



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 Use the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each section in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 Smithfield Plantation House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 12445 North River Road Not for publication

city or town Port Allen vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county West Baton Rouge code 121 zip code 70767

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jon Fricker 3/3/95
Signature of certifying official/Title Jonathan Fricker, Deputy SHPO, Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism Date
State of 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 the 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 the Keeper Entered in the National Register Date of Action 4.7.95

Smithfield Plantation House
Name of Property

West Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Eastlake

foundation brick

Italianate

walls weatherboard

Queen Anne

roof asphalt

other

Narrative Description

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

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Continuation Sheet**

Smithfield Plantation House, West Baton Rouge Parish, LA

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The Smithfield Plantation House is a large frame dwelling located on the west bank of the Mississippi River in a rural section of northern West Baton Rouge Parish. Although originally constructed c. 1875, the house experienced an extensive remodeling c. 1900 and retains a significant amount of features from both periods. It stands one-and-one-half stories high on its upriver side and rises to two stories on its downriver side. Although the structure shows influences of the Queen Anne and Italianate styles, its dominant decorative motif is Eastlake. The house has been somewhat altered since completion of the historic remodeling but remains eligible for National Register listing.

No historic photograph showing Smithfield's pre-remodeling appearance has come to light. However, architectural evidence surviving from the original house indicates that it began life as a large one story structure with an equally large one-story ell. The main block contained two rooms on each side of a central hall. The ell contained four more rooms whose ceilings were lower than those within the main block. Thus, the first floor was six rooms deep on the home's downriver side. This floorplan remains basically intact. Both the main block and the ell were raised almost a full story above grade on large brick piers. The main block was covered by a pitched roof with large gables on each end. Its front gallery spanned the facade and turned at one corner to continue as a side gallery inset beneath the gabled roof on the downriver elevation. There was also a gallery on each side of the ell and one on the rear of the main block.

The c. 1875 date for the original house is indicated by the following features. First of all, the house is constructed with square nails of the type commonly in use from roughly 1820 to 1880. Secondly, it is clear that the house dates from near the end of this date range because it has a number of Italianate features. The Italianate style is not much in evidence in rural Louisiana until well after the Civil War. Square Italianate pillars with molded capitals and necking and scroll sawn balustrades survive on the two galleries flanking the ell as well as on two surviving portions of the original rear gallery. Intricate Italianate moldings are found around most windows and doors on the interior. The same moldings are evident on the house's original surviving aedicule style mantel (located in the downriver front room). A second, more elaborate Italianate mantel is found within one of the

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ell's rooms.* The four panel doors are very richly and intricately molded. The hinges in use throughout the house are of the ornamental cast-iron type generally associated with the later nineteenth century. The six-over-six floor-length slip head windows which communicate between some of the rooms and the galleries would not be expected as late as, for example, 1900. Finally, the clapboard siding under all galleries is, generally speaking, a post-Civil War feature in Louisiana houses.

Smithfield's c. 1900 remodeling included a number of important changes, which will be outlined below.

- 1) The once symmetrical roofline was enlarged and remodeled, providing for a partial second story on the downriver side. This new second story, with a gallery of its own, culminated in a prominent forward-facing gable. Two additional front facing gables were added, giving the facade a boldly asymmetrical character. The total roof configuration gives the building the asymmetrical massing associated with the Queen Anne style.
- 2) At this time the originally unfinished attic was divided into rooms using beaded board and rough lumber (presumably for cheese cloth and wallpaper).
- 3) The original Italianate gallery columns and balustrades on the front and downriver sides were replaced by boldly turned Eastlake columns flanked by brackets, balustrades composed of turned Eastlake balusters, and Eastlake spindle screens resembling abacuses. The newly added upper gallery was in the Eastlake style as well. Despite the overall Eastlake character of the new gallery system, the first and second story cornices featured late carryover Italianate brackets.

* The Italianate mantel in the front room, with its somewhat homemade appearance, looks as if it is original to the house. The second Italianate mantel is of the type which would have been manufactured and sold through a catalog. This second mantel is so unlike anything else in the house that one wonders if it was salvaged from another house.

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- 4) It appears that the sizeable bathroom located on what was once the rear of the downriver gallery was installed at this time. The woodwork in this bathroom is consistent with this period. In addition, the gallery's bay spacing and termination (half column) appear to be created with this enclosure in mind. There is a similar enclosure on the upper Eastlake gallery which also appears to be original to the c. 1900 remodeling. Here, too, the Eastlake styling appears to have been installed with the enclosure in mind. In addition, the interior woodwork of the enclosed room is completely consistent with the other finished attic woodwork which was installed at this time.
- 5) Architectural evidence suggests that, in the original house, there were two exterior staircases leading from the galleries to the then unfinished attic space. Most likely both were removed as part of the c. 1900 renovation. At that time, a new, elaborate staircase was installed at the rear of the central hall. This boldly three dimensional, sculptural staircase employs two straight flights of stairs, one half turn winder flight of stairs, and three landings merely to ascend one story. It also features a hutch bench, a display cabinet, and two fluted Ionic pilasters and one fluted Ionic column which support an elaborate two bay Eastlake screen. At the center of each side of the screen is a stylized anthemion motif.
- 6) Colonial Revival mantels were installed in some rooms at this time, but all but the one in the dining room (located within the ell wing) have been lost. In addition, built-in Colonial Revival style china cabinets were installed flanking the dining room mantel. One of these cabinets has since been removed.
- 7) The rear downriver room of the main house and the forwardmost room in the ell were joined with the installation of a large polygonal shaped cut through opening. The base of the opening was ornamented with a pair of paneled dado cabinets. Curiously, the upper portions of the opening were left completely unornamented. Whether this plainness reflects a later removal of original (to the remodeling) decorative features is not known.

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- 8) Finally, a portion of the original rear gallery was enclosed for a small room. It is now a bathroom but it is not known whether this was its original purpose. If it was always a bath, then the c. 1900 remodeled house would have had two bathrooms. In this regard it should be noted that while interior plumbing was becoming commonplace at the turn of the century, it was very unusual for even a large house to have more than one bathroom.

Alterations experienced by the building since the c.1900 remodeling include the following:

- 1) the creation of an above-ground basement accomplished by enclosing the area below the house with concrete blocks as walls and glass blocks for windows. New front steps were also constructed using concrete block at this time.
- 2) the removal of the portion of the chimneys above the roofline,
- 3) the installation of a large carport adjacent to the downriver side of the ell,
- 4) the installation of new cabinets in one of the ell rooms and the modernization of the kitchen located in the adjacent room, the repair of some damaged clapboards and foundation piers, and the construction of cabinets in the room located within the main block's upriver rear corner,
- 5) the subdivision of the second floor rear downriver room to create a bath, closet and hallway,
- 6) the loss (by theft) of the three Colonial Revival mantels mentioned above, a stained glass window formerly located on the stair landing, and the home's original front door and sidelights.

Although this list of post-1900 remodeling alterations may seem long, the Eastlake styling, Queen Anne-like massing and other features which give the house its architectural distinction (see Part 8) remain intact. Thus, Smithfield is a prime candidate for National Register listing.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for 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.
- 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 N/A
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or 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)

architecture

Period of Significance

c.1875; c.1900

Significant Dates

c.1875; c.1900

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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:

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

Name of repository:

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Smithfield Plantation House, West Baton Rouge Parish, LA

Section number 8 Page 1

The Smithfield Plantation House is locally significant in the area of architecture because it is a landmark within the parish of West Baton Rouge. This landmark status is based upon the home's pretentious Eastlake ornamentation, its distinctive massing, its elaborate interior staircase, and its size.

A partially complete survey combined with extensive staff knowledge reveals that West Baton Rouge Parish has very few buildings reflecting the influence of styles popular during the years between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of the twentieth century. In fact, only a small minority of buildings could be considered to be styled at all, regardless of the period. The surviving 50+ year old buildings in this rural parish consist mainly of utilitarian plantation buildings and small, very plain galleried houses in the Creole cottage form. Very few major plantation houses survive. The parish's small communities are characterized largely by vernacular commercial buildings featuring no particular style, plain cottages and low-key bungalows.

It is against this background that Smithfield's landmark status emerges. Of the 211 structures surveyed to date in West Baton Rouge Parish, only ten reflect the influence of the Eastlake style. Were the survey to be complete, this number would not be dramatically higher (based on staff knowledge and the fact that the survey has already covered high probability areas). Of the ten Eastlake influenced buildings covered in the survey, most are low key examples in which perhaps a series of columns or brackets are applied to otherwise small, simple, one story homes. Staff knowledge reveals that this overall lack of quality is indicative of the parish as a whole. There are only two known buildings which would be considered landmark examples of the style -- Smithfield and Poplar Grove (NR). Both are fully articulated, combining Eastlake columns and brackets with turned balusters and spindle screens outlining their galleries. Smithfield is the only example to display Eastlake features on both the upper and lower portions of a double gallery. Thus, it is one of the parish's most prominent examples of the Eastlake style.

The home's Eastlake ornamentation alone would make it eligible for the National Register as a local landmark. However, Smithfield has additional significant architectural features. For example, the home's asymmetrical Queen Anne-like massing (as described in

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Part 7) is surpassed by no other building in the parish. In addition, the home's stairway, featuring Ionic columns, an Eastlake screen, a built-in bench, a display cabinet, multiple landings, and multiple flights of steps, is probably the most elaborate staircase in the parish. (In fact, the staff knows of few that would surpass it in the state.) Finally, Smithfield is important for its size. Published sources, survey information and staff knowledge suggest that Smithfield is one of the largest residences in the parish, with only three other dwellings rivaling it in size. For all of these reasons, the Smithfield Plantation House is a strong candidate for National Register listing.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Division of Historic Preservation, Standing Structures Survey of
West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana.

Site visit by National Register staff.

Staff knowledge of the architectural patrimony of West Baton Rouge
Parish.

Boundary Description: See attached property plat map.

Justification: Boundaries follow property lines to the north,
east, and south, as shown on the attached property plat map. The
western boundary cuts in fairly close to the rear of the house to
exclude non-contributing elements on the property.