce a written inventory, but this would have been a difficult task given the fact that the district contains over eight hundred buildings. Moreover, Holy Cross is an 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 an urban district has been previously approved by the National Park Service, and, in fact, has already been used successfully for five 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, virtually all intrusions, and a few buildings which defy categorization by type.

1. Creole Cottages (25 or 3% of the building stock)

Strictly speaking, Creole cottages are an early nineteenth century phenomenon, but the form was perpetuated until much later, as one can see from the examples in Holy Cross. 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. Most of the district's cottages are plain, but a few have Italianate details.

2. Shotgun Houses (479 or 57% 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. The survey includes within this category variations such as the double shotgun. 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 Holy Cross 48% of the shotgun houses are singles.

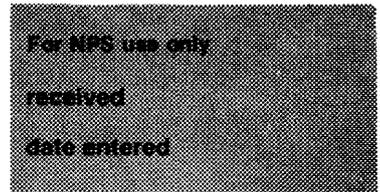
3. Camelback Houses (11 or 1% of the building stock)

The camelback is a single or double shotgun with a two-level portion over the rear rooms. 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.

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

4. Side Hall Plan Houses (35 or 4% 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 Holy Cross confirms its lower-middle to middle class status. Moreover, all of the relatively few side hall houses which do exist in the district are one story.

5. Bungalows (45 or 5% of the building stock)

For purposes of this submission, bungalows are defined as single living units one story high, two room wide, and two or more rooms deep. 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 Holy Cross. Virtually all of the district's bungalows are elevated the normal two, three or four feet above grade.

6. Commercial Buildings (23 or 3% of the building stock)

Although a few of Holy Cross' 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. Virtually all of these domestic-looking buildings are one story. On the whole, commercial buildings are distributed throughout the district. Most, although not all, are set at street corners. This category also includes the few large historic warehouses found in the district.

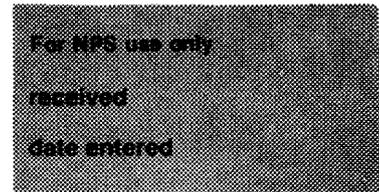
7. The aforementioned "other" category accounts for 239 buildings, or 27% of the building stock.

One would think that if a system of type categories adequately described a historic district, there would be relatively few buildings in the "other" category. This is not true of Holy Cross, but there are extenuating circumstances. Most of Holy Cross' intrusions are small slab-on-grade ranch or apartment houses, which of course do not fit into any historic building type category. Most of the buildings in the district's "other" category are intrusions of this kind. Indeed, the fact that buildings in the "other" category and intrusions are almost the same percentage is a very telling comparison. In our view the system of type categories does adequately describe the district's historic elements. If the intrusions were removed, the "other" category would only encompass about two to three percent of the overall building stock.

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Holy Cross Historic District

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Styles

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

1. The Italianate category includes the early classical-looking Italianate as well as the later florid, heavily bracketed Italianate, although the overwhelming majority are in the latter group. Unlike Italianate houses in much of the rest of the country, virtually all of Holy Cross' Italianate houses are more or less symmetrical. This no doubt reflects the area's architectural conservatism as well as its relatively tight urban pattern of growth.
2. The Gothic Revival and the other Downingsque stick styles are unknown in the district. This is largely true of the rest of New Orleans as well as the state as a whole.
3. 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.
4. The term twentieth century eclectic refers to the general body of revival styles which were fashionable in the early decades of this century. It includes the neo-classical, Colonial, and Mission styles.
5. The "plain or other" category refers to contributing elements which do not fit into the Greek Revival, Italianate, Eastlake, bungalow or twentieth century eclectic style categories being used in this submission. Some are buildings with a strong stylistic statement (for example, the two Doullut Houses and St. Maurice Church described in the landmarks section). The vast majority, however, are genuinely historic buildings that do not have any particular stylistic details. Buildings of this ilk, mainly plain Creole cottages and plain shotguns, are common in most New Orleans historic districts, and are certainly worthy contributing elements in Holy Cross. They are part of the "tout ensemble" which gives the district its distinctive character. Moreover, they represent an important aspect of the district's continuing historical appearance. Despite the somewhat repetitive nature of the building stock, there is some variety. Much of this variety stems from different levels of ornamentation seen in the district. Some contributing buildings are elaborately styled, others are sparingly styled, and some are not styled at all.

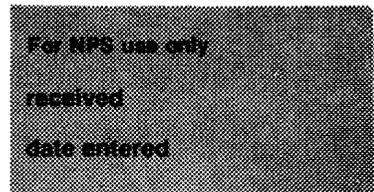
Style/period categories in the district break down as follows:

Greek Revival	5 buildings	1%		
Italianate	225 buildings	26%		
Eastlake	40 buildings	5%	Intrusions	223 buildings 26%
Bungalow	135 buildings	17%		
20th century eclectic	50 buildings	6%		
Plain or other	179 buildings	19%		
TOTAL NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING ELEMENTS	634 buildings	74%		

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7. Description (continued) <sup>Orleans Parish, LA</sup>

Landmarks

Landmarks in the neighborhood tend to be institutional buildings. There are also a few large old warehouses along the Mississippi River. 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.

There are, however, a few exceptions. The following is a list of possibilities:

1. St. Maurice Church, a late nineteenth century stuccoed Romanesque Revival structure. (Photo 8)
2. The main building at Holy Cross High School, a three story brick Italianate structure with decorative cast-iron galleries. (Photos 52-53)
3. The two Doullut Houses. These are by far the most significant houses in the district. The following description is an excerpt from New Orleans Architecture, The Creole Faubourgs:

"In 1905 Captain Paul Doullut, a steamboat captain, had two identical houses built near Egan and Douglas Streets at the Mississippi River not far from the Orleans Parish line. These highly unusual houses have achieved international fame through European publications so that they are better known by architectural historians elsewhere than by Orleanians. The inspiration for the structures was twofold: the Japanese exhibit building at the World's Fair of 1904 in St. Louis and steamboat architectural decoration.

Green tile concave roofs at the second levels and above the pilothouse recall the pavilion at the fair. The use of glazed tile to cover the Ionic columns of the raised basement, and the bricks at the basement level are also from Japanese influence. Steamboat features, however, predominate. The encircling decks or galleries are deep, interior halls narrow, the pilothouses large and open, with a view of the river. Cylindrical metal smokestacks replace masonry chimneys. Round and square porthole-type openings are interspersed among the full-length openings at the main level. Effusive use of tin is another steamboat influence. There is a metal cresting around the roofs, and the decorative gables are covered with pressed tin. The walls and ceilings on the main floor are covered with pressed metal, individual designs in each room. The gallery woodwork is highly evocative of the steamboat era with turned colonnettes and round balls of cypress graduated in size. These are strung as double-garland rows around the gallery. The railing has been replaced by a page fence on one of the houses, and a metal railing without balusters serves the house near the river. At one time turned jigsaw balusters must have been placed there."

(The Doullut Houses are shown in Photos 37-41.)

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Orleans Parish, LA

7. Description (Cont'd)

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 some 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.

Contributing Elements

Holy Cross represents an important collection of buildings from the period of 1850 to 1936. The period of significance ends in the mid 1930's when the modernist movement was taking root in New Orleans. The district is a "tout ensemble;" 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

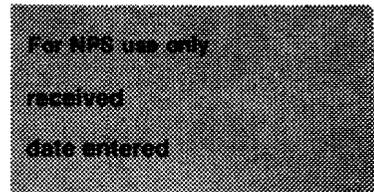
Most of the district's intrusions are small ranch or apartment houses. Because of the aforementioned truck farming, there was still room to build in the neighborhood in the 1940's and 50's, hence the tract houses. Even so, the district has a 26% intrusion rate, which is within the normally acceptable range for Louisiana historic districts. (Nine of the state's 50 Register districts have an intrusion rate over 26%, with the highest being 36%.) In addition, most of the intrusions are slab-on-grade, while the contributing elements are raised three feet or so. Hence the contributing elements tend to dominate where the two are juxtaposed. Moreover, in almost every case the district's intrusions are no larger than the contributing elements. And, of course, intrusions which are modified older buildings conform to the district's historic streetscape and scale. Given these factors, it is fair to say that in most cases the impact of intrusions in the district is minimal.

The two exceptions are the Holy Cross school grounds along Reynes Street and a pocket of small tract houses located around the intersection of Chartres and Andry Streets. Neither of these areas could have been omitted without either creating a "Swiss cheese" effect or excluding some of the district's most valuable historic buildings. In addition, there is plenty of precedent for a historic district where the character breaks and then picks up again. Finally, even with these areas, the overall intrusion count is still only 26%.

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Orleans Parish, LA

7. Description (continued)

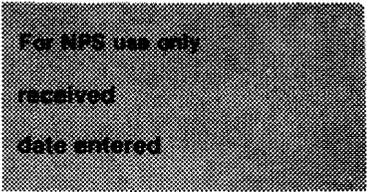
Assessment of Integrity

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 Holy Cross' contributing elements have 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 contributing elements. 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.

FOR THE RECORD, THE FOLLOWING MAPS ACCOMPANY THIS NOMINATION: 1 STYLE MAP,  
1 BUILDING TYPE MAP, & 1 USGS MAP.

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Continuation sheet Holy Cross Historic District Item number 10

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Orleans Parish, LA

Boundary Justification:

Boundaries were drawn to encompass the mix of building types and styles described in Item 7. In most cases the boundaries were obvious. The western boundary follows the Industrial Canal, and across the canal is a large modern Naval facility. The eastern boundary abuts Jackson Barracks (N.R.), a U. S. Army installation dating back to the early nineteenth century. The southern boundary follows the Mississippi River levee from the Industrial Canal as far as Flood Street (see map). We feel it is important to recognize the presence of the Mississippi River because without it, the plantations that became the district would never have developed. After Flood Street the southern boundary cuts inland in order to exclude modern warehouses and docking facilities. The northern boundary was 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 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.

THE BOUNDARIES FOR HOLY CROSS ARE SHOWN ON THE ENCLOSED STYLE 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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** c.1850-1936      **Builder/Architect** N/A

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**      Criterion C

The Holy Cross 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 shotgun houses, a noted regional house type. Moreover, it is a superior concentration of 50+ year old structures within the context of Louisiana.

Holy Cross is significant in the Gulf Coast area because of the preponderance of shotgun houses among its collection of building types. The district is 58% shotgun houses, which qualifies it as one of the more concentrated collections in the region. The 58% figure comes from adding ordinary shotgun houses (57%) and camelback houses (1%),

But beyond this, Holy Cross' 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. Holy Cross is one of very few areas which have a significant component of pre-bungalow era shotgun houses -- i.e., Eastlake and Italianate. Approximately 35% of Holy Cross' shotgun houses fall into this earlier 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 class. This is particularly true of Holy Cross, 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 Holy Cross 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.

Holy Cross 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, Holy Cross contains a significant mix of Italianate or earlier structures (27%). Hence the district has a richer and more varied mixture of older structures than comparable communities across the state.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Surveys described in Item 7.

Historical sketch of Holy Cross development submitted by Holy Cross Neighborhood Association.  
Toledano, Roulhac, et al. New Orleans Architecture: The Creole Faubourgs. Gretna, LA:  
Pelican Publishing, 1974.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property @160 acres

Quadrangle name New Orleans East, LA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	5	7	8	6	9	2	0	3	3	1	3	3	2	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B 

1	5	7	8	3	7	0	0	3	3	1	7	6	0	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

C 

1	5	7	8	8	4	2	0	3	3	1	6	9	2	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

D 

1	5	7	8	6	3	0	0	3	3	1	7	6	6	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

E 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Please refer to enclosed style 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
-------	------	--------	------

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff

Assisted by Holy Cross Neighborhood Assoc.

Division of Historic Preservation

organization State of Louisiana

date April-May, 1986

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

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date June 26, 1986

### For NPS use only

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

Entered in the  
National Register

date 7-31-86

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration