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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

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7 - DESCRIPTION

Sycamore Street Historic District

The Sycamore Street Historic District contains two commercial buildings and eight residences lining the north side of Sycamore Street east and west of the Old Spanish Trail which runs north to south. The two commercial buildings are located on the east and west corners of St. Francis Street, another cross street east of the Old Spanish Trail. The first block of Sycamore above St. Francis contains, in addition to the commercial building on the corner, only two residences, both frame Bungalow-style cottages, one located approximately in the middle of the block and the other at the corner of Sycamore and the Old Spanish Trail. Lots between these two houses are wooded. West of the Old Spanish Trail the district becomes more densely settled and contains six residences representing a variety of vernacular types--a shotgun cottage, a Creole cottage, two Bungalow-style cottages, a Georgian-plan cottage with Queen Anne- and Colonial Revival-style details, and a Georgian-plan cottage with three front doors providing access to the gallery. All buildings are either one or one-and-a-half stories high and of frame construction. The area west of the district has been taken over by new residential development, and the area south by urban-renewal project housing. These areas have been excluded for those reasons. All buildings are either of primary or contributing importance; there are no intrusions.

Inventory of Buildings in the District

ABBREVIATIONS:

- P = Primary Significance. Building retains its architectural integrity and is a key element of the streetscape.*
- C = Contributing. Building's appearance does not detract from the streetscape. Compatible in terms of material and scale.*
- M = Marginal. Building has some detracting features but not enough to be considered intrusive or maintains the scale and incompatible alterations are reversible.*
- I = Intrusive. Building has been altered to such a degree that the original character is irretrievably obscured and/or scale and materials are incompatible.*

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SYCAMORE STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT
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1. Big 5 Club (Sycamore at St. Francis). Ca. 1910. 1-story frame commercial building with front-gable orientation and canted corner entrance. Front gable is clad with boards laid in a chevron pattern; canopy shelters front facade. Double-leaf door with transom. Rear section used as residence. (P)
2. Bobby's Lounge (501 Sycamore St.). Ca. 1920. 1-story 3x4-bay frame commercial structure with front-gable orientation. Shed-roofed canopy covers half of the front elevation and rounds the southeast corner. Off-center door flanked by banks of windows. (C)
3. Residence (509 Sycamore St.). Ca. 1925. Bungalow style. 1-story dwelling with front-gable orientation; undercut gallery supported on turned posts, which rest on masonry piers. Bracketed front gable. Three-bay facade with central entrance and paired windows. (P)
4. Residence (519 Sycamore St.). Ca. 1920. Bungalow style. 1-story 2x2-bay front-gabled dwelling with front and rear undercut galleries. Exposed rafter-tails and asbestos siding. Porch supported on tapering posts resting on concrete piers. Curved step cheeks. (C)
5. Residence (523 Sycamore St.). Ca. 1895. 1-story Georgian-plan house with a five-bay facade, hip roof, and undercut gallery. Centrally placed front gable with Palladian-motif louvered opening. Polygonal bays on side elevations with corner brackets. Central entrance with side lights. (P)
6. Residence (525 Sycamore St.). Ca. 1925. Bungalow style. 1-story 3x5-bay front gabled cottage with projecting 1-bay porch supported on squared columns. Exposed rafter-tails. Paired windows. Central entrance with side lights and transom. Two-story modern garage buildings also located on property. (C)
7. Residence (531 Sycamore St.). Ca. 1870. 1-1/2-story 5x2-bay with gable roof and undercut gallery. Three front entrances provide access to the gallery. Original 4-panel doors. Porch valence partially intact. (P)
8. Residence (541 Sycamore St.). Ca. 1925. Bungalow style. 1-story 4x4-bay Creole cottage with front-gable orientation. Main block has exposed rafter-tails, paired windows, and projecting front porch. 1-bay gabled rear section possibly of earlier construction. (C)
9. Residence (551 Sycamore St.). Ca. 1880, later alterations. 1-story Creole cottage with gable-roof undercut gallery. 4-bay facade with entrances in the middle bays. (C)

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7 - DESCRIPTION

10. Residence (520 Sycamore St.). Ca. 1910. 1-story shotgun cottage with gable-on-hip roof, enclosed porch, side-L clad with aluminum siding. (C)

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

✓ Sycamore Street Historic District

Important to the study of black history in Bay St. Louis, the Sycamore Street Historic District also contains valuable architectural resources from ca. 1860 through the 1920s. The district is part of what remains of a small black settlement which once extended east, north, and west of the present district boundaries. Although there were enough black families in this area of Bay St. Louis in 1906 to construct a two-story school (building no longer extant), one block north of the present district on St. Francis Street, the area west of Old Spanish Trail was not fully developed as a black community until the 1920s.

Reflective of this development, the district contains a number of Bungalow-style houses, along with two houses which remain from earlier estates. One of these, located at 531 Sycamore Street, is a vernacular house type relatively rare in Mississippi. Showing French influence in its multiple entrances, this five-bay cottage contains doors in each of its middle bays which provide access to an undercut gallery, and is the only example of its type in Bay St. Louis. The house at 523 Sycamore Street, which dates ca. 1895, combines features of the Colonial Revival style, such as a louvered gable window articulated in a Palladian motif and central entrance with side lights, with features of the Queen Anne style, polygonal bays and angled window brackets. Another important architectural component of the district is the front-gabled commercial building on the corner of St. Frances and Sycamore streets. Built ca. 1910 it utilized diagonal boarding in its pediment and is a good example of turn-of-the-century vernacular building. Added to an earlier house, it was probably the first large store to be constructed in the neighborhood and illustrates the close proximity of the shopkeeper's residence to his business. Although black families lived in nearby residences, an Italian family, the Benignos, owned this store and one located in the Washington Street Historic District and lived in the attached residences.

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10 - GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM REFERENCES

Zone 16

E 274580
N 3355140

Verbal Boundary Description: The Sycamore Street Historic District is a rectangular-shaped area comprising approximately three acres. District boundaries correspond with the boundaries outlined on the city plat map (5).

