

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Latiolais House is a story and a half gable-ended structure measuring 56.5 feet across the front and 34 feet deep. It is the product of two early periods of construction. The first period of construction, c.1790, produced the southern *ords* of the present structure and was a complete house of four rooms, as well as a front and rear gallery, and attic space. The plan was the typical Creole type with the two largest rooms to the front, centered around a central fireplace, with two cabinet rooms to the rear on each side of the small rear open gallery. Unusual and telling features related to this particularly early structure visible today are: 1) Oversized ceiling beams with distinctive and rarely found today "bee de corbeau" beaded edges. 2) Louis XVI type Norman "tree" form trusses supporting the roof structure. 3) Oversized floor sills and joists. Other more "normal" features which are present and original in this earlier section are: 1) bousillage wall construction throughout the first floor. 2) chamfered and lamb's tongued colonnettes, batten shutters with strap hinges set on drive pinions.

About 1827, this earlier structure was creatively as well as tastefully enlarged and refurbished with more "up-to-date" woodwork in the then fashionable Federal style. The north side of the structure received an addition containing two rooms and a continuation of the front gallery. The large "new" room to the front contains a large fireplace original to the period of construction to the room. The only other major structural change which occurred at this time was the removal of two walls of the north original cabinet room in the earlier portion of the dwelling, which enlarged the existing small rear gallery into a larger one and thus it became proportioned to the "new" larger house. This modification of the original section contributed greatly to the remodeling and shows great sensitivity to design and balance used by the remodeling "architect." Several windows of the original two front rooms were sealed up at this period of remodeling.

The second major feature of the c.1820 remodeling was the "updating" of the woodwork in the "new" Federal style: 1) Baseboards with molded tops. 2) Raised paneled French as well as single doors. 3) Glazed French doors in all exterior door positions, and 4) The most glorious paneled and heavily molded and detailed wraparound fireplace mantels. As a further enhancement of this already 3-dimensionally refined woodwork, the majority of it was either "faux marbre" or "faux bois," adding 2-dimensional pattern and color. The doors were painted so that the frames looked like mahogany and the panels curly maple. The mantels in either end were painted to resemble black marble while the center one was painted more exotically with a tan background with red and blue veins. The baseboards in the "new" large north room were painted to imitate alternating blocks of white and gray marble. The exterior color from the period of the c.1820 remodeling was used in the current restoration, and is stunning. The weatherboards and front beaded flush tongue and groove boarding are painted a soft but magical yellow ocher which contrasts/ interacts with the Paris green of the shutters and handrail, the faux bois doors and sky blue gallery ceiling as well as the blue of the sky itself and the dark green of the remaining seven gigantic live oaks around the house.

The interaction between this house, painted by man, and its surroundings by nature is the most attractive - hypnotic - chromatic achievement known to this observer of Louisiana colonial architecture.

The site has several outstanding features: It is the highest elevation in Lafayette Parish. It retains seven approximately 200 year old live oak trees of great size and beauty. It retains many specimen camellias, azaleas, a tree-size yaupon, roses, altheas, irises, lilies, etc., which are remnants of an early garden installation around the house.

ITEM 7 ADDENDUM BY STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

The Alexandre Latiolais House received some alterations in the early twentieth century, but they were rectified during a recent restoration project. The front gallery had been altered, some of the fenestration had been replaced, and a rear lean-to had been added. During a recent restoration project, the old gallery columns were retrieved and restored to their original positions. The following features were duplicated: (1) the gallery balustrades, (2) the attic windows, (3) one pair of the French doors, and (a) the windows on the rear elevation. These duplications were necessary in order to restore the house to its original appearance. As can be seen in the Item addendum by the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office, the Latiolais House retains the historic features which contribute to its statewide significance.

Specific dates c.1790 & c.1820
 Builder/Architect see below

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)
 Criterion C

The Latiolais House is significant in that it is a largely intact structure which is the product of two very early and interesting periods of Louisiana colonial construction and design. Though many buildings were constructed in the eighteenth century in Louisiana! very few remain today. The oldest portion of the Latiolais House is certainly eighteenth century, and the oldest standing structure in Lafayette Parish. The c.1820 remodeling and enlargement produced a house which is exemplary for its period, combining the best of two cultures: a Louisiana French Creole floor plan, bousillage walls and galleries with the refinement and pizzazz of elegant Federal woodwork: An indigenous art/architectural blend - an acculturation which produced a beautiful as well as climatically attuned architectural achievement. Significance also is in the site and siting of the house. With its deep front gallery facing nearly due west, atop the highest elevation in Lafayette Parish, surrounded with large live oaks, the union of structure and site becomes like the interior of the house, a blend of unusual visual beauty, interwoven with climatic and environmental appropriateness: a balanced achievement of beauty and function.

CHAIN OF TITLE

November 5, 1982 - present	(sale)	Richard A. Campbell
November 5, 1982 - February 27, 1928	(sale)	Delpha Dominique
February 27, 1928 - September 29, 1924	(sale)	Joseph Clifton Latiolais
September 29, 1924 - ?		Pierre Gilbert
? - December 1890	(sale)	Frank Gilbert
April 1890 - December 1890	(succession)	Joseph Alexandre Latiolais
1883 - 1890	(sale)	Marie Emile Mouton* (Mrs. Alexandre Latoilais)
October 1857 - 1883	(succession)	Alexandre Coquelin Latoilais

1857 - ?

Rebecca Arceneaux
(Mrs. Claude Latoilais) *

*Names incised on beaded boarding of front facade of house:

Claude Latoilais

Joseph Mouton

(father of Marie Emile Mouton and son of Jean Jacque
Mouton, the founder of Vermilionville)

ITEM 8 ADDENDUM BY STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

The Alexandre Latiolais House is significant on the state level as an example of Creole architecture. There are hundreds of surviving Creole houses across Louisiana, but few are as important as the Latiolais House. Firstly, it is older than most. Even the grandest Creole residences do not usually date from before the 1820's. The original portion of the Latiolais House dates from about 1790 and shows a correspondingly heavy structure, particularly in the attic. Secondly, the house features bousillage construction, which places it in the minority of examples. A great many surviving Creole houses are in fact late "diluted" examples with ordinary frame construction. Finally, the Latiolais House has exceptionally fine Federal moldings and mantels. Although there are other comparable examples in the state, they are very few. In our judgment, they represent perhaps 5% of Louisiana's overall Creole building stock.

Major Bibliographical References

Conveyance Records, Lafayette Parish