

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

MOREAUVILLE HIGH SCHOOL, AVOYELLES PARISH, LA

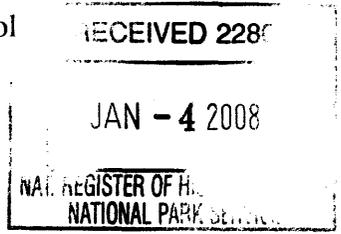
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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Moreauville High School
Other Name/Site Number: Avoyelles High School



19

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 287 Main Street Not for publication: NA
City/Town: Moreauville Vicinity: NA
State: Louisiana Code: LA County: Avoyelles Code: 009 Zip Code: 71355

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: Statewide: Locally: X

Signature of Certifying Official/Title Phil Boggan
Deputy SHPO, Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

Date 1-3-08

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official/Title

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
- Determined eligible for the National Register
- Determined not eligible for the National Register
- Removed from the National Register
- Other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

for Edson H. Beall  
Signature of Keeper

2.14.08  
Date of Action

5. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property  
 Private: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Public-Local: X  
 Public-State: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Public-Federal: \_\_\_\_\_

Category of Property  
 Building(s): X  
 District: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Site: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Structure: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Object: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

1

Non contributing

\_\_\_ buildings

\_\_\_ sites

\_\_\_ structures

\_\_\_ objects

0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: NA

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### 6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Education                      Sub: School  
Current: Education                      Sub: School

### 7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Classical Revival

Materials:

Foundation: Brick  
Walls: Brick  
Roof: Tar and Gravel  
Other: Cast Concrete

#### **Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.**

Moreauville High School stands within a large, closely-packed campus facing a main road within the small Avoyelles Parish community of Moreauville. The two-story, masonry, Classical Revival style school has been in continuous operation since its construction in 1926. Despite additions and alterations needed to make the building meet modern educational and building code requirements, the school clearly retains its National Register eligibility.

Moreauville High's facade displays the five-part articulation of projecting and receding planes common to school buildings of the period. These consist of a slightly projecting central pavilion and two slightly projecting side pavilions connected to the central section by receding hyphens. The width of the side pavilions, as viewed from the front, is misleading because part way along each side elevation, the building projects at a perpendicular angle. The additional space thus provided holds stair halls and more classrooms. Because they are set back from the façade, these projecting areas are visible only when the building is viewed from a diagonal angle. Despite the various projections, the façade's overall appearance is that of a rectangular mass. Inside, the plan is also typical of the period. A large entrance opens into a minimal lobby which leads in turn to a continuous hallway running from end to end of the building. Classrooms pierced by bands of large windows and accompanied by cloakrooms line each side of this hall, and the previously mentioned stair halls fill each end. An auditorium with a second floor balcony is located across from the main entrance and projects toward the rear.

The building's footprint of advancing and receding planes and the large ball ornament atop the central pavilion's parapet reflect the influence of the Beaux Arts style. However, the façade's overall rectangular massing and the vast majority of the structure's important decorative features are Classical Revival. These decorations, which are formed of painted cast concrete unless otherwise noted, include the following:

- 1) the classically treated entrance pavilion. It ranks as the building's climactic architectural feature. It consists of:

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- a) three arched bays, two stories in height, outlined by brick bands. Brick also fills the tympanum of each arch. Each arch is surmounted by a keystone and is pierced by openings reflecting the location of the building's first and second floors. The arches' two central spandrels contain bas-relief cartouches flanked by ribbon-like elements. The two half-spandrels at the sides contain bas-relief flowers flanked by the same ribbon-like features.
  - b) the building's main entrance, which is located within the lower portion of the central bay. The entrance is composed of double doors below a multi-pane transom. Its surround is composed of three decorative elements: a band of equally spaced incised circles on the outside, a band of torsade molding in the middle, and a band of bead and reel molding next to the doors.
  - c) a molded entablature located above the surround. It supports a central cartouche flanked by scrolled elements.
  - d) a second, more complicated decorative entablature, which the arches' keystones appear to support. It has a smooth architrave, a frieze carved with a band of simplified acanthus leaves, and a cornice articulated as separate blocks featuring circular and leaf-like decoration.
  - e) a shaped brick parapet featuring decorations of cast concrete. These include a band of alternating large and small squares resembling dentils, stepped geometric designs on each end, and rectangles and arrows in the center. The central rectangle is paneled and features a motif suggestive of two mirror image vases lying on their sides. The previously mentioned ball ornament rises from the coping surmounting the parapet.
- 2) The decorative treatment of the side pavilions. Each features a bold but simple entablature, a band of alternating large and small dentil-like squares below the entablature, and a shaped parapet with coping above the entablature. The parapet is ornamented by a central square containing four carvings of flowers, and stepped geometric elements on each end.
  - 3) the continuation of the previously mentioned parapets and simple entablatures to encircle the building.
  - 4) an encircling brick watertable and two encircling brick belt courses. The lower belt course runs just below the sills of the first floor windows. The upper belt course is formed by extending the lintels of the second story windows to the side until they connect with the lintels of the windows next to them.

Although not specifically a Classical feature, the building is also ornamented by sets of parallel brick bands between the first and second story windows on each elevation. Each band terminates in a cast concrete square at each end. Each set also features either a square concrete block with a bas-relief flower carving or a lozenge (or both) between the bands

The two-story auditorium is the interior's most ornate space. Although it has been subdivided vertically (see below), its decorative features remain intact and are clearly visible. They include:

1. pilasters with molded shafts, molded necking, and capitals combining molding and an acanthus leaf band. A geometric device combining a rectangle, square and three elongated gutae fills the

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center of the capital. The gutae extend downward into the top portion of the pilaster's paneled shaft.

2. a thick molded and denticulated cornice encircling the space,
3. molded ceiling beams featuring denticulated molding, and
4. a proscenium distinguished by bands of stylized leaf molding and bead and reel molding, patera, and a central cartouche with vine-like elements ending in scrolls extending from each side.

Other features found in the interior include original doors, beaded board wainscot, and wooden floors in some areas.

Because the building continues in use as a school, Avoyelles Parish education officials have made certain changes to help it meet modern educational needs and building code requirements. In addition to the construction of covered walkways to connect the original building to later structures added to the campus, these alterations include:

1. the addition of boys' and girls' restrooms at the rear of the building. These were connected to the historic school by converting two cloakrooms into hallways. To accomplish this, the walls separating the cloakrooms from the school's central hall were removed and the cloakrooms were then extended to the rear to connect with the restrooms. Because the restrooms are technically connected to the building, they are being considered as additions rather than non-contributing buildings for the purpose of this nomination.
2. the removal of the multi-pane upper sashes in all the building's exterior windows (they were replaced with wooden panels) and removal of the sashes of the multi-pane transom windows located between the classrooms and the hallways (the empty spaces are filled with painted boards).
3. conversion of the auditorium into a library (which included the removal of the seats, the installation of a much lower tile ceiling converting the space into a one-story room (the upper level is visible from the auditorium's balcony), and the piercing of the room's side walls with interior observation windows).
4. rearrangement of a few original interior walls and installation of partition walls to change room sizes, the construction of walls terminating each end of the second floor hallway at the tops of the staircases, and installation of tile over wooden floors in some rooms and of ceiling tiles in all rooms.
5. the replacement of exterior doors, and the installation of hood roofs above the exterior doors leading to the side stair halls. The hoods are supported by large brackets, have heavy tile roofs, and protect the students using the doors from the weather.

Of these changes, the loss of the upper sashes of each exterior window and the conversion of the auditorium into a library are the most significant. However, the sashes can be replaced, and photographs exist to show their original multi-pane appearance. The changes to the auditorium are also reversible. Clearly, no change has been significant enough to prevent former students from recognizing the building when they return to the campus today; and all the Classical features (including those in the auditorium) that

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give the school architectural significance survive. As the symbol of the coming of age of education in Moreauville, and as an architectural landmark within Avoyelles Parish, the Moreauville High School is a strong candidate for National Register listing.

NOTE REGARDING PHOTOGRAPHS:

Because Moreauville is a closely-packed campus with multiple buildings, it is impossible to photograph the candidate without showing other structures. With the exception of the restrooms mentioned above (which are considered as an addition to the building), the other buildings visible in some photographs are outside the nomination's boundaries.



8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Applicable National Register Criteria: A X B\_\_ C X D\_\_

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A\_\_ B\_\_ C\_\_ D\_\_ E\_\_ F\_\_ G\_\_ NA

Areas of Significance: Architecture; Education

Period(s) of Significance: 1926

Significant Dates: 1926

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: Architect: William T. Nolan
Builder: Charles F. Lau, Beaumont, TX
Craft-Rushworth Company, Lake Charles, LA

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### State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Moreauville High School is locally significant in the areas of architecture and education. Its architectural significance rests upon its status as one of the few late-nineteenth/early-twentieth-century landmark buildings in Avoyelles Parish. Its educational significance is based upon its role as a symbol of the "coming of age" of education in the community of Moreauville.

#### Architecture

Moreauville High School is of architectural significance when viewed within the context of Avoyelles Parish. Avoyelles is a decidedly rural parish with a population of just under 42,000. An early area of settlement, the parish has a scattering of historic antebellum houses, but there are very few architectural landmarks from later periods. This conclusion is documented by the Division of Historic Preservation's historic structures survey, which has identified approximately 812 of Avoyelles' buildings as 50 years of age or older. The majority of these are small residences of such vernacular or popular types as the shotgun, late Creole cottage, single or double pen house, bluff land house, Queen Anne cottage, and bungalow. Most of these structures are ordinary and unpretentious. The majority of the parish's commercial and public buildings are also uninspiring, leaving a group of approximately a dozen late-nineteenth/early-twentieth-century buildings which stand out because they are architect-designed and/or display noteworthy elements of high style architecture. This core includes the Avoyelles Parish Courthouse in Marksville, St. Mary's Assumption Church in Cottonport, and a handful of small banks scattered about the parish. A finely articulated, architect-designed example of the Classical Revival style, Moreauville High School clearly also belongs to this landmark group.

#### Education

Moreauville High School is locally significant in the area of education because its opening in 1926 marked the "coming of age" for public education in that Avoyelles Parish community. As will be explained below, the erection of a large modern brick school made possible improved education in various respects.

Most of rural Louisiana was slow in making free public education available to children. Throughout much of the nineteenth century the prevailing attitude was that education should be the responsibility of the family rather than of state or local government. As a result, there was very little money for education and no real public support. Wealthy families often hired private tutors for their children. Other families that could pay the tuition enrolled their children in one of the church-sponsored or secular private schools that appeared and disappeared with regularity around the state. When state government occasionally provided meager funding, free public schools operated for a few months, to be replaced by private schools when the public facilities closed. Sometimes both were located in the same building and taught by the same teacher. Most of the facilities taught only rudimentary skills such as reading, writing, and mathematics.

Rural public elementary schools came into being in the 1880s. The length of the school session fluctuated from two and one-half to six months. Classes were generally taught in one-room structures that were usually crude, stark, unpainted and improperly heated. They often lacked ceilings, and their furniture was generally homemade. Blackboards were usually placed between windows, forcing the students to look

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directly into a bright glare. Children of all ages and grades were accommodated in these buildings, making it extremely difficult for individual children to receive the attention necessary for a quality education.

Sporadic public education came to the Moreauville area around 1870. From then until 1905, one or two teachers taught short-term sessions offering up to eight grades in a poorly prepared, one-room building. The curriculum consisted basically of reading, writing and arithmetic. For those who could afford it, parochial schools filled the local education gap. Over the years, church schools opened and closed in the Moreauville area. They included a boy's school (1870-1876) founded by Reverend Thomas Rebours and "The Boy's College" (1891-1899) founded by Reverend Paul E. Simon. However, until 1899 children desiring a secondary education had to travel to church schools in larger communities. In that year, at the request of Father Constantine Brahic, the Daughters of the Cross opened St. Frances de Sales School (1899-1920) at Moreauville. Despite the availability of this school, most students had no secondary training.

The first public high school (grades 1-12) to serve the educational needs of Moreauville and the surrounding areas opened in October 1905. It was the result of the combined leadership of Moreauville Mayor Dr. Tobie L. Lougarre and Avoyelles Superintendent of Education Victor L. Roy. The school was a square, wooden, box-like building two stories in height. Local residents nicknamed it "The Moreauville Day Goods Box" because of its appearance. The elementary department primarily served the Moreauville area because other small towns still had their one-room schools. However, the high school courses drew students from a much broader area. The high school curriculum was described as "literary and classical" and was typical of the time for public education. It included English, French, mathematics, general science, biology, chemistry, physics, geography, civics, American history, world history, health, and physical education. Athletics were limited to softball, baseball, track and basketball.

By 1925, after 20 years of use, the aging wooden Moreauville School had developed structural problems. The Avoyelles school board decided to build a "modern brick building" to replace it. This transition from a frame school building to a "modern" brick facility was part of a recognizable chapter in the history of public education in the state, with the latter universally by their very nature considered to be the better. The Annual Report of the State Department of Education in Louisiana for 1924-1925 bragged that the number of brick school buildings in the state had grown from 40 in 1900 to 388 in 1925. By way of explanation, the report noted: "In the early years the custom was to erect cheap frame buildings. The custom now is to use permanent materials. . . ." Moreauville High School continued this trend.

Construction of the \$76,000 Moreauville facility began during 1925 and was completed by the end of 1926. The new school provided a number of amenities, including sixteen classrooms. Because the school continued the practice of educating students of all levels under one roof, the building's eight downstairs classrooms and cloakrooms were assigned to grades 1-6. This floor also provided a principal's office and a teacher's lounge. The second floor's eight classrooms were devoted to the higher grades. A large science laboratory was available, as well as a high school library that was then considered to be of medium size. (Library books for the lower grades were stored in built-in cabinets in the first floor classrooms.) An imposing school auditorium with a balcony stood in the rear center portion of the building. It accommodated around 500 persons and was used for all kinds of events.

It is clear that Moreauville's new brick building represented an improvement in the physical plant, which translated into a considerable improvement in the quality of public education provided. For example, the new school expanded its offerings to include vocal and instrumental music, vocational agriculture, and home economics. Classes were less crowded, and teachers could provide more individualized instruction to

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students. In addition, the construction and opening of the new school had considerable symbolic value as a milestone. The small village was and is quite rural, and its buildings are low-scale and modest. Throughout its existence, the community's population has never exceeded 900. Within this context, the large and elaborately ornamented new school must have seemed quite grand. As one graduate has explained, students "thought we were in the big city" when they started school at Moreauville.

The new high school survived the great Mississippi River flood of 1927 and then provided elementary level education to children from surrounding areas whose schools the flood had destroyed. As the years passed, separate elementary schools were constructed in other villages; but Moreauville continued in service as a high school. Today it is known as Avoyelles High. As a symbol of the maturing of public education in the Moreauville area, the school is a strong candidate for National Register listing.

### 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Division of Historic Preservation, Avoyelles Parish Historic Standing Structures Survey.

Interview with Carlos Mayeux, Jr., graduate of Moreauville High School and long-time Avoyelles Parish educator/school board member, November 18, 2007.

Mayeux, Carlos, Jr. History of Moreauville High School (Avoyelles High), typescript; copy in National Register file.

Mayeux, Carlos A., Jr. and DeCuir, Randy, compilers. *Moreauville Centennial, 1904-2004*, Volumes 1 and 2. Marksville, LA: Avoyelles Publications, 2004

Saucier, Corinne L. *History of Avoyelles Parish, Louisiana*. New Orleans: Pelican Publishing Company, 1943.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register. (partially)
- 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 (Specify Repository):

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## **10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Acreage of Property: approximately 1.5 acres

UTM References:     **Zone Easting Northing**  
                          15   598000   3433760

Verbal Boundary Description: Please refer to attached sketch map.

Boundary Justification:

Boundaries do not follow property lines because to have done so would have meant including several non-contributing elements that are now part of the campus. On the west, north and east sides of the school, the boundaries are cut five feet from the building in order to exclude those non-historic buildings. Near the historic school's southwest corner, the boundary turns westward for 50 feet, then runs south to the property line of the parcel which comprises the school's campus. Near the school's southeast corner, the boundary turns eastward for 50 feet, then runs south to the property line mentioned above. The latter portions of the boundaries were chosen to preserve the school's historic setting (i.e., the long, curved driveway and the view shed from the nearby road).

## **11. FORM PREPARED BY**

Name/Title: National Register Staff, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation

Address: P. O. Box 44247, Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Telephone: 225 342-8160

Date: Fall 2007

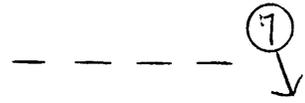
## **PROPERTY OWNERS**

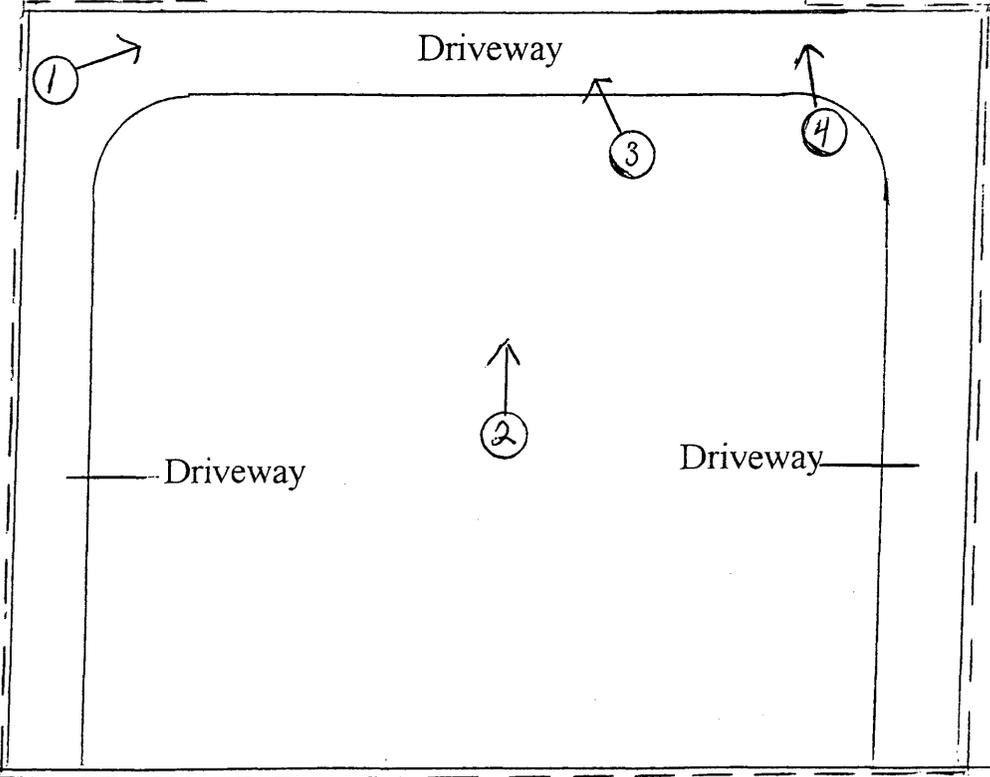
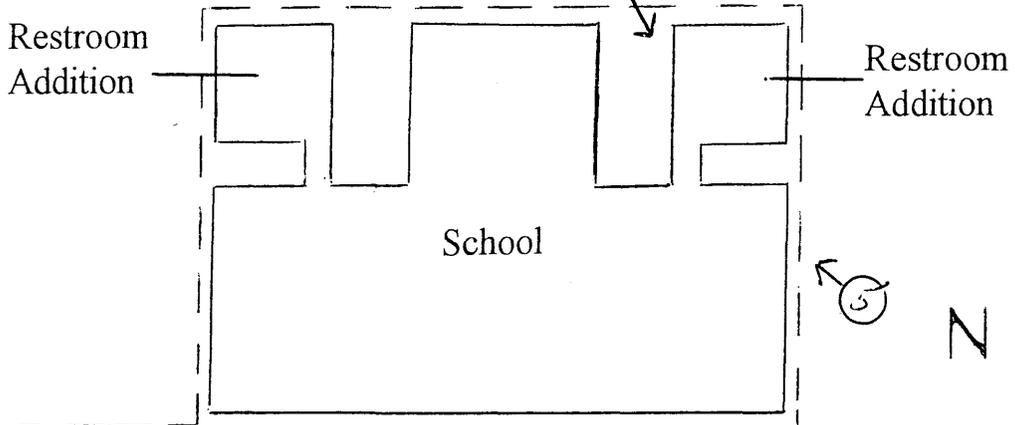
Dwayne Lemoine, Superintendent of Schools  
Avoyelles Parish School Board  
221 Tunica Drive West  
Marksville, LA 71351  
318 253-5982

# Moreauville High School

Moreauville, Avoyelles Parish, LA

Scale: 1 inch = 50 feet

Boundary: 



Main Street