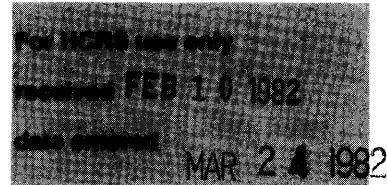


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



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

**1. Name**

historic El Dorado Plantation House

and/or common same

**2. Location**

LA 77

street & number Bayou Maringouin, Louisiana Highway 77 N/A not for publication

city, town Maringouin & Livonia me X vicinity of 8th - Gillis Long congressional district

state LA code 22 county Pointe Coupee code 077

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" 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	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Acquisition <u>N/A</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 checked="" 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 Jerry K. Nicholson telephone: (504) 861-7807

street & number 431 Broadway

city, town New Orleans N/A vicinity of LA 70118 state

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Pointe Coupee Parish Courthouse

street & number Main Street

city, town New Roads state LA 70760

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

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

date 1981  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge state LA

## 7. Description

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

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

El Dorado Plantation House is a story and a half, medium to large Greek Revival raised plantation house. It is set in a large landscape of live oaks and open fields with wild growth along the bayou and various distant fields. Although the house was somewhat altered in the 1950's and 60's, it does not fail to convey the full measure of its architectural significance.

The house is a gable-end frame construction with exterior chimneys, very much in the American taste that was almost universal in Louisiana from 1830 on. The plan consists of a porch across the front (northeast) with three rooms parallel to it; three more rooms go across the back and a back porch runs the length of the house (southwest). The porches are under the main roof mass. Tradition and fabric record a cabinet at the west end of the back porch, now reworked except for its northwest wall with window. The south end of this porch is now closed in with a utility room. Open porch area remains between these new constructions. There are three dormers on the front. The house measures, above the base, about 58' 6" wide and 48' 8" deep. Of this, the front porch is about 9' 10" deep. The first floor is about 4' 5" to 4' 9" above grade; first floor ceilings are 13' 10" high; the second floor about 10' 2"; and from finished second floor to top of rafters at the ridge is 15' 1".

The plan consists of an entry with a stair on the right wall, landing at the front wall. Behind this room is another center room slightly wider. To the left is the front (east) parlor, behind which is the slightly narrower back (south) parlor. To the right is the front (north) bedroom, behind which lies the narrower back (west) bedroom, behind which was the original cabinet construction. The center back room connects with back parlor and back bedroom by a single-acting door, the first floor bedrooms also have a single-acting door between them. The second floor consists of a central room lit by the central dormer. From here, a finished windowless room opens to the front on the east side of the dormer, and two exterior rooms open one to each side. A single-acting door under the stair and a new pair of doors connect the entry to the north bedroom and to the front parlor.

An investigation under the house shows clear evidence of an older structure below. Running side to side under the front, center and back walls of the house are beams 14" wide and 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ " high, hand cut on the sides and smooth cut on the bottoms. The interior brick piers are typically 30" x 13", with the step footing below grade. There are three such piers at the central axis of the house; these, however, are flanked on each side by 27" x 13" piers whose step footings start about 5" above grade. Each old beam is therefore supported in its center area by a pair of these variant piers, and in the center and for the rest of their length, by the typical pier type. In addition, below the door from entry hall to front parlor, the bottom of a double chimney with, again, about 5" of its step footing remains. On each side, short 14" x 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ " beams are found. The chimney was cut off below floor level, but has settled less than the other masonry, causing a bulge in the floor above. There are remnants of old beam framing in the area of the west cabinet, but beams of the side walls and of the porches have gone. A mortise in the southeast end of the back beam suggests a joint with an original beam on that side. It seems fairly well indicated that the house on top had its dimension established by the work below. The location of the chimney inside the house was typical of Creole construction, just as the present exterior chimneys indicate the American taste. The incorporation of such an earlier structure in such a house is of importance.

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Finishes are typical; generous sized weatherboards; milled frames, trim, doors and windows; plaster walls and cornices. Floors are wood. The roofing (undoubtedly smooth wood shingles or slate originally) is a modern asphaltic tile. Original hardware has vanished except in the door between the parlors.

The millwork provides the key to dating the building. Except for the enclosure of the back porch and an entirely new front porch, constructed in the 1960's along lines duplicating the original, changes to the millwork are minor. On the gable ends of the house, in the downstairs bedrooms and back center room, and in the attic, the trim is all of a typical Greek Revival style. All first floor single-acting doors have transoms with a Greek Revival "plaid" pattern in the muntins. The three remaining chimneys have Greek Revival "dog eared" style mantels. Old doors have two vertical panels at the top and bottom; above the lock rail is a horizontal panel. Again, a Greek Revival design. A paint analysis would reveal if the panel molds, which are bold in scale and unusual in section, are of the first stage of construction. We judge this work to date about 1840.

Contrasting with this work is millwork of the late 1850's. Large pairs of typically paneled pocket doors with 1850's moldings on the trim connect the entry hall with the room behind; the parlors are similarly connected, but here the floor shows no marks similar to those in the entry where the large doors obviously replaced a single-acting door. On the front porch the Greek Revival door frame and transom were altered with 1850's moldings and a twentieth century pair of doors. The four front windows have 1850 type frames, and sash suggesting the 1860's--no signs of transoms and French doors were observed, although they would have been typical. The first floor baseboards suggest the 1850's. The stair newel is, again, of the 1850's while the rail, showing a change in spindles near the newel, has turned spindles of a Greek Revival type on the ascent; above, these mix with a later type.

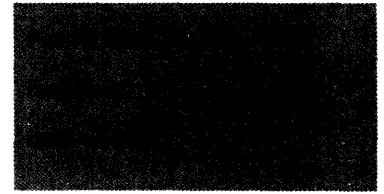
All of these changes are typical of mid-nineteenth century remodeling where changes of moldings and opening up rooms with large doors or arches could bring a house up to date.

The plaster work is intact except for the second floor ceilings. The cornices are significant. They are rather more high-style than one would have expected in such a modest house. Those in the first floor bedrooms are correct run moldings typical of the 1840's. In the four main first floor rooms, the run members are ornamented with egg and dart and bead moldings similar to those illustrated in Minard Lefevre's books; in addition, a fine, deeply carved bas-relief of a pole with leaves encircling it is added in the three main rooms. The design is typical of the late Greek Revival and is of exceptional quality for this area. A centerpiece in the hall, provided with a hook for an oil lamp, has as its center a not unknown 1850's pattern of large acanthus leaves in a swirling design. This is superimposed on bold castings in a pattern made of pure Greek Revival elements.

The west bedroom has, under a modern coat of paint, a field of bright blue on which extensive frescoes have been applied. Over the mantel a panel was made with a border of fasces in browns and golds; inside, at the bottom, can be seen a symmetrical layout of leaves in greens. The scale of the work and its design seem clearly to be of the Greek Revival style. On the other walls of the room there

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are evidences of small trees with large white buds starting low on the wall and going up about seven or eight feet--all in grisaille on the blue background. The later paint is easily removed in some cases; certain areas have cracks and others have a skim coat of plaster, but extensive areas of original work apparently remain.

Known changes to the nineteenth century house were made primarily in the 1950's and 1960's. The most important change to the house is the front porch, which was removed in the fifties. A new soffit beam was installed just behind the original, and large boxed columns ran down to a new brick floor just above grade. The front door was reached by a double curved stair, each curve reaching to a landing in front of the door.

In 1963-64 this porch was removed and replaced with a wood porch at the correct level duplicating the original. At this time the back porch, which was all open and in perilous condition, was put in its present state. Also, exterior brick piers and chimneys were stuccoed, and the rotted beams at the side walls of the house were removed and studs inserted. The attic rafters were supplemented with new ones, plywood sheathing, new roof tiles, and new stock gutters and downspouts were added. At this same time, the second of the two-story brick back buildings was destroyed by a storm, just at the time of its proposed renovation. Its mate had been destroyed by the actions of a sub-lessee, who had also remodeled the front porch. The present owner, inheriting the full ownership of the plantation in 1963, cancelled the lease and, against advice, preserved the house.

Other changes are more limited in scope. The front parlor chimney and fireplace are gone. The single-acting door between entry and front parlor is now a small pair of doors flanked, in the parlor, by boxed pipes and bookshelves. A door from the center back room to the west cabinet (now two bathrooms) was originally a double-hung sash. The west bedroom has on the back wall two openings which originally were single-acting doors with transoms, suggesting a small cabinet and access to the porch, or two cabinets. In the back parlor the door at the outside and of the back wall was once a double-hung sash, and a single-acting door next to it has been closed up.

The accommodation to modern use has been of minimal effect. Wiring is unobtrusive. Two bathrooms occupy the west end cabinets. At the back wall of the double parlor, a sink cabinet unit and a stove are placed.

With the evidence of the building and with the 1930's postcard, only the back porch of the house could not be fully restored to its 1860 appearance. As it is, the building shows a typical evolution and history of uses, and is in all important respects a straightforward historic document, with the added interest of the old house remaining below and the frescoed bedroom, and fine plaster work.

Approximately 700 feet behind the house is a metal sided shed used to store farm equipment (see photos 1 and 2). It is small, shielded by trees, and minimal in its visual impact.

## 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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** constructed c. 1840 **Builder/Architect** uncertain - see below  
remodeled in 1850's

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

El Dorado Plantation House is significant in the area of architecture on the state level as an unusually fine example of a Greek Revival raised plantation house. It is above average within the context of Louisiana for the following reasons:

1. It is unusually large.
2. The ornamental plaster work is rich and sophisticated and places El Dorado in a small statewide group of architecturally ambitious country houses. The average raised plantation house in Louisiana has no ornamental plaster at all.
3. El Dorado has an unusually graceful roofline with three dormers rather than the usual one or two.
4. The plantation house retains much of the original character of its setting.\*

### Historical Sketch:

El Dorado Plantation was made out of lands purchased by David Barrow in the 1850's. His purchase of 1854 from Joseph Lallande included Section 89 (which contains the house) and much of what is El Dorado today. Of the owners, David Barrow (1805-74) and his wife, Susan Woolfolk Barrow, and his son, Bartholemew Barrow (1836-69), who married Martha Leonora Semple, are the most conspicuous, being members of the large, successful and prosperous Barrow family of Louisiana. By the mid-1850's, David Barrow kept his main residence at Afton Villa in St. Francisville, one of the most important Gothic Revival buildings of the nineteenth century, but focused his main business activity on plantations in Pointe Coupee Parish. His son resided at El Dorado after his marriage in the late 1850's. A part of the history of the place is their ownership during the affluent 1850's and during the hard times of Reconstruction. Evidence suggests that the Barrows gave the plantation the name El Dorado; it does not appear before their ownership. (1)

Of the most important known previous owner, Joseph Lallande, who almost surely built the house, nothing is known except that his family has been known in Louisiana history. H. B. Cenas and his partners, from whom Lallande purchased the land in 1839, and the owners since the Barrows sold, have all been from successful professional and business families of New Orleans.

In the mid-1830's before Cenas et al purchased most of the land, there were individual owners, section by section along the bayou, with various owners owning various lands to the back. Of these people, only their names as recorded on patent confirmations and on a few minor records remain. Section 89, on which the house is built, was acquired by Cenas et al from Jos. de Bustamente and Clemente Bariante in December, 1835. A Manuel Bustamente witnesses a legal document relative to Nacogdoches in 1805. (2) L. A. Hubert, quite possibly the same L. A. Hubert from whom Lallande purchased Section 86, witnesses on June 15, 1836, a sale involving Olivo land, which was a grant of 1787 by the Spanish crown of land along Bayou Grosse Tete. (3)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

THE BARROW FAMILY OF OLD LOUISIANA by William Barrow Floyd, Published by the author, Lexington, Ky., March 1936. (limited edition - 500 copies)  
 Doc. No. 80, 19th Congress, House of Representatives, Treasury Dept., A Report of the Register of Opelousas, February 7, 1826. Gales and Seaton, Washington, 1826.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 37 acres

Quadrangle name Fordoche, LA

Quadrangle scale 1=24000

### UMT References

A 

1	5	6	3	9	1	8	0	3	3	7	7	4	2	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B 

1	5	6	3	9	6	6	0	3	3	7	7	5	7	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

C 

1	5	6	3	9	8	2	0	3	3	7	7	2	7	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

D 

1	5	6	3	9	4	1	5	3	3	7	7	1	6	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

E 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

F 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

G 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

H 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet and sketch map.

### 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 Henry W. Krotzer, Jr., A.I.A. for Jerry K. Nicholson

organization Koch and Wilson Architects

date April 1981

street & number 1100 Jackson Avenue

telephone (504) 581-7023

city or town New Orleans

state LA 70130

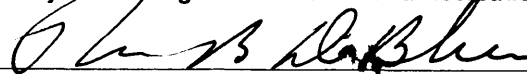
## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature




title State Historic Preservation Officer


date February 2, 1982


For HCPS use only

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



Keeper of the National Register

Att: 

C: 

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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The existence of plantations along the Mississippi in Pointe Coupee by the early 1760's (4), along Bayou Grosse Tete and Maringouin by the late 1780's (5), and along the east bank of the Atchafalaya in Ascension Parish by 1806 (6), can be seen in titles; these titles also contain a few, but significant, mentions of plantation buildings.

Of particular interest are grants of November 17, 1787. George Olivo (Oliveau) gets 20 arpents by 40 deep on Bayou Grosse Tete (7); Henry Olivo gets 20 x 40 on the east bank of the same bayou (8); and Santiago de la Rosa and Joseph Alvarez receive two contiguous tracts on the west bank of Bayou Grosse Tete a few miles below Bayou Maringouin, each tract being 40 arpents front on the bayou by 40 deep (9), these northwest of El Dorado.

Briefly summarized, El Dorado has a clear title of use and ownership going back to the mid-1830's, but it lies in an area settled by the 1780's. How consistent is this with the architectural fabric?

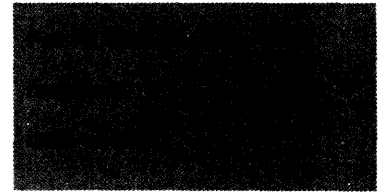
The brick piers and chimney construction and the large beams running the width of the house are of historic interest. It is this writer's conviction that the original piers and beams have not been moved since first being built. From a construction-erection point of view, if the beams had been raised, all earlier brick work would have been cleaned out to allow for new consistent work; raising and then lowering of the beams would, too, have tended to crack any masonry they sat upon. It is common to find remnants of piers and other footings below grade under old buildings; and it is not unknown in the French Quarter of New Orleans to find portions of solid masonry incorporated into a later building, as in the Cabildo and Presbytere. Also, it is not unusual for earlier wood joists and beams to be reused in a later building; they are, however, easily identified by notches and sizes as having had different original construction uses. El Dorado is the only instance known to this writer's firm of such a clear case of an earlier building buried in and controlling the design of a later building. (The now lost Belmont Plantation, close by down the bayou, seems to have been a remodeling of a French type plantation, with extensive reuse of the old fabric.) The location of the chimney base within the building mass is typical of the Louisiana French Colonial tradition. One would suppose a hipped roof and galleries on the front, if not the sides.

However, a probable construction date for these remnants does not fit comfortably into the titles. The mid-1830's would probably have been the last years when such a Creole type house would have been built, and had a building been on the land during the Cenas et al ownership or had such a house been built there in 1836 or so, it surely should have been reflected in the legal documents and in the prices, especially since a group of plantation buildings required for such a large scale operation as that suggested by the amount of land owned by Cenas et al would have been construction of significant cost and value. This strongly suggests an earlier building on land whose ownership has not been established by the title research to date.

Given vestigial remains of an early house, it can be pointed out that in Pointe Coupee by the 1770's, the early frontier type of "poteau-en-terre" is used

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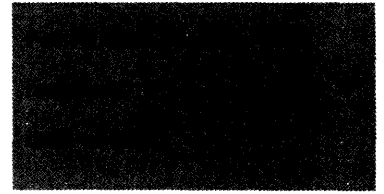
for secondary buildings, indicating an eighteenth century pier design for a main house is probable. (10) Examination of borings taken from the beams might yield dating information, and archaeological investigations of the upper portions of the building should be made. As for possible causes for the lack of a title, an interesting record describes the expropriation in 1815 of land along the west bank of the Mississippi, at the bend of Pointe Coupee, by the Pointe Coupee Police Jury which, because of a threatened flood, used it to build a levee, "which said works, they further allege, have proved a vast benefit to other parishes lying west of the Mississippi, preserving them from overflow, and thereby reclaiming large bodies of land." Although in modern times flooding came from the Atchafalaya on the west, flooding from the Mississippi might have caused an owner to abandon land and not be interested in maintaining its title. (11)

\* The setting is an important part of El Dorado's architectural significance because the house can be seen from a distance and in its historic naturalistic environment. This adds much to the grandeur of the house (photo 1). It also constitutes an integrity of setting in a plantation house which is rapidly disappearing as more and more rural areas of the state are being developed, The area is one of the few remaining which clearly evokes the agricultural world which produced these old plantation houses, which often exist solely as preserved structures in suburban or industrial settings.



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REFERENCES (See Bibliography)

1. The Barrow Family of Old Louisiana
2. Doc. No. 80, p. 59
3. Doc. No. 21, pp. 4-5
4. Doc. No. 21, pp. 12-21; 25-31
5. Doc. No. 73, p. 22 and p. 30; Doc. No. 21, pp. 3-9; pp. 32-37
6. Doc. No. 21, pp. 162-166
7. Doc. No. 73, p. 22
8. Doc. No. 21, pp. 3-9
9. Doc. No. 21, pp. 32-37
10. Doc. No. 21, pp. 13-14
11. Doc. No. 73, pp. 94-94

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Doc. No. 73, 23rd Congress, 1st Session, House of Representatives, Treasury Dept., Land Claims, S. E. Land District, Louisiana, January 31, 1834, Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury. Gales & Seaton: Washington, 1826.

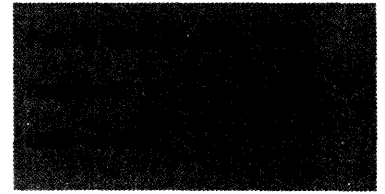
Doc. No. 21, 37th Congress, 3rd Session, House of Representatives, Treasury Dept. Land Claims in Louisiana, &c., December 17, 1842. Letter from Secretary of Treasury. Gales & Seaton: Washington, 1826.

Courthouse Archives, Parishes of Pointe Coupee, West Feliciana and St. Tammany Parishes, all of the State of Louisiana, and the Notarial Archives, Orleans Parish, Civil District Courthouse, Loyola Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Abstract of Title of Lands in Sections 85-92, 110-113, all in Township 6 South, Range 9 East, Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana, belonging to Jerry Kimball Nicholson. Vol. 1: Gov't. Severance to 4/29/30; Vol. 2: 4/30/30 - 8/27/63.

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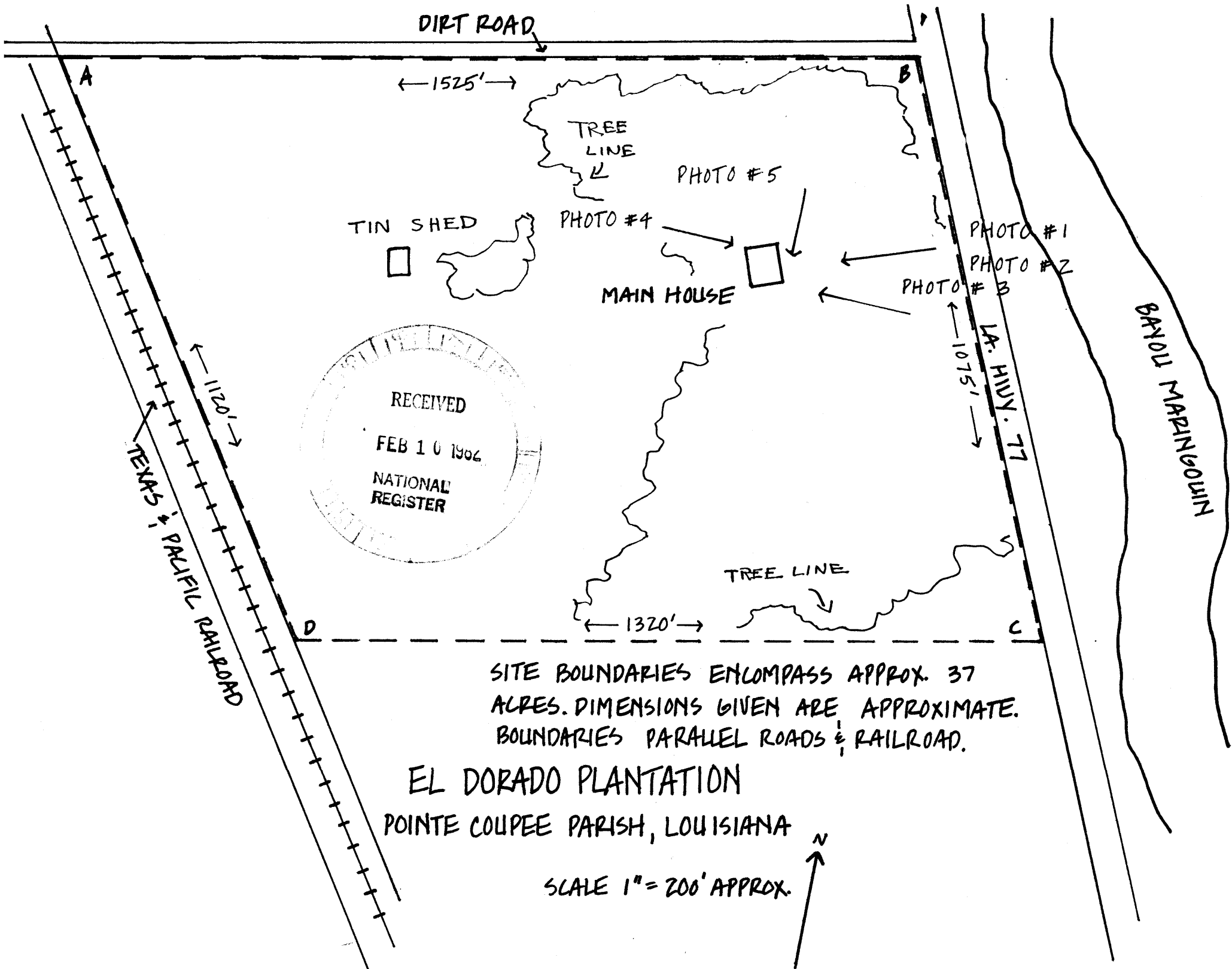
Item number 10

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10. Boundary Description and Justification

Boundaries were drawn to encompass the Greek Revival plantation house and the grounds which make up its immediate setting.

The setting consists of the discreet 37 acre parcel of land where there is direct visual contact with the house. The 37 acres is bounded by obvious visual limits within which the land shares space with the house. The limits are: (1) the extent of the live oaks which encompass the northeast and south sides of the house (photo 1). These live oaks determine the north and south sides of the nominated area. (2) Louisiana Highway 77. This determines the eastern limit of the nominated area. (3) The Texas and Pacific Railroad embankment and tracks. This determines the western boundary of the nominated area. This was chosen as the boundary because it is the first major modern element west of the house (photo 5).



DIRT ROAD

← 1525' →

TREE LINE

PHOTO #5

TIN SHED

PHOTO #4

MAIN HOUSE

PHOTO #1

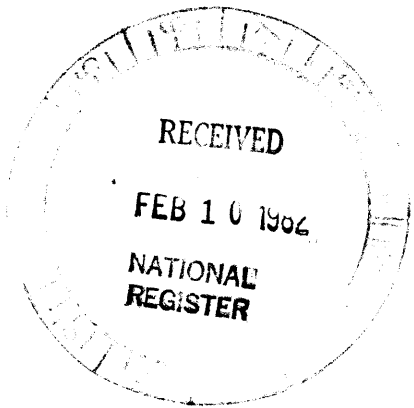
PHOTO #2

PHOTO #3

LA. HIGH. 77

↑ 1075' ↓

BRADU MARINGOUIN



TREE LINE

← 1320' →

SITE BOUNDARIES ENCOMPASS APPROX. 37 ACRES. DIMENSIONS GIVEN ARE APPROXIMATE. BOUNDARIES PARALLEL ROADS & RAILROAD.

EL DORADO PLANTATION

POINTE COUPEE PARISH, LOUISIANA

SCALE 1" = 200' APPROX.

N

TEXAS & PACIFIC RAILROAD

↑ 1120' ↓

A

B

D

C