

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAR 12 1985

date entered APR 11 1985

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

1. Name

historic Roumain Building

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number 343 Riverside Mall N/A not for publication

city, town Baton Rouge N/A vicinity of

state LA code 22 parish East Baton Rouge code 033

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Benjamin B. Taylor, Jr. (504) 383-3211

street & number 251 Florida Street, Suite 316

city, town Baton Rouge N/A vicinity of state LA 70801

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. East Baton Rouge Parish Courthouse

street & number 222 St. Louis Street P. O. Box 1991

city, town Baton Rouge state LA 70821

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Architectural & Historical Survey of Downtown Baton Rouge has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1984  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Foundation for Historical Louisiana

city, town Baton Rouge state LA

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input 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 type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The Roumain Building (1913) is a six story concrete and terra-cotta structure with a Beaux-Arts facade. It is located at 343 Riverside Mall in downtown Baton Rouge. Despite some alterations, the building still qualifies for National Register eligibility.

The Roumain Building consists of a ground floor lobby flanked by two independent stores. The upper floors consist of offices arranged around a central hall and stairway. This typical multi-story arrangement is embellished by an ornate exterior surface treatment. The main entry, which features an ornamented scroll keystone, marble dado, and a fixed metal jabot awning with a trio of cartouches, sets the decorative tone of the building.

The facade is symmetrically divided by a system of piers and shafts. The piers are richly decorated with terra-cotta shields and acanthus leaf drops flanked by hatchets. At the top of each pier is an elaborate terra-cotta cartouche with a florid acanthus leaf drop. Shafts, which are thinner than the piers, further embellish the facade. Each shaft features a terra-cotta strapwork design near its top. Together, the piers and shafts define the building's fenestration pattern, which is given a horizontal dimension by spandrels ornamented with decorative panels. The building is crowned by a full entablature with an overscale modillion cornice. The roofline features a balustrade with ornamental parapet blocks, echoing the vertical pattern of the piers and shafts.

An additional exterior feature is a sidewalk clock mounted on a fluted composite colonnette set on a paneled pedestal. The case of the clock is supported by brincade scrolls, and topped with an elaborate finial.

The interior of the Roumain Building features a lobby which is divided into bays by shallow arches resting on paneled piers. Each bay is ornamented by pilasters and coffers. The lobby floor and dado are marble, as are the dado and treds on the staircase, which also features a mahogany banister. Offices on the upper floors feature paneled partition walls with marble bases.

Assessment of Integrity:

Major alterations to the exterior of the Roumain Building are confined to the street level. Although the ground floor shops have retained their recessed entries, many of the original materials have been replaced. Modern awnings have been installed, some of the marble base panels have been removed, and transoms concealed. Despite these changes, the building retains an elaborately detailed facade, which is the source of its architectural significance.

# 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1913 **Builder/Architect** Favrot and Livaudais (architects)  
Joseph K. Roumain (builder)

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

Criterion C

The Roumain Building is locally significant in the area of architecture because it represents the work of an important architectural firm and because it is a landmark in downtown Baton Rouge.

Although no specific study has ever been done on the firm of Favrot and Livaudais, there is general agreement that it was a high style, competent, professional group of architects and that it was extremely prominent in the early twentieth century. Practicing the historicism which was then in vogue, it grew to be perhaps the largest architectural firm in New Orleans, the state's largest, most cosmopolitan urban center. For many years Favrot and Livaudais and Emile Weil vied for business across Louisiana. It is an open question as to which of these firms ultimately had the larger practice, but there is no question that they were the two major architectural firms in early twentieth century New Orleans. Favrot and Livaudais' best known works include the Hibernia Bank Building and the Cotton Exchange Building, both of which are landmarks in the New Orleans central business district. The firm also designed numerous public buildings, including courthouses, schools and libraries across the state.

The Roumain Building is additionally significant as a local landmark in the Baton Rouge central business district. The majority of the approximately 200 structures in the district are low-scale commercial style buildings. The Roumain Building is one of only three major office buildings in the area, and is also the city's first skyscraper. Furthermore, it is one of the few local structures which represents the work of a major architectural firm. In a provincial area like the Baton Rouge of 1913, it was unusual to come across a design as sophisticated and high style as that of the Roumain Building.

Compared to the other commercial style buildings of Baton Rouge, the Roumain Building is conspicuous in its outstanding Beaux-Arts styling, utilizing both Baroque and classical elements. Decorative motifs and the fenestration pattern are integrated by piers, shafts, and friezes which produce a unified facade. No other office building in downtown Baton Rouge can match this degree of cohesive surface treatment. The Roumain Building is also significant as one of six commercial facades in the Baton Rouge central business district which incorporates the elaborate use of terra-cotta. Its standing as a local landmark is further enhanced by the fact that it is the only building in downtown Baton Rouge which still retains its sidewalk clock, a piece of street furniture often associated with major buildings in a town.

Historical Sketch:

The Roumain Building was built by Joseph K. Roumain, a Baton Rouge watchmaker

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Favrot and Livaudais drawings for Roumain Building, In archives of Mathes Group, New Orleans.

Baton Rouge Daily State Times - The New Advocate, January 3, 1913.  
Historical sketch submitted by owner, Copy in Register file,

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property @ 1/4th of an acre

Quadrangle name Baton Rouge West, LA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 15 673960 3369840  
Zone Easting Northing

B                    
Zone Easting Northing

C                  

D                  

E                  

F                  

G                  

H                  

Verbal boundary description and justification

Boundaries follow the property lines of the lot on which the building stands, said lot being a rectangle measuring 64 feet by 128 feet. See attached plat map.

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  
Division of Historic Preservation ASSISTED BY OWNER

organization State of Louisiana date February 1985

street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone (504) 922-0358

city or town Baton Rouge state LA 70804

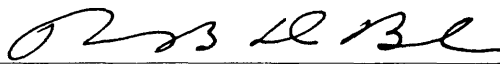
## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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 March 4, 1985

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the  
National Register

date

4-11-85

  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Continuation sheet Roumain Building (cont'd)

Item number 8

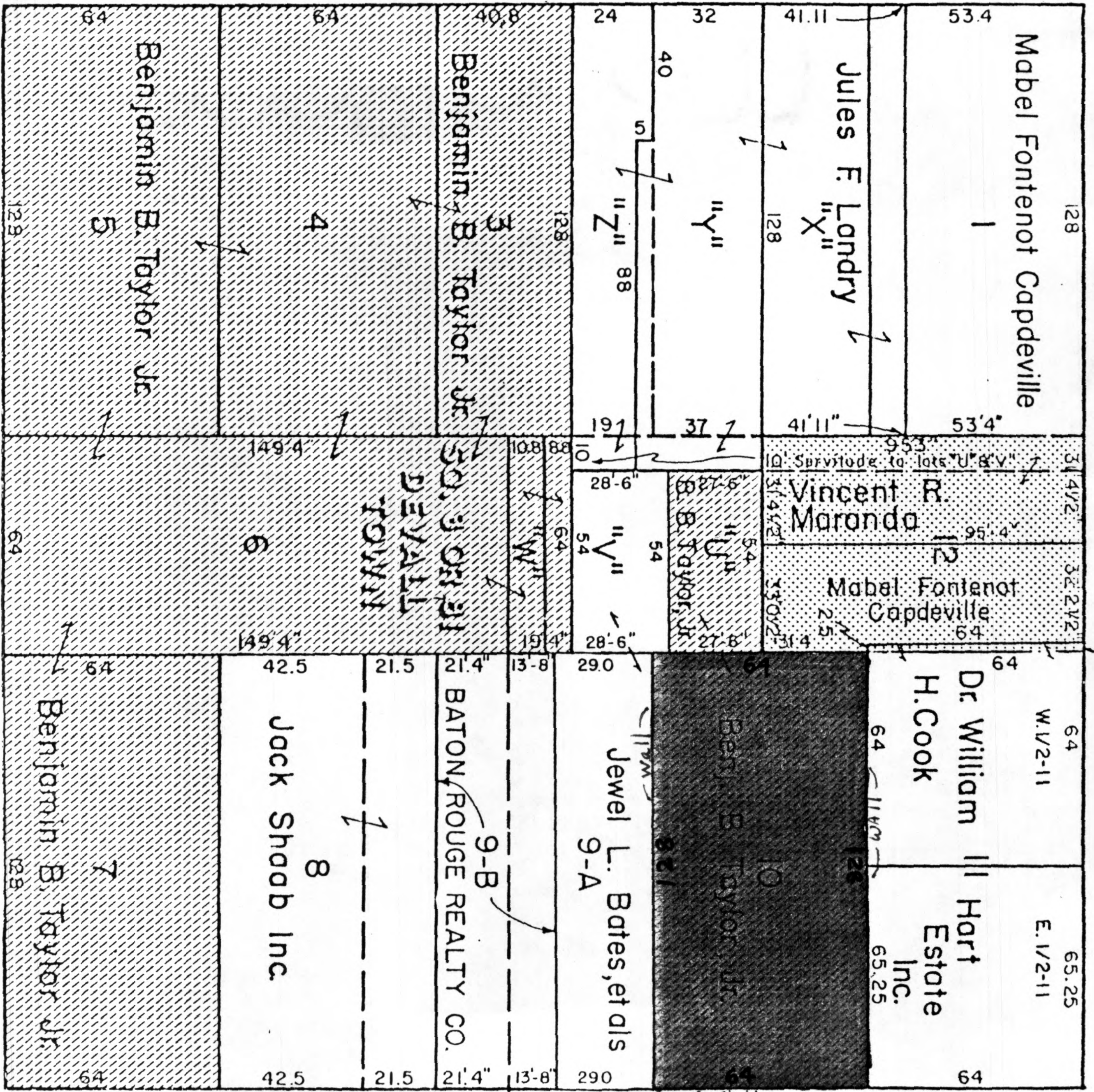
Page 1

8. Significance

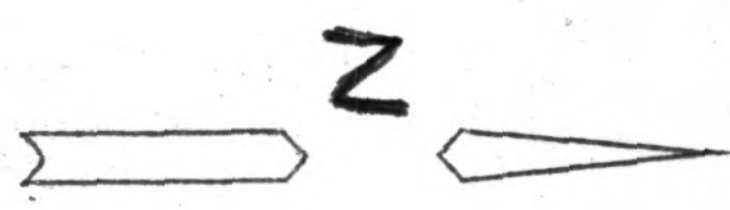
who founded the first wholesale jewelry business in Louisiana in 1888. His next venture was to build a prestigious, modern building to house his business. Construction on the Roumain Building was begun in February 1912 and completed in January 1913 at a cost of approximately \$150,000.

# LAFAYETTE ST.

FLORIDA ST.



(Riverside Mall)  
NORTH 3rd ST



Roumain Building

Baton Rouge, LA

East Baton Rouge Parish