

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Wormser's Department Store

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 112 E. Main St. N/A not for publication

city or town New Iberia N/A vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Iberia code 045 zip code 70560

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Gerry Hobdy August 30, 1995
Signature of certifying official/Title Gerry Hobdy, Date
LA SHPO, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 - determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
 - determined not eligible for the National Register.
 - removed from the National Register.
 - other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 10/5/95

Entered in the
National Register

Wormser's Department Store
Name of Property

Iberia Parish, LA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: department store

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: department store

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Moderne

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

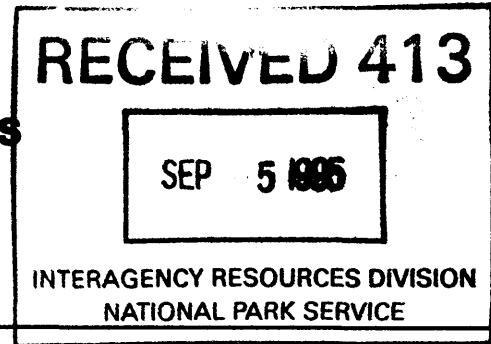
walls Stucco

roof Other: Tar & Gravel

other

Narrative Description

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

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Wormser's Department Store, Iberia Parish, LA
Section number 7 Page 1

The Wormser's Department Store nomination includes two commercial buildings which are connected on the interior. Both buildings are single story and in the Modernistic taste. Located on Main Street in the New Iberia CBD, both facades are fairly well preserved from their 1930s remodeling.

The architectural development of the property is somewhat complicated. What is now Wormser's Department Store began as three separate party wall brick commercial buildings dating from the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. In 1932, Justin Wormser, the present proprietor's grandfather, purchased the two western-most buildings and removed the party wall between them to create a single commercial space for the store he opened in that year. Either at that time, or shortly thereafter, he rebuilt the facade in the Modernistic taste. In 1966, Wormser's Department Store purchased the adjacent (eastern-most) building and joined it with the existing commercial space via a 12-15 foot opening cut in the party wall. Sometime during the 1930s this building had also acquired its own Modernistic facade.

The severe massing of the western facade, as constructed for the Wormsers in 1932 or shortly thereafter, is relieved by a rich and varied assemblage of Modernistic details. The lower portion of the facade is completely taken up by display windows with a low stucco kickplate. This window system is recessed in two places to provide access into the building. Here the glass and stucco walls recede in a complex sequence of angular setbacks which is echoed in lines in the terrazzo entrances. Each entrance features a stylized woman's head set in a roundel. Between the two entrances, also in terrazzo, is "Wormser's" in stylized letters. The architrave surmounting the windows recedes and protrudes so as to contrast with and, in effect, play off the spatial pattern created by the window display system.

The shopfront level is surmounted by a stylized hood mold motif which contains a panel at each end to mark the two entrances to the commercial space. Each of these silver finished panels features a stylized female nude, with a dove in each hand, surrounded by stars. These panels are recessed from the front plane of the building in a system of carrera glass plates. Between the silver finished panels, at the center of the composition, is the name "Wormser's" rendered in large stylized letters and underlined. Immediately surmounting the hood mold motif are the words "Smart Ladies' Wear" in blockier but still stylized lettering. There is also a small centrally placed formerly neon sign accenting the upper center of the facade. (It was put in place in January 1935, per a mention in the *New Iberia Enterprise*.)

CONTINUED

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Wormser's Department Store, Iberia Parish, LA

Section number 7 Page 2

With the exception of the latter two relatively diminutive elements, the area above the hood mold motif is one massive rectilinear expanse of flat unadorned stucco. This forms an energetic contrast to the very intensively styled area below.

The eastern facade is more straightforward with a massive stylized corbelled arch entrance flanked by a pair of display windows. The composition culminates in a lively roof top parapet which forms an overall gable shape. It consists of a succession of horizontal strips and scroll volutes climaxing in a central crest. Although the specific features here are classical, the stylized repetitive nature of the composition should certainly be viewed within the context of the Modernistic taste. In addition to the foregoing, the parapet also features a bas relief pylon superimposed on a cutaway base.

Alterations include:

- (1) The interior has been completely remodeled.
- (2) There have been two alterations made to the western Modernistic facade. The three columns that support the upper facade were once clad in small tiles. The tile had deteriorated and was removed. The supports are now of painted aluminum. In addition, the present metal fascia on the architrave surmounting the shopfront window system is a replacement, although it is apparently similar to the original.
- (3) It appears that the present shopfront level on the easternmost building has been largely replaced.

Assessment of Integrity:

In the opinion of the SHPO, these changes should be regarded as relatively minor given the overall scope of Wormser's articulation. Both facades retain the overwhelming bulk of their striking Modernistic character.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.) N/A

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

architecture

Period of Significance

1932 (western bldg); c.1935 (eastern bldg)

Significant Dates

1932 (western bldg); c.1935 (eastern bldg)

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Wormser's Dept. Store
Name of Property

Iberia Parish, LA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than an acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

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

3

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Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff

organization Division of Historic Preservation date July 1995

street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone (504) 342-8160

city or town Baton Rouge state LA zip code 70804

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Multiple (see attached)

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Wormser's Department Store, Iberia Parish, LA

Section number 8 Page 1

Wormser's Department Store is of state significance in the area of architecture as a superior example of the Modernistic taste within Louisiana.

Louisiana for the most part was architecturally conservative in the late 1920s and '30s. With some notable exceptions such as Huey Long's State Capitol, the state is not considered a mecca for enthusiasts of Modernistic architecture. In compiling a list of major examples for a nationwide inventory, the staff of the Division of Historic Preservation found that there were about 40 in Louisiana. A major example is in contrast to various buildings across the state that could be best described as featuring "hesitant touches" of the Modernistic taste -- i.e., a feature here and there in contrast to intensively styled, fully developed examples.

With but few exceptions, Louisiana's major examples are public buildings whose erection was made possible by federal relief funds. For example, eleven of Louisiana's sixty-four parish courthouses were constructed at this time in the Modernistic style. Other examples include schools, hospitals, municipal auditoriums, etc. Wormser's is particularly important because there are very few major commercial examples. The handful that do exist are found in large urban areas rather than a small town setting. Although at first glance Wormser's may appear to be a rather restrained example, its significance is in the details, particularly the westernmost facade with its advancing and receding shopfront echoed in the entrance's terrazzo design, the stylized lettering and sign, the nude forms above each door, and the stylized lettering and women's head designs in the terrazzo entrance.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Wormser's Department Store, Iberia Parish, LA

Section number $\frac{9}{10}$ Page $\frac{1}{1}$

Bibliography

Interview with David Wormser, third generation proprietor.

LA SHPO knowledge of Modernistic architecture in Louisiana.

New Iberia Enterprise, January 11, 1935. Notice of sign being installed.

Boundary Description: See attached sketch map.

Justification: Boundaries follow streets, a party wall, and the rear property line, as shown on the attached sketch map.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

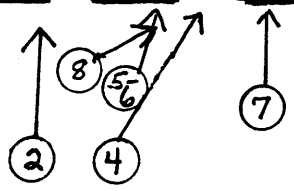
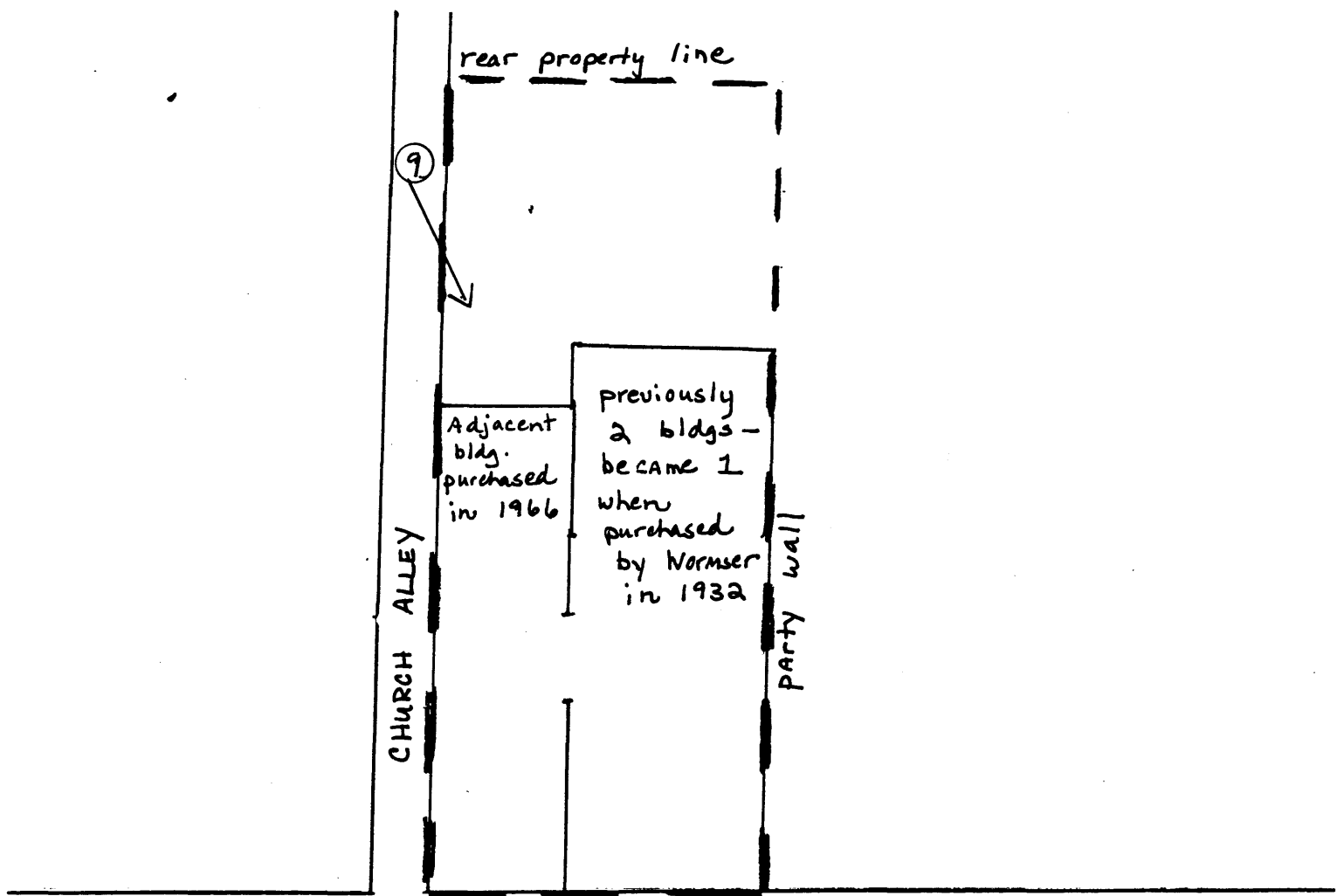
Wormser's Department Store, New Iberia, Iberia Parish, LA
Section number N/A Page 1

Owners:

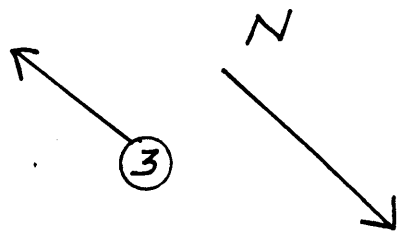
David Wormser
601 E. Main St.
New Iberia, LA 70560
318-365-3464 (w)
318-367-6466 (h)

John Wormser
116 Plantation Drive
New Iberia, LA 70560
318-367-2526 (w)
318-365-8516 (h)

Sally W. Bassler
10003 Wickersham
Houston, TX 77042
713-974-0600



E. MAIN ST.



WORMSER'S Dept. Store

New Iberia

Iberia Parish, LA

①

1" = 30'

--- BOUNDARY