

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received NOV 9 1987

date entered DEC 14 1987

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

1. Name

historic Poplar Grove Plantation House

and or common

2. Location

street & number 3142 North River Road N/A not for publication

city, town Port Allen vicinity of

state LA code 22 parish X county West Baton Rouge code 121

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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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 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 Mrs. Ruth Wilkinson

street & number Poplar Grove Plantation
3142 North River Road

city, town Port Allen vicinity of state LA 70767

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number 850 8th Street P. O. Box 107

city, town Port Allen state LA 70767

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Comprehensive Standing Structures Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1987 federal state county local

depository for survey records LA State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge state LA

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>1886</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Poplar Grove Plantation House (1884) is a single story, frame, galleried pavilion featuring a combination of Chinese, Italianate, Eastlake, and Queen Anne Revival elements. In 1886 it was moved to its present rural setting behind the Mississippi River levee north of the town of Port Allen. Despite some alterations, the house easily retains enough of its original 1880's character to merit listing on the National Register.

Designed by the noted New Orleans architect Thomas Sully, the house was built as the Banker's Pavilion at the 1884 World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition held in New Orleans. In 1886 it was purchased by the family of the present owner, moved to its present location, renovated and enlarged.

The building was described in the New Orleans Daily Picayune of February 8, 1885 as follows:

Yesterday one of the handsomest structures on the Exposition Grounds was turned over to the Banker's Committee, complete in every part. It contains two parlors, each about twenty-two feet square; one for ladies and one for gentlemen. Attached to each are commodious and well provided retiring rooms. The building is surrounded on three sides by a gallery; the structure is in an ornate and substantial style of architecture, the walls are elegantly decorated, the windows are filled with fine stained glass, the floor is covered with scarlet matting and the building is complete in every detail. The two parlors can be thrown into one by means of folding doors, and in every respect the structure does credit to the gentlemen who created it and the profession it represents.

Noteworthy decorative features include the jigsaw cut Chinese dragons set in each of the gallery brackets, the screens of Eastlake spindles which are said to resemble an abacus, and the multi-pane Queen Anne Revival windows with their checkered patterns of stained glass. In addition, the central entrance to the gallery features a Queen Anne Revival half-timbered gable. The galleries are surmounted by a separate hip roof which is trimmed with an elaborate Italianate modillion cornice.

In 1886 the house was moved some eighty miles to its present location. At that time the floor plan was changed to a central hall with two rooms each side. Two chimneys were inserted to service four new fireplaces. (Previously the building had not been heated.) In addition, a rear "L" wing was added with a Chinese-Eastlake porch of its own. Because the 1886 interior renovation was so extensive, it is not known how much of the present woodwork is actually from the Banker's Pavilion

CONTINUED

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

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



Poplar Grove Plantation House

Continuation sheet West Baton Rouge Parish, LA Item number 7

Page 1

Description (cont'd)

and how much of it was installed after the move. Suffice it to say that the following interior features should be noted. In the hall there is an Eastlake "abacus" screen resting upon a pair of oriental sunburst brackets. Much of the wall and ceiling surface is sheathed in a manufactured planed wood which is said to resemble groups of bamboo stalks. The principal doorways feature checkerboard glasswork in the transoms which echoes the windows.

In about 1910 the rear wing was extended and enlarged incorporating an 1850's structure from elsewhere on the plantation. In addition, two small portions of the original gallery were enclosed, one for a bathroom, the other for a dining room extension. Sometime during this century the original cupola was lost. In addition, at one time there were side gables matching the one in front. These too have been lost. Evidently these losses occurred quite a long time ago because no one in the present family can remember when they took place. More recently, the gallery on the rear wing was enclosed.

Assessment of Integrity:

It should be noted that most of the changes the house has undergone are 1880's historic alterations. Although regrettable, the loss of the side gables and the cupola has not substantially diminished Poplar Grove's architectural importance. It is still a very strong architectural statement and retains the major features contributing to its architectural significance (i.e., its essential form, oriental details, and fenestration).

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input 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 1884, 1886 **Builder/Architect** Architect: Thomas Sully (1884)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Criterion C

Poplar Grove is architecturally significant on the state level because of its unique character. It occupies a similar architectural niche to the Brighton Pavilion or Longwood in Natchez. While Poplar Grove was not the personal statement of an eccentric client, it was nonetheless deliberately designed to be both eye-catching and extremely unusual. Its oriental looking details are unique in Louisiana. In addition, its form, with a full ornamented cornice protruding above a skirting gallery and culminating in a central hip roof mass, is fairly unusual for the period. Moreover, its Queen Anne Revival windows, with fully 60 panes of stained glass in a checker pattern in the upper sashes, are apparently unique. Finally, one of the aspects of the Aesthetic Movement was a fondness for things oriental. This normally took the form of wallpaper designs, prints, collecting porcelain jars, etc. One seldom sees it directly manifested in the architecture of the period. Poplar Grove is one of only a handful of examples of this in all of Louisiana. Overall, the State Historic Preservation Office staff knows of no other house in the state comparable to Poplar Grove.

9. Major Bibliographical References

New Orleans Daily Picayune. February 8, 12, 1885.

New Orleans Times-Democrat. February 8, 12, 1885.

Photo in possession of owner showing Banker's Pavilion at the World's Industrial & Cotton Centennial Exposition.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property @ 5.75 acres

Quadrangle name Baton Rouge West, LA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	5	6	7	2	5	2	0	3	3	7	4	6	0	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B

Zone	Easting				Northing									

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

Please refer to enclosed sketch map. Boundaries were chosen to encompass the house and its immediate setting. Following property lines would have meant including extensive unnecessary acreage.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff ASSISTED BY THE OWNER
Division of Historic Preservation

organization State of Louisiana date August 1987

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

city or town Baton Rouge state LA 70804

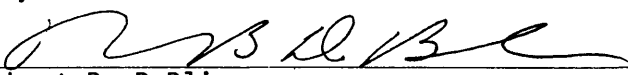
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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 November 2, 1987

For NPS use only

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


Keeper of the National Register

date 12-14-87

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

POPLAR GROVE PLANTATION HOUSE
WEST BATON ROUGE PARISH, LA
SCALE 1" = 100'

BOUNDARY

