

DATE RECEIVED  
EXP. 1/8/82

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

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

For NPS use only  
received MAY 18 1982  
date entered

1. Name

historic Birg House

~~and/or~~ common Columbia Hall

2. Location

street & number @2 miles northwest of Franklin off La. Hwy. 182 N/A not for publication

city, town Franklin Baldwin vic. N/A vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state LA code 22 county St. Mary Parish code 101

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. Clegg Caffery, Jr.

street & number P. O. Box 298

city, town Franklin N/A vicinity of state LA 70538

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary Parish Courthouse

street & number Main Street (no specific address) P.O. Box 1231

city, town Franklin state LA 70538

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title La. Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1982  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge state LA

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## 7. Description

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**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date       N/A      

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Columbia Hall is a massive, rambling, late-nineteenth century frame country house located about two miles northwest of Franklin amid flat canefields along Bayou Teche. The house has lost little of its original architectural fabric and has been little altered over the years.

The house has a central hall plan, three rooms deep, with a rear kitchen wing and second rear wing which contains a bedroom. The north front room is merged with the central hall to create a massive "L" shaped living hall which is the major spatial feature of the house. The most noteworthy aspect of the hall is the massive Eastlake staircase which turns the corner of the "L" as it ascends. The landing, at which the staircase turns the corner, is articulated with three elaborate octagonal newel posts which are embellished with contrasting dark wood panels. A similar newel is at the foot of the stair. The living hall communicates with galleries on two sides via French doors and floor-length sash windows. To the rear of the living hall are a living room and a dining room which are connected by means of a set of square columns. Both rooms have corner fireplaces, Eastlake mantels, and a paneled dado. The remainder of the interior features large plain rooms with standard late-nineteenth century woodwork. The second story consists of a central hall and a pair of flanking bedrooms.

The exterior features square post, pent roof galleries on all four sides. Most of the gallery posts are formed of groups of planks set with spaces between in a manner resembling fluting. The roofline features a huge hip roofed dormer on each side of the massive pyramidal main roof. In addition, the main roof is capped by a large hip roof monitor. Thus the complex roofline is articulated as a "bouquet" of pyramids with 32 different roof planes. The exterior also features movable louver shutters, porch balustrades, and entablatures on the dormers. Many of the window frames have pediment shaped tops.

The only changes in the house since construction have been the sheetrocking of the interior walls and the modernization of the bathrooms and kitchen.

## 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 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.1895 **Builder/Architect** Joseph Birg

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

Columbia Hall is locally significant in the area of architecture as probably the finest example of late-nineteenth century residential architecture in the Franklin area. \*

Late-nineteenth century residential architecture in Louisiana is customarily judged according to factors such as the following:

- (1) the use of a living hall
- (2) the experimentation with the three-dimensional spatial possibilities of the staircase
- (3) the complexity and elaborateness of the exterior massing

In a broader sense these factors represent the extent to which a house followed national trends of the later nineteenth century generally associated with the Queen Anne Revival.

The Franklin area is mainly known for its Greek Revival architectural landmarks. Although the area has a large stock of late-nineteenth century residential architecture, it is mainly confined to urban builder vernacular housing of standard design, such as shotgun houses, Queen Anne Revival cottages, etc. There are some larger residences which feature central hall plans, a modicum of asymmetry, and Eastlake ornamentation. But again these are more or less standard designs for a small town in Louisiana of the period.

Columbia Hall is superior to all of these because it is an individually designed structure with a larger and grander scale than any of its contemporaries in the Franklin area. More specifically, it is the only noteworthy example of the use of a living hall in Franklin or its immediate vicinity. Moreover, the boldly three dimensional staircase, with its turning the corner design, appears to be unique among period residences in Louisiana. Finally, Columbia Hall's roofline, with its "bouquet" of pyramids and its 32 roof planes, is undoubtedly the most elaborate piece of architectural massing in the area.

As stated in Item 7, Columbia Hall has lost little of its original architectural fabric and has been altered very little over the years. Consequently it clearly retains its local architectural significance as a superior example of late-nineteenth century residential architecture (within the context of the Franklin area).

\*The "Franklin area" is defined as a two mile radius around the city of Franklin. This area was a center of sugar production in the late-nineteenth century and consequently has a large number of period residences.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

St. Mary Parish Conveyance Records

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. .15 acre

Quadrangle name Franklin, LA.

Quadrangle scale 1"=2400'

### UMT References

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

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
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D			
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E			
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F			
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G			
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H			
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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Please refer to sketch map.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Debbie Fleming Caffery (Mrs. Clegg Caffery, Jr.)

organization N/A date February 1982

street & number P. O. Box 298 telephone 318-828-2850

city or town Franklin state LA 70538

# 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 May 3, 1982

For NPS use only

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

*Beth Grosvenor*  
for Keeper of the National Register

date 6/24/82

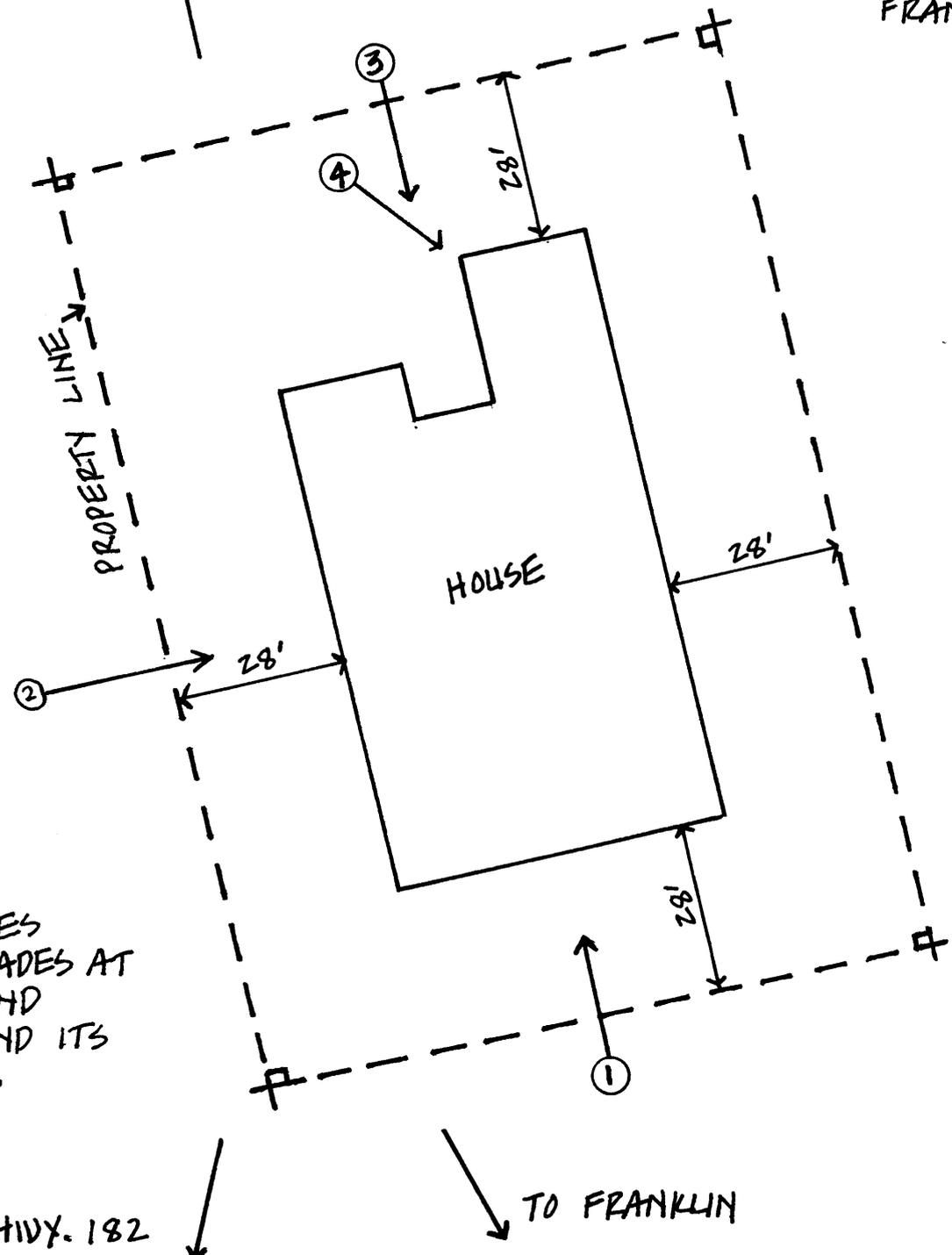
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

COLUMBIA HALL  
FRANKLIN, LOUISIANA

TO BAYOU TULHE



NOTE: SITE BOUNDARIES  
PARALLEL BLDG. FACADES AT  
DISTANCES SHOWN, AND  
ENCOMPASS HOUSE AND ITS  
IMMEDIATE SETTING.

TO HWY. 182

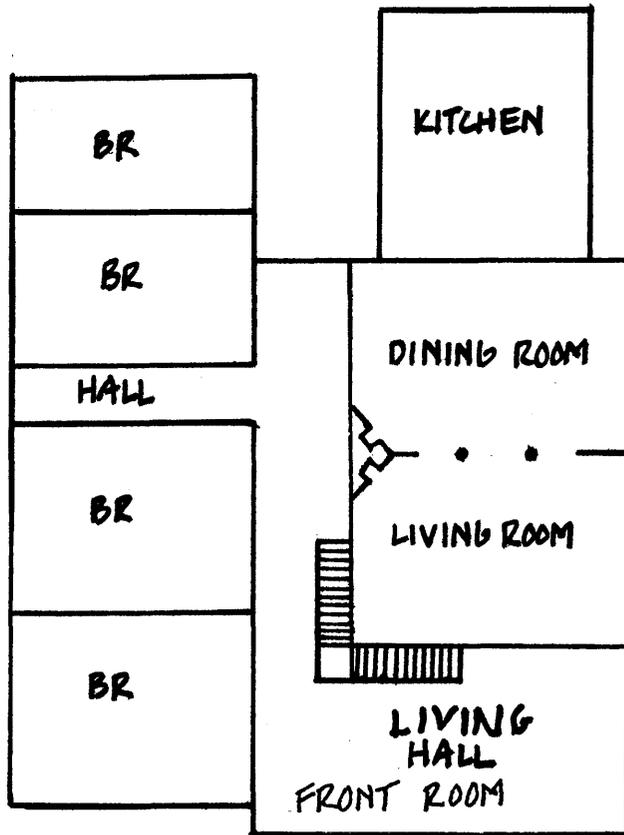
TO FRANKLIN

N  
↑  
SCALE 1"=30' APPROX.

COLUMBIA HALL

ROOM LAYOUT PLAN

FIRST FLOOR



NOT TO SCALE