

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

Broussard House, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

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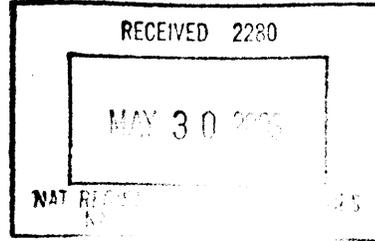
United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Broussard House

616



Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number 4512 Highland Road

Not for publication: NA

City/Town Baton Rouge

Vicinity: NA

State: Louisiana Code: LA County: East Baton Rouge Code: 033 Zip Code: 70808

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: Statewide: Locally: X

Jonathan Fricker

May 28, 2003

Signature of Certifying Official/Title Jonathan Fricker Deputy SHPO, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official/Title

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
- Determined eligible for the National Register
- Determined not eligible for the National Register
- Removed from the National Register
- Other (explain):

Signature of Keeper: *Edson H. Beall*

Date of Action: 7/10/03

5. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-Local:

Public-State:

Public-Federal:

Category of Property

Building(s): X

District:

Site:

Structure:

Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

2

2 (gateposts)

4

Non contributing

1 buildings

 sites

 structures

 objects

1 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: NA

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: domestic Sub: single dwelling

Current: vacant Sub:

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: other: French Eclectic

Materials:

Foundation: concrete

Walls: stucco

Roof: asphalt

Other:

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The Broussard House (1927) is a story-and-a-half, stucco-over-frame residence in the French eclectic taste set on a deep, two-acre lot on Highland Road in South Baton Rouge. The house is screened from the road, and from its approach driveway, by a dense planting of mature trees and shrubs. Original gateposts define the drive at Highland Road. The setting has the overall feel of an estate, albeit in miniature. Immediately to the rear of the house is a concrete ornamental fishpond. Then the land sweeps back and down a hillock to a grassy area at the extreme rear of the property. There has been little in the way of alteration since the historic period.

The house has a broad, capacious one-and-one-half story main block with a forward-thrusting story-and-a-half wing of somewhat lower profile. These are anchored at the corner by a prominent round turret with a strongly upward-thrusting conical roof. As is sometimes the case with ancient French buildings, the turret contains a winding staircase. It also provides for the main entrance and a small foyer. The main block's straightforward plan consists of a substantial square living room on the north end, a narrow library in the center and a squarish dining room at the south end. The front-facing wing is adjacent to the dining room and provides for a kitchen and storage.

The turret's winding stair forms a landing, part way up, which is lit by a window located above the entrance door. The upper story provides for two squarish bedrooms in the main block with a third over the front-facing kitchen. As was typical of the 1920s, the house originally had only one bathroom. It is located upstairs at the south end of the main block. Although they are set in a garret, the upper story rooms are large, with high knee-walls provided by the capacious roofline. So, although it is technically a half story, the upper floor is virtually another full story in all but name.

With its overall "L" shape plan, the accenting turret and the irregular system of generous hip and jerkin-head gable roofs, the house is meant to be seen from a three-quarter view. The well-planted front garden, with its mature trees and shrubs, is certainly oriented that way. The house's design is romantic and evocative rather than archaeologically correct, borrowing from several centuries of French architecture. The conical roof turret and the high, angular, generous, irregular roofline should be seen as French medieval, as should the board and batten front door with its richly crafted strap hinges. The distinctively French wall dormers are a feature found in both medieval and Renaissance buildings in France. The fact that the wall dormers culminate in hip roofs is atypical but may be seen as complementing the overall cottage-like effect of the roofline.

The rear elevation (garden façade) has a quieter, more regular feel suggesting the rural French Renaissance. There is also a single French Baroque oval dormer. Virtually all the openings are shuttered full-light French doors. On the upper story these are fitted with decorative metal grilles redolent of eighteenth century French townhouses. Another French Renaissance feature is the textured stucco which is worked into quoins at the corners. Finally, the living room chimney is fitted with a highly ornamental marble French Rococo mantel which is older than the house. Apparently it was purchased from an antique dealer in New Orleans when the house was built. Although its provenance is unknown, it does support the Francophile effect.

The dining room features a large mural on canvas depicting the Pont Neuf on the Seine River in Paris. It was acquired by James Broussard, the home's original owner, from the French Pavilion at

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the New York World's Fair held in 1939. In 1940 Broussard salvaged a black marble Greek Revival mantel from Uncle Sam Plantation in St. James Parish, which was being demolished by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. Other noteworthy interior features include cove moldings in the principal rooms, round arch doorways into the living and dining rooms with folding doors, and terrazzo floors. There is also a partial cellar.

Very shortly after the house was built, a frame sunroom was added to the dining room at the south end. More recently this sunroom was fitted with a full bath. This is virtually the only modern alteration and it should be regarded as minor.

On the north side of the property is a contemporaneous stucco garage with a steep gabled roof. This is listed as a contributing element. Just northeast of the kitchen wing (in front of the house but not that noticeable from the desired three-quarter view) is a frame (mainly board and batten) garden shed that was added less than 50 years ago. It is listed as a non-contributing element.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Applicable National Register Criteria: A__ B__ C X D__

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): NA
 A__ B__ C__ D__ E__ F__ G__

Areas of Significance: architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1927

Significant Dates: same

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: Architect: Robert Goodman, Baton Rouge, LA

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The Broussard House is of local architectural significance within the City of Baton Rouge as a rare and well-done residence reflecting the romantic historic revival tastes of the 1920s and 30s.

Highland Road's "petite maison" belongs to a distinctive generation of home building in America -- a time remembered in the once popular phrase, "between the wars." This era saw the heyday of the historic revival styles as nineteenth century Beaux Arts-inspired historicism made its way down the social scale to the American middle class. Today it can be seen as something of an architectural flowering that gave the country numerous romantic suburbs with "quaint" Tudor cottages and mock miniature Spanish haciendas. Houses were convincingly styled with a certain richness, variety and consequence -- qualities noticeably lacking in the more homogenous post-World War II Levittown-esque suburbs.

Baton Rouge grew rapidly during these years, expanding in population by better than 50%. And like the rest of the country, it too looked to the long ago and faraway for architectural inspiration, particularly after the mid-1920s when the bungalow began to fade from popularity. The old compact city spawned various suburbs "between the wars," and with them, a notable array of thousands of residences. Some of these homes are located in National Register districts. Others are scattered more sparsely in former outlying areas that filled-in later. Although no count has ever been made, it is clear that in terms of sheer numbers, this overall "between the wars" residential legacy is the city's largest collection of historic buildings.

The Broussard House is conspicuous among the city's historic revival residences because it reflects the hand of a formally trained architect, the vast majority of the others being builder jobs. Thus the styling is more consistent and focused. And the styling is not limited to the application of features (such as gables) and decorative details to a boxy house or bungalow plan. With its "L" shape, distinctive French roof design and strong conical roof turret, the Broussard House's massing is as much a part of the stylistic statement as its details. Indeed, it is a quite strong architectural statement -- a veritable chateau in miniature.

Moreover, the chateau or French eclectic genre gives the Broussard House standing as a virtually unique work among Baton Rouge residences of the period. Contemporaneous residences are, by and large, confined to more conventional romantic styles such as English Tudor, Spanish Mission, or Colonial in its various permutations. The Broussard House stands out in this regard as the only really well-developed and convincing work of domestic architecture in the French mode. (The other particularly good example is the French House at LSU, which has a connection to the Broussard House, as explained below.)

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Historical Note:

It is not by chance that the Broussard House is Highland Road's "petite maison." Its builder, James Broussard, was quite the Francophile. Having studied and taught as an exchange professor at the Sorbonne, Broussard returned to Baton Rouge to a faculty position at LSU in French language studies. By the mid-1930s he was both Dean of Administration and head of the Department of Romance Languages. The French House (National Register), a large French chateau built on the LSU campus in 1935, was his brainchild (according to tradition based upon a chateau he saw in France). Here in this co-ed building, exchange students and LSU students immersed themselves in a suitable environment for the learning of all things Gallic. For his efforts in French-American studies, the French government awarded Broussard the coveted Cross of the Legion of Honor. James and Nora Broussard's son Frederick and his wife, Vida Vignes Broussard, came to live with Mrs. Broussard (then a widow) in 1942. Vida Broussard remained in the house until a few years ago. Today it is unoccupied and on the market.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Staff knowledge of Baton Rouge architecture.

Broussard, Vida, interview. Mrs. Broussard is the daughter-in-law of the man who had the house built and she lived there for decades, beginning in 1942.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register. (partially)
- 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:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other (Specify Repository):

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: approx. 2 acres

UTM References: **Zone Easting Northing**
 15 675760 3364500

Verbal Boundary Description: The nominated property is shown as Parcels A and B on the attached map, measuring 197 feet along Highland Road by a depth of 431.3 feet.

Boundary Justification: Boundaries follow current property lines to encompass the house and its estate-like setting.

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11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: National Register staff

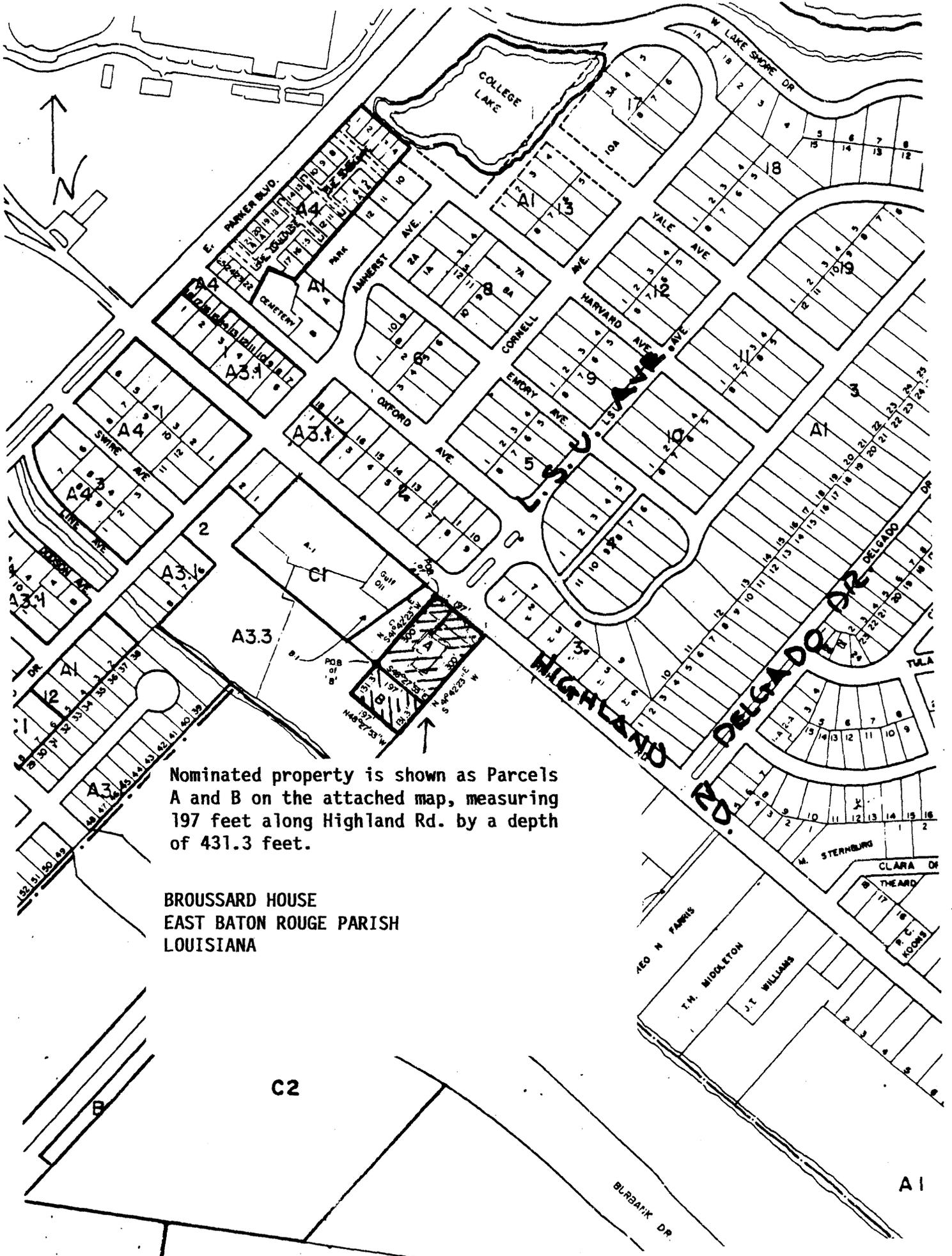
Address: Division of Historic Preservation, P. O. Box 44247, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Telephone: (225) 342-8160

Date: April 2003

PROPERTY OWNERS

Vida Broussard
333 Lee Drive, Apt. 186
Baton Rouge, LA 70808



Nominated property is shown as Parcels A and B on the attached map, measuring 197 feet along Highland Rd. by a depth of 431.3 feet.

BROUSSARD HOUSE
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH
LOUISIANA

C2

B

A1

BURBANK DR.

Broussard House
Photo Map
East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

