

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received DEC 23 1986

date entered

22

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

1. Name

historic DeSoto Parish Courthouse

and or common Same

2. Location

street & number Corner of Adams and Texas Streets N/A not for publication

city, town Mansfield N/A vicinity of

state LA code 22 Parish DeSoto code 031

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name DeSoto Parish Police Jury

street & number P. O. Box 898

city, town Mansfield N/A vicinity of state LA 71052

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. DeSoto Parish Courthouse

street & number Corner of Adams and Texas Streets(no specific address) P. O. Box 1206

city, town Mansfield state LA 71052

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1986  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records LA State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge state LA

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## 7. Description

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**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date N/A

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The DeSoto Parish Courthouse (1911) is a three story brick Beaux Arts structure located on a landscaped square in the center of Mansfield. Despite some alterations, chiefly on the interior, the building retains its National Register eligibility.

The DeSoto Parish Courthouse is actually three stories high, but is articulated with two principal stories raised on an English basement. The building is approached on all four sides via monumental flights of steps. The central main entrance is accented by a balustraded balcony on heavy consoles. The entrance leads to a central hall which in turn leads to axial corridors running to the ends of the building. Each side wing culminates in an imperial staircase leading to the courtroom on the top story. The presence of the courtroom is expressed on the exterior through the use of a higher central block with three great arched windows. The main block also features coupled Ionic columns and an ornamental parapet culminating in a central sculptural cartouche. The side wings, which are lower than the main block, are articulated with Tuscan pilasters and arched windows. The piano nobile rests upon a rusticated brick base with a heavy water table.

Today the interiors are fairly plain. When the courthouse was built, most of the ornamentation was in the courtroom, but much of this has been removed or hidden by the installation of a lowered ceiling and plywood paneling. Lowered ceilings have also been installed in much of the rest of the building. In addition, a few office walls have been removed and some glass fire safety screens have been added. Finally, one of the imperial staircases has been adjusted to accommodate an elevator. Aside from what survives of the imperial staircases and a small entrance vestibule, nothing of architectural significance remains on the interior.

The only exterior changes have been the installation of aluminum awnings on one of the side elevations, modern railings on the flights of steps, and an antenna on the roof. Since the courthouse's architectural significance rests entirely upon its exterior appearance, the interior changes, although regrettable, have not affected the building's eligibility for the National Register.

Immediately to the rear of the courthouse is a small modern brick shed which is listed as a non-contributing element.

# 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** 1911 **Builder/Architect** Architect: Favrot and Livaudais, New Orleans

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

The DeSoto Parish Courthouse is locally significant in the area of architecture as a rare example of the work of a high style practitioner as well as the parish's only example of the Beaux Arts style.

DeSoto Parish is currently being comprehensively surveyed for historic structures. It appears that most of the parish's building stock dates from the early twentieth century. Typically one sees cottages, bungalows, and "vernacular" commercial buildings, all of which reflect the work and taste of local builders.

The DeSoto Courthouse is very unusual in the parish because it reflects the work of an urban high style architectural firm. It is thought to be the only building in the parish designed by the noted New Orleans firm of Favrot and Livaudais. Although no specific study has ever been done on this firm, there is general agreement that it was a high style, competent, professional group of architects and that it was extremely prominent in the early twentieth century. Practicing the historicism which was then in vogue, it grew to be perhaps the largest architectural firm in New Orleans, the state's largest, most cosmopolitan urban center. For many years Favrot and Livaudais and Emile Weil vied for business across Louisiana. It is an open question as to which of these firms ultimately had the larger practice, but there is no question that they were the two major architectural firms in early twentieth century New Orleans. Favrot and Livaudais' best known works include the Hibernia Bank Building and the Cotton Exchange Building, both of which are landmarks in the New Orleans central business district. The firm also designed numerous public buildings, including courthouses, schools, and libraries across the state.

Favrot and Livaudais gave the courthouse a distinctive Beaux Arts style which sets it apart from every other period building in the parish. Its Beaux Arts design can clearly be seen in: (1) The grand gesture of its triple arch central block. (2) The use of coupled columns. (3) The use of a sculptural crowning cartouche. (4) The use of a climactic central mass dominating symmetrical ancillary wings. (5) The use of classical features such as consoles, balustrades, round arches, flat arches, rustication, heavy entablatures, etc.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Brasseaux, Carl A., Conrad, Glenn R., and Robison, R. Warren. The Courthouses of Louisiana. Lafayette, Louisiana: University of Southwestern Louisiana, Center for Louisiana Studies, 1977.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property @ 1 acre

Quadrangle name Mansfield, LA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	5	4	3	2	9	8	0	3	5	4	4	8	6	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

B 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

C 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

D 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

E 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

F 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

G 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

H 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Please refer to enclosed sketch map. Boundaries recognize the square on which the courthouse stands.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

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

organization State of Louisiana date November 1986

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

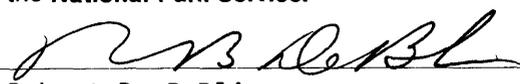
city or town Baton Rouge state LA 70804

## 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.

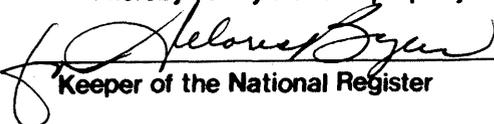
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

Robert B. DeBlieux

title State Historic Preservation Officer date December 17, 1986

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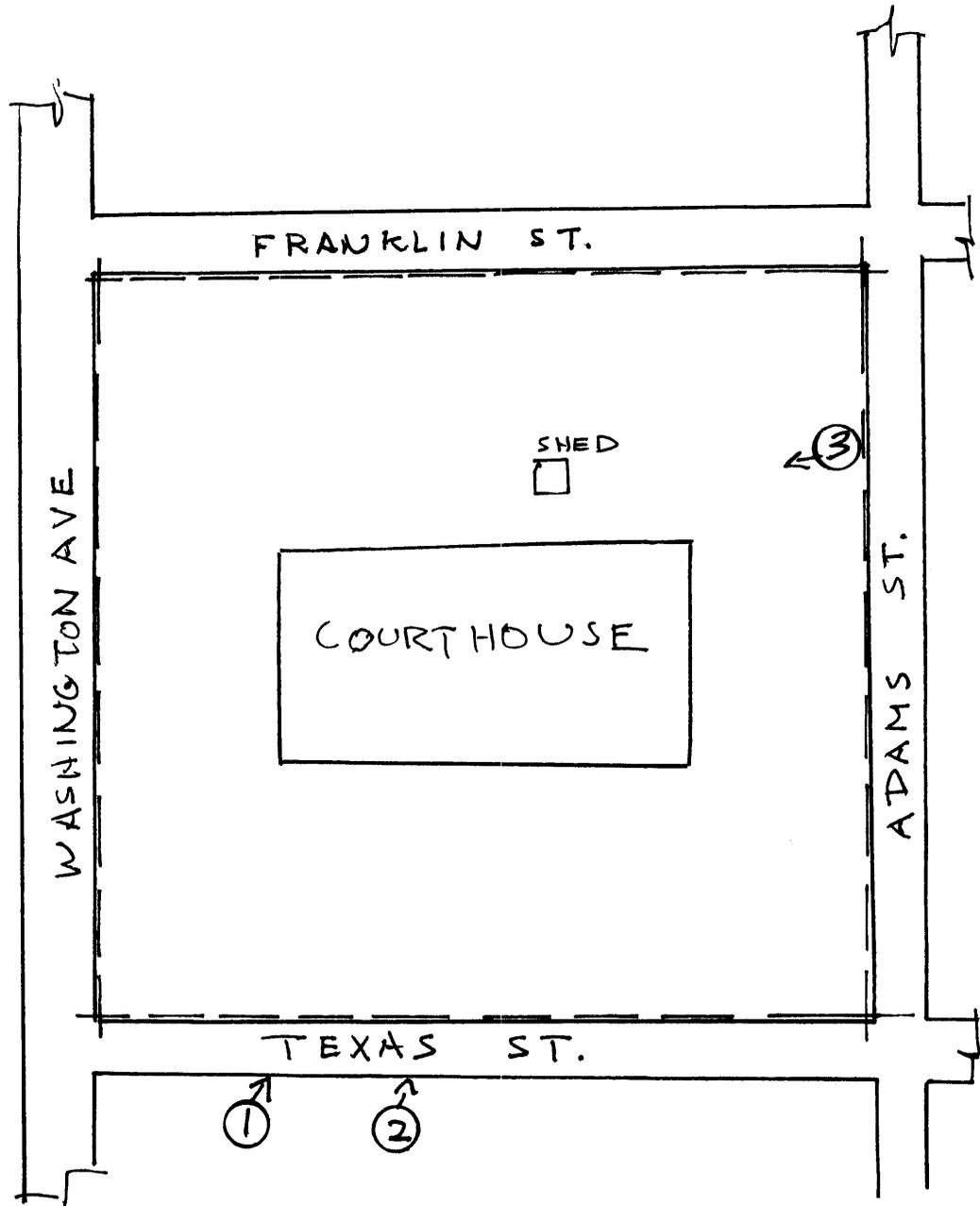
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

 date 1-22-87  
Keeper of the National Register

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

Chief of Registration

DE SOTO PARISH COURTHOUSE  
DE SOTO PARISH, LA



SCALE 1"=50'

--- BOUNDARY