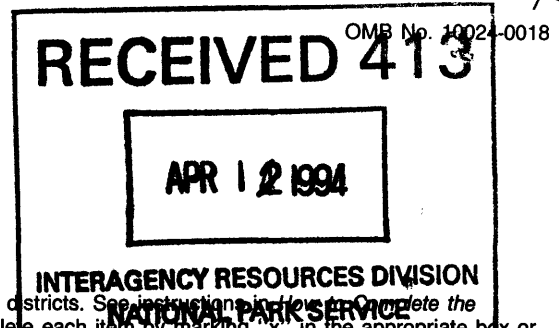


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad Co. Depot

other names/site number Illinois Central Railroad Station; Riverside Museum, Louisiana Arts & Science Center

2. Location

street & number 100 South River Road N/A not for publication

city or town Baton Rouge N/A vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county East Baton Rouge code 033 zip code 70802

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.)  
Gerri Hobdy April 8, 1994  
Signature of certifying official/Title Gerri Hobdy, LA Date  
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 certifying 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:) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Entered in the National Register Date of Action 5-19-94

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
	5	objects
1	5	Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/rail-related

RECREATION & CULTURE/museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

foundation concrete

walls brick

stone

roof other: tar and gravel

other

Narrative Description

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

**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** N/A  
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

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)

Transportation

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1925-1944 (transportation)

1925 (architecture)

**Significant Dates**

1925

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

unknown

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad Co. Depot  
Name of Property

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property @ 2 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 5	6 7 3 7 9 0	3 3 6 9 4 5 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

2			
---	--	--	--

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

4			
---	--	--	--

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 January 1994

street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone (504) 342-8160

city or town Baton Rouge state Louisiana 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 City of Baton Rouge

street & number P. O. Box 1471 telephone (504) 389-3100

city or town Baton Rouge state Louisiana zip code 70821

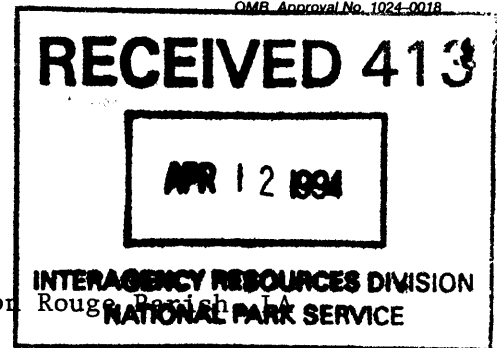
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to 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 Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad Co. Depot, East Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA  
Section number 7 Page 1



The Yazoo & Mississippi Valley Railroad Co. Depot (1925) is a large masonry building in the Neo-Classical style. Composed of a two-story main block flanked by one-story wings, it stands between the River Road and the Mississippi River levee, directly across from the Old State Capitol building in downtown Baton Rouge. Although it has undergone alteration due to its adaptive reuse as a museum, the East Baton Rouge Parish building remains eligible for National Register listing.

The depot is constructed of red brick with limestone decorative elements. Its Classical features include:

- 1) rectangular massing. Although the main block contains two slightly projecting surfaces flanking a colonnade and suggesting pavilions, the overall appearance of the entire structure is that of a rectangular mass.
- 2) the above mentioned central colonnade, which is composed of single, engaged colossal stone Tuscan columns. Colossal brick pilasters are found on the original rear elevation (now an interior wall--see below).
- 3) an entablature encircling the main block. The entablature's banded architrave and cornice are composed of stone. Its brick frieze features stone plaques decorated by bas relief wreaths.
- 4) entablatures on the facades of both wings,
- 5) segmental arches with keystones above breezeways which connect the wings to the main block,
- 6) parapets on both the main block and the north wing. That on the main block is solid and features a large plaque inscribed with the railroad's name. The north wing's parapet is also solid, but its projecting and receding surfaces make it resemble a balustrade. Both parapets are surmounted by copings of limestone.
- 7) two sets of window surrounds which distinguish the openings in the slightly projecting pavilions. The surround of the upper window features shoulder

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad Co. Depot, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

Section number 7 Page 2

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molding. The highlight of each lower surround is a pair of scrolled brackets supporting a hood. The two surrounds are connected by a stone plaque. Stone sills distinguish all the other windows in the main block.

- 8) arched windows (now bricked in) creating arcades on the front and rear elevations of both wings, and
- 9) a stone watertable.

Other features of interest on the exterior include brick paneling between the windows of the upper and lower floors and decorative wheel-like metal devices located just below the stone capitals of the rear pilasters. These wheels mark the location of tie rods which help to hold the structure together.

The main block's original first floor plan contained separate waiting rooms and lounge facilities for white and black travelers. These spaces flanked a central ticket office which served both groups. A small newsstand was located adjacent to the ticket office. The north wing contained a kitchen and dining rooms for both races. The south wing housed freight and railway express offices. The main block's second floor contained a large general office on the south end of the building and a series of smaller single offices lining each side of a central corridor on the north end. Surviving visible interior features include simple colossal pilasters in the waiting rooms and one set of grilled windows in the ticket office.

Changes to the floorplan, as well as some alterations on the exterior, were the result of a 1974-1976 renovation which converted the building into an art and science museum. The changes included:

- 1) the loss of all but one of the depot's accompanying sheds. An eighteen foot wide canopy which served as a train shed paralleled the west (rear) elevation of the depot. It was replaced by a small walled sculpture garden and a large, two story brick addition of modern design. A more narrow canopy standing north of the building and a freight shed on the south side were also demolished.

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**United States Department of the Interior  
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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad Co. Depot, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

Section number 7 Page 3

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- 2) the alteration of many of the building's windows and doors. First, several doors on the main block's facade were converted into windows. Next, all of the arched windows on both the north and south wings were filled with brick, as previously mentioned. All of the surviving original and altered exterior openings on the building were then glazed with large panes of tinted glass. Unneeded doors and windows on the main block's rear elevation were filled with wooden inserts and at least one window was converted into a door.
- 3) the conversion of much of the building for use as exhibit and laboratory space. To accomplish this change, the first floor was reconfigured, with some rooms being subdivided and others having walls removed. In addition, some ceilings were lowered, the terrazzo floors were covered by carpet, and carpet-covered plywood panels were installed approximately two-thirds of the way up the walls to provide a mechanism for attaching exhibit materials. These panels cover terrazzo wainscots and the bottom portions of the pilasters lining the waiting room walls. On the second floor, some of the north-end offices were gutted to create gallery space, and those remaining were reconfigured and modernized to serve as offices for the museum staff.
- 4) the alteration of the wings and arched breezeways connecting them to the main block in order to make these spaces conform to the museum's needs. The north (restaurant) wing's interior was gutted to provide space for collections storage, while the interior of the south wing was gutted for conversion into an auditorium. A large glazed room serving as a river overlook was constructed above the south wing and was connected to the second story of the main block by a glazed barrel vault above the breezeway. As part of this wing's conversion, its brick parapet was removed. Both breezeways were glazed. That on the north serves as exhibit space while that on the south serves as the museum entrance. Attached to the south wing is an elevated walkway providing access to the river.

Although the alterations to the depot may seem extensive at first glance, the structure retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic role as a railroad depot and its status as a Neo-Classical landmark in downtown Baton Rouge. Except for the reglazing of the windows and the conversion of some doors into windows, the facade of the main block looks just as it did in 1925. Because limestone lintels identical to those on the rest of the building were

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**United States Department of the Interior  
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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad Co. Depot, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

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installed below the newly created windows, this change does not disrupt the rhythm of the main block's facade. Furthermore, the wings' arcades are still clearly visible despite their brick infill. Although the rear addition completely covers the original rear elevation, that wall was always secondary to the highly articulated facade. Furthermore, the original rear wall does survive and is visible from inside the addition. Although most of the train sheds are gone, one does survive to illustrate how these ancillary structures related to the depot. As a rare example of the once important railroad industry and the phenomenon of the urban depot, and as a landmark example of the Neo-Classical style within downtown Baton Rouge, the Yazoo & Mississippi Valley Railroad Co. Depot is a prime candidate for National Register listing.

Non-contributing Elements:

Located within the train shed are five historic railroad cars brought to the site and restored in 1976. In consultation with the National Park Service, these are being counted as non-contributing elements for the purpose of this nomination. Future research in reference to their rarity and integrity may reveal that they independently meet the Register criteria as a collection of objects in an appropriate setting.



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad Co. Depot, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

Section number 8 Page 1

The Yazoo & Mississippi Valley Railroad Co. Depot is significant at the state level in the area of transportation history, both as a rare railroad resource and as an even more rare example of the phenomenon of the urban depot. The period of significance spans from 1925, the date of construction, to 1944, the fifty year cutoff for significance. The railroad continued to be a major force in Louisiana until at least the 1950s, and passenger service continued at this depot until 1971. The building is also being nominated at the local level in the area of architecture because of its status as a superior example of the Neo-Classical style within the Baton Rouge Central Business District.

**State Significance--Transportation History**

From the late-nineteenth century until the 1950s, the major means of transportation in the nation was by train. Three or four times faster than the steamboat which had previously been the workhorse of Louisiana's transportation industry, the railroad was also able to reach areas not served by navigable waterways. Some 5,000 miles of mainline trackage were built in Louisiana between about 1880 and 1910, opening sparsely populated areas to settlement and, in many cases, literally creating new towns. Besides being the link between individual towns and the outside world, the railroad was integral to the very economic existence of communities. Therefore, besides the seat of the government and the churches, the train depot was probably the most important building in any town through which the railroad passed.

Although the railroads were once served by numerous facilities such as depots, roundhouses, warehouses, and hotels, only a limited number of railroad resources survive in Louisiana today. Many of these are small, modest board and batten structures which are only locally important as reminders of the importance of the railroad in a particular town's history. However, the surviving urban depots of the period tell a broader story. They reflect the pride of the railroad company, the significant role which it played in the development of the state as a whole, and the status of certain cities as important railway centers. Recognizing these associations, the railroad companies took extra measures to ensure that their urban depots were among the grandest buildings in any community. Thus, these depots were large, multi-story, sophisticated buildings which were consistently articulated with the vocabulary of a recognized historical style of architecture. For example, New Orleans once had several railroad stations, among which were two monumental depots exhibiting classical styling. However, all have been demolished. Shreveport, another

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad Co. Depot, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

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important railroad center, lost its grand, towered Romanesque station to fire in 1972. The Yazoo & Mississippi Valley Railroad Co. Depot is one of only four urban depots (as defined above) extant in Louisiana. In addition, its Neo-Classical styling and monumental appearance make it the grandest of the survivors. Thus, it is a rare and important symbol of the transportation industry, and of the importance of the urban depot, in Louisiana.

### Local Significance--Architecture

The Yazoo & Mississippi Valley Railroad Company Depot is locally significant in the area of architecture because it is a superior example of the Neo-Classical style within the Central Business District of Baton Rouge.

Although the official founding date of the community is recognized as 1719, downtown Baton Rouge has retained only a relatively small number of historic buildings with their integrity intact. This situation is due largely to the fact that the city remained prosperous after the Depression and into the 1950s and 1960s. As a result, it suffered considerable alteration and demolition. The extent of this loss is documented in old photographs, oral accounts, and Sanborn maps. The Architectural and Historical Survey of Downtown Baton Rouge, completed in 1984, also confirms these losses. It identifies only 124 surviving buildings 50 years of age or older within the commercial district, and almost half of this number are residences. Of the historic commercial and institutional buildings which remain, most are unstyled c. 1890 - c. 1940 vernacular buildings, many of which have been significantly altered. In addition, the Central Business District also contains a number of new buildings, parking lots, and vacant lots where older buildings once stood.

Against this background, the Yazoo & Mississippi Valley Railroad Co. Depot is clearly a significant landmark. Consummate classical style articulation is relatively rare in downtown Baton Rouge. Although buildings with vestiges of the Neo-Classical taste can be found, these examples tend to have only sparingly applied details such as pilasters used for accent. Only four buildings are fully articulated examples of the style. With its monumental size, its grand central colonnade, and its full entablature with surmounting parapet, the depot ranks as one of the city's two finest Neo-Classical structures. The other, the Old Louisiana Governor's Mansion, has previously been listed on the National Register.

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## **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad Co. Depot, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

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### Historical Note

As is the case in many communities, the railroads serving Baton Rouge have undergone a series of name changes over the years. The first line, the New Orleans & Mississippi Valley, reached the city in 1883. The next year its name changed to the Louisville, New Orleans & Texas. This company was acquired by the Yazoo & Mississippi Valley Railroad in 1893. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps show that the building under consideration was the third depot to be constructed within the railroad reservation situated on the levee at the foot of North Blvd., and was the second to be erected on this exact site. The Yazoo & Mississippi Valley was eventually acquired by the Illinois Central Railroad system. The depot is now owned by the city and houses the Louisiana Arts and Science Center.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad Co. Depot, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

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### BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Historic Baton Rouge: A Revised Study of Historic Buildings and Sites. City-Parish  
Planning Commission, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, March 1970.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1885, 1891, 1908, 1911, 1923 (corrected through 1946).

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Continuation Sheet

Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad Depot, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA  
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The nominated building occupies three tracts, with the following legal property description:

**Tract I:**

Those certain lots or parcels of ground, together with all improvements and buildings thereon and all rights, ways, privileges, servitudes, appurtenances and advantages thereunto belonging or in anywise appertaining, and any servitudes running in favor thereof, situated in the City of Baton Rouge, Parish of East Baton Rouge, State of Louisiana, in that portion of the City of Baton Rouge known as **Beauregard Town, Supplemental Plan**, bounded on the East by Front Street (formerly Natchez Street) and on the West by the Mississippi River and being designated as the entire Square 1 composed of Lots 1 through 6 inclusive, Lots 1, 2 and 3 of Square 2, said **Beauregard Town, Supplemental Plan**, as shown on the official map of the City of Baton Rouge compiled and drawn by William G. Waller and R. Swart dated 1885 according to the Ordinance of the City Council dated June 3, 1884, and being more particularly described as follows:

Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of Square 1, Beauregard Town, Supplemental Plan, shown on the 1885 Swart map as a complete square measuring 384 feet on the west side of Front Street (formerly Natchez Street) by a depth between equal and parallel lines of 128 feet, each lot measuring 64 feet on the west side of Front Street (formerly Natchez Street) by a depth between equal and parallel lines of 128 feet;

Lots 1, 2 and 3 of Square 2, Beauregard Town, Supplemental Plan, shown on the 1885 Swart map as measuring 192 feet on the west side of Front Street (formerly Natchez Street) by a depth between equal and parallel lines of 128 feet, each lot measuring 64 feet on the west side of Front Street (formerly Natchez Street) by a depth between equal and parallel lines of 128 feet;

and being more clearly shown on that map made by Evans-Graves Engineers, Inc., dated February 6, 1986, and revised October 5, 1988 and December 27, 1988.

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Continuation Sheet

Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad Depot, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

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**Tract II:**

That certain tract or parcel of ground, together with all improvements and buildings thereon and all rights, ways, privileges, servitudes, appurtenances and advantages thereunto belonging or in anywise appertaining, and any servitudes running in favor thereof, situated in the City of Baton Rouge, Parish of East Baton Rouge, State of Louisiana, and further shown on the official map of the City of Baton Rouge compiled and drawn by William G. Waller and R. Swart dated 1885 according to the Ordinance of the City Council dated June 3, 1884, as that portion of America Street lying West of Front Street (formerly Natchez Street), Beauregard Town, Supplemental Plan, being more particularly described as follows:

America Street, measuring 53.33 feet along the westerly right-of-way line of Front Street, by a depth of 128 feet between equal and parallel lines;

and being more clearly shown on that map made by Evans-Graves Engineers, Inc., dated February 6, 1986, and revised October 5, 1988 and December 27, 1988.

**Tract III:**

That certain tract or parcel of ground, together with all buildings and improvements thereon, and all of the rights, ways, privileges, servitudes, appurtenances and advantages thereunto belonging or in anywise appertaining, and any servitudes running in favor thereof, situated in the City of Baton Rouge, Parish of East Baton Rouge, State of Louisiana, and shown on the official map of the City of Baton Rouge compiled and drawn by William G. Waller and R. Swart dated 1885 according to the Ordinance of the City Council of June 3, 1884, as that portion situated north of the Railroad Depot (now the Louisiana Arts and Science Center) located immediately adjacent to and North of Lot 1, Square 1, Beauregard Town, Supplemental Plan, and West of Front Street, in the City of Baton Rouge, Parish of East Baton Rouge, State of Louisiana, and being more particularly described according to a map entitled "Map Showing Survey of Lots 1-6, Sq. 1, Lots 1-5, Sq. 2 & Lots 1-5, Sq. 5 or A, Beauregard Town Supplemental Plan, Located in the City of Baton Rouge, Parish of East Baton Rouge, Louisiana...", prepared by Evans-Graves Engineers, Inc., dated February 6, 1986, and revised October 5, 1988 and December 27, 1988, as follows:

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Continuation Sheet

Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad Depot, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

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Commence at the northeast corner of Lot 1, Square 1, Beauregard Town, Supplemental Plan, located in the City of Baton Rouge, Parish of East Baton Rouge, State of Louisiana; thence proceed S 86°56'21" W along the north boundary line of said Lot 1, a distance of 2.5' to Point of Beginning; thence proceed to the left along the arc of a curve having a radius of 538.87' a distance of 85.44' to a point; thence proceed N 12°04'45" W a distance of 64.26' to a point; thence proceed to the right along the arc of a curve having a radius of 2070.13' a distance of 323.92' to a point; thence proceed N 4°07'04" W a distance of 41.10' to a point and corner; thence proceed S 87°00'20" W, a distance of 29.25' to a point and corner; thence proceed S 2°29'10" W a distance of 176.23' to a point; thence proceed to the left along the arc of a curve having a radius of 1452.50' a distance of 138.94' to a point; thence proceed S 2°59'40" E a distance of 197.90' to a point and corner; thence proceed N 86°56'21" E a distance of 99.22' to the Point of Beginning and Ending.

Tracts I, II and II being subject to any and all servitudes granted by the parties pursuant to an act of Cash Sale with Grants of Servitudes by and between Illinois Central Railroad Company, as seller, and The City of Baton Rouge, Louisiana and The Parish of East Baton Rouge, Louisiana, as buyer, which instrument was recorded in the office of the Clerk and Recorder of East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, on November 18, 1988, at Original 745, Bundle 10043.

Boundary Justification: Boundaries follow legal property lines.