

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

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

For NPS use only

received **AUG 25 1983**
date entered

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

1. Name

historic n/a
and/or common Sprague Street Houses

2. Location

street & number 1100 - 1118 Sprague Street N/A not for publication
city, town Shreveport N/A vicinity of
state LA code 22 parish Caddo county code 017

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: some are vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Charles Beard
street & number P. O. Box 31110 (318) 459-3242
city, town Shreveport N/A vicinity of state LA 71130

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Caddo Parish Courthouse
street & number 501 Texas Street
city, town Shreveport state LA 71101

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Resources Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date February 1980 federal state county local
depository for survey records City of Shreveport, Urban Development Programs Department
city, town Shreveport state Louisiana

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Location

The six houses are located on the northwest corner of Sprague and Christian Streets. They are less than one half mile from the Caddo Parish Courthouse, the center of downtown Shreveport. The houses are located in a neighborhood called St. Paul's Bottoms (or more commonly The Bottoms), generally acknowledged as the most distressed neighborhood in the city. The houses lie across the street from Oakland Cemetery, the original city cemetery, which is already listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Historical Background

The 1872 Bird's Eye View of Shreveport shows a row of six similar houses on the northwest corner of Sprague and Christian Streets. These are not the same houses that are standing today. The 1899 Sanborn map shows five identical "shotgun" houses and a "T" shaped house. The 1899 city directory indicates that these houses were occupied by black working class families. By 1903 the five identical shotgun houses had been demolished and/or moved and replaced by five new houses. The 1909 Sanborn map shows a new house replacing the "T" shaped house. City directories indicate that the original inhabitants of these houses were white middle class families.

Exterior

The six houses are nearly identical in appearance. The front of each house has a three sided bay on the left and an entry porch on the right. All houses are built on crawl, with brick piers and cedar lattice between piers. The porches have turned columns and the front door has a large single pane transom. Each side of the three sided bay has a large (about 7' 0") double hung window. The upper sash of the middle window has a large central pane of clear glass rimmed by 14 smaller panes of various colors of stained glass. All of the other windows have one over one pane patterns. The wall surface is "novelty" siding: a horizontal wood siding with alternating 4 inch wood strips and 1/2 inch in wood beads. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the exterior of the house is the rather complicated roof that combines hip, gable and shed elements. Of note is the pediment above the entry which is part of a shed roof covering the entire porch. A projecting gable is on the left side over the second room which extends out beyond the rest of the side wall plane. There are two doors other than the front door, a rear door leading to the kitchen and a recessed door on the right side of the house leading to the central hall. The most apparent difference between the various houses is that two (1110 and 1114 Sprague) are without the interior brick chimney. The chimney lies just in front of the apex of the hip roof.

Interior (See attached floor plan sketch.)

The floor area of each house is about 1,550 square feet. While not large by late Victorian standards; nonetheless these houses provided ample room for the working class families that city directories showed as initial residents.

Two major intersecting interior walls run the length and width of the house, creating four quadrants. Each quadrant has distinctly different functions. The rear left quadrant contains two bedrooms. The rear right quadrant contains the service functions of the house: kitchen, bath, pantry, hallway and two of the three entrances. The front

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7. Description (cont'd)

left quadrant contains the most formal rooms in the house, both of which have a corner fireplace and mantel. Finally, there is the front right quadrant, containing the reception hall. The front porch is an extension of this hall.

Environment played a considerable role in a number of design factors. Windows, doors and hallways were lined up from both front to back and side to side to create breezeways. Transoms allowed doors to be shut to insure privacy while still maintaining cross ventilation. Ceilings are 12 feet high so that the warmest air rises well above head level. Windows are double hung, drawing cooler air through the lower opening and expelling warmer air through the upper opening. Heating in the first 2 rooms was from coal burning fireplaces. The cast-iron plates to the fireplaces still remain in a number of the six houses. Each fireplace had a mantel, the more ornate mantels being located in the front room. The mantel design varied from house to house, all of them within classical lines-- i.e., fluted Ionic columns, brackets and cornices.

Other architectural elements of note are the fluted window and door surrounds with their circular pattern cornerblocks and the grooved wainscotting on the hall, bath and kitchen walls.

Alterations

After 80 years, the houses on Sprague Street have remained remarkably intact despite, or perhaps because of, years of neglect. Four of six are vacant (1114, 1108, 1104 and 1100 Sprague). 1104 and 1100 Sprague were cited with property standards violations and were in the process of being gutted prior to demolition when the present owner purchased them. Many of their windows and interior walls had been torn down.

Sometime in the 1930's, asbestos siding was added to the exterior of the three houses closest to Mary Street (1108, 1104 and 1100 Sprague). Also, some of the roofs had asphalt shingle roofing replaced by rolled tar paper. In other houses, some transoms have been painted or closed, ceilings lowered and wood panels hung. Most of these changes have been cosmetic; much of the original materials lie underneath.

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Item 7. ADDENDUM BY STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

The Sprague Street Houses nomination consists of a group of six more or less identical c.1905 frame rental units which can best be termed side hall shotgun houses. Each has a Queen Anne Revival and Eastlake front. The houses are located in Shreveport in a large working class renthouse neighborhood known as The Bottoms. Despite a few alterations, the houses retain their National Register eligibility.

Each house has a side hall plan, four rooms deep, with a kitchen at the end of the hall.* (It is not known whether the kitchens are original or not.) In each house the front room protrudes forward in a semihexagonal bay under a faceted conical roof, and the second room protrudes from the side under a side gable. There is also a forward facing entrance gable over each of the single bay Eastlake entrance porches. Overall, the front roofline of each house consists of twelve planes. By contrast, the rear of each house has only two. Each house has a single chimney which serves corner fireplaces in the first and second rooms. Ceilings are twelve feet high and many of the doors have transoms.

Integrity

In addition to the changes mentioned in the nomination form, the following alterations have been made:

1. In all of the halls, portions of the rear have been enclosed for pantries and baths. (See plan.)
2. No. 1104 has lost two of its porch columns.
3. Some of the windows have been boarded up.
4. Nos. 1110 and 1114 have lost the upper part of their chimneys.

Most of these changes should be regarded as minor and cosmetic. Numbers 1104 and 1100 have lost much of their interior architectural fabric and some of their windows, but their exterior appearance remains intact and their identity as side hall shotgun houses is still recognizable. In both cases most of the wall which creates the side hall is still in place. The installation of bathrooms and pantries has not compromised the houses' identity either. As can be seen in the sample plan, half of the rear portion of each hall remains. Moreover, the side hall still dominates the room configuration. Finally, the residing on Nos. 1108, 1104, and 1100 has not affected their massing, fenestration, plan, or porch details, which are the basis of their significance. Overall, the six buildings are well enough intact to merit listing on the National Register.

*Apparently each hall was bisected by a wall and side entrance (see plan).

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates c. 1905 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Criterion C

Context

By 1900 Shreveport had already established itself as a center for services, agricultural trade, and transportation. Foremost among its industries were: cotton, supplying raw material for the nation's growing textile industries; and lumber, supplying material for both building trades and rapidly expanding railroads, especially in neighboring Texas. In 1905 oil was discovered in Oil City, Louisiana, about 20 miles northwest of Shreveport. Over the next decades western Louisiana and east Texas became the world's largest producer of oil. Shreveport, along with Dallas and Houston, were the major cities involved with oil exploration, leasing and drilling. With the new oil industries and the expanding oil industries, the decade following the turn of the 20th century brought a period of unprecedented growth in Shreveport. In 1900, Shreveport's population was about 16,000. By 1910, the population had almost doubled to about 28,000.

This influx of people created a need for working class housing. The following are two classified ads from the Shreveport Journal:

Jan, 28, 1901

FOR RENT: A nice five room cottage, with bath, reception hall, rear hall, front and back galleries, located on Anna Street, Allendale. Will be vacant on February 1.

May 13, 1903

FOR RENT: New house, five large rooms, hall, front and back galleries, bath and pantry, shady, grassy yard.

Five of the six houses on Sprague Street (1114-1100 Sprague Street) were most likely built in 1902 or 1903. The remaining house, 1118 Sprague, was probably built in late 1904 or 1905. The 1906 city directory indicates that the houses were occupied by working class families -- i.e., couples with one to three children. The heads of the households worked in such jobs as clerks and freight agents. The only exception was Dr. M. A. Lewis, who both boarded and worked at 1100 Sprague Street. The "Doctor" lived by himself and listed his profession as "magnetic healer." Like the houses described in the classifieds, these were rental housing. City directories show a high rate of turnover. By the 1930's this part of the Bottoms was a black ghetto.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Carruth, Viola Caddo 1000 Shreveport Magazine, 1971

Hennick, Louis Louisiana, Its Street and Inter-Urban Railways, Pelican Pub. Co., 1978

Interviews with: Goodloe Stuck; Dr. Alan Thompson

Sanborn Maps, LSUS Archives

1899, 1903, 1904, 1909, 1935

City directories: 1899, 1900, 1902,

1905, 1906, 1910, 1919, 1921

Shreveport Journal: 1-28-1901, 5-13-1903

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approximately 3/4 acre

Quadrangle name North Highlands, LA

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	5	4	2	18	9	18	10	3	15	9	17	9	0	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.

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 Daniel J. Thomas Urban Design Planner

organization Shreveport Metropolitan Planning Commission

date June 28, 1983

street & number P. O. Box 31109
1234 Texas Street

telephone (318) 226-5782

city or town Shreveport

state Louisiana 71130

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

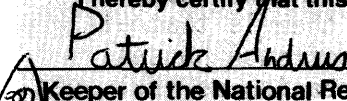
title State Historic Preservation Officer

date August 15, 1983

For NPS use only

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

date 10/3/83


Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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8. Significance (cont'd)

The houses were built near the end of the Queen Anne period. These houses demonstrate a stylistic "trickle down" effect. Elements of high Victorian architecture that were used in houses for the wealthy 10 years earlier have, by 1902, become emulated by builders of houses for the working class. Such stylistic elements on the exterior are: a complex, multi-shaped, high pitched roof; pedimental entry; a front with its center window having an upper sash with a border of small colored lights, and turned porch columns.

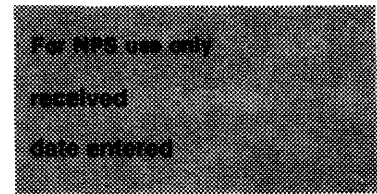
The concept of "novelty" is important in explaining the richness of these rent houses. Massed produced items intended for household adornment have, by 1900, become things that the working class could afford. Features that earlier only the wealthy could afford, became commonplace. For example, they could be ordered through a Sears and Roebuck catalog and shipped by rail across the country. In working class houses these novelties could be placed at strategic locations such as the porch entry, doorways, front windows and mantels. The Sprague Street houses are excellent examples of the careful placement of these types of details. One has only to look at one of the ornate mantels and cast-iron fireplace plates to be impressed.

Environmentally, these houses are significant in that they reflect a tradition of building well suited for its local climate. High, double hung windows, transoms, high ceilings, lap board construction, and the alignment of doors and windows to create breezeways are all part of this climate consciousness.

Finally, while these houses were not constructed for homeowners, they are precursors of what was to come. Massed produced, tract housing for the working class began to occur extensively after World War I. By the late 1940's and early 1950's it was the dominant form of housing in America. These six houses on Sprague Street are a testament to quality built, affordable housing that has become part of the American Dream.

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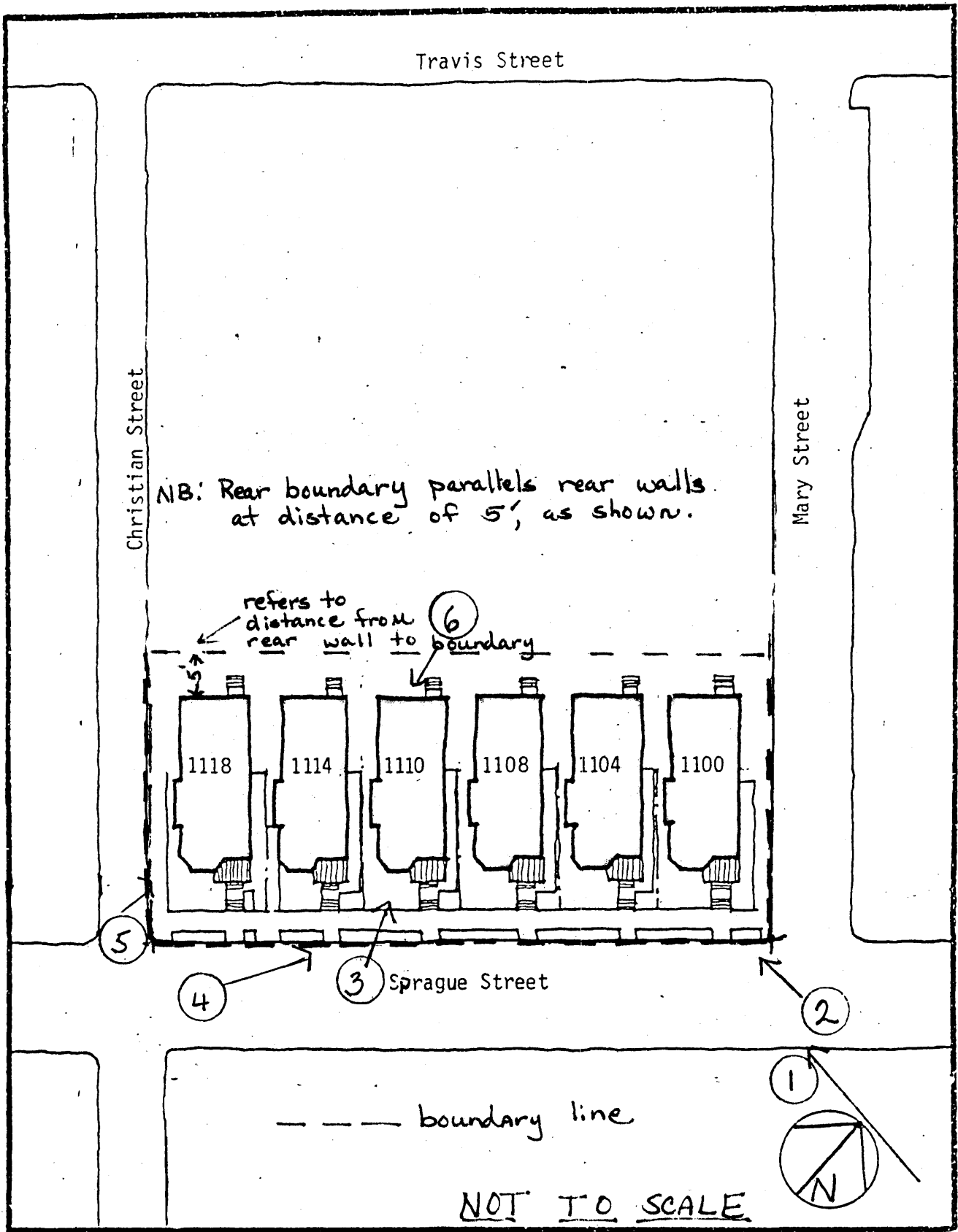
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Item 8. ADDENDUM BY STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

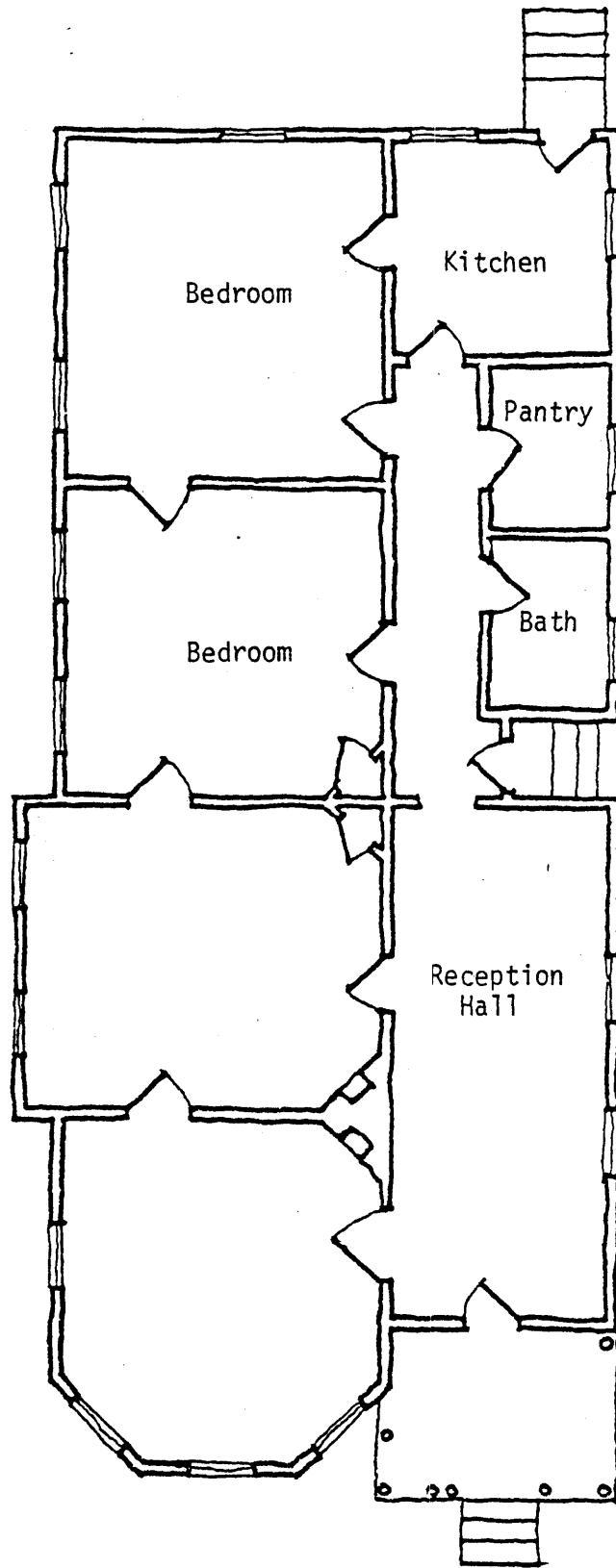
The Sprague Street Houses property is locally significant in the area of architecture as an important collection of shotgun houses within the context of The Bottoms area and Shreveport as a whole.

The Bottoms is a working class rental house neighborhood consisting of a few thousand structures, most of which are simple frame shotgun houses. In contrast to shotgun neighborhoods of New Orleans, the majority of the shotgun houses in the Bottoms are single rather than double. But in the Bottoms, as in New Orleans, the largest and most pretentious shotgun houses usually have a side hall and some distinguishing ornamentation on the facade. On the whole, shotgun houses in the Bottoms are less ornamented than comparable examples in New Orleans.

It is against this background that the architectural significance of the Sprague Street Houses emerges. Like other speculative shotgun houses in the Bottoms, the Sprague Street Houses were built as a more or less identical row. But unlike most of the others, the Sprague Street Houses have side hall plans. Moreover, the front half of each house is elaborately styled and massed with a Queen Anne Revival and Eastlake character. This goes well beyond the facade decorative treatment which is normally found on other pretentious shotgun houses in the area. Architecturally, the six houses represent the apex of speculatively built rental houses in the Bottoms. In addition, they are by far the finest collection of shotgun houses in the City of Shreveport. As far as the State Historic Preservation Office is aware, there are no other local collections which are even comparable.



SPRAGUE ST. HOUSES
 SHREVEPORT, CADDO PARISH
 LOUISIANA



SPRAGUE ST. HOUSES
Typical Floor Plan

Source: Paul Davis, Neighborhood Housing Service
Elizabeth Gray