

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

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received SEP 6 1984

date entered OCT 4 1984

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic St. John's Episcopal Church

and or common same

**2. Location**

street & number Old Laurel Hill Road N/A not for publication

city, town Laurel Hill N/A vicinity of

state LA code 22 county West Feliciana Parish code 125

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Grace Episcopal Church Reverend John Senette 504-635-4065 or 635-6692

street & number P. O. Box 28

city, town St. Francisville N/A vicinity of state LA 70775

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. West Feliciana Parish Courthouse

street & number Highway 61 (no specific address) P. O. Box 71

city, town St. Francisville state LA 70775

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title LA Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1984  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records LA State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge state LA

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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### **Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

St. John's Episcopal Church (1873) is a small frame Gothic Revival chapel that has been altered very little since construction. Its remote pastoral setting in rural West Feliciana Parish contributes to its identity as a Victorian country Gothic church.

The three-bay basilican plan church is sheathed in narrow gauge clapboards and features slender pilasters at each corner of the main block. Architectural evidence indicates that the small room extending beyond the chancel is original. Both the entrance vestibule and nave have a steeply pitched roof trimmed in pointed arch vergeboards and crowned with a wooden cross. All openings are cut in the form of two center arched lancets except for the six over six window on the rear of the chancel extension. The window at the rear of the chancel is the only one with bar tracery. All windows feature louvered shutters. The arched double doors leading into the entrance vestibule are distinguished by cusped panels.

The flush board interior has a false barrel vault and a secondary false barrel vault in the chancel. Both are pointed. The arched opening framing the chancel is accented with pilasters. The windows feature a combination of stenciled and stained glass and are all original. The pews, pulpit and other furnishings appear to be original, except for the early twentieth century altar rail. The original flooring has been covered by modern carpeting.

Adjacent to the church is a small overgrown cemetery enclosed by a cast-iron fence. It is listed as a contributing element because it is historically related to the church. The oldest tombstones are very weathered and difficult to read, but there is no question that the cemetery has been in use at least since the time of the church's construction. The cast-iron fence is probably contemporaneous with the church.

### Assessment of Integrity:

In addition to the carpet and altar rail previously mentioned, the front steps have been replaced and a sign bearing the name of the church has been placed over the front doorway. These alterations are rather picayune when one considers how remarkably intact the church has remained.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1873 **Builder/Architect** Builder: St. John's Episcopal Church

Contractor: William Goddard

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)** Criterion C

St. John's Episcopal Church is of state significance in the area of architecture as a rare Louisiana example of a nationally recognized archetype.

St. John's is a good typical example of an American "Carpenter Gothic" church. Traditional Gothic features include the lancet doorway, lancet windows, pointed arch vergeboards, cusped panels on the door, and pointed vaults. Moreover, it exemplifies the "romantic rationalism" of A. J. Downing and A. J. Davis. Its light members and vertical proportions, in addition to being Gothic, were also considered by men like Downing and Davis to be in keeping with wood construction. As Downing put it: "It is false taste to erect a wooden building in a massive and heavy style."

"Carpenter Gothic" was popular throughout the country during the middle decades of the nineteenth century, especially for rural churches. As far as the State Historic Preservation Office is aware, there are only about half a dozen "Carpenter Gothic" churches in Louisiana. There were probably never very many, but those which remain represent a well-known and important manifestation of Victorian American taste.

### Historical Note:

St. John's Parish was organized at a meeting held September 28, 1873 with Reverend A. G. Bakewell as rector; J. Burruss McGehee, senior warden; and V. D. Walsh, junior warden. Construction of the church was far enough along for a service to be held in it on November 23, 1873. The church was built as a memorial to Susie Jessie Walsh, only daughter of Colonel V. D. Walsh. The cost, including furniture, was \$2,200, of which Col. Walsh contributed \$1,000. On Whitsun Day, May 14, 1874, the church was consecrated.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Historical sketch submitted by owner. Copy in Register file, LA State Historic Preservation Office.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property @ 2/3rds of an acre

Quadrangle name Laurel Hill, LA-MISS

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	5	6	5	8	4	3	0	3	4	2	5	8	1	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Please refer to enclosed sketch map. Boundaries were drawn to encompass the church, the historically related cemetery, and the immediate setting. The site is encompassed by forest land on three sides and by the road on the fourth side.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff ASSISTED BY OWNER

organization Division of Historic Preservation  
State of Louisiana

date July 1984

street & number P. O. Box 44247

telephone 504-342-6682

city or town Baton Rouge

state LA 70804

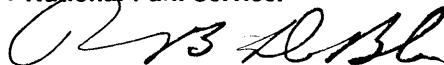
## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



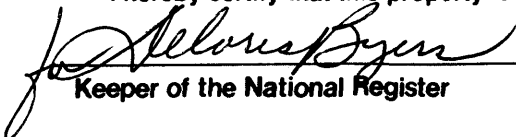
Robert B. DeBlieux

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date August 27, 1984

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register



Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 10-4-84

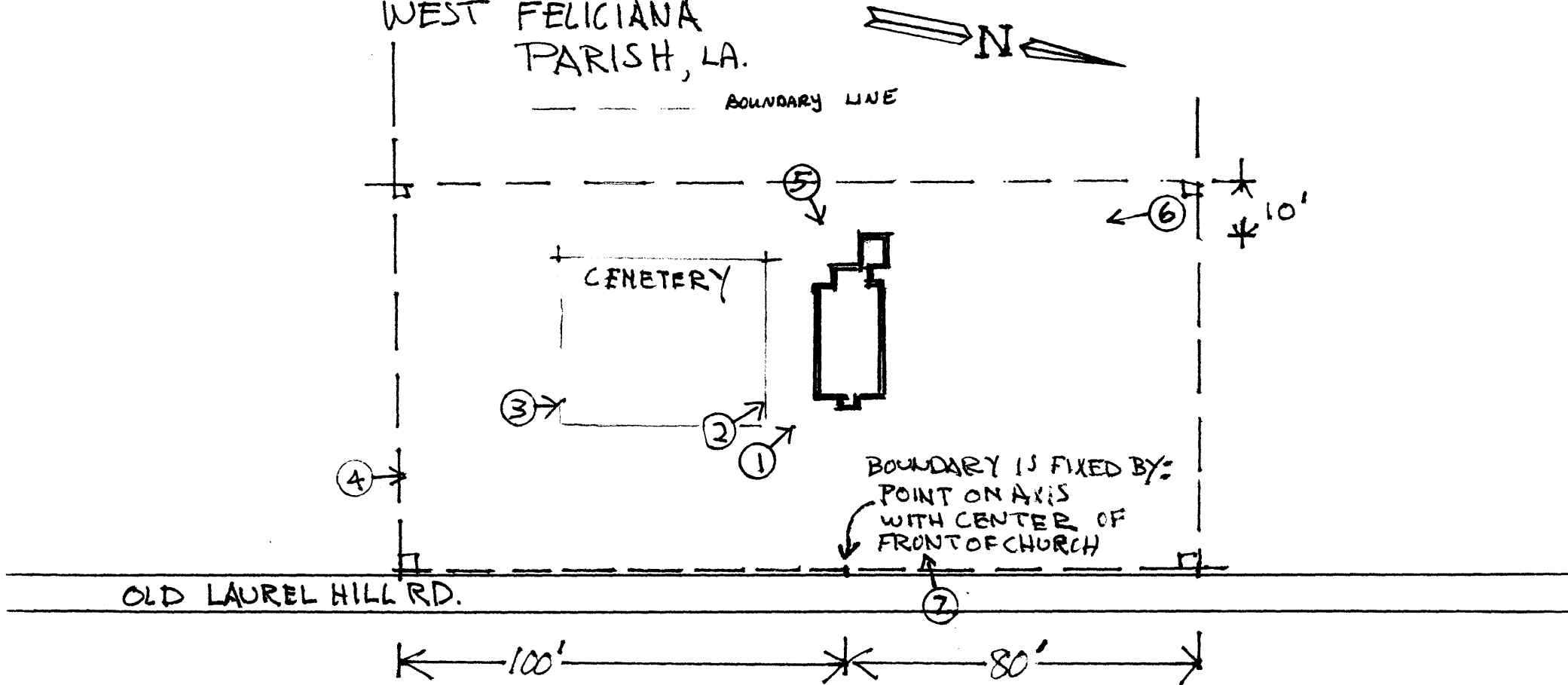
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

ST. JOHN'S  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH,  
WEST FELICIANA  
PARISH, LA.

APPROX.  $\frac{2}{3}$  ACRE



NOT TO SCALE