

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received APR 17 1986  
MAY 15 1986  
date entered

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

1. Name

historic G. B. Cooley House

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 1011 South Grand Street N/A not for publication

city, town Monroe N/A vicinity of

state LA code 22 parish ~~East~~ Ouachita code 073

3. Classification

|   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <b>Category</b>                                 | <b>Ownership</b>                                     | <b>Status</b>                                       | <b>Present Use</b>  |
| <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 (law office) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure              | <input type="checkbox"/> both                        | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress           | <input type="checkbox"/> museum                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site                   | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                            | <b>Accessible</b>                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> park                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> private residence                  |
|   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted          | <input type="checkbox"/> religious                          |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> no                         | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific                         |
|   |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial                         |
|   |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation                     |
|   |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> military                           |
|   |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> other:                             |

4. Owner of Property

name Neal G. Johnson and Jerry L. Jones

street & number 1011 South Grand

city, town Monroe N/A vicinity of state LA 71201

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Ouachita Parish Courthouse

street & number 300 St. John P. O. Box 1862

city, town Monroe state LA 71201

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 70804

## 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 Cooley House is a fourteen room, brick and stucco, Prairie Style residence located next to the Ouachita River in the old residential section of Monroe. A design for the house was exhibited as early as 1910; however, it was not executed until 1926. The house and its matching garage have only been slightly altered over the years.

Some comment is required regarding the disparity between the date of the design and the actual date of construction. It is known that a design for a G. B. Cooley House in Monroe was exhibited at the Chicago Architectural Club in 1910, that Cooley acquired the property in question in 1924-25, and that the present house and garage appear on a 1926 Sanborn map. The reason for the time lapse is a mystery. One local story has it that Cooley commissioned the design, but waited until he had amassed enough money to execute it.

Most Prairie Style houses are planned around a primary axis and a major secondary axis. But the plan of the Cooley House is so linear that there is really only one axis--i.e., from front to rear. The plan is anchored by a two story living room with a massive free-standing fireplace at the back. In front of the living room are a couple of small rooms, one upstairs and one down. The upstairs room can only be reached by narrow balconies which run either side of the upper part of the living room. Behind the living room is a somewhat higher two story block which contains bedrooms upstairs and a dining room, study, and stair hall downstairs. Further to the rear is a lower two story wing which contains the kitchen area. In front of the house is an oblong reflecting pool which continues the dominant front-rear axis of the house into the garden. The pool has a decorative brick surround.

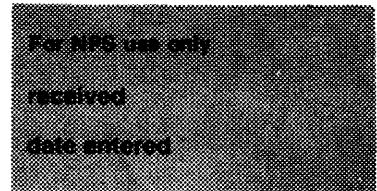
The massing of the Cooley House consists of a central two story block with slightly lower two story front and rear wings. All parts of the house are set under broad low pitched roofs which extend two to three feet beyond the exterior walls. These roofs cast heavy shadows which emphasize the horizontal massing of the design. Horizontal feeling is also given by the squat chimneys, the low brick walls encompassing the terraces, and the numerous bands of casement windows. The house does feature one vertical element -- the stucco piers which separate the windows. This represents more vertical articulation than most Prairie Style houses have. All the windows are ornamented with screens of Japanese-inspired fretwork. The thirty degree angle used in some of the fret members echoes the roofline of the house. This fretwork style is echoed in the two lamp standards located at each of the major entrances.

The interiors are fairly regular and contained, but there is some interpenetration of spaces (principally between the living room and the dining room). The rooms feature light colored walls with Japanese-inspired dark wood strips which emphasize the architectural members. Unlike some Prairie Style houses, the Cooley House does not have wood accents which attempt to contradict the shapes of the rooms. The two story living room and most of the bedrooms have pitched ceilings to follow the pitched roof of the house. The fireplace features a pronounced two-sided fire hood with a vigorous geometrical surround. On each side of the flue is a recessed niche designed for sculptural display. The house retains most of its original illumination, including recessed lighting in the living room and fretwork sconces in other rooms. There is also an original built-in vacuum cleaning system.

CONTINUED

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7. Description (cont'd) Ouachita Parish, LA

To the rear of the property is a matching Prairie Style garage which is linked to the house by a low brick wall. This, of course, is listed as a contributing element.

Alterations

Since construction, a few extra ceiling lights have been added and a tertiary bedroom has been fitted with ceiling tile and plywood paneling. Also, a covered walkway leading from the kitchen to the garage has been added. The garage has been fitted with a new front door and its interior has been reworked for a law library. In our view, these changes should be regarded as minor. There is certainly no question of integrity loss.

## 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** 1910; 1926

**Builder/Architect**

Builder: G. B. Cooley

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

Architect: Walter Burley Griffin

### Criterion C

The Cooley House is of state level significance in the area of architecture because it is Louisiana's only known Prairie Style house, and indeed one of very few ever built in the South. In addition, it is the work of Walter Burley Griffin, an internationally known Prairie School architect.

The Prairie Style is an important architectural phenomenon for the United States because it was largely a homegrown product. It is one of relatively few instances in which American architecture did not simply reflect European trends. The Cooley House is, of course, very much a part of the Prairie School phenomenon. When it was designed, the drawings were exhibited by the Chicago Architectural Club, which was at that time something of a forum for progressive architecture. The Cooley House is believed to be Louisiana's only true Prairie Style house, and it is one of very few ever built in the South.

Scholarly assessments differ as to Griffin's importance in the Modernist Movement. Some declare that he was merely an expert practitioner of other peoples' concepts, while others assert that he contributed to the development of the Prairie Style while an associate of Frank Lloyd Wright (1902-1906). Wright is generally acknowledged as the single most important figure in the Prairie School, and Griffin is usually thought of as one of a small coterie of designers who were important but on the "second rung." It is well known that Griffin did not merely "sit at the feet of the master." He developed his own mode of the Prairie Style (as can be seen at the Cooley House) and ultimately evolved his own style totally apart from the Prairie School. Instead of "breaking up the box" and reaching out into the garden as Wright would have done, Griffin increasingly sought a closed mass with four monumental facades. In his mature style he drew the mass of a house together in what one scholar has called a "tall prism."

As his career developed, Griffin became better known as a land planner than as an architect, although he continued to design individual buildings to the end of his life. His most important work was the design for the new Australian capital of Canberra. In 1912 he won an international competition for planning the new town, a feat which brought him tremendous publicity in the United States. It also took him to Australia, where he practiced for many years.

Griffin's stature as a major Prairie Style architect is beyond doubt. He is the subject of at least two books himself and is featured prominently in numerous scholarly works on the Prairie Style. For example, in H. Allen Brooks' The Prairie Style, which is regarded as the standard book on the subject, Griffin has almost a page-and-a-half of citations in the index. In addition, he is important enough to be mentioned in general works such as Marcus Whiffen's American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles. The Cooley House is most likely the only example of his work in the South.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1/2 @ 1/2 acre

Quadrangle name Monroe South, LA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

|      |   |   |   |         |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 5 | 5 | 8 | 3       | 2 | 4 | 0 | 3        | 5 | 9 | 5 | 1 | 8 | 0 |
| Zone |   |   |   | Easting |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |

B 

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| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

C 

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D 

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E 

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| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

F 

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| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

G 

|      |  |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|--|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
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| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

H 

|      |  |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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|      |  |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Boundary lines follow property lines of the two lots on which the house and garage stand, said lots being legally described as Lots D and E of Layton's First Addition to the City of Monroe. See enclosed map for lot dimensions.

### 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 ASSISTED BY OWNER  
Division of Historic Preservation

organization State of Louisiana date February 1986

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*

Robert B. DeBlieux

title State Historic Preservation Officer date March 27, 1986

### For NPS use only

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

Entered in 1986 National Register date 5-15-86

*for Allous Byers*  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet G. B. Cooley House Item number 9 Page 1

Ouachita Parish, LA

9. Bibliography

Birrell, James. Walter Burley Griffin. University of Queensland Press, 1964.

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Courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Brooks, H. Allen. Frank Lloyd Wright and the Prairie School. New York: George Braziller, Inc., in association with the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 1984.

Brooks, H. Allen. The Prairie School: Frank Lloyd Wright and his Midwest Contemporaries. University of Toronto Press, 1972.

Conveyance Records, Ouachita Parish Courthouse.

Griffin, Walter Burley. Schematic Drawing of G. B. Cooley Dwelling, Monroe, Louisiana (no date, one 8½ x 11 sheet, in possession of owner).

Peisch, Mark L. The Chicago School of Architecture: Early Followers of Sullivan and Wright. New York: Random House, 1964.

Sanborn Insurance Company Map, Monroe, 1926.

Spencer, Brian A., ed. The Prairie School Tradition: The Prairie Archives of the Milwaukee Art Center. New York: Whitney Library of Design, An Imprint of Watson - Gupstill Publications, 1979.

Van Zanten, David T., ed. Walter Burley Griffin: Selected Designs. Palos Park, Illinois: Prairie School Press, 1970.

BOUNDARY MAP

Cooley House  
Monroe  
Ouachita Parish, LA

NOT TO SCALE

LOTS D + E OF  
LAYTON'S 1ST  
ADDITION TO THE  
CITY OF MONROE

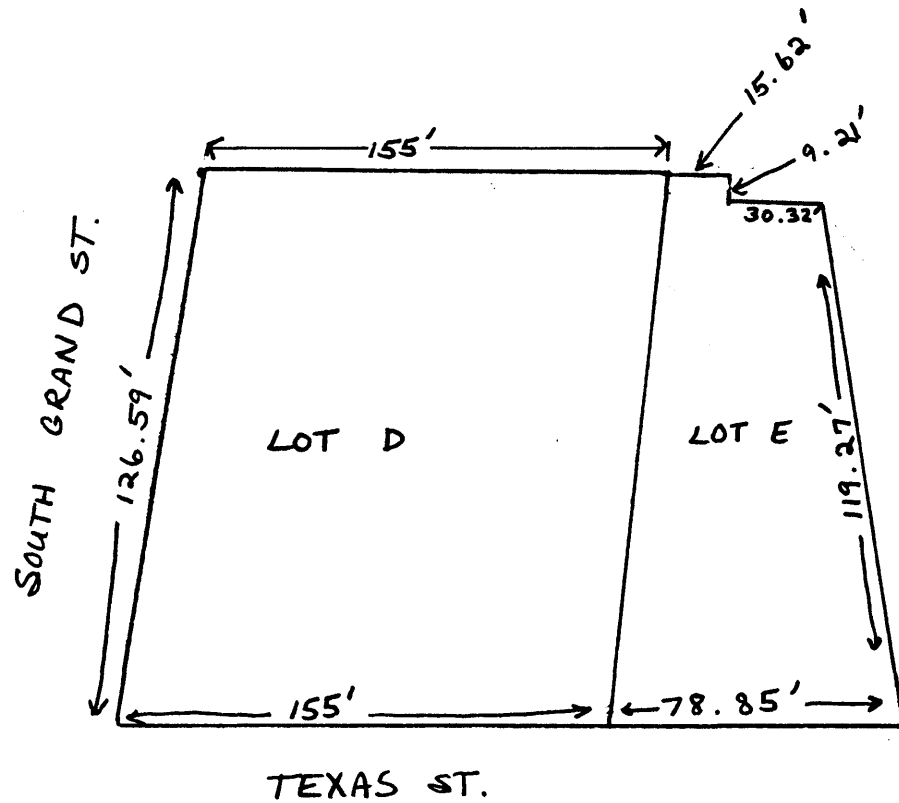
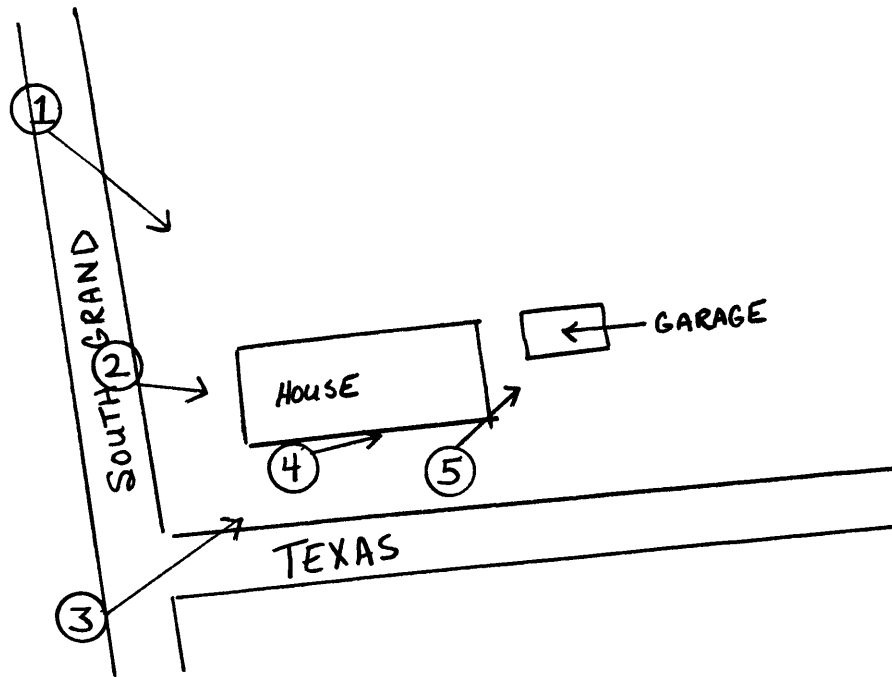


PHOTO DIRECTION MAP

Cooley House  
Monroe  
Ouachita Parish, LA



NOT TO SCALE