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 National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any 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.

1. Name of Property			
Historic Name: Laurel Street Fire S			
Other Names/Site Number: Fire S			
Name of related multiple property	listing: N/A		
2. Location			
Street & Number: 1801 Laurel Street	eet		
City or town: Baton Rouge	State: LA	County: East Baton Rouge	
Not for Publication:	Vicinity:		
3. State/Federal Agency Cer		servation Act, as amended, I hereby certify	
for registering properties in the Na professional requirements set forth not meet the National Register Cri I recommend that this property be	ational Register of Historic h in 36 CFR Part 60. In my iteria. considered significant at	bility meets the documentation standards Places and meets the procedural and y opinion, the property meets does the following level(s) of significance:	
☐ national ☐ state ☐ loca	al		
Applicable National Register Crite	ria: A B 🖂 C	D	
Lutin Plander		12/7/18	
Signature of certifying official/T	itle: Kristin Sanders, State His	storic Preservation Officer Date	
Louisiana Department of Cultur	e, Recreation, and Touri	<u>ism</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau	or Tribal Government		
In my opinion, the property me	ets does not meet the	National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official	al:	Date	
Title:	State or Federa	al agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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4	National	Park	Certifica	ation

I hereby certify that the 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 the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply.)

X	Private
	Public - Local
	Public - State
	Public – Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box.)

X	Building(s)	
	District	
	Site	
	Structure	
	object	

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

Contributing	Non-contributing	
1	0	Buildings
		Sites
		Structures
		Objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.): GOVERNMENT/fire station

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.): VACANT/NOT IN USE

Laurel Street Station
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7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.): LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival – Mediterranean Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: concrete

walls: stucco, brick, structural clay tile

roof: terra cotta tile other: wood, glass

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Laurel Street Station (Fire Sub-station No. 1), located at 1801 Laurel Street in the Mid City neighborhood of Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, was completed in 1925 as one of four highly celebrated fire stations that the City of Baton Rouge constructed in response to the needs of its rapidly growing and modernizing metropolis. The property is located at the corner of Laurel and N. 18th Streets on a roughly 0.18acre parcel that includes a large paved parking lot to the east added after the period of significance. Designed by the office of New Orleans architect William T. Nolan, the 2-story, Mediterranean Revival-style station resembles a private residence to harmonize with its residential surroundings and provide comfortable quarters for its firemen, a trend that came to define fire station design nationally in the 1910-20s. It served as a fire station until 2011 and is currently vacant. The building's exterior remains virtually unchanged since its construction except for the replacement of the two engine rooms' original wood double doors with modern overhead garage doors. The interior retains several original features, including its distinctive layout consisting of a living room, kitchen/dining room, and 2 engine rooms on the 1st floor, and a dormitory and locker room upstairs. Interior alterations reflect efforts to modernize the facility in the 1960s and 1980s and include new staircases, interventions related to the installation of air conditioning, and a limited number of new partitions. Because of its high degree of integrity, the Laurel Street Station is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Narrative Description

Constructed in 1924-25, Laurel Street Station (Fire Sub-station No. 1) is a 2-story former fire station located at the northeast corner of Laurel and N. 18th Streets in the Mid City neighborhood of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. It was designed by New Orleans architect William T. Nolan in the Mediterranean Revival style, one of many popular revival styles for domestic architecture following World War I. (Figures 1-3) It is one of 4 fire stations that the City of Baton Rouge constructed in the 1920s: one central downtown fire station (now known as Bogan Fire Station, National Register of Historic Places, 1984) and 3 sub-stations. The 3 sub-stations—the candidate, 855 St. Ferdinand Street, and 542 S. 15th Street—were specifically designed to resemble private residences. These residential stations, known as "bungalow-type" stations, first appeared in the early 20th century in response to several factors, including improvements to firefighting equipment, changes in firefighting procedures and administration, and the advent of zoning and the automobile, which spurred the development of new residential districts. The candidate and the St. Ferdinand Street station are nearly identical in

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appearance, but the latter suffers from loss of integrity. Please see Section 8 for a more detailed discussion of these stations.

Laurel Street station is slightly set back from the public right-of-way and is fronted by shallow lawns on its two street-facing elevations (Laurel and N. 18th Streets). The immediate setting is characterized by tree-lined streets, low-rise commercial buildings, and surface parking lots. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps indicate that, in addition to commercial activity, the area also historically contained numerous small single-family dwellings, primarily shotgun houses and bungalows, most of which have been demolished within the past 50 years. To the east of the station, just across N. 19th Street, is Magnolia Cemetery, a spacious, shady burial ground established in the mid-19th century (National Register of Historic Places, 1985).

Exterior (photos 1-4, 10):

Laurel Street Station consists of a concrete foundation and bearing walls of structural clay tile clad in lightly textured stucco. Its shallow-pitched gable-on-hip roof is covered in red barrel tiles and features open eaves that extend beyond the wall plane, exposed rafter tails, and decorative supporting brackets. The gable peaks face east and west and consist of wood louvers and decorative red-tile finial cones. The building's one chimney, which rises from the original 1st-floor kitchen below, is tapered and clad in textured stucco with applied painted-brick geometric ornamentation (Photo 3). Separate shed/hip roofs covered with red barrel tiles protect the entrances to the station's two engine rooms, which open onto Laurel Street (south) and N. 18th Street (west) and meet to form an L at the building's northeast corner. These two engine rooms, which resemble large garages, are the only exterior clues that this building once served an institutional rather than a strictly residential purpose. Historically, the engine room doors were wood double doors with 12-light windows and metal strap hinges. One pair had been replaced with a modern overhead garage door by the 1970s, according to documentation completed for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), and the second pair in the 1980s.¹

Another prominent exterior feature is the 2-story L-shaped porch, which wraps the building's southwest corner and marks the location of the primary pedestrian entrance on Laurel Street. The porch is clad in lightly textured stucco with applied geometric ornament above and around its arched openings. The arches, sills, and geometric ornamentation are painted brick. The porch is accessible from the street via 3 painted-concrete steps. The 2nd-floor porch is accessible from the former dormitory via multi-light French doors. The porch flooring is painted concrete and wood on the 1st and 2nd floors, respectively.

The majority of the station's original painted-wood windows and doors are intact. The pedestrian entrance at the 1st-floor porch consists of a single-leaf wood door with 6 lights over 2 vertical panels and a multi-light transom above. The doors to the 2nd-floor porch are 6-light French doors with multi-light transoms above. The two exterior doors on the east elevation providing pedestrian access to the Laurel Street engine room have been replaced with flush-metal doors (Photo 2). The windows throughout the building are multi-light wood casements, some with multi-light transoms above. A handful of windows are boarded up on the exterior but the windows are intact underneath. Some window openings have modern security bars installed on the interior. Below the 2nd-floor windows on the Laurel Street elevation is an original window box on stucco-clad supports.

There are three original wall sconces extant on the exterior: two flanking the garage opening to the N. 18th Street engine room and one on the east elevation. The fixtures are cast metal with large yellow glass globes (Photos 2-3). One globe was recently shattered by vandals.

Interior (photos 5-9, 11):

The 1st-floor layout is largely intact and consists of a living room, kitchen/dining room, and two engine rooms. The living quarters sit 3 steps higher than the engine rooms as originally intended, which distinguishes the change in use between the spaces. The living room is entered directly from the front porch. To the right of the

¹ Sibyl McCormac Groff et al, "Laurel Street Station (Fire Station No. 1), HABS No. LA-1127," (Washington, DC: Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, Department of the Interior, 1978), 8.

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entrance is a staircase to the 2nd floor. While this is the location of the historic stair, the staircase itself was rebuilt in the 1980s; at that time, a second staircase was also added to provide direct access from the N. 18th Street engine room to the 2nd floor. The two engine rooms are large open volumes designed to accommodate fire trucks and equipment; the rears of both rooms have been partitioned into a small bathroom/storage. Interior finishes were simple and easy to clean. Throughout the 1st floor, the concrete floors or intact or covered with vinyl tile, and the majority of walls and ceilings are plaster on metal lath. Dropped ceilings were added in the engine rooms and some surfaces were covered with gypsum board, but in several locations the plaster ceilings are visible underneath. The paneled-wood interior doors original to the 1st floor have been replaced with wood or metal doors.

The 2nd floor layout was designed to include a large open dormitory, a spacious locker room, and showers/bathrooms (Figure 4). The former locker room is largely intact but has been expanded into the former shower area, which was downsized into a single bathroom and closet in the 1980s. The brass fireman's pole was located in the vicinity of this closet but was removed in the 1960s, according to HABS documentation.² The dormitory was partitioned into 2 large rooms and a bathroom with a kitchen installed along one wall. Nevertheless, these areas retain an open feel in keeping with their historic role as communal living quarters. The historic wood floors and plaster walls and ceilings are intact throughout. The minimal painted-wood trim, including baseboards and casings, is largely intact. Interior doors have been replaced with wood-slab doors.

Alterations:

The station was renovated in the 1960s and again in the 1980s. In the 1960s, updates included the removal of the brass fireman's pole and the enclosure of the original staircase in conjunction with the introduction of airconditioning.³ A larger renovation took place in the 1980s to further modernize the facility and adapt the building for use as a combined fire station and EMS facility.⁴ At that time, an HVAC system was installed and dropped ceilings were added in the engine rooms; the original staircase was rebuilt and a 2nd stair was added; vinyl tile flooring was installed in some rooms over the original concrete; some interior and exterior doors were replaced; and the above-described partition walls in the engine rooms and on the 2nd floor were added.

Assessment of Integrity:

<u>Location and Setting:</u> The property possesses integrity of location and setting. The building remains in its original location. While the demolition of many of the surrounding residences is unfortunate, the setting still includes tree-lined streets, the continued presence of commercial activity, and Magnolia Cemetery, which was well established when the station was under construction.

<u>Design, Materials, and Workmanship:</u> The property possesses a remarkably high degree of exterior integrity in that it remains virtually unchanged since its construction. The only notable alterations to the interior are the replacement of the original staircase and the addition of a 2nd staircase; overall, however, the station's character-defining layout—a combination of homey living quarters and institutional functionality—is largely intact. Most interior finishes are also intact, including concrete and wood floors, painted-wood trim, and plaster walls and ceilings. Minor modifications, such as the installation of dropped ceilings and the addition of vinyl tile over some concrete floors, are easily reversed given that the underlying historic fabric is intact.

<u>Feeling and Association:</u> As a result of the property's integrity of location, setting, design, materials, and workmanship, there is no doubt that a former fireman who lived and worked at Laurel Street Station would recognize it if he were to visit today. The building still feels like the comfortable, welcoming residence it was designed to be.

8. Statement of Significance

² Groff et al, "Laurel Street Station," 5.

³ Groff et al, 5.

⁴ Clements, Blanchard + Holmes, "Renovations to the Laurel Street Fire Station/EMS," architectural drawings, 1986.

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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

	Α	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
	В	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
X	С	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:

Α	Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes		
В	Removed from its original location		
С	A birthplace or grave		
D	A cemetery		
Е	A reconstructed building, object, or structure		
F	A commemorative property		
G	Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years		

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.): Architecture

Period of Significance: 1925

Significant Dates: 1925

Significant Person (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above): N/A

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion D is marked above): N/A

Architect/Builder (last name, first name): Nolan, William T. (architect)

Period of Significance (justification): The period of significance is 1925, when the Laurel Street Fire Station was placed in service.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary): N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Laurel Street Station (Fire Sub-station No. 1) is eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion C in the area of architecture as an important example of a residential-style fire station in East Baton Rouge Parish. Prior to its conversion into a municipal department in 1914, the Baton Rouge Fire Department comprised volunteer fire companies reflecting 19th-century trends in fire station design, firefighting techniques, and equipment. Laurel Street Station was completed in 1925 as part of a highly celebrated fire station building campaign that ushered

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the new fire department into the 20th century. Most notably, this campaign included the construction of three residential-style fire sub-stations, which embody a key stage in the evolution of fire station design nationwide and represent, at a local level, the landmark changes taking place in fire service during this period. Today, Laurel Street Station most successfully reflects this history by virtue of its high integrity and overall design. The period of significance is 1925, when Laurel Street Station was placed in service.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Historical Overview of Fire Station Design in the United States, 1600-1945

Note: This section draws heavily from Rebecca Zurier's *The Firehouse: An Architectural and Social History* (New York: Artabras Publishers, 1991). Quoted material is specifically cited.

The American fire station is a functionally simple building, and yet the evolution of the building type over time resulted in a remarkable diversity of form, massing, scale, materials, and architectural styles. This variation reflects the changing roles of firefighters and the administration of fire service in communities over hundreds of years, from ragtag citizens' groups to exclusive fraternal organizations to municipal departments. Other factors such as improving firefighting technologies also impacted station design, e.g., the switch from horse-drawn to gas-powered fire engines in the early 20th century.

Colonial Fire Stations: 1600-1800

In the colonial era, firefighting began as a community obligation similar to jury duty or militia service, and fire stations were nothing more than small wood public storage sheds. When a fire broke out, men, women, and children formed bucket brigades to pass leather buckets to and from a water source to douse the fire. When this method was unsuccessful, firefighters used ladders, ropes, and curved iron hooks to pull down a burning building to isolate the damage. In addition to storing equipment in a town shed, some municipalities also required citizens to maintain their own fire-fighting equipment at home, including buckets and ladders.

One of the first notable advances in firefighting equipment was the invention of the fire engine in the late 17th century, which consisted of a hand-pulled wood tub on wheels with hand and foot pumps that moved water through a wood nozzle directed at the fire. The tubs were filled using buckets or hand-stitched hoses. The nation's first organized volunteer fire companies appeared around this time as well and, by the 1790s, had become the norm. Meanwhile, fire station design remained unchanged. Wood sheds still sufficed in most municipalities, and company members met in taverns or halls. It was common for larger cities to have multiple fire companies, which were typically formed along ethnic or racial lines. As incentive, many cities offered a premium to the company who arrived first to a fire, fostering a fierce sense of competition among the groups.

Pre-Civil War Fire Stations: 1800-1860

By the early 19th century, most cities were equipped with underground water mains and fire hydrants, which led to improved firefighting equipment. New leather hose with strong copper rivets was introduced to withstand the increased water pressure of the municipal water system, which in turn led to the creation of the hand-pulled "hydraulion," an engine that used suction to quickly pump water; multiple hydraulions could be connected by hoses to pump from a distant cistern or hydrant. This new equipment continued to be stored in sheds until finally, in the late 1820s and 1830s, cities began constructing more substantial fire stations for their volunteer companies. One of the earliest examples was a granite-faced Greek Revival-style edifice in Boston modeled after the Choragic monument (1825, demolished); it was possibly the first time that the fire department was considered a separate organization worthy of its own quarters and the fire station treated "as a monument in itself." The use of the Greek Revival style, with its emphasis on simple, monumental forms based on ancient precedents, was common for American public buildings during this period, providing a sense of dignity and democracy to the activities taking place within. Following Boston's lead, Greek Revival-style stations popped

⁵ Rebecca Zurier, *The Firehouse: An Architectural and Social History* (New York: Artabras Publishers, 1991), 32.

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up throughout the country, ranging from finely detailed stone buildings to modest frame structures dressed up with wood columns and a stucco front.

As fire stations evolved into more permanent structures, so did volunteer fire companies grow in stature. By the 1830s-40s, they had become exclusive clubs that were "part athletic team, part secret society, and part fraternity," according to architectural historian Rebecca Zurier, and their members enjoyed some social standing. The local annual fireman's ball became a major social event, and firemen's parades were a familiar sight. Firemen began spending more time at their stations, which were typically 2 stories in height and consisted of a plain, garage-like apparatus room on the ground floor and a more comfortable lounge area above that was off-limits to the general public. In some cities, firemen spent their own private funds to make these private rooms as splendid as possible; one 1850s account compared their luxury to that of European clubs, with reading rooms, billiard tables, and oil paintings adorning the walls. Station exteriors also grew more flamboyant and ornate as the nation's tastes turned away from the severity of the Greek Revival style toward picturesque styles such as Italianate, which called for a greater variety of materials, textures, ornament, and more complex forms. Fire companies built new stations to serve as company emblems and to stand out from their rivals, the more splendid and memorable in appearance, the better.

Eventually, this emphasis on one-upping rivals and socializing rather than firefighting wore thin. Fire companies were accused of having gang-like mentalities and treating firefighting as a sport rather than a public service, dismissing new, safer equipment and techniques as an insult to their manhood. This shift in public opinion led to the overhaul of fire service nationwide. Around the Civil War, the invention of the horse-drawn steam-powered fire engine and the creation of a municipally paid fire service ushered in a new era of professionalism as well as new standards in station design. Cincinnati, Ohio, led the charge when, in 1852, it replaced its volunteer system with the nation's first city-administered, paid fire department, and commissioned local inventors to build a steam fire engine with the goal of reducing the number of firemen needed to put out a fire. The 22,000-pound machine, introduced in 1853, needed only 3 men to operate and could produce 6 225-foot streams of water simultaneously, far out-performing the volunteer companies. Soon a refined, lighter version of the steam engine became available that could be pulled by horses (rather than by men, which had been the tradition among volunteer companies since the 18th century). Other cities quickly took notice of Cincinnati's successes and followed suit.

In the 1850s-70s, existing stations were often adapted to these equipment and operational changes rather than rebuilt. Apparatus rooms were enlarged to accommodate the new steam engines. The volunteers, who had been replaced with part-time, on-call City employees, removed the luxury appointments from their clubrooms, and the upstairs spaces were converted into plain meeting halls or, in some cases, an apartment for a full-time watchman or driver. When cities did erect new stations, the buildings were more sober in appearance than those of the volunteer companies, resembling factory or commercial architecture rather than upscale houses and clubs. These new fire stations were typically narrow buildings 2 to 3 stories in height and located among other commercial buildings on a city block. The primary façade usually exhibited some degree of ornamentation in keeping with prevailing commercial styles. Large windows on the upper floors provided daylight to the station's meeting rooms and living quarters. Spacious garages on the 1st floor housed one or two fire engines, and horse stables were typically located outside. Fire stations in a given city or town became more uniform in appearance as well, since the facilities were overseen by one public committee who often chose a single architect to design them. These modest "storefront" stations continued to be built into the 20th century with little variation.

Post-Civil War Fire Stations: 1870-1910

Following the storefront station, yet another station type arose in the late 19th century. In the 1870s-90s, many cities, notably those that developed after the Civil War, built larger stations that housed multiple companies with several pieces of equipment or served as fire department headquarters. These monumental public buildings stood out from their neighbors, often occupying a full city block, and were much grander in

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⁶ Zurier, 29.

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appearance than their storefront counterparts. Common exterior features included red-brick construction, arched openings, and prominent towers. On the interior, these stations incorporated new technologies such as electric alarms and lighting, telephone service, and modern plumbing. Furthermore, in the interest of reducing response time, horses were brought into stations for the first time, providing space for stables, harness rooms, and haylofts. One typical example of this type is the central station in downtown Ann Arbor, Michigan, constructed in 1882. According to Zurier, these stately stations symbolized "the public's growing recognition of the importance of the fire department to community interests."

Most firemen had become full-time city employees by this time (on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with some time off each year), and a station's upper stories served as their living quarters, offering some combination of dormitory, locker room, bathroom, and lounge area. This arrangement also served to separate the men from the smells and noises of the stables below. In response to the inefficiency of using stairs to travel from the upper floors to the 1st-floor apparatus rooms and stables at the sound of an alarm, the sliding pole was invented in 1878 (by a Chicago fireman) and soon became a fixture in multi-story stations everywhere.

With the professionalization of firefighting, public sentiment towards firemen improved. No longer gang-like, by the turn of the 20th century firemen were widely praised as noble, selfless heroes, and the public was willing to spend more tax dollars on fire stations to make its heroes comfortable. Stations of this period grew ever larger and more elaborate and reflected the architectural eclecticism of the period. An extreme example is Engine 31 in New York (1896), an enormous building inspired by William K. Vanderbilt's Fifth Avenue mansion, which was itself based on a French chateau. These larger fire stations also fit with the grand ideals of the City Beautiful movement, which grew out of the World's Colombian Exposition of 1893. Cities and towns all over were inspired to spend more on their public buildings, services, and amenities, from libraries to street lighting.

Residential Stations: 1900-1940

Exclusively residential districts began developing outside city centers at the end of the 19th century, a phenomenon spurred by increased numbers of city dwellers and the introduction of streetcar lines. Many of these new districts were large enough and far enough from the city core to warrant their own fire stations. Since they were located in residential neighborhoods, the new stations began to take on the appearance of large private residences rather than commercial or institutional buildings, and they were designed in the prevailing residential styles of the period, such as Shingle Style and Queen Anne. These stations usually housed no more than two engines but followed the same general layout of their larger downtown counterparts (apparatus rooms and stables downstairs, living quarters above).

By the 1910s, these larger residential stations had evolved into the more modest 1-story "bungalow" station. The bungalow was a new residential type that swept across middle-class America to become the quintessential housing type of the early 20th century. Similar to bungalow houses, many of the new stations were designed in the popular Craftsman style, a casual, low-profile style that stood in stark contrast to the exuberant artifice of earlier revival styles.

Bungalow stations were the product of important changes in fire service and, according to Zurier, symbolize "how firefighting and domestic architecture moved into the twentieth century." They also epitomized the concept that firefighters deserved comfortable quarters in exchange for their courage, for what could be cozier than a home? First, the introduction of the internal combustion engine replaced the horse-drawn engines of the 19th century and thus fundamentally changed stations' size and programming requirements. Stables, haylofts, and harness rooms were no longer needed, and horseless engines required smaller crews, which meant company sizes were reduced and, therefore, less square footage was required. The new engines were less bulky than their predecessors, which meant smaller apparatus rooms and garage doors. Living quarters, formerly relegated to upper floors to separate the men from the horses, moved to the 1st floor alongside the apparatus rooms.

⁷ Zurier, 117.

⁸ Zurier, 157.

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Second, changes in firemen's shifts impacted station design. Rather than one crew on duty at all times, with time off for meals (which they usually ate at home), fire departments instituted a new two-platoon policy with 2 companies working 12-hour shifts. During those 12 hours, firemen were not allowed off the premises, which soon led to the introduction of kitchens in stations for the first time.

As a result, bungalow stations felt like actual homes rather than institutional buildings. According to Zurier,

[t]he most striking characteristic of the early buildings of this [bungalow] type is how little they looked like fire stations. Their main exterior feature was not the apparatus door but the front door, entered by way of a porch and surrounded with flower boxes. Trucks left from a garage door tucked away in a corner or recessed off to the side as in a private residence. Like single-family homes, these stations were set back from the street with a landscaped lawn and garden....The small scale...made interiors seem more like those of a private home rather than a cavernous hall.⁹

In some cases, bungalow stations were constructed for political rather than functional reasons. Their pleasant appearance appeared local residents who did not want an unsightly institutional building in their neighborhood. In the 1910s and 20s, the desire that a fire station "harmonize" with rather than "mar" its surroundings, particularly in planned communities, became a common refrain. One fire magazine sums up the trend:

Providing a building design to harmonize with the surroundings of a residential neighborhood merits special commendation. In departing from the conventional brick building with flat roof, erected regardless of its environment, recognition is given to the growing demand for something that shall promote the development of beautiful suburbs instead of interposing structures that mar or clash with that purpose.¹¹

In the 1920s, as architectural tastes changed, architects began applying the bungalow station concept to 2-story stations, which continued to resemble modest homes and also lent themselves well to the residential styles gradually replacing Craftsman, such as Mediterranean Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival.

Streamlined Designs, 1925-1945

The final phase in fire station design prior to the end of World War II incorporated elements of the slick, mechanized look of Art Deco and Art Moderne. When it came time for architects to design new fire stations in urban centers after the invention of the motorized engine, they embraced modernism over the quaint revival styles of the suburbs. These pared-down stations were typically constructed of concrete, with flat roofs, metal trim and windows, and integrated modern, geometric designs such as lightning bolts.

Historical Overview of the Baton Rouge Fire Department

The history of fire service in East Baton Rouge Parish largely reflects the national trends described above. According to the HABS documentation for Laurel Street Station,

The oldest fire company in Baton Rouge dated from 1825. Eventually, six volunteer companies were established, between whom there was great rivalry. Membership in any of the companies was considered prestigious and "Unless you or one of your family was a fire fighter, you just weren't in it." (Program, 3rd Annual Fireman's Festival May 15, 16, 1930. Unpaginated.) Annually, on George Washington's birthday, there was a fireman's parade complete with floats and a Grand Ball.

⁹ Zurier, 159.

¹⁰ Zurier, 164.

¹¹ Unnamed fire magazine as quoted in Zurier, 166.

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In 1914, the fire companies were transferred to the public domain. By 1918, there were four paid employees. With the passage of a bond issue for \$175,000 in 1922, the streets were paved and four new fire stations were built. By 1925, the number of Fire Department employees had grown to 40.12

The 4 fire stations constructed in the 1920s represent the transformation of the Baton Rouge fire department from a volunteer-based system rooted in 19th-century practices to a modern public service that paralleled the progress and growth of the city itself. One notable difference between Baton Rouge and other cities is that the former did not gain a municipal fire department until 1914, decades later than the norm.

Prior to the 1920s, Baton Rouge was served by 6 fire stations founded by its volunteer companies and scattered throughout the city (per 1916 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps). These stations ranged from small 1story buildings not much larger than sheds to 2-story storefront-style stations, e.g., Washington Co. No. 1 Fire Department at 420 N. 4th Street.¹³ The Washington Co. No. 1 station is the only extant station from this period. After the 1920s stations were constructed, it was converted into a gym, presumably for the firemen at the new nearby Central Fire Station completed in 1925.14

1920s Stations

With its new municipal fire department and increasing size, Baton Rouge required new fire stations. In 1922, the City passed a bond issue for \$175,000 to fund street paving (which made it possible for fire engines to travel farther faster) and the construction of 4 new fire stations to serve all of Baton Rouge: 1) Central Fire Station (now known as Bogan Fire Station, National Register of Historic Places, 1984) at 427 Laurel Street; 2) Sub-station No. 1 at 1801 Laurel Street (the candidate); 3) Sub-station No. 2 at 542 S. 15th Street; and 4) Substation No. 3 at 855 St. Ferdinand Street. All 4 stations were designed by the office of New Orleans architect William T. Nolan. (Lewis Grosz, who allegedly worked for Nolan at the time and claimed to have designed the stations, soon after relocated to Baton Rouge, where he established his own successful architectural practice and contributed several important designs during the city's interwar period.)¹⁵ The 3 sub-stations were designed as variations on the modern "bungalow" station and outfitted with the latest equipment and conveniences in line with new stations throughout the country. Their picturesque architectural styles (Mediterranean Revival and Mission Revival), small scale, setbacks, landscaped yards, front porches, garagelike engine rooms, and window boxes ensured that they would be welcome additions to their residential neighborhoods.

Upon completion, the local press heralded the new fire stations as symbols of modern efficiency and the envy of fire departments everywhere:

Substantiation to Baton Rouge's claim of being a real and modern city are its fire stations....Because of the well-known efficiency of the fire department and because of the recently improved streets, the Louisiana Fire Prevention and Rating bureau is making a survey here which will probably result in the reduction of fire insurance and a saving of insurance payers of the city....

That Baton Rouge has fire stations superior to any in the New England states was the unanimous opinion of the 60 fire chiefs from that section who spent a day here recently on their return trip from the meeting in New Orleans of the National Association of Fire Chiefs....Chief George L. Johnson of the fire department in Waltham, Mass., has asked for plans and photographs of one of the

¹³ The 1916 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map series lists 6 stations in Baton Rouge: H&L Co. No 1 Fire Department on Lafayette Street near the corner of Florida Street: Hose House No. 2 Fire Department on St. Louis Street near Louisiana Street: Roseman Co. No. 6 Fire Department on present-day Eddie Robinson Sr. Drive near Government Street; Station No. 5 Fire Department (later Schloss Fire Co. No. 5) on Main Street between N. 17th and N. 18th Streets; 514 Main Street Station Fire Department at 544 Main Street; and Washington Co. No. 1 Fire Department at 420 N. 4th Street. An additional station, Chemical Co. Fire Department, a 1-story open shed, was constructed on Pocahontas Street near Standard Oil Company by the early 1920s.

¹⁴ 1923-47 Sanborn Fire Map. Volume 1, Sheet 5.

¹⁵ Among Grosz's Baton Rouge commissions were Drehr Hall, several residences, the new home of Capital City Press on Florida Street, and the city's first public library on Laurel Street. This information was provided by John Sykes, director of Magnolia Mound Plantation and Louisiana National Register review committee member.

Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA County and State

substations to take back with him with the intention of using it for a model for the building of substations there.

The substations, which resemble attractive bungalows in construction, were built at a cost of \$18,000 each. Each has a dormitory, a kitchen and breakfast room combined, a locker room, shower baths and a general living room.¹⁶

Laurel Street Station (the candidate) and Sub-station No. 3 at 855 St. Ferdinand Street were historically nearly identical in appearance. Both are located on corner lots and each accommodated about 6 firemen. However, the St. Ferdinand Street station, which sits at the corner of St. Ferdinand Street and South Boulevard across from an on-ramp for the elevated Interstate-10 expressway, has suffered a loss of integrity. The building was de-commissioned as a fire station in 1978 and converted into a women's rehabilitation facility, which remains in operation today. Exterior alterations are found primarily on the South Boulevard-facing elevation and include the addition of an exterior metal fire stair, a 1-story CMU addition at the rear of the engine room, and a concrete and metal access ramp connecting to the front porch. On the interior, the garage openings in both engine rooms have been walled off from the interior and blocked with new partitioned rooms. A platform and stair have been added at the rear of the South Boulevard engine room to meet the floor level of the adjacent St. Ferdinand Street engine room, which has been partitioned into bathrooms, closets, and bedrooms. No original finishes are visible on the 1st floor; the ceilings are dropped and the floors are covered with vinyl tile. The kitchen and living rooms are in their original locations. The original stair has been carpeted and enclosed. On the 2nd floor, the dormitory and locker room spaces are intact. The original wood lockers have been relocated into the dormitory, and the bathroom has been enlarged and reconfigured. The fireman's pole has been removed. In comparison, Laurel Street Station possesses a higher degree of integrity overall.

Sub-station No. 2 at 542 S. 15th Street is the smallest of the 1920s sub-stations. Done in the Mission Revival style, it is 1 story in height and contains only 1 engine room. The façade consists of a central inset porch with stuccoed porch piers and 2 end bays marked by front gables with curved parapets, quatrefoil vents, and applied ornament. The North Bay houses the engine room. Doors and windows are boarded up but some wood casement windows are partially visible. The historic red-tile roof has been replaced with red standing-seam metal. The station's interior integrity is unknown. Sub-station No. 2 differs enough from Laurel Street Station in height, scale, and style as to not be directly comparable.

Central Station, which housed the department's headquarters, was not designed to resemble a residence but nevertheless contained all of the latest technologies and presented a splendid commercial front. A 2-story Gothic Revival-style building with a striking polychrome terra-cotta façade, it housed a large garage and several pieces of equipment, offices for fire department headquarters, a lounge, and dormitories for 24 firemen. A drill tower was located at the rear of the building's courtyard. Since it is not a residential-style station, Central Station is not directly comparable to the candidate.

Conclusion

The transformation of Baton Rouge's fire service—its new stations, administration, and policies—in the early 20th century was part of its evolution from a small town into a modern metropolis. The 4 fire stations constructed in the 1920s represent this important shift and embody national trends in fire station architecture applied in a local context. While all of the stations are extant, Laurel Street Station stands apart as the most intact and representative example of the residential-style sub-stations constructed during this period and, as such, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Developmental History/Additional historic context information

See above

_

¹⁶ "Efficiency of Fire Department to Win Reduction in Insurance Rates for All Baton Rougeans," State Times, November 12, 1926.

¹⁷ "New Central Fire Station Now Occupied," *State Times*, June 16, 1925; and "Central Fire Station," National Register of Historic Places, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation, April 5, 1984.

Laurel Street Station

Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA County and State

9. Major Bibliographical Resources

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Clements, Blanchard + Holmes. "Renovations to the Laurel Street Fire Station/EMS," architectural drawings, 1986.

"Efficiency of Fire Department to Win Reduction in Insurance Rates for All Baton Rougeans." State Times, November 12, 1926.

"Fire Stations Nearing Completion; Built for Use, But Are Attractive." State Times, April 11, 1925.

Groff, Sibyl McCormac, et al. "Laurel Street Station (Fire Station No. 1), HABS No. LA-1127." Washington, DC: Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, Department of the Interior, 1978..

Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation. "Central Fire Station." National Register of Historic Places nomination, April 5, 1984.

Nolan, William T. "Laurel Street Fire House," "Feliciana Street Sub Fire Station," and "St. Ferdinand Street Fire House," February 1924. William T. Nolan Office Records, Collection 52, Southeastern Architectural Archive, Special Collections Division, Tulane University Libraries.

"New Central Fire Station Now Occupied." State Times, June 16, 1925.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1916, 1923-47 series.

Site visits conducted by Gabrielle Begue, July 2018.

Zurier, Rebecca. *The Firehouse: An Architectural and Social History.* New York: Artabras Publishers, 1991.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

\underline{X} 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
X recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #LA-1127
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #
recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #
Primary location of additional data:
X State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other Other
Name of repository:

Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

County and State

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: less than one acre

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84:_____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 30.451159 Longitude: -91.169786

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Please see attached boundary map.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The current property boundaries include the parking lot to the east of the building. However, this parking lot was excluded from the historic boundaries because it was added after the period of significance and does not contribute to the building's historic significance.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Gabrielle Begue

organization: MacRostie Historic Advisors

street & number: 1139 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd.

city or town: New Orleans state: LA zip code: 70113

e-mail: gbegue@mac-ha.com telephone: (504) 655-9707

date: 9/21/2018

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- Maps: A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- Additional items: (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Laurel Street Station (Fire Sub-station No. 1)

City or Vicinity: Baton Rouge

Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

County and State

County: East Baton Rouge Parish

State: LA

Name of Photographer: Gabrielle Begue

Date of Photographs: July 2018

1 of 11: Laurel Street facade; camera facing north

2 of 11: East elevation; camera facing southwest

3 of 11: Oblique view showing N. 18th Street engine room; camera facing southeast

4 of 11: N. 18th Street façade; camera facing east

5 of 11: N.18th Street engine room looking toward rear partitions; camera facing east

6 of 11: Laurel Street engine room looking toward garage entrance; camera facing southwest

7 of 11: Living room looking toward front entrance; camera facing southeast

8 of 11: Living room looking toward kitchen and mechanical closet; camera facing north

9 of 11: Dormitory, 2nd floor; camera facing southwest

10 of 11: 2nd-floor porch on Laurel Street elevation; camera facing east

11 of 11: Locker room, 2nd floor; camera facing south

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA County and State

Name of Property

Friday, Nov. 12, 1926. "You Can Buy It in Baton Rouge." A FIRE SUB-STATION.

Figure 1. Laurel Street Station (Fire Sub-station No. 1), 1801 Laurel Street, in 1926. ["Efficiency of Fire Department to Win Reduction in Insurance Rates for All Baton Rouge," State Times, November 12, 1926.]

Name of Property



Figure 2. Elevation drawings, "Laurel Street Fire House," February 1924. William T. Nolan, architect. [William T. Nolan Office Records, Southeastern Architectural Archive, Special Collections Division, Tulane University Libraries]

Name of Property

County and State

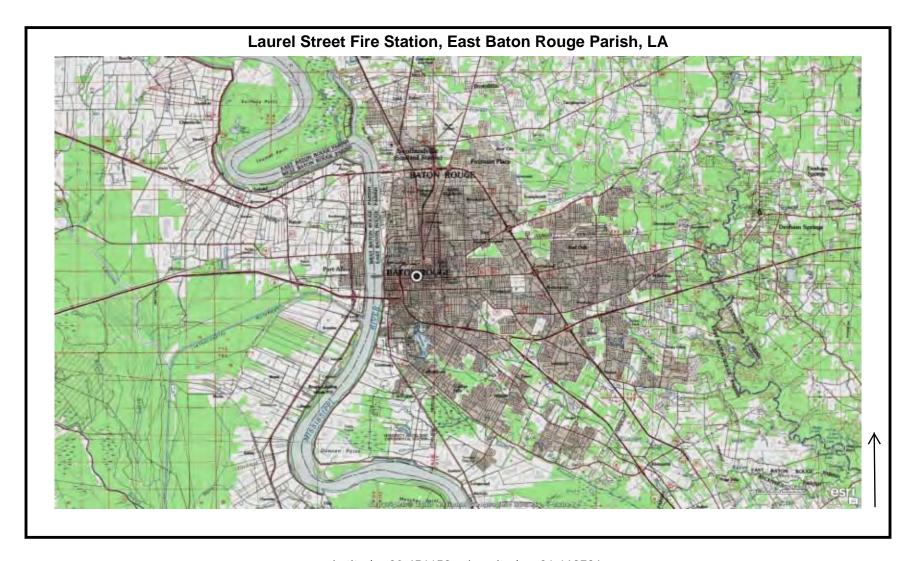


East Baton Rouge Parish Library Digital Archive

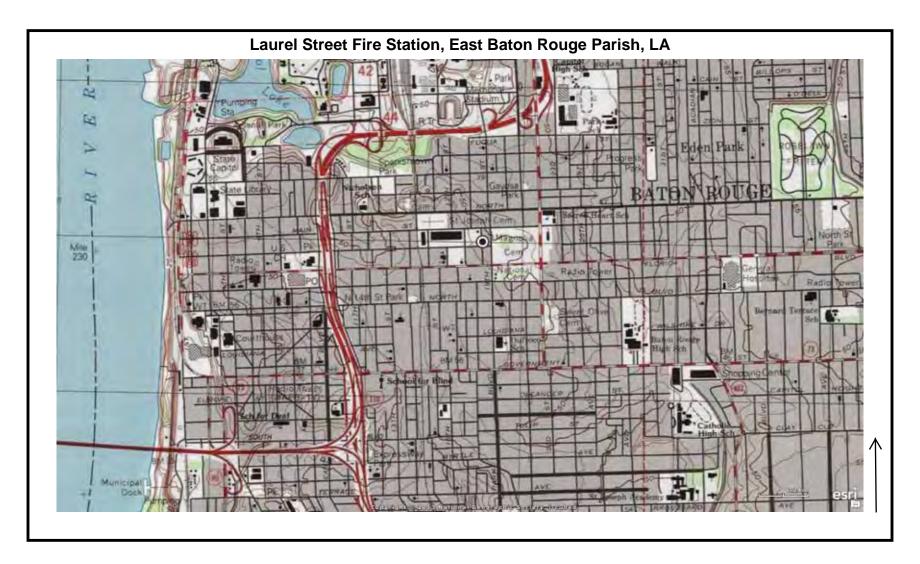
Figure 3. Exterior view of Laurel Street Station, 1978. [Sibyl McCormac Groff et al, "Laurel Street Station (Fire Station No. 1), HABS No. LA-1127," (Washington, DC: Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, Department of the Interior, 1978) via East Baton Rouge Parish Library Digital Archive.]



Figure 4. Dormitory, Laurel Street Station, 1978. [Sibyl McCormac Groff et al, "Laurel Street Station (Fire Station No. 1), HABS No. LA-1127," (Washington, DC: Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, Department of the Interior, 1978) via East Baton Rouge Parish Library Digital Archive.]



Latitude: 30.451159 Longitude: -91.169786



Latitude: 30.451159 Longitude: -91.169786

Laurel Street Fire Station, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA - Boundary Map



DISCLAIMER: The Assessor's Office provides this information in good faith with no warranty and does not accept any liability arising from incorrect, incomplete or misleading information or improper use. Be advised not to rely solely on the information reflected in these maps.

1 inch = 21 feet
0 10 20 30 40
Feet

EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN

3/16"=1'-0"

РРОВИСЕВ ВУ АИ АИТОВЕЗК ЕВИСАТІОИАL РРОВИСТ























UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	Nomination			
Property Name:	Laurel Street Fire S	Station		
Multiple Name:				necessaries and the control of the season decessaries and enterprise at the control of
State & County:	LOUISIANA, East I	Baton Rouge		
Date Recei 12/17/20		ending List: Date of	16th Day: D	ate of 45th Day: Date of Weekly List: 1/31/2019
Reference number:	SG100003377			
Nominator:	Other Agency, SH	PO		
Reason For Reviews				
Appea	· continued	X PDIL		Text/Data Issue
SHPO	Request	Landscape		Photo
Waiver		National		Map/Boundary
Resubmission		Mobile Resource		Period
Other		TCP		Less than 50 years
	4 44 4.450(1777)00	X CLG	The a environment	
X Accept	Return	Reject	1/31/2	2019 Date
Abstract/Summary Comments: An excellent example of physically and the grown			re that also re	eflects the growth of both the city
Recommendation/ Accept / A & C Criteria				
Reviewer Jim Gabbert			Discipline	Historian
Telephone (202)35	54-2275		Date	
DOCUMENTATION	: see attached o	comments : No see	attached SLF	R : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



BILLY NUNGESSER LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

State of Confeiana

OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM
OFFICE OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

RICHARD H. HARTLEY DEPUTY SECRETARY

KRISTIN P. SANDERS ASSISTANT SECRETARY

September 25, 2018

Carrie Broussard 1100 Laurel St, Ste 104 Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Dear Carrie:

We are pleased to inform you that the historic resource listed below will be considered by the State National Register Review Committee for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places:

Laurel Street Fire Station East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

The National Register of Historic Places is the federal government's official list of historic properties worthy of preservation. Listing on the National Register provides recognition and assists in preserving our Nation's heritage. Listing of a property provides recognition of its historic significance and assures protective review of federal projects that might adversely affect the character of the historic property. If the property is listed on the National Register, tax credits for rehabilitation and other beneficial provisions may apply. Listing in the National Register does not place limitations on the property by the federal or state government. Public visitation rights are not required of owners. The government will not attach restrictive covenants to the property or seek to acquire them. A draft copy of the nomination and attachment is included with this letter.

One of your responsibilities as a Certified Local Government (CLG) is to review pending National Register nominations of properties within your community. This is required, in part, to detect any errors in fact, but also to provide local insight or knowledge concerning the property. I hope that you will consider the nomination for this property at your next meeting. After providing a reasonable opportunity for public comment, the East Baton Rouge Historic District Commission shall fill out the attached CLG review form as to whether or not, in their opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. Within 60 calendar days of notice from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the chief elected official shall transmit their report to the SHPO. If the SHPO does not receive the report and recommendation within 60 calendar days, the nomination process will continue. All comments received will be forwarded to the SHPO Director and the National Register Review Committee for consideration along with the nomination.

We have scheduled the nomination for presentation to the National Register Review Committee on **Thursday December 6, 2018**, and would like to receive your comments by that time in

Carrie Broussard June 8, 2018 Page 2

fulfillment of the comment period. This letter serves as notification initiating the sixty-day comment period.

You are invited to attend the National Register Review Committee meeting at which the nomination will be officially considered. The location and time have not been confirmed yet, but will be found on our website. Should you have any questions about this nomination, please contact Jessica Richardson at 225-219-4595 or at richardson@crt.la.gov.

Thanks,

Kristin Sanders

State Historic Preservation Officer

EAST BATON ROUGE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION REPORT FOR: LAUREL STREET FIRE STATION NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION

NAME OF CLG:East Baton Rouge Parish Historic Preservation Commission
PROPERTY NAME: Laurel Street Station
PROPERTY ADDRESS: 1801 Laurel Street
DATE SENT:
DATE OF NATIONAL REGISTER REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING: Does the nomination meet the Criteria for Listing on the National Register of Historic Places?
Yes_X_No Criterion: A B C _X D
Has public comment been included? Yes X No Explain:
A public hearing was held by the East Baton Rouge HPC on November 14, 2018.
■ The Commission recommends that the property or properties should be listed on the National Register of
Historic Places.
The Commission would like to make the following recommendations regarding the nomination (use additional
sheets if necessary):
☐ The Commission recommends that the property or properties should not be listed on the National Register of
Historic Places for the following reasons:
☐ The Commission chooses not to make a recommendation on this nomination for the following reasons:
1011 118 0 1 10 111 / 1
Whitnest of man and Whitnes I Ame land 11.28-18
Historic District Commission Chair (Print Name) Signature Date
01 11 10
Sharon Mistan Avanne - I Millimilliming 11/1/18
Chiefferd of the Control of the Chiefferd of the Chieffer
Chief Elected Official (Print Name) Signature Date



BILLY NUNGESSER LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

State of Conisiana

OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM
OFFICE OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

RICHARD H. HARTLEY DEPUTY SECRETARY

KRISTIN P. SANDERS ASSISTANT SECRETARY

DATE:	December 13, 2018
TO:	Mr. James Gabbert National Park Service Mail Stop 7228 1849 C Street, NW Washington, D.C. 20240
FROM:	Jessica Richardson, National Register Coordinator Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation
RE:	Laurel Street Fire Station, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
Jim,	
for the Laur	ed disks contain the true and correct copy of the National Register Documentation rel Street Fire Station to be placed in the National Register of Historic Places. Should ny questions, please contact Nicole Hobson-Morris at nmorris@crt.la.gov .
Thanks,	
Jessica C	JR.
Enclosures	
X X X	 CD with PDF of the National Register of Historic Places nomination form CD with electronic images (tiff format) Physical Transmission Letter
	Physical Signature Page, with original signature Other:
Comments	
×	 Please ensure that this nomination receives substantive review This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
	The enclosed owner(s) objection(s) do do not constitute a majority of property owners. (Publicly owned property) Other: