

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received JUN 8 1983
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Simms - Ellis House

and/or common Ellis House

2. Location

street & number LA Hwy 148 N/A not for publication

city, town Clay vic. X vicinity of

state LA code 22 parish Jackson code 049
county

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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	Public Acquisition	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name W. C. Ellis work: 713-845-5063 home: 713-822-6524

street & number Texas A & M University, College of Agriculture, Animal Science Dept.

city, town College Station N/A vicinity of state TX 77843-2471

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Jackson Parish Courthouse

street & number Main Street (no specific address) Courthouse Building

city, town Jonesboro state LA 71251

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records LA State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge state LA

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Simms-Ellis House (c.1845) is a two-story frame vernacular house located in a hilltop setting about two miles east of the small community of Clay. Despite a few alterations, the house is still an excellent candidate for the National Register.

The Simms-Ellis House represents a combination of characteristics from three vernacular American house types. It consists of two "I" houses set at right angles in an "L" shaped configuration with an open dogtrot corridor on the ground story at the point where the two "I" houses meet.

The facade is trimmed with Greek Revival friezes and pilasters. It has the appearance of a two-bay pedimented temple with a long side wing. This represents an early-nineteenth century New England house type known as the "temple and upright," a provincial manifestation of the Greek Revival.

The house consists of ten rooms, two staircases, and a front and rear gallery. Ceilings are twelve feet on the ground story and eight feet on the upper story.

Noteworthy details include:

1. The six over six windows with their grooved frames and corner blocks.
2. The Doric posts on the galleries and the Doric pilasters on the front gallery.
3. The Greek Revival double panel doors.
4. The frieze and denticular cornice on the front and west side.
5. The eight original mantels, all of which have the basic Greek Revival shape but also feature Federal carryovers such as paneled friezes and planed pilasters.
6. The wide transom which traverses the dogtrot at the rear.
7. The two enclosed staircases, both of which are original.

The house was renovated in 1917 when it was purchased by the Ellis family. They made the following changes:

1. They replaced the original columns on the front gallery with bungalow style posts on piers.
2. They built a second story onto the front gallery.
3. They added new siding on the facade under the lower gallery.
4. They added a wide pair of doors at the front end of the dogtrot corridor.

CONTINUED

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
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Continuation sheet Simms-Ellis House

Item number 7

Page 2

7. Description (cont'd)

5. They installed bathrooms and closets.

Since that time the siding deteriorated on the upper gable end of one of the "I" houses. This relatively small area has been sheathed in corrugated metal.

Other changes which have occurred since construction include:

1. One of the two original chimneys has been lost.
2. Most of the original shutters have been lost. (Some of the shutters are in storage inside the house.)

Assessment of Integrity

The Simms-Ellis House is significant because of its blending of three vernacular house types ("I" house, dogtrot, "temple and upright"). Each house type remains easily recognizable despite the changes. Both "I" houses and their configuration remain distinctive as does the "temple and upright" facade. Although double doors have been built at one end, the dogtrot corridor remains essentially open. In any case, it should be noted that most dogtrot corridors in Louisiana have been enclosed at both ends with permanent walls.

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	c. 1845	Builder/Architect	Uncertain
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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Criterion C

The Simms-Ellis House is significant on the state level as a very unusual combination of vernacular house types.

It should be regarded as a prodigy house among the folk buildings of Louisiana. It is a highly individual adaptation of the basic "I" house form to the vernacularized neo-classical tradition of the "temple and upright."

In addition, the importance of the Simms-Ellis House is enhanced by the fact that the "temple and upright" is normally thought of as a New England house type which traveled to the northern Midwest as part of the westward migration. It is not characteristic of the South. Hence the Simms-Ellis House is a very rare example within the context of Louisiana.

Finally, the use of the dogtrot corridor is interesting. Some of the state's "I" houses have central halls and one (the Hopkins House, Union Parish, National Register) has a hall which is more or less open. But the Simms-Ellis House appears to be different from all the others in that the dogtrot corridor is set in the manner of a side hall rather than a central hall.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Jackson Parish Conveyance Records.
Kniffen, Fred. "Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion." Annals of the Association of American Geographers 55(December, 1965), pp. 549-577.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property @ 1/5 acre

Quadrangle name Hodge, Louisiana

Quadrangle scale 1:62,500

UTM References

A

1	5	5	3	3	7	1	0	1	0	3	1	5	8	1	6	2	1	0	1	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.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff
Division of Historic Preservation

ASSISTED BY OWNER

organization State of Louisiana

date March 1983

street & number P. O. Box 44247

telephone (504) 342-6682

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
Robert B. DeBlieux

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date May 23, 1983

For NPS use only

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

~~Entered in the~~
National Register

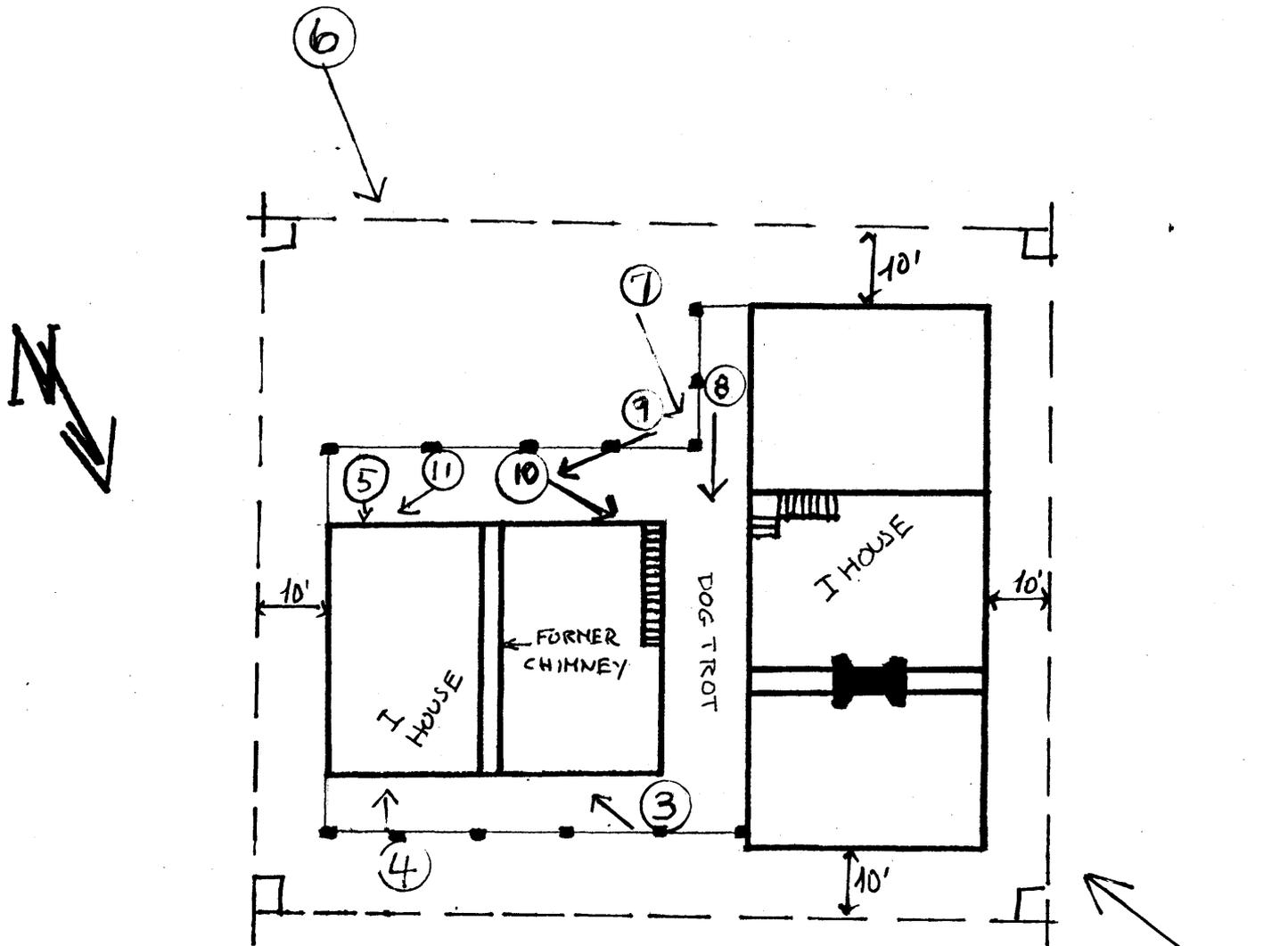
date 7/7/83

J. Melvyn Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



Site Boundaries
 ARE PARALLEL TO
 BLDG. FACADES,
 DISTANCES AS SHOWN.
 THE HOUSE FACES
 LA. HWY 148.

①
 SIMMS-ELLIS HOUSE
 CLAY VICINITY, JACKSON.

LA HWY 148