

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

Fitzgerald House, Minden, Webster Parish, LA

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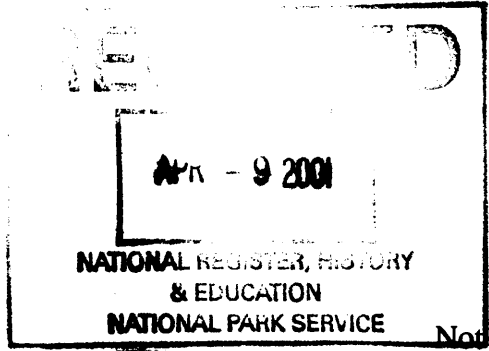
United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Fitzgerald House

Other Name/Site Number:



510

2. LOCATION

Street & Number 304 McDonald

Not for publication: NA

City/Town Minden

Vicinity: NA

State: Louisiana

Code: LA

County: Webster

Code: 119

Zip Code: 71055

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: ___ Statewide: ___ Locally: X

Gerri Hobdy
Signature of Certifying Official/Title Gerri Hobdy,
LA SHPO, Dept. of Culture, Recreation and
Tourism

March 27, 2001
Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official/Title

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this 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 Keeper: Edson H. Beall

Date of Action: 5-18-01

5. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-Local:

Public-State:

Public-Federal:

Category of Property

Building(s): X

District:

Site:

Structure:

Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

 2

 2

Non contributing

 buildings

 sites

 structures

 objects

 0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: NA

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: domestic Sub: single dwelling

Current: domestic Sub: single dwelling

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Queen Anne Revival, Colonial Revival

Materials:

Foundation: brick

Walls: weatherboard

Roof: asphalt

Other: wood shingles

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The Fitzgerald House (1902) is a one-and-a-half story, wood frame, transitional Queen Anne-Colonial Revival residence located in an early twentieth century neighborhood close to downtown Minden, the parish seat of Webster. It sits at about the middle of a roughly one acre parcel bounded on three sides by streets and on the fourth by a small grassy park. The house is virtually unaltered on both the exterior and interior.

The house built in 1902 for lumberman Edward Eugene Fitzgerald was typical of its time in combining Queen Anne massing with mainly Colonial Revival details. In this case, an abundance of protrusions have been added to what is essentially a rectilinear block. The main roof ridge, which is perpendicular to the street, culminates in an enormous jerkinhead gable which encompasses the entire façade. (It is this capacious roofline combined with its numerous projections that provides for an upper story.) At the center of the front gable is a prominent polygonal bay. Beneath is a Colonial Revival porch with Ionic columns grouped on rusticated concrete block bases. At the center of the composition, immediately below the polygonal bay, the porch projects forward to provide a pedimented entrance. Within the pediment are various swirling foliage designs in bas relief.

The northern (side) elevation features no less than three projections. The smallest provides for a bay window with window seats in a front parlor. At the very rear is a two story angular projection whose upper story reads as a large dormer capped by a hipped roof. The most unusual projection on this elevation is a wide rectangular section cantilevered out from the main wall, about half way up, to contain the main landing of the house's magnificent staircase. The staircase projection is topped by a hipped roof and features large brackets at its base, which must be for decorative purposes only. (They don't look strong enough to support such a weight.) On the opposite side elevation are four projections: a large polygonal balcony with Colonial Revival details like those on the front porch, and beneath it, a hipped roof porte-cochere in the same style; a one story polygonal bay at the front; and a large hipped roof dormer at the rear.

The large front jerkinhead gable, its polygonal bay, the side balcony, and the staircase projection are sheathed in fish-scale shingles (another Queen Anne feature) while the body of the house is sheathed in narrow gauge clapboards. Bracketed eaves accentuate the main roofline and most of the projections. The complexity is further enhanced, mainly at the facade, by deep overhangs – one seemingly superimposed upon another and then another (i.e., the jerkinhead gable, the main porch roof, and the entrance gable).

The Fitzgerald House's greatest glory is its impressive, beautifully preserved interior spaces. As is typical of the period, the floorplan is quite open, with vistas through various rooms being a salient feature. The front door opens into a fairly wide but not very deep entrance hall with a parlor on each side. This hall in turn opens (at a ninety degree angle) into a very wide living hall that runs the width of the house. At one end of the living hall, and encompassing its entire width, is the massive staircase, which takes three flights and two landings to ascend one story. The second landing is the size of a small room. (A living hall with a boldly three-dimensional staircase, creating a sculptural effect, is an important feature of the grand Queen Anne interior.) At the other end of the living hall is a door leading to the porte-cochere. At roughly the center of the hall is a massive hooded fireplace made of glazed terra-cotta and featuring copious over-sized egg and dart molding, Greek key bands, and consoles formed of egg and dart designs. To the rear of the living hall on one side is a dining room, followed by a butler's pantry, and then a kitchen. On the other side is a narrow hallway providing access to bedrooms. The capacious upper story contains various bedrooms and a hall.

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The house features an abundance of exposed wood, as befitting the home of the manager of a huge sawmill plant, the Minden Lumber Company. Presumably, it is wood produced by Minden Lumber – i.e., yellow pine. Much of the wood was cut specially to reveal various designs in the grain. Most is stained a dark color, although some has a reddish cast. Separating the entrance hall from one of the parlors is a divider featuring Ionic columns resting on a paneled base. Above is a paneled entablature with applied laurel wreath designs and swags. Access from the entrance hall to the living hall is via a wide opening with pocket doors and a matching laurel wreath design in the entablature. The living hall is almost entirely given over to dark wood. In addition to the paneled staircase, there is an exposed beam ceiling and a high wainscot formed of numerous panels, with each panel outlined by bead and reel molding. All doors and door surrounds on the first floor are of natural wood. The doors feature multiple horizontal panels. The sides of the doors facing into the living hall feature bead and reel molding outlining each panel. The dining room is dominated by a high paneled wainscot with a plate rail. Here too each panel is outlined with bead and reel molding. The wood has a reddish-orange cast and a particularly intricate grain design. Other natural wood features in the house include baseboards, picture molding, and various built-in cabinets in the butler's pantry. Additional decorative features include a Colonial Revival mantel with its original green glazed tile hearth, panels in the front door displaying laurel wreaths and swags, a window seat encompassing one wall of a front parlor, and various instances of stained glass and leaded, beveled glass. There are stained glass upper windows at the parlor window seat, large stained glass windows at the main stair landing, and a stained glass fanlight in the large dining room window. The parlor stained glass is gold accented with mainly blue, while that in the dining room is mauve with a design in gold. The large panels at the stair landing are clear and feature various diamond shaped patterns; torches and laurel wreaths are done in color.

Assessment of Integrity:

The Fitzgerald House is in a remarkable state of preservation, retaining such relatively small details as the original cabinets in the butler's pantry and light switches of the old push button variety. In short, except for kitchen and bathroom modernization and new wallpaper, the first floor interior looks just as it did in 1902. Even the second floor has received only a modicum of alterations – mainly additional bathrooms. The only exterior change has been to the porte-cochere, which must have been damaged at some time (perhaps an errant car or a downed tree) because it now has a concrete base (instead of the rusticated block base of the front porch). It also appears that the column shafts on the porte-cochere have been replaced. The capitals are identical to those found elsewhere on the house, although they are not nearly as weathered. Also, a small section of the low brick wall upon which the house rests has been patched with concrete blocks (near where the porte-cochere is located).

Contributing Element:

At the rear of the property is a substantial, wood frame, hipped roof dependency (historic use unknown) that gives every indication of being built at the same time as the house. It is sheathed in the same narrow gauge clapboards.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Applicable National Register Criteria: A_ B_ C X D_

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): NA A_ B_ C_ D_ E_ F_ G_

Areas of Significance: architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1902

Significant Dates: 1902

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: unknown

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The Fitzgerald House is of architectural significance at the parish level because its exterior articulation makes it easily one of Webster Parish's most impressive period houses. The house is significant within northern Louisiana for its exceptionally well-detailed and well-preserved interiors.

Settlement in Webster Parish (and North Louisiana as a whole) began in earnest in the 1830s; however, the greatest growth occurred in the 1880 to 1920 period. It was in the 1880s that an east-west railroad came through the parish (the Vicksburg, Shreveport and Pacific), and in the 1890s, a north-south line (the Louisiana and Northwest, later the Louisiana and Arkansas). Of course, these transportation arteries made various industries economically viable (most notably, timber production). The parish was and is largely rural, with Minden being the only town of any size (6,105 in 1920). The next largest town is Springhill, with a population in 1920 of only 748.

Webster Parish has 432 buildings recorded in the statewide survey as being over 50 years old. Most of these are unstyled, and among the styled buildings the Bungalow style predominates (mostly low-key examples). There are some 30-35 houses in the parish that are either Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, or some combination thereof. (Almost all of the Queen Anne houses feature Colonial Revival galleries and other details.) Of these 30-35, some 10 to 12 (all in Minden) would be regarded as notable examples – i.e., landmarks. The Fitzgerald House is easily among these because of its complex and quite distinctive massing, its Ionic porch and balcony, and its shingled treatment. There are only three or four other period houses in the parish which display the “busy” massing so characteristic of the Queen Anne. The Fitzgerald House is also one of very few houses (about 6) in Webster where fish-scale shingles are used to produce a richly textured effect (another Queen Anne hallmark).

The Fitzgerald House is noteworthy within the larger context of northern Louisiana for its pristine, intensively detailed interiors, as described in Part 7. While staff members of the Division of Historic Preservation certainly have not been in every turn-of-the-century house in the region, they have visited the best examples in their fifty-plus years of experience and can safely conclude that the Fitzgerald House has few peers in this regard. A rich and sumptuous “Victorian” look is created by an abundance of dark wood, various stained glass windows, and in particular, the living hall, which has a baronial grandeur to it.

Historical Note:

According to family history, the house was built for Edward Eugene Fitzgerald, who was originally from Michigan, in 1902. A 1904 document on Webster Parish gives Mr. Fitzgerald as the manager of the Minden Lumber Company, an industrial giant about a mile south of downtown which opened in 1902. The plant included a large sawmill, planing mill, mill pond, steam dry kilns, and stacks upon stacks of processed lumber. According to the 1904 source, the company manufactured 70,000,000 board feet of yellow pine annually and shipped from 300 to 500 cars of lumber per month. The employment at that time was 450.

The house was owned and occupied by Fitzgerald family members until December 1998, when the third generation sold it to the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Slaid. In 1999 the Slaid family launched an extensive refurbishment program, including re-painting the exterior and cleaning the interior woodwork.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Historic Structures Survey, Webster Parish, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.

Fitzgerald family history, as communicated verbally to the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Slaid, by a granddaughter of the original owner.

Webster Parish, Louisiana: The Homeseeker's Paradise! The Eden of the New South!! The Promised Land of Plenty !!!!!. 1904.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA

- ___ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ Previously Listed in the National Register. (partially)
___ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
___ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
___ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
___ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- _X State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State Agency
___ Federal Agency
___ Local Government
___ University
___ Other (Specify Repository):

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreeage of Property: approx. 1 acre

UTM References: **Zone Easting Northing**
 15 473320 3608960

Verbal Boundary Description:

The legal property description is as follows:

A lot in the City of Minden, Webster Parish, Louisiana, fully described as beginning at the intersection of the north side of Crichton Avenue and the east side of McDonald Street; thence run in a northerly direction along the east side of McDonald Street a distance of 307 feet, more or less, to the south line of Academy Park; thence run in an easterly direction along the south line of said Academy Park, a distance of 180 feet, more or less, to the west side of Lewisville Street; thence run in a southerly direction along the west side of Lewisville Street a distance of 240 feet, more or less, to the north side of Crichton Avenue; thence run in a westerly direction along the north side of Crichton Avenue, a distance of 192 feet to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

Boundaries follow the property lines of the parcel of land historically associated with the Fitzgerald House.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: National Register staff

Address: Division of Historic Preservation, P. O. Box 44247, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Telephone: (225) 342-8160

Date: January 2001

PROPERTY OWNERS

Jack W. and Melissa Slaid
304 McDonald St.
Minden, LA 71055