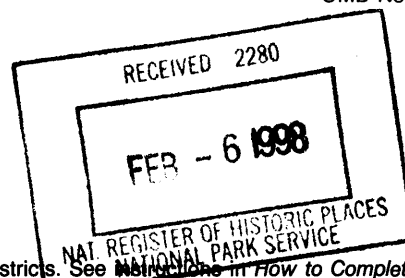


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



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This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See **NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES** 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 Crystal Grocery

other names/site number Fertitta's Delicatessen

2. Location

street & number 1124 Fairfield N/A  not for publication

city or town Shreveport N/A  vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Caddo code 017 zip code 71101

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 1/28/98  
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 commenting 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:)

Robert H. Beall Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 3-5-98

Crystal Grocery  
Name of Property

Caddo 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	
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.)

N/A

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

0

**6. Function or Use**

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

Commerce/Trade: Specialty store/  
restaurant  
Domestic/single dwelling

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

Commerce/Trade: Restaurant  
Domestic/single dwelling

**7. Description**

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

No style

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls brick

roof Other: tar & gravel

other

**Narrative Description**

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

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Crystal Grocery, Caddo Parish, LA

Section number 7 Page 1

The two story brick building at the corner of Fairfield and Christian streets in Shreveport known since 1949 as Fertitta's Delicatessen was built in 1927 for Italian immigrant John Fulco to house a grocery and restaurant on the ground story and living quarters on the second. Various primary sources indicate that the grocery was called Crystal Grocery, or sometimes Fulco's Crystal Grocery. The restaurant was the Redbud Cafe. Until the late 1950s, when work began on the nearby interstate, the building was located in a large, tightly packed neighborhood of shotgun houses with corner groceries here and there. Today it is one of few buildings remaining in the area. And although customers of the grocery and cafe from the historic period would not recognize their old neighborhood today, they would certainly recognize the old Crystal Grocery building, despite a few modifications.

The Crystal Grocery building turns the corner with a forty-five degree cut, and it is here where the entrance is located. Decorative yellowish cream brickwork contrasts with brown brick background on the Fairfield Street elevation (Howell Street when the building was constructed) and the corner cut. There is a band of alternating color bricks above the transom level, a slender band of contrasting bricks below the second story windows, and a pronounced band at the parapet level featuring dentils below alternating color bricks.

Windows on the second story are grouped singly and in pairs. The ground story features three sets of shopfront windows, two on Fairfield and one on Christian just beyond the corner entrance. The transom windows, now covered with plywood panels and latticework decoration, are clearly visible on the interior. Also, modern metal awnings obscure one's view of the historic shopfront windows. The building's fixed awning (see attached c.1950 photo) was removed within the last few years due to deterioration, but the hooks where it attached remain. Other alterations to the exterior include painting over the plain brown brick around the shopfront, the replacement of the original one over one windows on the main elevations with windows formed of four horizontal panes (probably in the 1950s), and the addition of storm windows to all second floor windows. The rooftop neon sign ("Fertitta's, Home of the Muffy") dates from the 1950s.

There is some speculation as to why the brickwork has a break in it below the shopfront window where the restaurant was located. It has been suggested that the restaurant originally had its own separate entrance, but if this was removed, and a shopfront window installed, then it occurred fairly early in the building's history. In short, the window treatment there at present (with its transoms and double window below) looks historic and it matches the other shopfront windows.

CONTINUED

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Crystal Grocery, Caddo Parish, LA

Section number 7 Page 2

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The grocery store/restaurant space retains its traditional character, which is surprising considering the building has been in continuous commercial use since its construction. Fortunately, its owners over the years elected not to modernize. The ceilings retain their original height and are covered in press metal. The walls are plastered. The floorplan has not been altered, although there is some confusion concerning the original demarcation between the former grocery store space and the restaurant. It is today marked by a historic-looking pillared wooden divider which matches the simple woodwork found elsewhere on the first floor. But according to family tradition, there was a partition here originally and one stepped down into the restaurant. (Of course, partition is a word open to interpretation.) The present proprietor, John Fulco's step-granddaughter, indicates that her father, Sam Fertitta, raised the level of the restaurant floor when he took over the business in 1949.

The upstairs living area is very basic in character, featuring various rooms with plastered walls. It remains in its original use as living quarters for the proprietors of the business establishment below.

The building has two small one story appendages at the rear -- one metal sided and one made of concrete blocks. The metal sided one may be historic. There is also a small shed roof frame appendage on the second story of the rear. It rests on bungalow-like braces and appears to be historic.

### Assessment of Integrity:

Although there have been various exterior alterations, as noted above, they have not had a serious impact on the overall character of the building. This can be seen by comparing a current photo with the one taken c.1950 (roughly the close of the historic period). The alterations have had a negligible impact perhaps because of the building's corner articulation and distinctive brickwork -- character-defining features which remain intact and visually dominant. Also, despite the covering and obscuring of some of the shopfront windows, the original pattern is still clear. But most importantly, at least in terms of Register eligibility, is the fact that a patron of the store during the historic period would clearly recognize it today.

**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** N/A  
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

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)

Ethnic Heritage / European

**Period of Significance**

1927 - 1947

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Builder: Victor L. Campisi

**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:

Crystal Grocery  
Name of Property

Caddo Parish, LA  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than an acre

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

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

3 

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Zone Easting Northing

4 

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 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.)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register staff

organization Division of Historic Preservation date November 1997

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 Agatha Fertitta McCall 318-424-5508 (business)  
street & number 1124 Fairfield Avenue telephone 318-221-6670 (home)  
city or town Shreveport state LA zip code 71101

**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.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Crystal Grocery, Caddo Parish, LA

Section number 8 Page 1

The Crystal Grocery building is locally significant in the area of ethnic heritage because it is a very rare survivor to represent the impact of Italian immigration in Shreveport's history. The Italian presence in early twentieth century Shreveport was greater than percentage-of- population figures would reveal. Although the city's 1,220 Italians in 1930 comprised only 1.5% of the population, they were the largest non-black ethnic group in the city. And very importantly, they dominated in certain neighborhoods, were concentrated mainly in one occupation (food-related), and were active in various civic, political, fraternal and religious organizations. All of the foregoing, not to mention the Shreveport Italian Band and St. Joseph altars, gave the city's Italian population a high profile. The period of significance ends with the current 50 year cutoff (1947) because Italians continued to have an important and distinct presence in the city up to and past that date.

Of course, Shreveport's Italians were part of a larger phenomenon -- the floodtide of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe arriving in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. And while most immigrants settled in Eastern and Midwestern cities, many found their way to Louisiana, with the port of New Orleans being a major point of entry for ships sailing from Palermo, Italy. As would be expected, Louisiana's largest concentration of Italian immigrants was in New Orleans, but Italians also labored on the state's railroads, on sugar and cotton plantations, and in lumber mills. In Tangipahoa Parish, where they numbered about 10% of the population, Italians helped make possible a boom in strawberry production in the early twentieth century. And, as noted above, by 1930, 1, 220 Italians were living in Shreveport in the northwestern corner of the state. Shreveport in 1910 was Louisiana's second largest city but by 1930 had dropped to the third largest (having been eclipsed by Baton Rouge).

Italians learned of Shreveport through various means (immigration societies, labor agents, etc.), but apparently the most important was word-of-mouth, as new immigrants living there contacted relatives in Italy and elsewhere in the United States. Many came directly from New Orleans, through whose port arrived 70,000 Italians between 1898 and 1929. As was typical, Shreveport's Italians came from impoverished Sicily -- the vast majority being from the town of Cefalu.

Shreveport Italians principally lived in the Allendale, West End and "Cross Town" neighborhoods, where other European immigrants and blacks also lived. There was a particularly strong concentration of Italians at Walnut and Pierre avenues, surrounding the Italia Moderna Society Building (demolished). Several blocks in this area were designated as

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Crystal Grocery, Caddo Parish, LA  
Section number 8 Page 2

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“Luchini’s subdivision” in the Sanborn maps of 1896 and 1929 -- most likely named for Caesar Luchini, a local brickmaker and contractor.

Had it survived, the two-story brick Italia Moderna Society building would have been the most important reminder of Shreveport’s Italian heritage and an excellent Register candidate. It was a meeting hall for the society, a 450 member civic and political group, and the place where the city’s Italian language newspaper, *The Italia Moderna*, was published (see photos). Founded in 1929 by Frank Fulco and printed in both English and Italian, the newspaper “gave a voice to the Italian community,” writes Lucy Leber in her thesis on Shreveport’s Italian immigration. The word “moderna” was most appropriate given the fact that the paper encouraged older Italians to take up the ways of their new country. Specifically, Fulco encouraged Italians to learn English, to become educated, and to be civic minded. In 1930 the newspaper changed its name to the *News Record* and expanded beyond Shreveport with a circulation of 4,500 copies received weekly in Italian homes throughout the state.

Although the largest, the Italia Moderna Society was only one of several self-help, civic, fraternal, and religious organizations in the city’s Italian community. These included the Young Men’s Progressive Association, the Tux Boys Dramatic Club (so named apparently because of its emphasis upon personal appearance), the Italian Blessed Sacrament Society, and the Saint Joseph’s Society. In addition, there was S. Vitale’s Shreveport Italian Band which often represented the Italian community in parades and other public events. A c.1920 photo (attached) shows it with twenty members.

In terms of occupations, Shreveport’s Italians made a strong showing in the merchant class -- being known chiefly for food-related businesses and grocery stores in particular. For example, the 1915 city directory shows that of the 109 Italians listed, 50 were in food handling businesses. (This category would have included grocery stores, restaurants, fruit stands, and the like. There were also two or three truck farming Italian communities on the southern edges of the city.) By the 1938 city directory, there were at least 100 grocers with Italian surnames in the city (roughly one-third of the total number of grocers). This figure would probably be higher if one took into account the number of individuals who Anglicized their names (Piraro to Peters, for example) or those, like John Fulco, who operated businesses with non-Italian names like Crystal Grocery. The 1938 entries, ranging alphabetically from Angliano to Zagone, reveal that the grocery business often ran in families. For example, there are various Brocatos, DeFattas, Fulcos, and Papas who owned grocery stores. Helping to supply foodstuffs for the stores was the Shreveport Macaroni Factory, established by the Cordaro family.



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Crystal Grocery, Caddo Parish, LA  
Section number 8 Page 3

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The oral tradition indicates that the typical Italian grocery was like Crystal Grocery -- i.e., a business establishment with the family either living above the store or beside it in the same building. John (born Giovanni) Fulco arrived in Shreveport c.1905 and died there in 1960. Like many of his fellow Sicilians from Cefalu who settled in the city, he was able to improve his economic status considerably, owning at least this one grocery store and rental property. Crystal Grocery was built in 1927 by Victor Campisi for John Fulco at a cost of \$12,178. It, as recorded in a document in the possession of the current proprietor. City directories combined with family recollections reveal that Fulco owned the business but that various family members (cousins) operated it and lived above. The adjacent eatery was known for most of its life as the Redbud Cafe. In 1949, Fulco turned the building over to his step-daughter and her husband, Florence and Sam Fertitta. The Fertittas operated the building as Fertitta's Delicatessen, specializing in Italian food and foodstuffs. They maintained their residence on the second floor. Their daughter and the current proprietor, Agatha Fertitta McCall, took over the business after her parents' retirement. She works and lives where she grew up, continuing the food tradition into the third generation of Shreveport's Italian-American population.

While today the city's Italian heritage is evident from the thousands of Italian sounding names in the phone directory and the annual Fiesta D'Italia, there is practically nothing left in the historic building stock to directly represent this high profile community. As mentioned previously, the best candidate, the Italia Moderna Society building, has been demolished. There are various Italian named businesses in the city (often still in foodstuffs) but they are in modern buildings. Holy Trinity Catholic Church, where the city's Italians worshiped, survives, but it was not built specifically for them, nor was it used exclusively by them. Virtually all of the grocery stores and many of the homes Italians lived in have either been demolished, or in the case of some stores, modified beyond recognition. How so much could have been lost from the relatively recent past can be attributed largely to two factors: (1) As mentioned in Part 7, the neighborhood where Fertitta's is located was once a large, tightly packed area of homes and businesses. It was almost completely leveled for the construction of Interstate 20 in the late 1950s. Only Fertitta's and a handful of houses were spared. (2) Neighborhoods not wiped out by forces such as highway construction are today low income areas where, quite frankly, survival is more important than historic preservation. As a result, there are vacant lots where businesses and homes once stood and seriously altered historic buildings. Today, there are only two historic buildings that could be said to directly represent Shreveport's Italian heritage, and both quite appropriately are food-related: Fertitta's (formerly Crystal Grocery) and Brocato's, a c.1940 restaurant.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Crystal Grocery, Caddo Parish, LA

Section number 8 Page 4



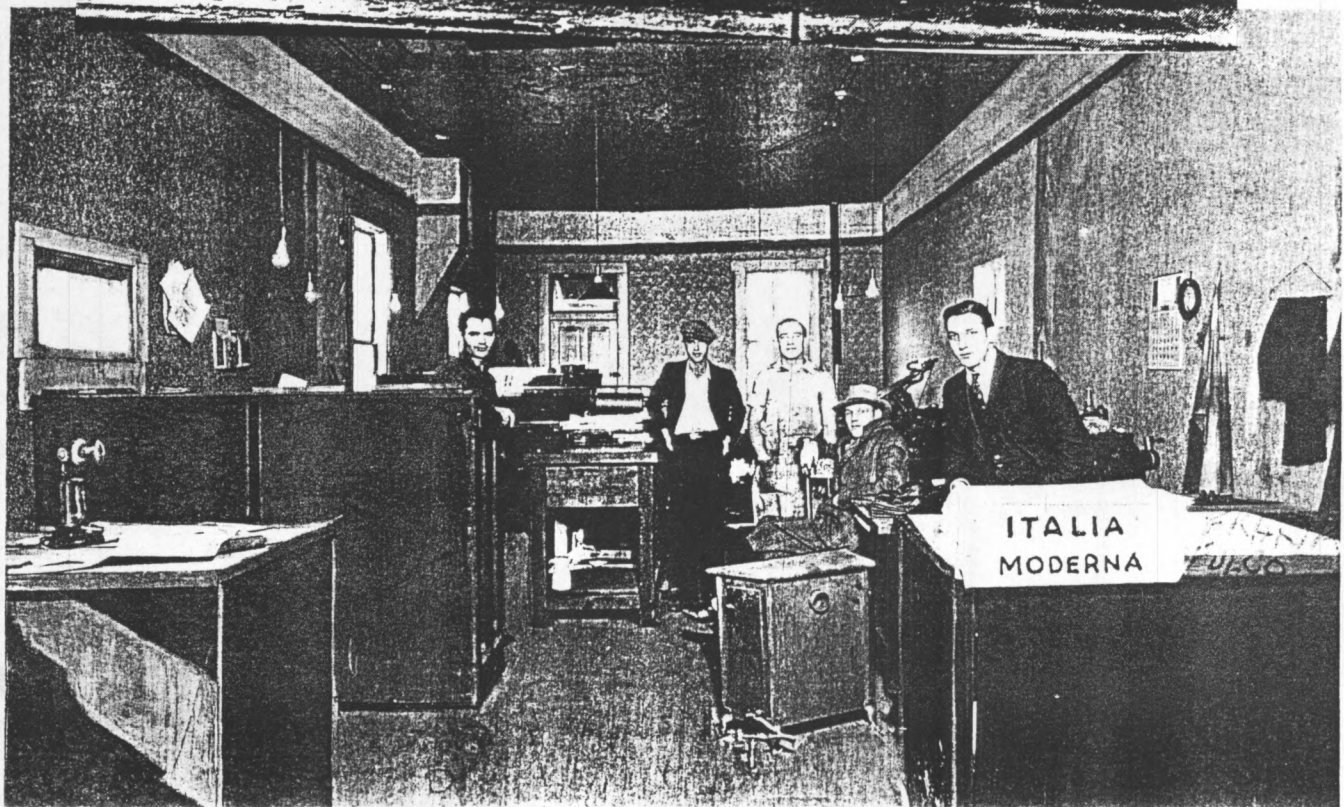
c. 1950



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Crystal Grocery, Caddo Parish, LA  
Section number 8 Page 5



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Crystal Grocery, Caddo Parish, LA

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Leber, Lucy Richardson. "Impact of the European Migration of Italians to Shreveport, Louisiana from 1880 to 1930." M.A. thesis, Louisiana State University at Shreveport, 1987.

Shreveport City Directories, various years.

Sanborn Insurance Company maps, Shreveport, 1935.

Historic photos courtesy LSU-S Archives and Shreveport historian Eric Brock.

Personal communication with Shreveport historian Eric Brock and on-site observations concerning surviving Italian-related buildings.

Bill from Victor L. Campisi for construction of the building. Copy in National Register file.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Crystal Grocery, Caddo Parish, LA

Section number 10 Page 1

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Legal Property Description: SWLY 76 feet of Lots 46 and 47, Block 15, W. R. Carter's  
Subdivision, City of Shreveport, Caddo Parish, LA

Justification: Boundaries follow property lines.