

NATIONAL REGISTER REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING – MINUTES
Thursday, November 21, 2024 - 11:00 AM
State Library of Louisiana
701 N 4th Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Dr. Robert Carriker called the November 21, 2024, regular meeting of the National Register Review Committee to order at 11:17 AM. In addition to Dr. Carriker, members present included Ava Alltmont, Guy Carwile, Dr. Keith Finley, Dr. Rebecca Saunders, and John Sykes.

Dr. Carriker then asked for a motion to approve the agenda. John Sykes so moved, and Rebecca Saunders seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Bailey Hall welcomed the audience and committee members. Division of Historic Preservation staff in attendance included Bailey Hall (National Register Coordinator), Ameila Blackmon (student intern), Elaina Stuntz (student intern).

Dr. Carriker asked for a motion to approve the minutes from July's meeting. Rebecca Saunders so moved, and Ava Alltmont seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

After this item, six nominations were presented to the committee.

Gem Theater, Lincoln Parish

Presented by Bailey Hall, NR Coordinator

The Gem Theater is a two-story brick building with a single screen located on Hico street in downtown Dubach, LA of Lincoln Parish. The exact date of the building's construction is unknown, but it was destroyed by fire in 1928 and subsequently rebuilt, serving the community as a general store. It was renovated to be a movie theater in the 1930's. The theater was in use from 1937-1964 as a movie theater and then was used as storage until 2023. Currently in the process of restoration, it will be used as a theater again. It is part of the historic downtown area on a block of buildings; thus, it shares party walls with two other contemporaneous commercial buildings. It is mainly constructed of brick, with a stucco facade. The exterior of the theater remains unchanged since it was built, with the likely exception of paint and the addition of awnings. The roof was replaced in 2024. The Gem, like most theaters from that era, was racially segregated with separate entrances and seating for Black patrons. The original segregated features remain intact such as the balcony, seating, entrance, stairs, and ticket counter. The Black patrons did not have access to the main lobby or bathrooms. Additionally, the original drinking fountain, soda fountain, movie projector, and seating remain in place. Although a fire struck the Gem Theatre in 1950's, destroying portions of the auditorium and the roof, the majority of its original defining characteristics remain in place, and it would be recognizable to a person from that period. Therefore, the Gem Theatre is eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

Gem Theater is a historic theater located in downtown Dubach, Louisiana. Although written records relating to the business are scarce, we were able to establish an opening date for around 1937. This establishes the business as greater than 50 years old, meeting the Register's fifty-year cutoff. The period of significance is from 1937-1964, the opening date to the year of its closing. The Gem Theater is locally significant in the area of entertainment/recreation under Criterion A. Its significance is tied to its status as the only entertainment venue in Dubach from the Great Depression until the 1960's. Outside of church functions and school sporting events, there were no other entertainment venues in Dubach to the 1960's, when a skating rink was built. Older Dubach citizens recount the stores in the downtown area staying open late on weekends to take advantage of the influx of people coming into Dubach from the surrounding farm communities to go to the Gem Theater. This made it an integral part of the town's economic sustainability. Additionally, it was the only theater, although segregated, that served both white and Black patrons during its tenure. Being one of the only Black leisure businesses in the area, makes it especially important to African American history and gives insight to the daily life of the area's Black residents during Jim Crow/segregation in the deep south.

Dr. Carriker asked committee members for questions and comments. Guy Carwile offered suggestions for the architectural description and general proofreading. Keith Finley asked for clarification on the future use of the building.

Dr. Carriker opened to public comments. John P. Klingman, Tulane architecture emeritus professor, expressed his support for the nomination and gave a brief comment on the importance of maintaining the historic awning.

Rebecca Saunders then moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO, and Ava Allmont seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Central Louisiana State Hospital, Rapides Parish

Presented by Sarah Mason, nomination preparer

Central Louisiana State Hospital consists of an isolated, institutional campus located on a bluff and gently rolling hills on the southwestern edge of the city of Pineville. The district encompasses a large area of the contiguous grounds of Central Louisiana State Hospital, which opened as a mental asylum in 1906. Construction in the district continued throughout the 20th century and World War II apartment complexes were incorporated into the district in 1957 and renovated between 1961 and 1965. One example of new construction occurred within the boundaries in the district in 2004. The district includes 120 resources, which represent a wide range of styles and functions. Most are institutional buildings and complexes historically used for housing, offices, treatment facilities, and training facilities, as well as early to mid-20th century residences for staff members, some unique landmarks such as the iconic Dairy Barn, and several early to mid-20th century warehouse buildings. The pine and oak-lined roads of Central meander through the hilly grounds, which provide access to large-scale institutional buildings ranging in style from Neoclassical and Italian Renaissance to Mid-Century Modern and Contemporary, the majority of which are constructed of brick masonry. Most buildings in the district fall under Late 19th and Early 20th Century Revival styles, Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements, and Modern Movement, with a small amount of Late Victorian. The staff residences primarily consist of wood siding, vinyl siding, and brick masonry. While a few of the residential buildings for staff housing have lost integrity due to alterations and neglect, nearly all other institutional buildings in the district remain unaltered and retain their historic integrity. Despite 19 non-contributing resources, the majority of Central Louisiana State Hospital Historic District retains its historic character and landscape, giving the resources a high contributing rate, making the district eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Central Louisiana State Hospital Historic District is significant on a local and state level for representing the past 118 years of mental health care facilities, advances in psychiatric medicine and treatment, and the mental health care reform that occurred throughout the 20th century in Louisiana and the United States. The district is comprised of the main campus of Central Louisiana State Hospital, an inpatient psychiatric hospital which has served patients of 42 parishes in Louisiana. The hospital became a self-contained and sustainable community for its patients and staff and has continued to function as such to this day. The rolling hills, towering pines, oak allées, and diverse array of architecture all contribute to this historic sense of place and community at Central Louisiana State Hospital. As stated in a 1933 *Town Talk* article, "The daily life of the hospital gives it the internal influence and significance more like that of a large college or university than that of an insane hospital," and "The hospital is a small city in itself." It also stands in memory of all those who lived within its grounds, both those who recovered and those who remained here until their death and burial in the on-site cemetery. In addition to its significance in the history of mental health care, an incredible and diverse array of architectural styles is present on the grounds of Central. Thus, the Central Louisiana State Hospital historic district is also significant on a local level in the area of Architecture. These examples have been well-maintained with minimal alterations and retain their historic integrity. The architecture of the Central Louisiana State Hospital historic district is significant not only for its historic integrity and the forms and styles it embodies, but also because it documents the changing approach to mental health care facilities throughout the 20th century as the country's perspective on mental and psychiatric care evolved. The buildings also

demonstrate the importance of visually appealing architecture on Central's campus and the idea of “therapeutic architecture” that was tailored to meet the needs of Central’s patients and staff. The period of significance for Criterion A begins in 1906 because 1906 is the year the campus opened, and it has been continuously shaped and occupied by the activity of Central Louisiana State Hospital since. Additionally, the existing cemetery, a contributing site in the district, was established in 1906. 1974 is the closing date because that is the 50-year mark historic cut-off and the district’s significance for its history in health care and medicine continued through 1974 and continued in this location until 2024 when the facilities moved to a new location. The period of significance for Criterion C, 1914 to 1970, encompasses the range of historic architecture still present on the campus.

Dr. Carriker asked committee members for questions and comments. Guy Carwile offered suggestions on the architectural descriptions. He also asked for clarification on the two separate periods of significance. Sarah Mason explained that one period of significance is for Criterion A and the other for Criterion C. Rebecca Saunders commented in support of the nomination. Members inquired about the future use of the property as a senior living facility.

Dr. Carriker opened to public comment. No comments were made.

John Sykes then moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO, and Guy Carwile seconded. The motion passed with one opposed.

First Church of God in Christ, Iberia Parish

Presented by Jessica Richardson, nomination preparer

The First Church of God in Christ (FCOGIC) is a one-story frame building on the southeast corner of Pellerin Street and Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive on the west side of Jeanerette in Iberia Parish. Built in 1951, the former church building retains many original features and has only received cosmetic updates to its simple form and design. Original features include asbestos siding, 2/2 (horizontal pane) double hung aluminum windows, wood paneling on the interior, open floor plan with small storage and office space at the rear, and raised choir stage. The main alterations to the space are linoleum floors laid c. 1974, and alterations to the façade front towers after hurricane damage in the early 1990s. The building is easily recognizable to all former members, as well as members of the community at large who attended a variety of classes, trainings, meetings, and other activities at the building.

The First Church of God in Christ (FCOGIC) in Jeanerette is locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: Black, and Education as it served as an extension to the educational facilities for the African American community from its construction in 1951, when schools were segregated, through the present day. The church hosted back to school orientation meetings, parent/teacher conferences, after school tutoring, enrichment for students, adult literacy and education programs, and provided supplies to students in the community. Additionally, the church served as a meeting place during the Civil Rights Movement, hosting voter registration meetings. The period of significance under both areas of significance is 1951 through 1974, the current 50-year guideline.

Dr. Carriker asked committee members for questions and comments. Guy Carwile asked for clarification on the future use of the building. A member of the church will speak on it during the public comment period. Carwile also offered suggestions on the architectural description. Keith Finley asked for additional information on the voter registration drive that occurred during the period of significance. Jessica Richardson explained that there are no additional sources available to further comment on that activity outside of oral histories.

Dr. Carriker opened to public comments. Dr. Ezora Proctor, church and community member, spoke in support of the nomination as an effort to highlight the historic buildings’ significance in serving the community of Jeanerette. She explained the future use of the building will continue to be a place of community service.

Rebecca Saunders then moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO, and Keith Finley seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

1309 Harmony Street, Orleans Parish

Presented by Gabrielle Begue, nomination preparer

The two-story wood-frame single-family residence at 1309 Harmony Street was constructed in 1898 in the Garden District, a historic neighborhood of New Orleans. The 1,365-SF house was designed by New Orleans master architect Emile Weil for Arthur and Fanny Kastler on the rear portion of a corner lot owned and occupied by Fanny's parents. The setting consists of low-rise nineteenth-century residential upper-class housing stock in the most important "suburban" neighborhood in the city. The irregularly shaped parcel is wide and shallow with a spacious landscaped side garden that provides a visual separation from the corner residence. The building's exterior treatment reflects all of the houses nearby with weatherboard siding and a pitched roof. The building has a strong vertical street presence with a partial-width front porch sheltering the entrance. The garden facade incorporates bay windows that emphasize the connection between building and landscape. The building sits on short brick piers with brick chain walls on both the Harmony Street and garden façades. The hip roof is covered in standing seam metal with a central stuccoed-brick chimney. There are numerous windows, almost all of which are 2/2 wood sash with louvered shutters. The internal layout consists of two primary street-facing rooms on each floor. On the ground floor a kitchen/pantry extends behind. Each of the four principal rooms has an original coal-burning fireplace centered within the space. Most historic interior features and finishes remain intact. Outbuildings include a c. 1920s metal-frame garage and a post-World War II CMU shed on the north side of the property. This is a modest house with little ornament that nevertheless clearly exhibits design sensitivity both inside and out that is consistent with the architect's Academic Eclectic design philosophy. It was owned by the same family until 1989, during which time almost no modifications were made. Since 1989 renovations and improvements have been undertaken with the intention that they are compatible, discernibly contemporary changes that complement the building's historic significance. 1309 Harmony Street remains clearly recognizable as a high-quality single-family residence in a historically important nineteenth-century neighborhood and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The two-story wood-frame residence at 1309 Harmony Street (1898) in New Orleans, Louisiana, is significant at the local level under Criterion C, in the area of Architecture, as the work of New Orleans master architect Emile Weil. The home was Weil's first independent professional commission at the age of nineteen, when he was still apprenticing at an architectural firm by day, and upon its completion he founded his own practice in 1899. The period of significance is 1898, the construction date of the property. Weil went on to become one of the city's most prestigious and prolific architects and a master of Beaux-Arts-inspired Academic Eclecticism within a local context. He designed more than 140 buildings during his thirty-four-year career, from modest residences to mansions, warehouses, and synagogues, department stores, hospitals and movie palaces. His work received widespread publication and acclaim, including several projects that have been described as architectural masterpieces. 1309 Harmony Street was an essential project in Weil's professional development. Planning strategies that were established in this house design were reiterated, with variations, in Weil's important residential work of the next decade and after. During that period Weil established his trajectory as one of the foremost architects practicing in New Orleans. Although it is a compact building, 1309 Harmony demonstrates a design coherence, both inside and out, that is clearly evident today, over 125 years after its completion. Its unusual massing has never been altered. Necessary improvements are minimal on the exterior, and they are clearly identifiable on the interior. Much of Weil's earliest residential work is no longer extant or has been extensively modified. Therefore, as the earliest of few surviving early projects, 1309 Harmony Street, a seminal work of a master architect, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Dr. Carriker asked committee members for questions and comments. Guy Carwile offered suggestions for the architectural description and clarification on the specific firm Weil apprenticed at before beginning his own firm.

Dr. Carriker opened to public comments. John P. Klingman, Tulane architecture emeritus professor, expressed his support for the nomination and commented on the importance of the unique architecture and a seminal work in Weil's career. He also explained that many of the alterations made to the house were done with original materials found within and under the house to keep recognition of the important historic materials.

Ava Allmont then moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO, and Guy Carwile seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Sophie Gumbel School, Orleans Parish

Presented by Sam Crowley, nomination preparer

Located at the corner of Joseph Street and Loyola Avenue in Uptown New Orleans, the Sophie Gumbel Training School serves as an excellent local example of a school in the English Collegiate style. Since its construction in 1918, the building has been used by several different organizations for similar uses, mainly education and job training for people with intellectual disabilities. There have been some minor changes to the exterior of the building, including the replacement of two doors and the east-side fence as well as a shed addition and detached storage pavilion to the rear of the structure. The only other changes to the building's exterior are limited to boarded windows and doors, weather damage, and some vandalism. Original elements include cast-stone reliefs and Tudor-arch window and door surrounds, as well as large parapeted cross-gables, all characteristic of the English Collegiate style. Despite the alterations, the three-story school building has retained its historic integrity, making it eligible for listing in the National Register.

The dates recommended for the Criterion A Period of Significance represent the years the building was used for its original intent: a training institution for intellectually disabled children. The school officially opened in 1922 after being used as an emergency hospital for the Influenza Epidemic of 1918. The recommendation for the Criterion C Period of Significance is the year the building was constructed, 1918. The Sophie Gumbel Training School is locally significant under Criteria A and C, in the areas of Education: Intellectual Disability and Architecture: English Collegiate/Tudor Revival. It is closely associated with the movement of education reform in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, specifically intellectual disability education and the development of training schools. Prior to this movement, institutions for intellectually disabled people were mainly custodial, including asylums, hospitals, and orphanages; training schools were the first facilities to focus on education and rehabilitation. Although there were existing custodial institutions throughout the state, the Sophie Gumbel Training School was the first training school for intellectually disabled people in South Louisiana. The period of significance from 1922-1945 reflects the years it was used for this purpose. The building itself is of the English Collegiate architectural style, a subset of Tudor Revival. It is one of the few examples of this style in New Orleans, which is represented by the second period of significance of 1918, the construction date of the building.

Dr. Carriker asked committee members for questions and comments. Guy Carwile asked what the future use of the building will be. Sam Crowley explained that the City is in progress of redevelopment but does not know the specifics. Carwile added minor suggestions to the architectural description of the gabled parapet walls and diamond shaped glass panes.

Dr. Carriker opened to public comment. James Rolf, Southkick Rolf Preservation Works, spoke in support of the nomination.

John Sykes then moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO, and Guy Carwile seconded. The motion passed with one opposed.

Mollere House, Tangipahoa Parish

Presented by James Rolf, nomination preparer

The Mollere House was constructed near LA Hwy 22 in Ponchatoula, Louisiana in 1958. It is situated in a large cleared lot on a level plateau surrounded by dense woods, with quiet residential Beach Road to the East, Hwy 22 to the North, and the Tangipahoa River to the West, with the house overlooking the river. Historic aerial photographs show that the hardwood forest was left intact in the entirety of the site with the exception of the house's own footprint. It is a single-story, single-family dwelling, whose original purpose was primarily as a vacation retreat for the Mollere family. It was constructed on a concrete slab foundation and lifted onto four

structural pillars that are located in the interior of the building and dually function as closets. The exterior walls are primarily formed by large sheets of glass, with masonry and wood sections for added support. The roof is a unique design by Albert Ledner, a “space frame” created from small section lumber and metal ties, and hoisted onto wooden support posts situated in the interior of the house. Ledner designed the house in the Modern style. Influenced by Wrightian ideas, Ledner forged his own unique design philosophy, with this house being an excellent example of a transitional work from early in his career. The only major alterations to the building have been the addition of a bathroom, a bedroom, and a dining room with the existing screened footprint. Overall, it retains its character defining features and historic integrity.

The Mollere house qualifies for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for Architecture. The Mollere House is architecturally significant on a local and a statewide level and represents Louisiana Modernism. The house is a representative work by Albert Ledner, a New Orleans based architect who was well-respected in Louisiana. The Mollere House has design and engineering elements which are representative of Ledner's unique approach to structural design and his inventive use of materials in unexpected ways. The building is well preserved, retaining its important character defining features from its year of construction in 1958.

Dr. Carriker asked committee members for questions and comments. Guy Carwile made suggestions to correct the influences and inspirations section of the nomination. He also suggested additions to the architectural description of the space frame roof to include specifics that describe how significant it is to architecture.

Dr. Carriker opened to public comments. No comments were made.

Guy Carwile then moved that the nomination be recommended to the SHPO, and Rebecca Saunders seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Closing Announcements:

Ms. Hall announced that the next National Register Review Committee meeting was scheduled for Thursday, March 20, 2025. Ms. Hall thanked the numerous student interns the Division of Historic Preservation employs including Amelia Blackmon from LSU's School of Architecture, Elaina Stuntz from LA Tech's History Graduate Program, and soon to join, Sam Crowley from Tulane's School of Architecture. She also gave a brief recap of the current status of the state tax credit bill. The 2025 meeting dates were shared with the committee as well.

Adjournment: 12:49 PM