

STATE: Mississippi
COUNTY: East Baton Rouge
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON:
Old Capitol (Veterans' Memorial Building)

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Louisiana State Capitol 1849-62; 1882-1932

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Bounded on the north by North Boulevard, on the east by St. Philip Street, on the south by America Street, on the west by Front Street.

CITY OR TOWN: Baton Rouge

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 6

STATE: Louisiana

CODE: 22

COUNTY: East Baton Rouge

CODE: 033

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: State of Louisiana

STREET AND NUMBER: P. O. Box 44095, Capitol Station

CITY OR TOWN: Baton Rouge

STATE: Louisiana

CODE: 22

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Office of Clerk of Court

STREET AND NUMBER: Municipal Building, 300 North Boulevard

CITY OR TOWN: Baton Rouge

STATE: Louisiana

CODE: 22

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: National Register of Historic Places

DATE OF SURVEY: 1973

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: National Register of Historic Places

STREET AND NUMBER: 1100 L Street NW.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE: D. C.

CODE: 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Louisiana State Capitol was built in 1847-49 and rebuilt in 1880-82 after the interiors were destroyed in December 1862 while it was used as a garrison for Negro troops. During the interim, as before the 1840s construction, the State was governed from New Orleans. As a Gothic Revival public building in America, it is a unique example of a rare type. Its architect, James H. Dakin, described it as "castellated Gothic." Thirty-five years later Mark Twain wrote, "Sir Walter Scott is probably responsible for the Capitol building; for it is not conceivable that this little sham castle would ever have been built if he had not run the people mad, a couple of generations ago, with his medieval romances."

Like a cathedral, the Capitol has a cruciform plan. The east-west axis is comparable to a nave and contains the House chamber on the west end at the second floor and the Senate chamber in the apse, each with a giant stained glass window behind the now vanished rostrum. The transepts continue in use as office space. Each arm of the plan terminates in two towers; those at the west are octagonal, the others square. The west front, facing the Mississippi River, was originally regarded as the principal facade and the names of State Officials responsible for the 1847 construction are incised in the marble panels flanking the great Tudor-arched entrance.

The fenestration with cast-iron hood moulds over the openings is the most authentic remnant of the original construction and to the extent that it controls the floor plan, the tie between the 1840s work and 1880s rebuilding within the shell. Crenellated parapets conceal the roofs, flat in Dakin's original design but now a variety of pitched forms. Exterior walls, painted beige with brown trim, are plastered brick above a granite plinth. Historic references to "the old gray castle" suggest that it may have been painted gray at one time.

Dakin's plans were submitted in a competition announced January 23, 1847; he was notified of their acceptance on May 5. Delays in fixing the site and obtaining satisfactory local brick postponed the corner stone ceremonies until November 3. The proposal accompanying the design stressed the economy of the style and the durability of the cast-iron decoration. Dakin's diary reveals extensive cast iron use on the interior and quantities of glass for some type of glazed dome but none of this survived the 1862 fire.

The architect chosen for the 1880-82 reconstruction was William A. Freret, who tried to keep his work in the spirit of the original. Known changes include new emphasis on the north entrance, addition of a fourth story to the transepts, and open work cast-iron turrets on all the towers. Never popular, these were removed in 1937. The interior rotunda is Freret's showpiece. From a central iron column rising to the fourth floor level

(Continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1847-49 and 1880-82**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Unlike the British, Americans rarely applied the Gothic Revival to major government buildings. The Old Louisiana Capitol in Baton Rouge is a singular example of a Gothic Revival design for the State's most important building. Although its checkered career includes a disastrous fire and periods of abuse, the building is again restored and is particularly notable for the 1847 west facade of James H. Dakin and the 1880 sky-lighted rotunda of William A. Freret.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	30°	26'	49"	91°	11'	23"			
NE	30°	26'	49"	91°	11'	18½"			
SE	30°	26'	44½"	91°	11'	18½"			
SW	30°	26'	44½"	91°	11'	23"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **4.59 acres**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Paul Goeldner, Architect, Historic Sites Survey

ORGANIZATION: **Division of Historic and Architectural Surveys,
National Park Service** DATE: **1/18/74**

STREET AND NUMBER:
1100 L Street NW.

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE: **District of Columbia** CODE:

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

<p>As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Title _____</p> <p>Date _____</p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p>_____ <i>Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</i></p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p>_____ <i>Keeper of The National Register</i></p> <p>Date _____</p>
--	--

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Louisiana	
COUNTY East Baton Rouge	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

7. Description (page 1)

Old Capitol

the stained glass dome begins with a narrow cone and opens, like the underside of a morning glory, then arches down to the twelve-sided, Gothic-arched cast-iron cage which encloses the rotunda above the second floor. A broad, free-standing stair spirals around the central column from the first to the second floor. The rotunda floors are checkered squares of black and white marble. Offices of the major government officials retain the original sills with the titles incised in the marble.

Since the removal of the State government to the new capitol in 1932, the building has been used principally to house the Louisiana Art Commission (now part of a State Department of Art, Historical, and Cultural Preservation), and offices of veterans' organizations. Architectural changes have primarily been toward restoration and safety. The legislative chambers are used principally as galleries which give them a somewhat vacant appearance.

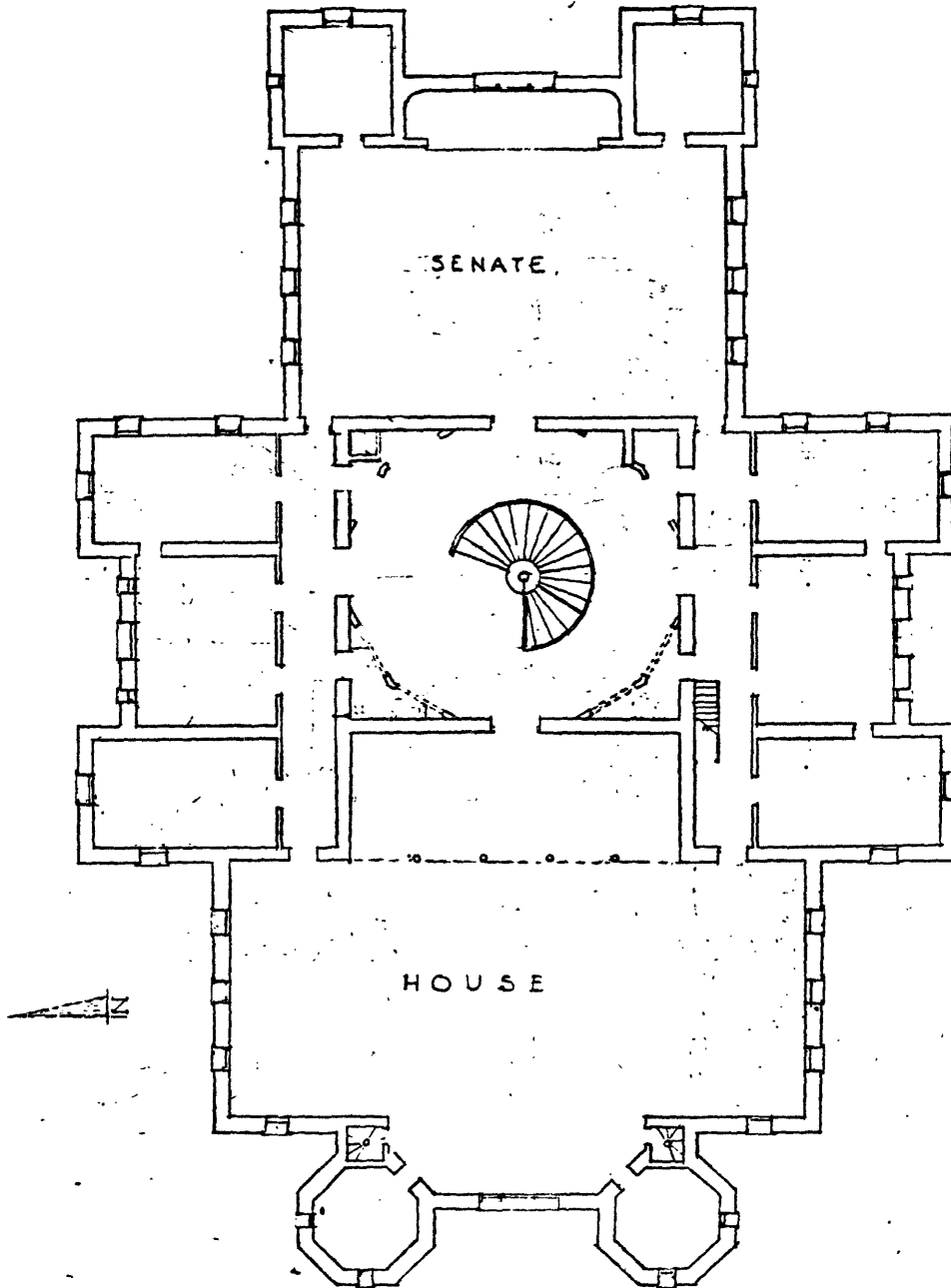
The grounds, on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi, are thought by some to be the site of the Indians' baton rouge noted by French explorers as a boundary marker or council location. They are surrounded by the 1849 cast-iron fence. Segments were designed to fit without bolts. They were designed and cast by John Hill at his Baton Rouge foundry. The ornament includes pineapples on fence posts, eagles on gate posts, quatrefoils and fleurs de lys. Landscaping and planting, though a concern of earlier eras, is not based on original designs which are unknown. The long stairs from the west entrance to Front Street gate are flanked at the top by couchant lions which may be original. A number of monuments on the grounds exhibit varying eras and levels of taste.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Louisiana	
COUNTY East Baton Rouge	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries) 7. Description
Louisiana State Capitol 1849-1932, Baton Rouge



Second Floor Plan