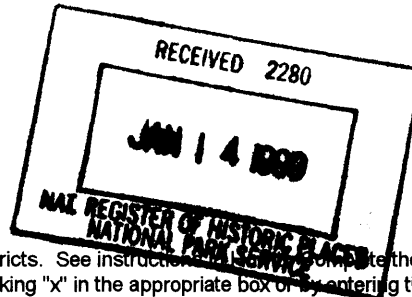


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions for completing 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 any 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 Francis T. Nicholls Junior College Main Building

other names/site number Charles C. Elkins Hall

2. Location

street & number 906 Highway 1 East NA not for publication

city or town Thibodaux NA vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Lafourche code 057 zip code 70310

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jonathan Fricker January 8, 1999
Signature of certifying official/Title Jonathan Fricker, Date
Deputy SHPO, Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

State or 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 this 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):

Elson H. Beall Signature of Keeper Date of Action 2-12-99

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

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

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Education

Sub. College

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Education

Sub. College

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other Concrete

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" next to the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- X 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

(Mark "X" next to all that apply.)

NA

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education

Period of Significance

1948

Significant Dates

1948

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Favrot and Reed

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

NA

- 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 #

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property** approximately 9 acres**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

1 15 712530 3297840

2 _____

3 _____

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 Byname/title National Register Stafforganization Division of Historic Preservation date November 1998street & number P.O. Box 44247 telephone (225) 342-8160city or town Baton Rouge state LA 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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name University of Louisiana System, Board of TrusteesState Capital Building, Third Floorstreet & number 150 Third Street telephone (225) 342-6950city or town Baton Rouge state LA zip code 70801**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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section 7 Page 1

A restrained example of the Classical Revival style, the Main Building of Francis T. Nicholls Junior College (now Nicholls State University) is a two-story brick structure with a one-story rear wing. It stands within the outskirts of the Lafourche Parish seat of Thibodaux at the head of a broad, sweeping lawn which borders Bayou Lafourche and Louisiana Hwy 1. Although the building's rear elevation and interior have received alterations, the facade looks remarkably as it did when the facility was completed in 1948. Thus, the structure's National Register eligibility remains intact.

Designed by the firm of Favrot and Reed, the building exhibits several Classical architectural elements articulated in concrete. The most pronounced is the treatment of the main entrance as a temple. It features a large pediment with a raking denticulated cornice. Below the pediment is an entablature with a denticulated cornice and a wide frieze where the words "C. C. Elkins Hall" indicate the building's modern name. Four colossal pillars with Corinthian capitals, necking and molded bases give the appearance of supporting the entablature and pediment. The latter is pierced by a large oculus decorated by voussoirs. Behind the temple front the facade features a door with an aedicula style surround. (This motif also ornaments the doors on each side of the building.) The surround is surmounted by a window featuring shoulder molding. Shoulder molding also highlights the first story windows which flank the door. The two other second level windows behind the temple front feature simpler yet still prominent lintels.

Also of interest on the facade is the decoration of pavilion-like elements located on each end of the building. Treated identically, each "pavilion" features two pairs of colossal pilasters with Doric capitals and necking. The pilasters support an entablature almost as bold as that on the temple front, except that the former lacks the dentil treatment found on the latter. Although not of Classical derivation, the treatment of the brick on the end "pavilions" is also of interest. It is laid in a pattern which creates two panels, one above the other. The entablatures of the temple front and pavilion-like elements are joined by a more narrow entablature which encircles the building and is abutted by the top portions of the second story windows.

The plans of both floors are organized around long hallways which bisect the building horizontally. Except for the installation of an elevator in the hall space immediately opposite the main entrance and the removal of student lockers which once lined them, these hallways remain open and intact. However, with only one or two exceptions, the large classrooms and offices which once filled the building on either side of the halls have been subdivided to create a larger number of small offices. A

CONTINUED

Francis T. Nicholls Junior College Main Building

Name of property

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

Lafourche Parish, LA

County and State

OMB No. 1024-0018

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section 7 Page 2

modest addition to one side of the one-story rear wing and the building of crosswalks connecting the side entrances to newer structures nearby are the only alterations to the exterior. Thus, former students who attended Francis T. Nicholls Junior College during its opening term would easily recognize the Main Building should they return to the campus today. As the symbol of the coming of age of higher education in the Lafourche region, the building is a strong candidate for National Register listing.

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National Park Service****NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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The Francis T. Nicholls Junior College Main Building is locally significant in the area of education as the symbol of the arrival of higher education in Louisiana's Lafourche/Terrebonne region. With the opening of the junior college (all of whose facilities were originally housed in this one building) in Thibodaux on September 23, 1948, the opportunity to obtain an education beyond the high school level was made available to most of the area's students for the first time.

Nicholls was originally planned to serve the citizens of Southeast Louisiana living between the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers in Ascension, Assumption, Lafourche, St. Charles, St. James, St. Mary, and Terrebonne parishes. Because bayous Lafourche and Terrebonne provide a geographic anchor for this area, it will be referred to as the Lafourche/Terrebonne region for the purposes of this nomination. Characterized by a rural nature (including large expanses of wetlands) and (until recently) a population consisting mostly of trappers, fishermen and farmers, this relatively remote region has traditionally been underserved. Until the opening of Nicholls, schools in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Lafayette were the only options for students desiring post-high school education. However, a number of factors prevented most students from attending these institutions. Firstly, although not impossible, commuting was made difficult by the distances involved (four to five hour round trips upon two-lane bayou roads) as well as by the problem of crossing the Mississippi (which until 1960 was spanned by only one bridge in Baton Rouge and one in New Orleans). Another serious impediment was finance, for the cost of boarding either in dormitories or off-campus housing was out-of-reach for many. Finally, according to Dr. Alfred N. Delahaye (Professor Emeritus of Journalism at Nicholls and the author of a soon-to-be-published history of the school), a strong sense of place and family often prevented students from leaving the area for any reason. As a result of these factors, higher education was not readily available for the majority of the region's high school graduates until the opening of Francis T. Nicholls Junior College.

The movement to obtain post-high school learning opportunities for the area's citizens actually began in 1938, when the state legislature passed a law creating a trades school for white citizens at Thibodaux. However, this facility never materialized. Over the years local civic leaders and educators (a group eventually known as the junior college committee) expanded their goal--championing the creation of a two-year junior college which would offer academic courses. In 1944 the legislature finally responded by amending the 1938 act to provide for a combination junior college and trades school. The institution was to be named for former governor Francis T.

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**United States Department of the Interior
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CONTINUATION SHEET**Section 8 Page 2

Nicholls, a Donaldsonville native who later settled in Lafourche Parish. It was to be located in Thibodaux and to be administered by Louisiana State University (LSU).

Although the new law allocated \$375,000 for the creation of the school, the state held these funds while the junior college committee and the state's Attorney General negotiated over the legalities of acquiring a site. (The AG would not allow the Lafourche Parish Police Jury to call a tax election to fund the purchase and also ruled that the local School Board did not have the authority to donate a site to LSU.) Not until May 1945, after the committee had recommended that part of the \$375,000 be used for site acquisition, were the funds finally transferred to LSU. Nicholls would be the third junior college in the university's system.

On November 14, 1945 the LSU Board of Supervisors spent \$29,500 to purchase a 108 acre campus paralleling Bayou Lafourche on the outskirts of Thibodaux. Later they would purchase an additional 90 acres. By late January 1946 a newly constituted Executive Building Committee (which included local leaders as well as representatives of LSU) had instructed the New Orleans architectural firm of Favrot and Reed to prepare plans and cost estimates for the junior college's first building. This work took slightly longer than a year to complete. When the committee opened construction bids on April 10, 1947, it found the lowest to be \$406,000. The contractor chosen to complete the work was Romero & Theall of Youngsville, Louisiana. Ground was broken on May 9. Because the contractor hired local labor for the project, the junior college brought an immediate economic benefit to Thibodaux. LSU used the construction period to finalize its choices for the new school's administrative staff and faculty. Charles C. Elkins, then director of the university's remedial reading bureau, was named as the junior college's dean in April 1948. Administrators were allowed to move into the almost-complete building the first week in September, but student registration had to be postponed until September 23 while the structure received more finishing touches.

By registration's end, 161 people had enrolled in the new junior college's day classes. Less than a month later over 140 more would enroll when the institution began offering evening extension courses for older, working students. These first scholars found a state-of-the art educational building containing 31,000 square feet on two floors. The facility included six general classrooms; an additional lecture room; a commerce (business) room; two science laboratories; and a home economics department with separate sewing, living and cooking rooms. Support spaces included a library, "social room," dining room, and combination post office and bookstore.

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Twelve administrative, business and faculty offices were also located in the structure. Finally, the building provided students with lockers, which outlined the hallways on both floors.

The curriculum and class schedule were especially geared to the students' needs. Although preliminary plans had included courses such as woodworking, auto mechanics, metal work, food processing and preservation, and vocational agriculture, authorities had eventually realized that their limited resources would necessitate their focusing upon a more "fundamental" junior college curriculum. As Dean Elkins explained in an LSU publication, "We hope to offer courses which the students . . . want and need as terminal education or as preparatory work for senior college." These courses were organized into six general areas, including agriculture, home economics, secretarial science, liberal arts, commerce, and engineering. (The last three concentrations proved most popular with Nicholls' first students.) In addition, classes taught early in the morning were also offered a second time later in the day so that commuting students would not be penalized.

With no dormitories available and little money to pay dorm fees had the facilities existed, commuting became an important part of every student's life. The trip was made somewhat easier by the fact that, with the legislature's approval and assistance, Nicholls offered the first free bus service to college students in Louisiana. At first the buses reached only Lafourche and Terrebonne parishes, but eventually nine parishes participated in the transportation plan. Many of the salaried drivers were Nicholls students, so the program provided a form of financial aid to the lucky persons who won the positions. Additional campuses of LSU and other state institutions of higher learning quickly adopted this idea, and free bus service for post-high school students continued throughout the state until the 1980s.

In summary, there can be no doubt that the opening of the Francis T. Nicholls Junior College Main Building in 1948 was a milestone in the history of higher education in the Lafourche/Terrebonne region. According to Leon Gary, a member of the state Board of Education in 1956 when Nicholls became a senior college, "Before Nicholls and [Dean] Elkins. . . few high school graduates of the area cared about college, but once Nicholls was in place almost everyone began going to college." The school provided a low cost education, gave young students opportunities to learn leadership skills, and, states Nicholls historian Delahaye, kept family groups together for two more years while young students matured. As one early student explained, "We were the

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last of the eleventh-grade group. We were not ready for a large college atmosphere. We were young, too protected, naive, innocent. Only about 20 percent of us would have made it through college had there been no Nicholls.”

NOTE: With an expanded campus and curriculum, the institution now known as Nicholls State University continues to provide college level education for the citizens of the Lafourche/Terrebonne region, as well as to attendees from around the state. In 1964 the Main Building was named in honor of Dean Charles C. Elkins.

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

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Delahaye, Alfred N. "Nicholls State University: The Elkins-Galliano Years, 1948-1983."
Unpublished manuscript used by permission of the author; copy in his
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Interview with Dr. Alfred N. Delahaye, Professor Emeritus of Journalism and Nicholls
historian, Nicholls State University, November 4, 1998.

Lafourche Comet, January 23, 24, March 13, April 17, May 1, 15, 1947; April 22,
September 9, 16, 23, 30, October 14, 21, 1948; copies in National Register file.

Nicholls State University Vertical File, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University,
Baton Rouge.

Original floor plans for Francis T. Nicholls Junior College Main Building, Campus
Architect's Office, Nicholls State University.

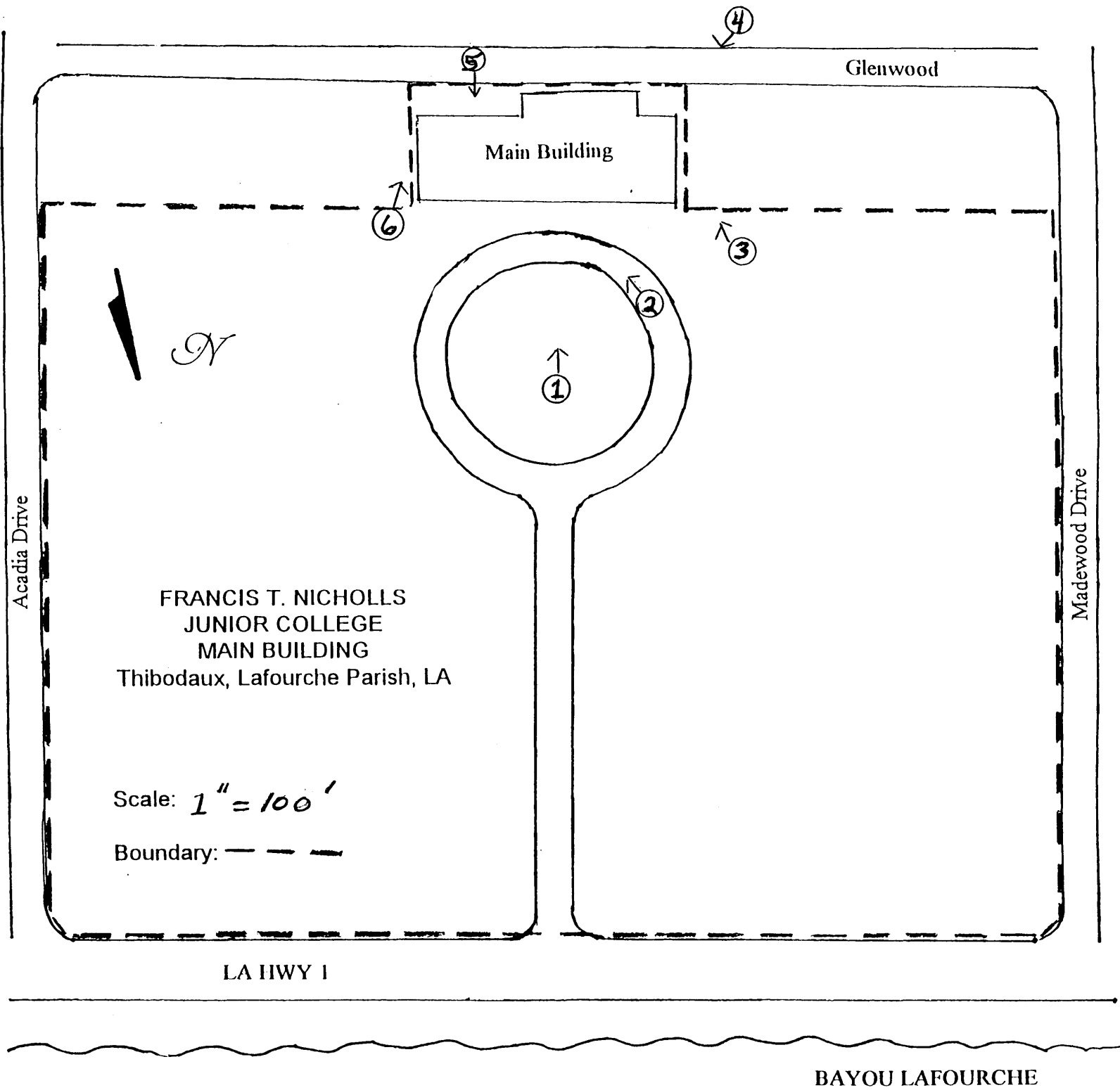
Site visit by National Register staff.

Boundary Description:

See attached sketch map.

Boundary Justification:

The resource stands facing Bayou Lafourche at the head of a circular drive
encompassed within an expansive lawn. The boundaries are drawn to include as much
of this historic context as possible while excluding non-contributing elements which
stand close by. The boundaries cut through breezeways on the sides of the building.



FRANCIS T. NICHOLLS
JUNIOR COLLEGE
MAIN BUILDING
Thibodaux, Lafourche Parish, LA

Scale: 1" = 100'
Boundary: - - - -

BAYOU LAFOURCHE