

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received AUG 25 1983

date entered SEP 22 1983

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

1. Name

historic Vernon Parish Courthouse

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 201 South<sup>c</sup> 3rd St.

N/A not for publication

city, town Leesville

N/A vicinity of

state LA

code 22

county Vernon Parish

code 115

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Vernon Parish Police Jury Raymond Palmer, President 318-238-0324

street & number P.O. Box 1548

city, town Leesville

N/A vicinity of

state LA 71446

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Vernon Parish Courthouse

street & number 201 South 3rd Street

city, town Leesville

state LA 71446

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1978  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records LA State Historic Preservation Office

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 Vernon Parish Courthouse (1910) is a stuccoed masonry neo-classical building with two principal stories and a third story cupola. It is located on a landscaped square in the Leesville central business district. Despite alterations, the building retains its National Register eligibility.

The essentially square building mass has four small wings which project diagonally at each of the corners. This creates something of an overall "X" shaped plan. Each side of the building has a four-column colossal composite order pedimented portico with relief work in the tympanum. The main entrance portico (which faces Third Street) and the corresponding rear portico are slightly larger than the two side porticoes. The front and rear porticoes also project further from the building than the other two. Windows and doors are plainly cut through the walls with almost no detailing. Each corner of the building is trimmed with quoins, and the entire building mass is surmounted by a full entablature and a parapet. The large hip roof culminates in a sizable Baroque domed cupola with a clock on each face.

The ground story has a cruciform hall plan with the courtroom space upstairs. As with most of Louisiana's old courthouses, the interior of the Vernon Parish Courthouse has been considerably modified over the years and does not contribute much to the building's architectural value. Nonetheless, it retains the following original features: (1) the paneled wainscoting in the major public spaces both upstairs and down, (2) the two original staircases with their heavy, paneled newel posts and decorative metalwork balustrades, (3) the decorative balustrades and other woodwork encompassing the legal bench, (4) the decorative frontispiece to the safe, (5) various interior doors and doorways, and (6) the blue and brown tile floors on the ground level.

Since construction the following changes have been made in the courthouse:

1. As previously mentioned, the interior has undergone many alterations including the installation of false ceilings and plywood paneling and the partitioning off of a portion of the courtroom.
2. In the 1970's a brick annex was built behind the courthouse. An enclosed passage was constructed from the rear courthouse entrance door to the annex which passes under the rear portico.
3. The original entrance doors have been replaced with glass doors.
4. Handicapped entrance ramps have been installed.

### Assessment of Integrity:

Despite these changes, the courthouse retains the features (mentioned in Item 8) which establish its architectural significance. Moreover, the large annex hardly touches the original building. The classical courthouse stands forth from the annex and dominates the square.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" 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** 1910 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

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

The Vernon Parish Courthouse is locally significant in the area of architecture within the context of Vernon Parish. The Louisiana Comprehensive Historic Sites Survey has recorded eighty-nine 50+ year old structures in Vernon Parish, most of which are cabins and bungalows. From among this group the Vernon Parish Courthouse is by far the most architecturally pretentious and sophisticated. It followed the prevailing taste for neo-classical architecture in public buildings of the early-twentieth century. In doing so, it far outstripped the handful of substantial residences and large commercial buildings in the parish. It is one of the parish's largest buildings and it has the only fully articulated dome. Moreover, it is the only building to feature pedimented porticoes of any kind, let alone composite colossal order ones. Other significant features include its distinctive exterior shape, its use of quoins, which is unusual in the parish, and its parapets. Taken as a whole, the courthouse represents Vernon Parish's most distinguished work of historic architecture.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Louisiana Comprehensive Historic Sites Survey, Vernon Parish.  
Brasseaux, Carl A., Conrad, Glenn R., and Robinson, R. Warren. The Courthouses of Louisiana. Lafayette, LA: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1977.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approximately 3/4 acre

Quadrangle name Leesville, LA

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	5	4	7	5	1	4	1	0	3	4	4	5	2	1	0	1	0
Zone			Easting						Northing								

B 

Zone			Easting						Northing								

C 

Zone			Easting						Northing								

D 

Zone			Easting						Northing								

E 

Zone			Easting						Northing								

F 

Zone			Easting						Northing								

G 

Zone			Easting						Northing								

H 

Zone			Easting						Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Please refer to enclosed sketch map.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff Assisted by Eugene Kavanaugh, Vernon Parish  
Division of Historic Preservation Tax Assessor

organization State of Louisiana date June 1983

street & number P.O. Box 44247 telephone 504-342-6682

city or town Baton Rouge state LA 70804

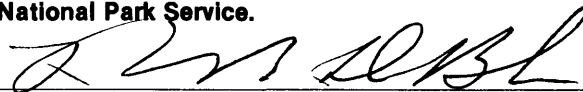
## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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



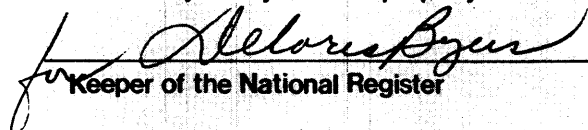
Robert B. DeBlieux

title LA State Historic Preservation Officer

date August 15, 1983

### For NPS use only

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

  
Keeper of the National Register

**Included in the  
National Register**

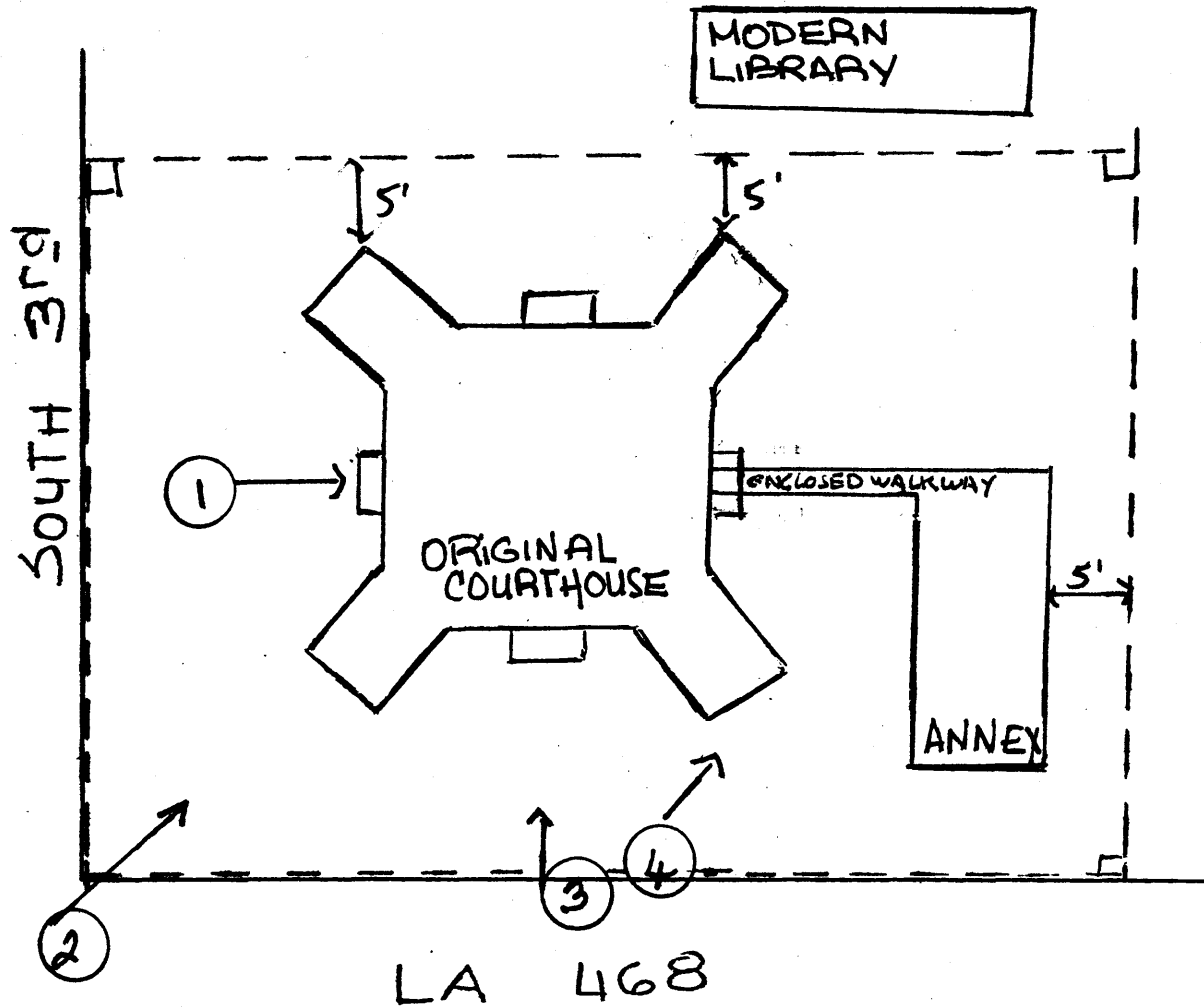
date 9/22/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

# VERNON PARISH COURTHOUSE, LEESVILLE



Boundaries are parallel to the  
facades of the main building  
block, distances as shown.

