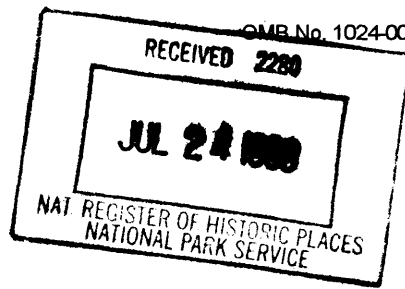


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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Pitre, Vic House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 476 Sala Avenue NA not for publication

city or town Westwego NA vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Jefferson code 051 zip code 70094

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Gerri Hobdy

July 17, 1998

Signature of certifying official/Title Gerri Hobdy Date
LA SHPO, Department of Culture, Recreation & Tourism

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

Edson H. Beall
Signature of Keeper

Date of Action
8-20-98

Pitre, Vic House

Name of property

Jefferson Parish, LA

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Choose as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Choose only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- X private
public-local
public-State
public-Federal

- X building(s)
district
site
structure
object

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total. Values: 1, 0.

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Domestic

Sub. Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Domestic

Sub. Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Bungalow/Craftsman

Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other Ceramic tile

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Pitre, Vic House

Name of property

Jefferson Parish, LA

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" next to the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
X B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations NA

(Mark "X" next to all that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1925-1948

Significant Dates

1925

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Pitre, Victorin A.

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

NA

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
previously listed in the National Register
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:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Pitre, Vic House

Name of property

Jefferson Parish, LA

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

1 15 775640 3312160

2

3

4

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff

organization Division of Historic Preservation

date May 1998

street & number P.O. Box 44247

telephone (504) 342-8160

city or town Baton Rouge

state LA

zip code 70804

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Rhonda Serignet

street & number 476 Sala Avenue

telephone (504) 341-4361

city or town Westwego

state LA

zip code 70094

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

The Vic Pitre House (1925) is a medium-sized residential structure located on Sala Avenue in Westwego, a city on the west bank of the Mississippi River in Jefferson Parish, directly across from Uptown New Orleans. The building is set in what is now (and was historically) a neighborhood of mixed residential and commercial uses. Essentially Bungalow in form, the house exhibits some Colonial Revival styling at the front elevation. The building also reflects the influence of the popular New Orleans "camelback" form (a second story built only at the rear of the house). Although the interior of the house has received minor modifications through the addition of walls to provide new bedrooms and bathrooms, the house is clearly recognizable to its period and thus easily retains the integrity necessary for National Register eligibility.

Owing to its decorative front facade (highly decorative for the neighborhood), the house was described as an "ornamental" addition to the town of Westwego in a news article published three years after its construction. The prominent full-length porch supported by heavy brick piers topped by decorative columns is clearly in the Bungalow mode, as is the generally squat massing and gentle pitch of the roof. Unlike most bungalows, however, the house exhibits a hipped roof. The entrance porch is topped by a segmental portico decorated with ornamental scrollwork. This portico, supported on each side by three simple Tuscan-style columns, represents a significant Colonial Revival influence. Although the front entrance with elliptical fanlight and sidelights is also clearly an element of the Colonial Revival, the light configuration of the entrance door and sidelights is decorated with muntins in a grid pattern typical of the Craftsman style. Located just above the entrance portico is a projecting dormer accented by two square vents.

Each edge of the wide porch eave (another Bungalow element) is supported by a group of three square classically-inspired wooden columns which match the two pilasters found at the edges of the front elevation. The brick-enclosed piers supporting the porch and front faces of the porch steps are decorated with ceramic tile. Although the house is raised on piers, the area beneath the house is enclosed with decorative concrete blocks. These blocks appear again at the edge of the front property line as a base for the iron fence which surrounds the front yard.

The first floor plan has been modified somewhat to provide additional rooms in the house. The original plan provided for a parlor stretching the full width of the house, but the parlor was divided with a wall to provide an additional bedroom. A rear bedroom has also been divided by a wall to create two bedrooms. The current owner is familiar with the house dating back 35 to 40 years ago, and indicates that these modifications had already occurred by that period.

There are also two bathrooms at the first floor, one of which is original and retains a number of its original elements and fixtures. Also at the first floor is a living room featuring a bay

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**United States Department of the Interior
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

window and fireplace faced in the same brick as the exterior porch piers. The kitchen features original glass-doored cabinetry. A rear full-length porch has been enclosed with screen.

The second-story camelback is accessed by a tight, steep stair located off a side hall adjacent to the kitchen. The camelback houses a large (master) bedroom and small bathroom. The exterior of the camelback features three windows at each side and a square vent at the front face.

A small rear addition with dumbwaiter was made at some point soon after the house's construction to provide additional storage with access to the area beneath the house; the dumbwaiter, although not currently in use, remains operable.

The long-range plan of the current owners is to restore the house fully, including the removal of the earlier room partitions and the addition of details such as period kitchen appliances.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 1

The Vic Pitre House is locally significant in the area of politics and government as the home of Westwego Mayor Vic Pitre from the 1925 construction of the house until his 1957 death in an automobile accident. Well known and remembered even today as an important figure during the town's developmental years, Pitre remains the longest serving mayor in Westwego's history, from 1921 (only two years after the town's charter) until his defeat in 1941. The period of significance spans from the building's 1925 construction date until 1948, the current 50-year cutoff.

Under Vic Pitre's leadership as the second mayor (the first to be elected rather than appointed), the town of Westwego developed in a "steady, substantial and in many ways remarkable" fashion. During his administration, the town's population nearly quadrupled and many amenities of which towns much larger would have been envious were established. As noted in the *Times-Picayune* in 1928: "by comparison with communities similarly sized and situated Westwego seems to have gone far in the matter of public facilities."

Although settled beginning in the mid-nineteenth century by the French of the Bayou Lafourche and Barataria areas, it was the railroad, wharves, and Westwego Canal which allowed the first bursts of development in the late nineteenth century in the area now known as Westwego (named to commemorate the thousands of travelers who crossed the Mississippi River at that point). The area was alternately known as Salaville, in honor of Pablo Sala, who is regarded as the founder of the town. The limited population of the area was somewhat increased in 1893 by the influx of refugees from the hurricane-devastated Cheniere Caminada (near Barataria Bay and the Gulf of Mexico). Among these newcomers was a young Vic Pitre, along with his mother and siblings.

Although known to most New Orleanians as "some little place across the river" (as described in a 1928 *Times-Picayune* news article), Westwego was referred to by the trappers and fishermen who utilized the town's industrial center as "the front"—owing to its location at the river's edge. Moreover, to the individuals who lived in the rural swamps approaching the Gulf of Mexico (only 45 miles away), Westwego was a center of civilization and progress. This progress was most notably attributable to Mayor Pitre's aggressive attempts to improve the small town through municipal projects.

Given the fact that Westwego had no form of municipal government until the village received its charter in 1919, the strides made by Pitre's administration were quite remarkable. By 1928, only seven years after his initial election, Pitre noted that his "proudest boast" was the fact that although every street within Westwego was paved in concrete and flanked by sidewalks, taxes remained low. Pitre believed that low taxes and the city's accessibility drew people to

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United States Department of the Interior
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 2

Westwego and spurred the town's development and growth. By 1930, the population was approaching 4000; by comparison, the population was just over 1500 in 1919.

Pitre's tenure as mayor brought many municipally-sponsored improvements to Westwego, including paved streets, sidewalks, natural gas, a playground, fire protection, "modern schools," and a "first class water supply." The water system, hailed as one of the state's best, became possible through the aid of Pitre's support of a \$100,000 bond issue. It was at the time the only water system in Louisiana developed under the supervision of the Board of Health and the Fire Prevention Bureau.

Prior to Pitre's administration, ferry service to New Orleans occurred twice each hour and night service was non-existent. By 1928, the ferries operated every ten minutes during the day and every 30 minutes at night; three boats operated on Sundays to accommodate the crowds. The increase in ferry service would certainly have had a considerable impact on the people of Westwego, allowing them more frequent access to New Orleans. This impact is brought into better perspective in considering that until 1935, when the first bridge crossing the Mississippi River in the New Orleans area was opened (the Huey P. Long Bridge), New Orleans was only accessible from the West Bank by ferry.

In 1933, Westwego's Chamber of Commerce began an active campaign to advertise the town's advantages through the *Times-Picayune*, believing that effective advertisement was the only thing required for the town and parish "to go far to the front" and be recognized as "the most attractive parish outside of New Orleans"—and one ripe for investment. Pitre's administration also engendered an increase in industrial development by offering a five-year moratorium on taxation for new factories locating in Westwego.

Pitre was largely motivated by the belief that new industries would be influenced to locate in Westwego rather than New Orleans if the town was outfitted with top-notch facilities. He also believed that Westwego would eventually become "second to the second port" of New Orleans.

Mayor Pitre not only led the way in municipal-level politics, but also stood in opposition to parish-level policies which he believed were unfair. In 1925, Mayor Pitre's decision to pay only half of the property taxes owed to Jefferson Parish for his vast land holdings (at the time he had the largest land holdings in Westwego) almost caused him to lose his property at auction. Mayor Pitre claimed that Westwego landowners had a constitutional exemption from the full millage of the parish property tax because the town had a system of paved streets and was therefore not a burden to the parish budget. The judge in the case agreed with Mayor Pitre, allowing Pitre to retain his property and prompting a decision described as one of great importance to the town's taxpayers.

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United States Department of the Interior
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 3

This decision came at the same time that many Westwego residents were beginning to view their town as a refuge from the “big city” on the other side of the Mississippi River. Westwego’s proximity to New Orleans allowed the town to profit from many of the city’s positive forces as a port and industrial center, but the town forged by the actions of Mayor Pitre was a haven fully equipped with the big city’s amenities but few of its problems.

Known as a savvy real estate investor, Pitre built a number of the structures in early Westwego, primarily as rental housing. However, one of the substantial private contributions which he made to Westwego was the construction of the extant Jefferson Building, located approximately one and a half blocks from his own home. The two-story masonry structure represented a substantial addition to the area and housed a post office, bank, pharmacy, and office space. Pitre himself managed the construction of his “ornamental” home at 476 Sala Avenue—described in a 1928 *Times-Picayune* news article as a “high class improvement” to the town.

Pitre was defeated in the 1941 mayoral election after 20 years in that position, although he remained Jefferson Parish Clerk of Court until 1952 (a position he had held since 1928). Despite the fact that Pitre’s service to Jefferson Parish as a whole cannot be understated (having also been president of the Jefferson Parish School Board for nine of his 16 years in that service), it is his achievements as Mayor of Westwego which are truly noteworthy. As the longest serving mayor of the town, Pitre served remarkably in time as well as deed.

OTHER PROPERTIES ASSOCIATED WITH VIC PITRE:

When Pitre arrived from Cheniere Caminada in 1893, he lived in a house at the rear of the store at which he was employed, located at 470 Sala Avenue. He purchased this building in 1910 and continued to live there until the construction of the candidate building at 476 Sala Avenue. The building at 470 Sala Avenue is no longer extant, and in any case, is not as intimately associated with Pitre’s tenure as mayor as the candidate building.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 9 Page 1

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- Reeves, William D. *Westwego: From Cheniere to Canal*. Jefferson Parish Historical Series Monograph 14. Westwego, La.: Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Alario, Sr., 1996.
- Seiferth, Herman J. “Adopted Realty as Best Use for Surplus: Now Largest Holder in Town of Which He’s Mayor.” *Times-Picayune* [New Orleans, La.]. 1928.
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- “Westwego Decides to Use Advertising: The Times-Picayune Chosen for Publicity Campaign.” *Times-Picayune* [New Orleans, La.]. 18 May 1933: 3.

Pitre, Vic House

Name of property

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

Jefferson Parish, LA

County and State

OMB No. 1024-0018

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National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 10 Page 1

LEGAL PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:

Lots 152 & 154 and 12 feet of Lot 156 nearest to the adjoining Lot 154, Town of Salaville (now City of Westwego), Parish of Jefferson, as per plan of survey drawn by Sidney F. Lewis, C.E. Annexed for referenced to an act of sale by Pablo Sala to Manuel Vallee, passed before Michael V. DeJan, a notary public in the City of New Orleans, on the 8th day of March 1893.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

Boundaries follow property lines.