

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

DUFROCQ SCHOOL, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

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1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Dufrocq School
Other Name/Site Number: Dufrocq Elementary School
Dufrocq Montessori Magnet Elementary School

FEB 15 2002

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 330 South 19th Street
City/Town: Baton Rouge
State: Louisiana Code: LA County: East Baton Rouge Code: 033 Zip Code: 70806
Not for publication: NA
Vicinity: NA

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

Signature of Certifying Official/Title: Laurel Wyckoff, Louisiana SHPO, Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

Date: 2/13/02

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: [Handwritten Signature]

Date of Action: 3/28/02

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

Non contributing
5 buildings
sites
structures
objects
5 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: Education Sub: School
Current: Education Sub: School

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Beaux Arts
Materials:

Foundation: Concrete
Walls: Brick
Roof: Other: Tar and Gravel
Other: Concrete

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Dufrocq School (1922) occupies a city block in one of Baton Rouge's older residential neighborhoods. A restrained example of the Beaux Arts style, the two-story brick structure features concrete and brick decorative elements. The building has experienced little significant change since its construction and easily retains the integrity required for National Register listing.

Dufrocq's façade displays a five-part composition of projecting and receding planes. These consist of a projecting central pavilion and projecting north and south wings connected to the central section by receding hyphen-like elements. (Interestingly, the side elevations of the two wings also contain prominent receding and projecting planes.) The school's original floorplan (still visible despite slight changes -- see below) is typical of the period and consists of classrooms lining each side of long central hallways on each floor. Additional classrooms are found on each floor of the building's north wing. The south wing's second level also contains classrooms; the school's cafeteria is located on the first floor of this area. A two-story auditorium projects from the rear elevation to form a middle wing.

The building's Beaux Arts decorative features, which occur on the façade of the central pavilion and are made of concrete, give the structure a sense of monumentality. Classical elements used to adorn the pavilion include:

1. Two sets of paired, fluted colossal pilasters with stylized capitals.
2. Twin entrances surmounted by oversized hoods supported by very large brackets. (The entrances contain double doors and tall, subdivided transom windows.) Behind each hood a low pediment motif is attached to the wall.
3. A frieze containing two sets of roundels (one centered above each pilaster capital) and a band of bas relief elements stretching between the two sets of roundels.
4. A stepped parapet with coping culminating in a low pediment located at the center point of the pavilion. (The stepped parapet continues to encircle the building.) The pediment contains a bas relief sculpture (difficult to view because of trees adjacent to the building) and is flanked by a pair of rooftop urns.

The central pavilion contains one decorative element which is suggestive of the Craftsman style. Rectangular cast concrete panels containing stylized motifs of the type seen in Craftsman art glass flank two windows on the pavilion's second level. The school also displays other features which are not specific to the Beaux Arts. For example, a notable modillion cornice and two-layer brick band encircle the building below the parapet. Square bas relief plaques appear periodically within the parapet walls. A plaque (located between upper and lower story sets of triple windows on the central pavilion) displays the school's name. Simple yet decorative brick panels highlight several exterior walls. A watertable composed of layers of corbelled brick provides the visual suggestion of a raised basement. Finally, each elevation is pierced by bands of large nine-over-nine windows with brick sills and lintels. The first floor sills extend and join to form a belt course which also encircles the building.

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Except for the auditorium and the treatment of the building's two staircases, Dufrocq School's interior is unadorned. The auditorium features a ceiling subdivided by large paneled beams. Paired pilasters with molded capitals and necking appear to turn the two front corners of the space. Paneled pilasters flank the auditorium's stage and support the large arch which forms the proscenium. The auditorium's chair rail also survives. The staircases' heavy carved newel posts are quite distinctive, featuring incised vertical members which end in a point. Although simple in appearance, the classrooms are large. They feature high ceilings; transom windows piercing the hallway walls, and built-in, glazed storage cabinets. Several cloakrooms are included in the floorplan; each is shared by the two classrooms which flank it.

Exterior alterations to Dufrocq School are very few. A covered walkway has been attached to the wall of the south wing and a small, one-story brick addition has been appended at the rear of the cafeteria (in the south wing). Finally, a small mechanical room has been attached to the rear of the auditorium wing. On the interior, a wall has been removed between the two downstairs classrooms of the north wing to create a library. On the auditorium's first floor two original rear doors have been sealed, the original wooden theater seats have been removed, and movable partitions have been placed at the rear beneath the balcony. (The front portion of the auditorium remains open.) In the auditorium's balcony the theater seating has been removed, the floor has been leveled, and a wall has been built to separate the area from the open space below. The former balcony currently serves as a computer lab. All of the cloakrooms have been converted as either office or teaching space, but their original coat hooks and shelving remain intact. Tile floors and ceilings have been installed throughout the building, and rubberized matting now covers the two staircases.

Although at first glance the list of alterations may appear long, in reality the changes are minor in nature and have no effect upon the building's National Register eligibility. In fact, the original façade is completely intact. As one of a limited number of major examples of the Beaux Arts taste within the City of Baton Rouge, Dufrocq School is a strong candidate for National Register listing.

Non-Contributing Elements:

Five modern frame temporary classroom buildings currently stand on the school grounds.

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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: 1922

Significant Dates: 1922

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: William T. Nolan, Architect
Caldwell Bros. General Contractors, Builder

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

Dufrocq School is locally significant in the area of architecture as one of a limited number of major examples illustrating the Beaux Arts taste in Baton Rouge.

Although the official founding date of the community is recognized as 1719, Baton Rouge has retained only a relatively small number of historic commercial and institutional buildings with their integrity intact. Those which remain are generally found in one of three locations -- the Central Business District, the Louisiana State University Campus, and older residential neighborhoods which stand near downtown. The relatively low survival rate is due largely to the fact that the city remained prosperous after the Depression and into the 1950s and 1960s. As a result, the community's older commercial and institutional buildings suffered considerable alteration and demolition.

Although there are various buildings in Baton Rouge which display Beaux Arts influence, most examples are quite low-key, featuring only sparingly applied details such as pilasters used for accent. Less than ten are fully articulated examples of this classical style. This number is verified by a survey of downtown Baton Rouge and the National Register staff's familiarity with the rest of the city. Dufrocq is one of these Beaux Arts landmarks. Though not the largest or grandest, the school presents a monumental appearance and has elaborate detailing, featuring several classical motifs. This can be seen in the school's finely executed central pavilion, which exhibits colossal fluted pilasters, a stepped parapet, roundels, hoods, pediments, over-sized brackets, and urns. These features make Dufrocq School an important example of the Beaux Arts taste within the City of Baton Rouge, and, thus, a legitimate candidate for National Register listing.

Historical Note

Dufrocq School was named for John R. Dufrocq, a French Canadian journeyman printer who eventually became editor of a local newspaper after moving to Baton Rouge. He served as magistrate (mayor) from 1846-1849, and was the first municipal leader to be known as mayor when the town changed the name of its executive officer in 1850. Dufrocq School has operated continuously as an elementary school since its opening. It now functions as a Montessori Magnet school.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Architectural and Historical Survey of Downtown Baton Rouge. Foundation for Historical Louisiana and City of Baton Rouge - Parish of East Baton Rouge, July 1984.

Staff knowledge of the City of Baton Rouge.

Site visit by National Register staff.

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: Approximately 2.5 acres

UTM References: **Zone Easting Northing**

 15 675860 3369360

Verbal Boundary Description:

The block bounded by 19th Street on the west, 20th Street on the east, Spain Street on the south, and Louisiana Avenue on the north, City of Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana.

Boundary Justification:

Boundaries for the nomination follow the boundaries of the school grounds (which are also the property lines). These coincide with the historic school grounds (boundaries) of the institution.

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 2002

PROPERTY OWNERS

Clayton Wilcox, Superintendent
East Baton Rouge Parish School Board
1050 South Foster Drive
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806
(225) 922-5618