



## Office of the Planning Commission

City of Baton Rouge and Parish of East Baton Rouge  
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Ryan L. Holcomb, AICP  
Planning Director

March 4, 2021

TO: Planning Commission

THROUGH: Ryan L. Holcomb, AICP, Planning Director *HL*

FROM: Collin Lindrew, Planner I *CL*

SUBJECT: **HL-2-21** 1565 Curtis Street

Application Summary					
<b>Applicant</b>	Fairleigh Jackson on behalf of Preserve Louisiana		<b>Submittal Date</b>	December 3, 2020	
<b>Site Area</b>	± 5,800 sf				
<b>Location</b>	North side of Curtis Street, west of Helene Street (Council District 2 Banks)				
<b>HPC Meeting Date</b>	February 10, 2021	<b>Planning Commission Meeting Date</b>	March 15, 2021	<b>Metro Council Meeting Date</b>	April 21, 2021
Request					
<b>Proposed Landmark</b>	Immaculate Conception Church				
Site Characteristics					
<b>Historic District</b>	None				
<b>Historic Information</b>	Originally constructed in 1953 as Scotlandville's first Catholic church				
<b>Existing Zoning</b>	Limited Residential (A3.1)				
<b>Existing Use</b>	Religious Institution				
Findings					
Staff certifies the request meets the criteria for designation as a Local Historic Landmark					

### Case History – This Site

- Historic Preservation Commission recommended approval on February 10, 2021

### Case History – Surrounding Area

- None

### Design Elements

- Main church constructed from mostly brick and concrete in 1953
- Main church features prominent campanile connected to the building by a brick archway

- At least three other buildings of similar architecture style were constructed on church grounds since its opening
- A Montessori school was established on church grounds in 1970

#### **Regulatory Issues**

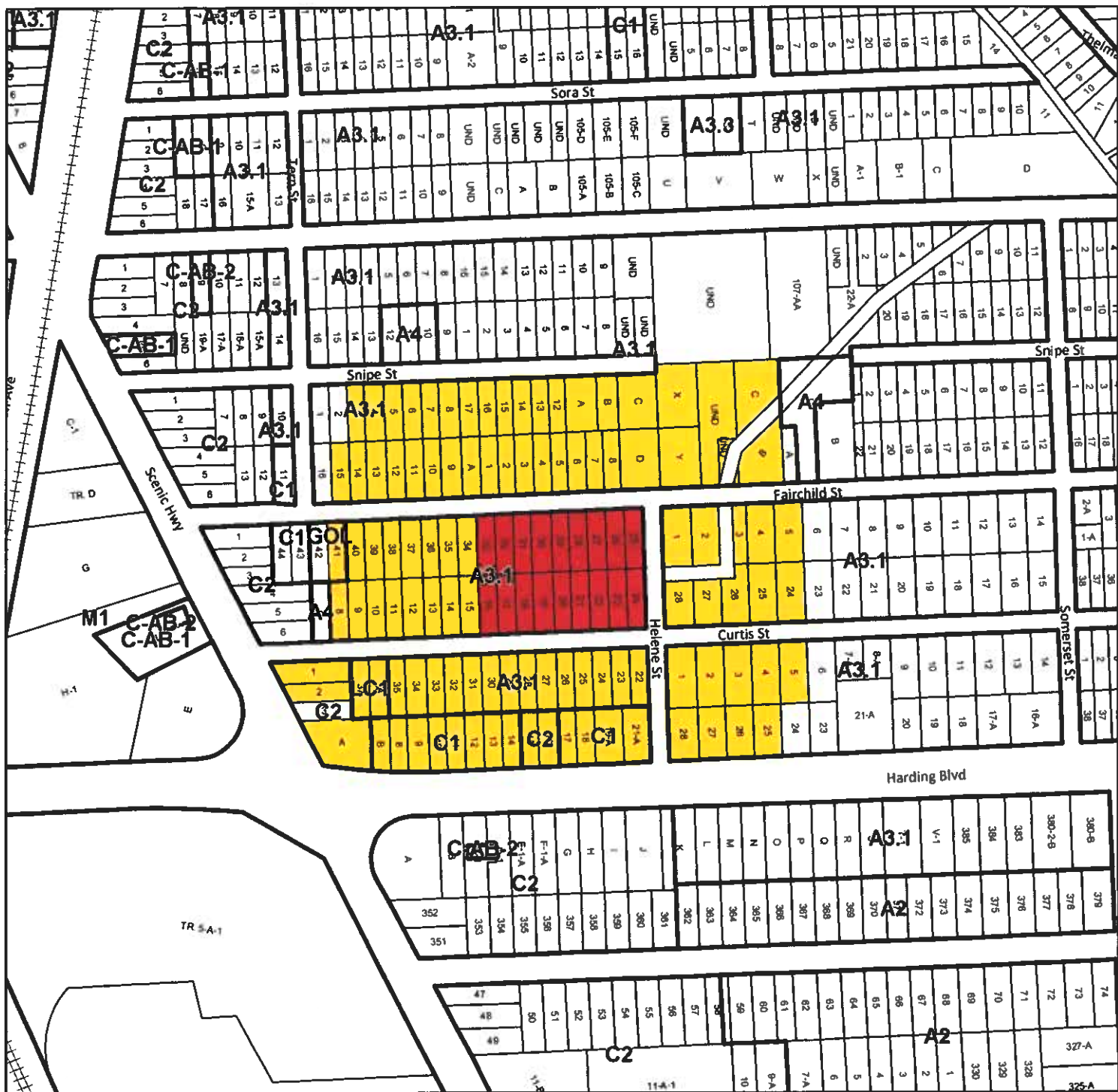
- Consistent with FUTUREBR Community Design and Neighborhoods Action Item 2.4.3: Expand historic designation program to protect additional areas
- Consistent with Unified Development Code Section 3.7.1 A, exhibiting cultural significance
  - Constructed in 1953, Immaculate Conception was the first Catholic church to be erected in Scotlandville
  - Over 200 volunteers, some from “as far away as New Orleans,” aided in the construction of the church
  - Reverend Rawlin B. Enette, an assistant pastor, was active in the Civil Rights movement
    - Rev. Enette marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Washington D.C. in 1963 and Montgomery, Alabama in 1965
    - Rev. Enette spoke at a rally at the Louisiana State Capitol in 1968, following Dr. King’s murder
- Application has written consent of the property owner

#### **Community Outreach/Notification**

- Public notification cards mailed to property owners within a 300 foot radius on February 26, 2021
- Subject property posted on February 26, 2021
- Staff reports available online on March 4, 2021 at <http://la-batonrouge.civicplus.com/AgendaCenter/12>
- Legal advertisement published in the Advocate on March 5, 9, and 11, 2021

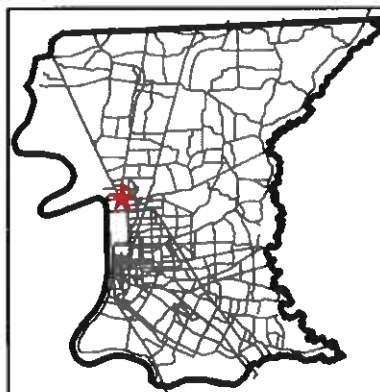
#### **Findings**

Staff certifies the request meets the criteria for designation as a Local Historic Landmark



**Legend**

- Current Case
- Previous Relevant Cases
- Notified of Public Hearing
- Zoning Graphic
- Lot Graphic
- Special Flood Hazard Area
- A1** Zoning Labels



**HL-2-21**

0 150 300 450 600 ft

SCALE

N






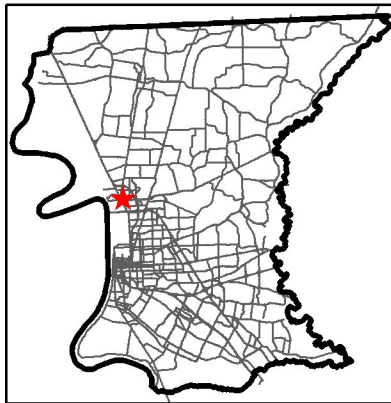
**CITY OF BATON ROUGE**  
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE  
PLANNING COMMISSION





**Legend**

-  Current Case
-  Zoning Graphic
-  Lot Graphic
- A1** Zoning Labels



**HL-2-21**

0 150 300 450 600 ft

SCALE

N





***Immaculate Conception Catholic Church***  
***1565 Curtis Street, Scotlandville, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana***

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, built in 1953, is located at 1565 Curtis Street in Scotlandville, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana. It is the first Catholic church to be erected in Scotlandville.

Prior to the end of World War II, Scotlandville's Catholics, the vast majority of whom were African-American, had to travel to St. Francis Xavier Church in Baton Rouge to attend mass. Locally, the community's spiritual needs were attended to by a St. Francis Xavier mission. St. Francis Xavier was the first African-American Catholic Church in East Baton Rouge Parish, Immaculate Conception Catholic Church was to be the second. In 1953, there were an estimated 3,500 Black Catholics in the parish, about 2,500 formed the St. Francis Xavier congregation (Dixon 1953z). It is presumed that the remainder would have formed the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church congregation.

In October 1946, still without their own church, area Catholics began attending mass led by Rev. Edward Ledoux at Cook's Theatre at 8252 Scenic Highway in Scotlandville (Dixon 1953z). Though far more convenient than travelling to Baton Rouge for services, the arrangement was not ideal. Desirous of having their own church, the congregation officially kicked off the Immaculate Conception Parish Building Fund drive on 30 March 1950. The goal of the drive was to raise \$25,000 towards building a new church. All of the money was to go towards actual construction, the land for the church had already been acquired by the Josephite Fathers, who were serving in Scotlandville as missionaries from St. Francis Xavier Church. The drive was not kicked off in Scotlandville; rather, it was launched at the Heidelberg Hotel in Baton Rouge by Assistant Committee Chairman Harold Ourso. The Most Rev. L. Abel Caillouet, auxiliary bishop of New Orleans and pastor of Baton Rouge's St. Joseph church, was named Executive Committee Chairman (Couvillion 1950z).

To raise money to build the church, Scotlandville's residents "gave benefits, suppers and bazaars" (Dixon 1953z). In addition, Archbishop Joseph Francis Rummel was able to procure a large gift from the Catholic Extension Society. Additional money was raised as far

away as Boston and New York. By 1952, enough money had been raised to hire architect Perry L. Brown to develop plans for the new church. They were approved in October 1952 (Dixon 1953z).

Construction began that same month. Although the original goal had been to raise \$25,000, the new church was to cost \$40,000. This does not appear to include over \$10,000 in donated building material. Nor did that figure include labor, virtually all of which was donated, both by artisans and congregants. It was estimated that “more than 200 persons and a dog aided in the building” of the church (Dixon 1953z). Among the volunteers was Major Robert Armistead, a Baptist whose wife was Catholic. Armistead laid bricks at the church every Sunday, aided by his dog Spot who carried bricks in his mouth. Ourso not only helped raise money for the church, he volunteered his help in its physical construction. Among the many volunteers were boys from the Industrial School for Colored Youth. Other volunteers traveled from as far away as New Orleans. Most of the volunteers, however, were from the two black congregations. Built by volunteers, most of the church’s construction occurred on weekends (Dixon 1953z).

At the time, it was estimated that \$50,000 of volunteer labor had been used in the church’s construction, not including the food provided to the volunteers by the congregation. The church was completed in early December 1953 and dedicated on 13 December 1953. Archbishop Rummel officiated the ceremonies. In recognition of the Cook family, who aided the congregation early on, the church’s statue of the Immaculate Conception was dedicated to them (Dixon 1953z).

The Immaculate Conception Catholic Church has held innumerable services since 1953, including christenings, weddings and funerals, and has become an integral part of the community. Its influence has not been limited to the area’s Catholic population. At least one assistant pastor, the Rev. Rawlin B. Enette, was active in the Civil Rights movement; Rev. Enette marched with Martin Luther King in Washington, D.C. (1963), and at Montgomery, Alabama (1965). At a rally held on the steps of the Louisiana State Capitol in April 1968 following King’s murder, the Rev. Enette urged African-Americans to “stand up with dignity”

(Bridges 1968). Rev. Enette, a Josephite father, had been assigned to serve as the full-time chaplain at Southern University in September 1966 while residing in the Immaculate Conception Parish (*State-Times* 1966). Following the police shooting of two African-American burglary suspects in September 1969, Rev. Enette warned Baton Rouge councilmen that if police brutality did not end, young Blacks would begin taking the law into their own hands (*State-Times* 1969). While the church's direct involvement in the civil rights movement is unclear, Rev. Enette's advocacy was undoubtedly known throughout the parish. Finally, a Montessori School was established on the church grounds in September 1970 (*Morning Advocate* 1971).

H. Schmutz pastor July 1957-May 1960

Francis H. Fallon May 1960-1962

Aubry F. Osborn 1964

Bridges, Susan

1968 Capitol Rally Climaxes Day of Marching in BR. *Morning Advocate*, 6 April 1968:1-A, 10-A. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Couvillion, Steve

1950z Open Drive for Negro Catholic Church Funds. *Morning Advocate*, 1 April 1950:10-B. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Dixon, Margaret

1953z 'A Work of Many Hands.' *Morning Advocate*, 6 December 1953:Magazine:6-7. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

*Morning Advocate*

1971 Open House Set at S'ville School. *Morning Advocate*, 25 March 1971:9-B. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

*State-Times*

1966 St. Jude Parish Established in Catholic Diocese. *State-Times*, 3 September 1966:2-A. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

1969 Police Department Hit By Negro Leaders Here. *State-Times*, 10 September 1969:9-B. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.





The East Baton Rouge Parish  
Historic Preservation Commission  
**Case HL-2-21**  
☐ Staff Level (No Public Hearing)  
☒ **Public Hearing**  
Date: **Jan 13, 2021**  
Time: 8:30 a.m.  
Location: 1100 Laurel Street  
Planning Conference Room  
For Information Call  
389-3144  
[www.brgov.com/dept/planning](http://www.brgov.com/dept/planning)

**NO  
PARKING**



