

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

MAR 27 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Mary's Assumption Church
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Front Street N/A not for publication
city, town Cottonport N/A vicinity
state Louisiana code LA county Avoyelles code 009 zip code 71327

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	_____ objects
			<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Leslie Tassin March 20, 1989
Signature of certifying official Leslie Tassin, State Historic Preservation Date
Officer, Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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): _____

Alvares Byrum Entered in the 5/1/89
National Register

for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION- religious structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION - religious structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brickwalls weatherboard

roof tinother portico foundation concrete

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

St. Mary's Assumption Church (c.1889, c.1918) is a one-story, frame clapboard structure in the Classical Revival style. Now used as a parish hall, the building is part of a large religious complex located in downtown Cottonport. Although only the old church is being nominated to the National Register, the compound also includes a modern church, a separate rectory with detached three car garage, storage and mechanical buildings, a small basketball court, and a cemetery with several mausoleums. Small areas on each side of the old church are shaded. The structure stands perilously close to Front Street, a busy Cottonport thoroughfare which parallels Bayou Rouge.

A historic photograph shows that St. Mary's began life with a mixture of architectural styles. The original Classical rectangular nave was fronted by a massive, battered, three-story Romanesque bell tower. The tower was topped by a high Gothic steeple with miniature corner towers and an upward thrusting cross. Semi-elliptical arches opened into a porch on the tower's lower floor, while round arched and circular openings penetrated the bell tower on its second and third levels. Around 1918 parishioners removed the 110 foot high tower and steeple, enlarged the nave by adding space at the front, and reworked the facade to include a denticulated temple front portico. Although the nave dates to c.1889, the old church is being nominated to the National Register in recognition of its historic c.1918 Classical Revival facade.

The current floorplan of the old St. Mary's consists of a large rectangular room with a slightly raised stage across its southern end. A small open kitchen is tucked into one corner, while the second front corner holds a stairway ascending to a choir loft crossing the front of the building. A closet occupies the space beneath the stair's risers. Behind the stage at the building's two rear corners stand small projecting rooms, each containing a restroom.

St. Mary's cypress clapboard exterior reflects Palladian influence in its Classical Revival styling. A temple-like portico supported by four fluted Corinthian columns projects from the church's facade. The temple's entablature contains a frieze displaying five roundels below a boldly denticulated cornice. Also boldly denticulated, the temple's pediment contains an arched fanlight with a keystone. Small statues rise from two of the pediment's three corners; a third statue has been lost. The steeply pitched gable of the nave rises behind the temple front. Boldly denticulated like the pediment below, this larger gable is pierced by a Palladian window with a surmounting keystone. Above the gable's peak stands a large square base from which a belfry once rose. Paneled

 See continuation sheet

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St. Mary's Assumption Church, Cottonport, Avoyelles Parish

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Corinthian pilasters mark the facade's corners and the two points where the portico joins the main building. These pilasters support an entablature similar to that found on the temple front. The church's main entrance is distinguished by six-panel, double doors topped by a large fanlight. Scrolled announcement boards are mounted on the exterior wall on each side of this entrance. Two secondary entrances, each consisting of a pedimented, six-panel single door, pierce the facade between the announcement boards and corner pilasters. A single oculus window displaying keystones and glass etched with a cross appears above each secondary entrance. The nave is pierced by a series of six-over-six shuttered windows, each topped by a semi-circular arch. The windows on the rear elevation (the former apse) are arranged in an irregular, asymmetrical configuration. The small original room projecting from the western rear corner displays a gable roof with boxed return.

In contrast to the church's Classical exterior, St. Mary's rectangular interior space displays elements of Gothic Revival styling. The interior's most outstanding feature is its ceiling, composed of tongue and groove boards nailed to a curved frame which rises to a pointed vault. Steamed ribs are attached to the tongue and groove boards at intervals to help hold them in place. In the apse area above the former altar location, the ceiling displays a field of stenciled gold stars, apparently added in 1904. This area is bordered by painted scallops. All of these elements remain intact above a recently installed suspended ceiling. Clearly visible below the new installation are other elements of the church's early decorative scheme, executed in pine. The stairway's heavy newel posts are molded and chamfered. A series of free-standing octagonal Gothic columns with molded dado and capitals extends down the center of the nave in two parallel rows from the main entrance almost to the rear wall. Similar semi-octagonal engaged columns stand between the round arch windows on both nave walls. Tongue and groove boards cover the walls between engaged columns and windows. The original wooden floor remains.

Assessment of Integrity

St. Mary's Assumption Church has experienced several changes since its enlargement and the reworking of its facade around 1918. The most important of these alterations has occurred in the interior. Converted to a parish hall in 1958, the church has lost all its religious accoutrements, including its altar, tabernacle screen, chancel rail, pews, statuary, and a stained glass window which once pierced the apse wall. A stage now occupies the apse area, a small open kitchen occupies a corner into which one of the secondary entrances opens, and wire grilles cover the windows. One round arch window has been converted into a door. The once polychrome interior is painted a solid beige. The original spiral stairway leading to the choir loft has been replaced by a small three flight stair with two landings. As mentioned above, a ceiling of suspended tiles was installed around 1986, and fluorescent tubes now light the room.

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St. Mary's Assumption Church, Cottonport, Avoyelles Parish

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St. Mary's c.1918 exterior has fared better, for its only significant change has been the removal of its cupola-like louvered belfry above the belfry's box-like base. One of the statues formerly attached to the temple front pediment is also missing. All the windows have either been painted over in a beige color which matches the interior or filled with plywood coverings from which window air conditioners protrude. On the rear elevation the original small gabled extension has been converted to a restroom and a second projecting restroom with shed roof has been added to the opposite rear corner. A shed roof storeroom is attached to the newer restroom wing. Despite the loss of its belfry, the church still retains the bulk of its c.1918 Classical Revival features and is one of only three fully expressed Classical or Colonial Revival buildings in the parish. Thus, St. Mary's retains its National Register eligibility.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Avoyelles Parish Historic Standing Structures Survey, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.
Site visit by National Register staff.
Photos showing 1889 church (exterior and interior); present church before belfry removed.

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately 1/5 acre

UTM References

A

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

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Please refer to enclosed sketch map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Boundaries follow property line on the north but cut close to the old church on the other three sides in order to exclude several modern structures which are part of the Catholic Church complex.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register staff
organization Division of Historic Preservation date February 1989
street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone (504) 342-8160
city or town Baton Rouge state Louisiana zip code 70804

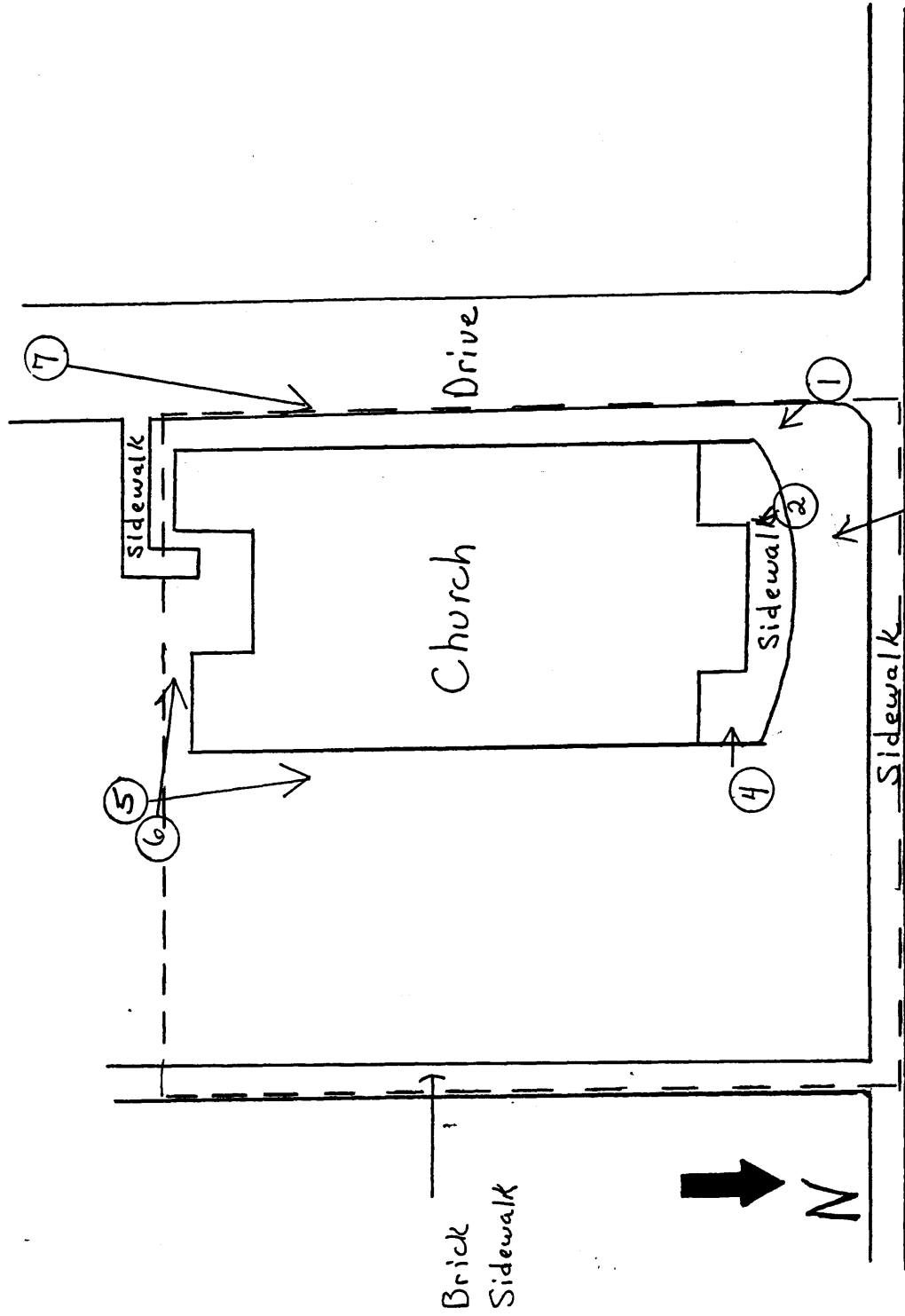
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St. Mary's Assumption Church, Cottonport, Avoyelles Parish

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oculus windows, and its fanlighted entrance with paneled doors also contribute to the quality of the building's Classical facade. As mentioned previously, St. Mary's is one of only three fully expressed Classical or Colonial Revival buildings in the parish.



St. Mary's Assumption Church
 Cantonment Avevellos Dr. 1 1 1

FRONT ST.

--- BOUNDARY

Scale: 1" = 20'