

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 Gracelane Plantation House

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 14444 Perkins Road N/A ☐ not for publication

city or town Baton Rouge N/A ☐ vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county E. Baton Rouge code 033 zip code 70810

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.)

Jonathan Fricker 7/28/97  
Signature of certifying official/Title Jonathan Fricker, Date  
Deputy 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 commenting 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

8/29/97

Gracelane Plantation House  
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge 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	
<u>1</u>	<u>1 (carport)</u>	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	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)

Domestic / Single Dwelling

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Work in progress

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Mixed

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick  
walls weatherboard

roof metal

other \_\_\_\_\_

### Narrative Description

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

Gracelane Plantation House  
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA  
County and State

## 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

c. 1870

c. 1890

### Significant Dates

c. 1870, c. 1890

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Michael & Joseph Smith (builders)

### Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Gracelane Plantation House  
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.67 acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	5
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6	8	6	6	2	0
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3	3	6	0	3	3	0
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Zone Easting Northing

2 

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3 

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Zone Easting Northing

4 

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☐ 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 May 1997

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 Gracelane Historical Foundation, Inc., Nils Herlitz, President

street & number 14444 Perkins Road telephone 504-751-0704

city or town Baton Rouge state LA zip code 70810

**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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Gracelane Plantation House, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

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Located in East Baton Rouge Parish, Gracelane Plantation House is a one-and-one-half-story galleried cottage constructed between 1862 and 1871 and remodeled c. 1890. A date of c. 1870 will be used as the original construction date for the purposes of this nomination. The house stands on its original site, which was formerly a rural plantation of moderate size. It is now a smaller yet still spacious undeveloped tract sandwiched between two developing subdivisions on an extremely busy street on the outskirts of Baton Rouge. The building's architectural style must be categorized as "mixed" because it displays the influence of the French Creole, Greek Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne styles as well as of the Louisiana galleried cottage tradition. In addition to the historic remodeling, the house has experienced subsequent alterations and is currently undergoing rehabilitation. However, Gracelane remains eligible for National Register listing.

Gracelane consists of two parts: 1) a main block dating to c. 1870 and 2) a previously separate kitchen which was attached to the rear of the main block around 1890. This addition gave the home the "T" shaped footprint which it displays today. It is the treatment of the main block's front gallery which gives the building its status as a galleried cottage. This gallery is undercut beneath an all encompassing gable roof and is divided into five bays. The gallery received a false gallery, whose under side is sheathed in narrow beaded board, some time before approximately 1930.

The plan of the main block reflects Creole influence. It consists of a front range with two rooms, a rear range containing three rooms, and front and rear galleries. The kitchen consists of one large room. The two ends of the rear gallery were enclosed by walls containing French doors when the kitchen was joined to the main house. In addition, the kitchen's interior was upgraded and the former exterior walls of the rear gallery and kitchen were sheathed in narrow flush boards.

In addition to the previously described floorplan, Creole features found in the house include exposed beaded ceiling beams on the front gallery and in all original first floor rooms. The Greek Revival style is represented in the home's surviving vernacular mantel, which appears to date to the home's original construction. It features simply molded bases and capitals, smooth shafts and a smooth entablature supporting a simple mantel shelf. Italianate motifs distinguish the gallery columns and the home's two dormers. The columns are composed of rectangular shafts with boxed bases and heavily molded capitals. The dormers feature Italianate segmental arches surmounted by fishscale shingles in the gable peaks. These shingles, which provide a suggestion of the texture which was a hallmark of the Queen Anne Revival style, are the home's

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only Queen Anne motif. Because of the combination of Italianate and Queen Anne motifs on the dormers, the most likely scenario is that they, along with the columns, were added during a c. 1890 remodeling (perhaps at the time when the kitchen was connected to the rear). Although not an element of a particular style, the roof's covering material is unusual. It consists of pressed metal shingles similar to the pressed metal siding sometimes used on buildings during the late nineteenth century.

In addition to the Creole beaded beams and the Greek Revival mantel previously mentioned, the following woodwork features are found on Gracelane's interior: 1) a plain cornice with a large bead or mold at the bottom, 2) tall molded baseboards and wide wooden floorboards, 3) several four panel doors with molded panels on one side and plain panels on the other, and 4) simple door surrounds. The main block retains some of its original plaster walls; others have been sheetrocked. A door formed of beaded planks separates the kitchen from the enclosed rear gallery.

Gracelane experienced the following changes at some point after it attained its current configuration: 1) the addition of a modern door on one side of the kitchen, the piercing of the kitchen's end wall by a set of early twentieth century double windows, and the installation of an awning on the kitchen's east side, 2) the construction of a metal carport adjacent to but not actually touching the home's west side and the construction of a metal covered walk connecting the house to the carport, and 3) the installation of iron bars over all exterior doors. In addition, the current rehabilitation has initiated the following changes to the building:

- a) the replacement of 20-25 percent of the clapboards on the home's west side due to rot, the replacement of one stolen mantel with a replica of the home's surviving Greek Revival mantel, and the replacement of the original steep straight stair by a winder stair. (This stair accessing the attic was located in the middle room of the rear range, as is the replacement.)
- b) the subdivision of the formerly unfinished attic to create a small landing, two rooms and a bath, and the subdivision of one original rear room for use as a bath and closet.
- c) the repair of the home's shutters, the repair of the bottom portions of some gallery columns, the replacement of the front steps and railing, and the installation of carved pineapple shaped newel posts at the bottom of the gallery's steps.

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Gracelane Plantation House, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

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Despite the changes the house has received since its c. 1870 construction and c. 1890 remodeling, the building's architectural integrity and significance remain intact. With the exception of one lost Greek Revival mantel (which has been replicated), it retains its important French Creole, Greek Revival, and Italianate features. As explained in Part 8, houses displaying these stylistic elements are very rare in East Baton Rouge Parish. This rarity makes Gracelane Plantation House a legitimate candidate for National Register listing.

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Gracelane Plantation House, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA  
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Gracelane Plantation House is locally significant in the area of architecture as a rare surviving example of the pre-Queen Anne Revival taste within the context of East Baton Rouge Parish.

The area which would become East Baton Rouge was first settled during Louisiana's colonial era. Known for its French Creole plantation holdings, the locale later served as a military outpost for both the Spanish and the British. Thus, although its population at first remained small, settlement within the region was well established by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. With the official creation of East Baton Rouge Parish in 1811 and the incorporation of the City of Baton Rouge in 1817, a slow but relatively steady period of growth began. Fueled in the nineteenth century by a prosperous river trade and in the twentieth by an equally important petrochemical industry, the city has expanded ever outward until its boundaries basically encompass most of the parish. This continual process of urbanization, and more recent problems of decay, have resulted in the destruction of many of the parish's early historic structures. As a result, almost all of the historic buildings remaining date to the Queen Anne Revival period and after.

Although the parish has never been surveyed comprehensively, the historic preservation staff is very familiar with its patrimony. Although the parish probably retains close to 2,000 buildings which are fifty years old or older, most of these are bungalows, twentieth century eclectic residences, or twentieth century commercial buildings. It retains few examples of Creole, Greek Revival, and Italianate styled buildings, and equally few numbers of the vernacular Louisiana galleried cottages which would have been constructed during the late eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth centuries.

Against this absence of early building types and styles, Gracelane stands out because it contains rare examples of these early stylistic elements and the vernacular building form under discussion. The State Historic Preservation Office estimates that there are only 25-30 buildings in the entire parish which represent the pre-Queen Anne Revival (i.e., Creole, Greek Revival and Italianate) taste, and Gracelane has motifs from each. The presence of Creole features in Gracelane is especially important because, in addition to their rarity, these motifs reflect the popularity and longevity of that building tradition in South Louisiana. Finally, Gracelane is important because of its status as a Louisiana galleried cottage, the features of which are seen in its story-and-a-half pitched roof form and its five bay symmetrical facade. This now rare vernacular house type in East Baton Rouge Parish was once far more common than the grand, two-story mansions which are considered the state's architectural stereotype.

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Historical Note

The land upon which Gracelane would be built was purchased by brothers Michael and Joseph Smith in 1862. Carpenters as well as agriculturalists, the brothers apparently built the house together between that year and 1871, when Michael purchased Joseph's interest in the property. The house appears to have been named for Grace Olive Lane, who married into the extended family associated with the property. The house has passed through the hands of various family members but still remains in the possession of a Smith family descendant, who is spearheading the building's current rehabilitation.

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Staff knowledge of East Baton Rouge Parish.

Williams, Estelle Skolfield. *From Under the Magnolia Tree: A Family History*, n.p., 1996.

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Gracelane Plantation House, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA  
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Boundary Description: See attached property plat map.

Justification: Boundaries follow the property lines of the 1.67 acre parcel of land upon which the nominated house is located.

