

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

Rugg Elementary School, Rapides Parish, LA

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

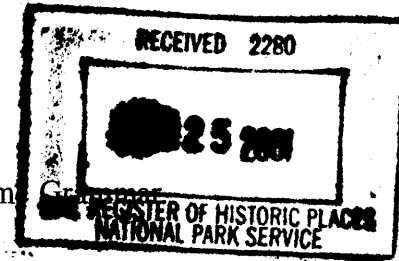
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Rugg Elementary School

807

Other Name/Site Number: Bush Avenue Grammar School, Bram



2. LOCATION

Street & Number 1319 Bush Avenue

Not for publication: NA

City/Town Alexandria

Vicinity: NA

State: Louisiana Code: LA County: Rapides Code: 079

Zip Code: 71301

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

Jonathan Fricker, Deputy SHPO, Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

June 20, 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

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

Rugg Elementary School, Rapides Parish, LA

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 2
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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: Sarah D. Pope

Date of Action: 8/10/01

5. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property
Private:
Public-Local: X
Public-State:
Public-Federal:

Category of Property
Building(s): X
District:
Site:
Structure:
Object:

Number of Resources within Property
Contributing
1
1
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

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

## **Rugg Elementary School, Rapides Parish, LA**

**Page 3**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

---

### **6. FUNCTION OR USE**

Historic: education                      Sub: school  
Current: education                      Sub: school

### **7. DESCRIPTION**

Architectural Classification: Modernistic

Materials:

Foundation: concrete  
Walls: brick  
Roof: other: tar and gravel  
Other:

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

## Rugg Elementary School, Rapides Parish, LA

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 4

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

### Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Built in 1940, Rugg Elementary School is a large, two-story, blonde brick building in the Modernistic taste. It occupies a large parcel of land in a mainly early twentieth century middle class neighborhood of the City of Alexandria. The school sits perhaps a hundred feet from the street, with a grassy lawn shaded by mature trees in front. Alterations are confined mainly to the rear.

Rugg has a footprint typical of period schools. There is a long main block with a rear auditorium/gym wing at the center. The auditorium/gym wing is two stories with a one story hallway along each side. A small restroom wing is set at a right angle at the rear of each hallway. The school's five-part articulation of advancing and receding wall planes is done a bit differently than is typical. Here the end pavilions are recessed rather than protruding. The building is strongly horizontal in character. The only vertical emphasis (and it is not strong) is from the central entrance pavilion.

Rugg's design reflects a strand of the Modernistic taste which emphasized curving forms. The central pavilion has curving corners, and the hyphen wings curve to join the recessed end pavilions on both the front and rear elevations. The front entrance steps are flanked by low curving brick walls. The treatment of secondary entrances is also within the Modernistic taste. These are located on the front and rear where the hyphen wing curves inward to meet the recessed pavilion. The door itself is on the pavilion wall, but the overall composition is that of a corner entrance. A squared-off, flat roofed, brick section (which reads as a continuation of the brick band between the first and second story windows) is supported at the corner by a thin metal pole. Steps curve around the corner. Access to the halls flanking the auditorium is at the corners where the halls and restroom wings meet, via a curving entrance. A thin curving flat canopy, supported on thin metal poles, covers each entrance, and the steps sweep around the corner.

The school's windows occur in long ribbon-like bands, with each unit featuring multiple horizontal panes. Horizontality is further re-enforced by thin brick bands above and below each floor of windows which extend the full width of the school, curving as the building curves. In true Modernistic fashion, the walls and roof meet in a crisp line – in this case emphasized by a thin coping of a different color.

As noted above, the only hint at verticality is in the entrance pavilion, which rises perhaps a foot above the main building mass. A two story, three part, squared off opening is at the center. Protruding at a ninety degree angle is a flat metal canopy capped by "L. S. Rugg" in free-standing letters. At the upper level the composition is filled with multi-pane windows with a vent in each lower section. Modern doors fill most of the lower section. The flat roof canopy appears in an early photo of the school; however, the "L. S. Rugg" dates to 1953-54, when the school acquired this name.

Rugg Elementary's interior is very well preserved. Floors are of terrazzo, and a brown wainscot of glazed tiles contrasts with off-white plaster walls. With the notable exception of original Art Deco chandeliers, the lobby is fairly simple in character. The only other decorative touch is the treatment of the juncture of wall and ceiling, marked by multiple bands extending onto the ceiling. At the head of the lobby are three doors (with a round window each) leading into the auditorium. A long hall, punctuated by slightly protruding piers, runs through the building with classrooms to each side. The doors leading into the end pavilions access a hall running the depth of the building with a staircase at each end. Additional classrooms are in each end pavilion. As noted previously, a hall runs along each side of the auditorium.

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

## Rugg Elementary School, Rapides Parish, LA

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 5

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

The interior's most impressive space is easily the auditorium/gym with its boldly curving forms. At the front the triple entrance doors are framed by massive piers which protrude inward in a sweeping curve. The curve is re-enforced at the ceiling by a broad band of multiple layers painted in a contrasting color. A small office is located within each bulging pier. Less dramatic but equally Modernistic is the treatment of the stage, which is framed by piers which curve inward. The piers are scored with vertical lines. The top of the proscenium is squared off and is severely plain. The end of the stage is marked by a low wall with curved ends. The auditorium retains its numerous space-ship looking hanging light fixtures. The space is well lit, featuring multiple pane windows on the first story and round "porthole" windows on the second.

Alterations since construction include:

- 1) As previously mentioned, the entrance pavilion has modern doors, and the L. S. Rugg name was added in 1953-54.
- 2) An addition has been made to the rear of the building, and a new addition is in the beginning stages of construction (ground preparation). The current addition (one story) attaches at the end of one of the auditorium halls via a hyphen. The former end of the auditorium hall has been fitted with a new opening with a modern character. Site preparation for the new addition, located at the south end of the school, was beginning when the photos for this nomination were taken, but the location and footprint were evident (see photos 4 &5). Also of one story, it will abut the entrance to an end pavilion. Regrettably, the Modernistic entrance will be obscured, or perhaps removed.
- 3) A covered (metal) walkway is attached to the rear at the north end to provide access to free-standing temporary classrooms. (These classroom buildings are not included in the nominated acreage.)

### Contributing element:

A contemporaneous power house, in the same blonde brick, is located immediately to the rear of the school.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

Rugg Elementary School, Rapides Parish, LA

Page 6

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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: 1940

Significant Dates: 1940

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: unknown

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

## Rugg Elementary School, Rapides Parish, LA

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 7

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

Rugg Elementary School is of local architectural significance as a good representative example of the Modernistic taste within Rapides Parish. It is one of only three major Modernistic buildings in the large parish and is convincingly styled in a distinct strand of the style known as Streamlined Moderne.

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. Most of the forty or so major examples within a statewide context were made possible by New Deal funds (most notably, eleven parish courthouses and various educational facilities). There are very few major commercial examples (perhaps a dozen), and Modernistic houses are also quite rare. (A major example is in contrast to various buildings across the state that could be best described as having "hesitant touches" of the Modernistic taste - i.e., a feature here and there in contrast to intensively styled, fully developed examples.)

Many parishes in the state have no fully developed Modernistic buildings, while a handful of parishes can boast several notable examples (for example, Caddo). Rapides Parish is a large rural parish with Alexandria (population about 55,000) the only town of any size. (One town has a population of about 12,000, while all the others are quite small, numbering less than 1,000.) Rugg Elementary is one of Rapides' three major examples of the Modernistic taste (using the definition of "major" as defined above). The others are the Rapides Parish Courthouse, a quite stark building notable principally for large bas relief designs flanking the entrance, and the intensively styled U. S. Post Office and Federal Building (NR), the best of the three. The parish courthouse and Rugg are roughly comparable in quality on the exterior, but the courthouse has completely lost its original interiors.

Of the three, Rugg is the only one to exhibit a distinctive strand of the Modernistic taste known as Streamlined Moderne. Its signature was curving fluid forms symbolizing motion. And while Rugg is on the chaste side of the spectrum, it nonetheless is a convincingly developed Streamlined Moderne building. With its rounded corners, ribbon-like windows, and thin bands of brick, the exterior reads almost as a continuous flow of building mass. And, of course, curving fluid forms reign supreme in the gymnasium/auditorium, particularly in the boldly formed front wall, with its dramatic form emphasized in multiple bands at the ceiling.

#### Historical Note:

The candidate opened on January 22, 1940 as Bush Avenue Grammar School. It was renamed Brame Grammar in the 1947-48 school year. With the opening of the 1953-54 term, the school acquired its current and final name, L. S. Rugg Elementary, named for Luzon Strausbury Rugg, principal from 1943 to 1949.

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

## Rugg Elementary School, Rapides Parish, LA

Page 8

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

### 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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

Circa 1950 photo of Rugg Elementary. Copy in Register file, LA Division of Historic Preservation.

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:

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

### 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: approx. 4 acres

UTM References:     **Zone**   **Easting**   **Northing**  
                          15     551140   3462240

Verbal Boundary Description: See attached sketch map.

Boundary Justification: As can be seen on the attached sketch map, Rugg Elementary occupies the city block bounded by Bush Avenue, Orange, 24<sup>th</sup>, and Myrtle. However, not all of this acreage is included due to new free-standing construction on the campus. Specifically, the boundaries cut in at the northeastern corner to exclude modern temporary classrooms connected to the historic school via a metal covered walkway.



# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

## **Rugg Elementary School, Rapides Parish, LA**

**Page 9**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

---

### **11. FORM PREPARED BY**

Name/Title: National Register staff

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

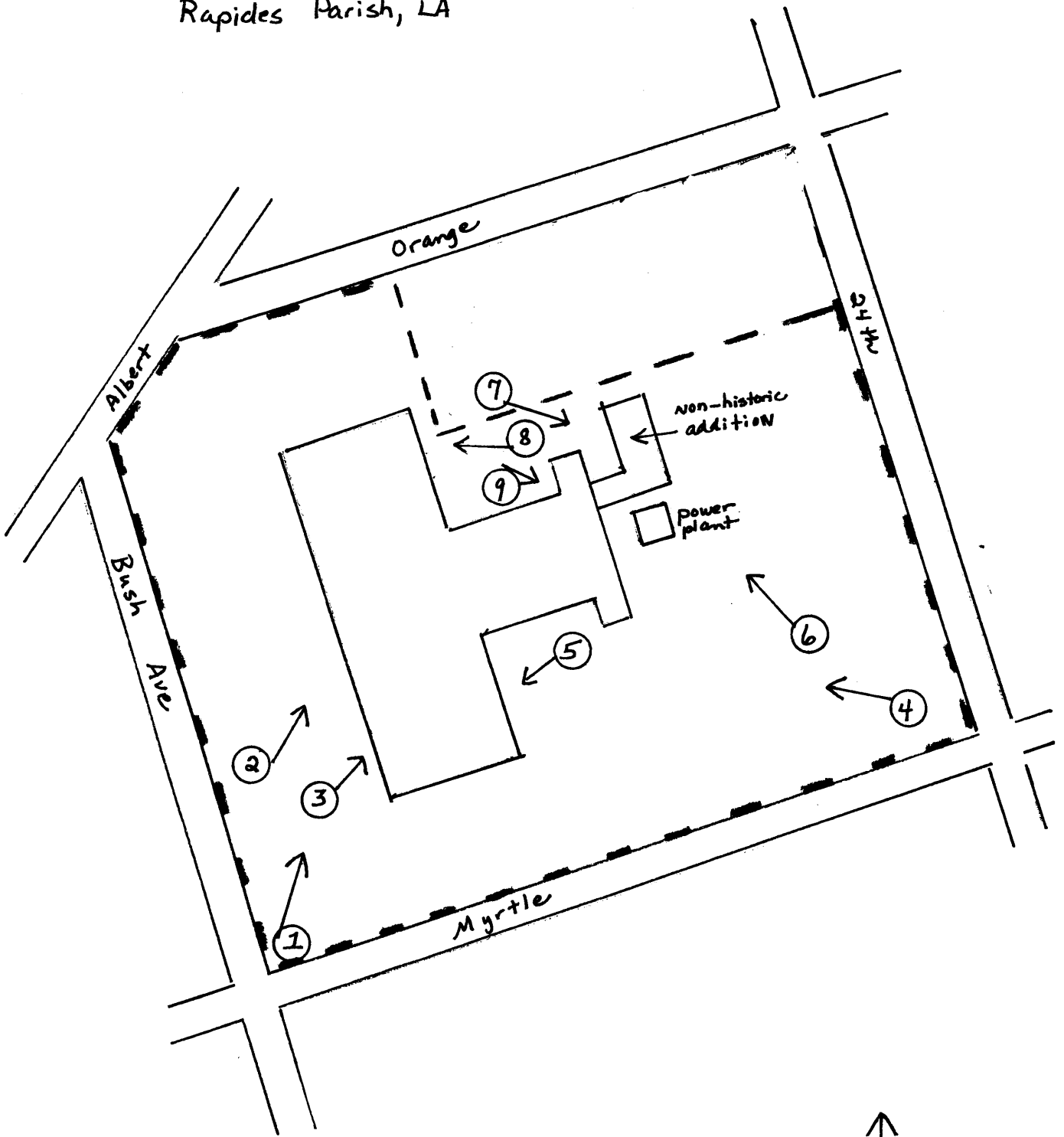
Telephone: (225) 342-8160

Date: April 2001

### **PROPERTY OWNERS**

Rapides Parish Schools  
P. O. Box 1230  
Alexandria, LA 71309-1230

Rugg Elementary School  
Rapides Parish, LA



1" = 100'

--- BOUNDARY