NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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NATIONAL REGISTER

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Mary's By the River

other names/site number M'hoon Estate

2. Location

street & number 3855 River Road n/a ☐ not for publication

city, town Moss Point n/a ☐ vicinity

state Mississippi code MS county Jackson code 59 zip code 39563

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
☒ private	☒ building(s)	1	0 buildings
☐ public-local	☐ district		sites
☐ public-State	☐ site		structures
☐ public-Federal	☐ structure		objects
	☐ object	1	0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ 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 ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Kenneth H. O'Rourke — March 26, 1991

Signature of certifying official — Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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:)

~~Entered in the~~ National Register

Carol Byers — 5/2/91

for Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Domestic: Single dwelling	Domestic: Single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (enter categories from instructions)
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	foundation n/a walls stucco roof other: composition shingles other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

"St. Mary's by the River" is a large country house located on an elevated three-acre tract overlooking the Pascagoula River. A winding driveway leads to the house from River Road and exits on the north side of the house onto Celeste Avenue. The entrance facade faces east, and the river is located to the south and west. The grounds surrounding the house are shaded by large live oak and magnolia trees, and contain numerous crape myrtles, camellias, azaleas, and dogwoods.

The house is eclectic in character, combining elements of the Tudor Revival and Mediterranean styles. Its exterior walls are stuccoed and its roof is clad in composition shingles resembling slate. The front (east) façade is asymmetrically composed. The left-hand part of the façade is front-gabled. It is two full stories in height and contains the entry and the main living spaces. At the lower right of this part of the façade is the entrance, which is sheltered by a flat wooden roof suspended by chains. To the left is a triple window which illuminates the living room. The second story projects slightly over the first as a jetty. On the second story are three double-casement windows flanked by shutters. The gable above is unadorned except for slender vergeboards and a narrow louvred ventilation opening. To the right of the projecting part of the façade is the side-gabled north wing that contains the garage and the most distinctive and important feature of the house -- a completely furnished private chapel.

Exterior features of the house include a small, hip-roofed balcony projecting from the south wall of the main bedroom; a long, hewn-timber porch (now enclosed with glass) at the southwest corner of the house; a half-timbered gable in the center of the south side; and a tall chimney with stepped-back sides rising from near the center of the house.

The house is asymmetrical in plan and has four levels, two on each story. At the ground level are an entrance hall and reception room at the front entrance, a laundry room at the rear entrance, and a garage on the north. The second level is the main downstairs living area, containing a stair hall, living room, dining room, solarium, enclosed rear porch, and kitchen (see plan of first floor). At the third level is the chapel, located directly over the garage at the north side of the house. The chapel can be reached either by the main staircase or by a small private elevator in the sacristy which offers access to the front bedroom, one of the five bedrooms located on the fourth level (see plan of second floor).

[x] See continuation sheet

The most ornate room in the house is the chapel, a rectangular room about 12 feet by 20 feet, with a barrel-vaulted ceiling that fans out from above the altar at the north end. The hand-carved altar was made in Germany and features a tabernacle for the Blessed Sacrament, a richly-carved shrine to St. Mary the Virgin, and polychrome statuary. Above the altar hangs a brass presence lamp. On each side of the chapel are three large, round-arched casement windows and a pair of smaller windows by the altar, all containing stained glass by Tiffany.

Other notable interior features are the living room fireplace, trimmed with Italian tile, and a fountain faced with Italian tile located in the solarium. The living room and dining room have layered teakwood cornice moldings.

The only changes that have been made to the house by the present owners have been the enclosure of the large back porch with glass and the addition of a screened porch and an attached garage at the northwest corner of the house.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Architecture	1929	1929

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

n/a

Architect/Builder

Shepard, Martin (Architect)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

"St. Mary's by the River" is locally significant for its architectural character, primarily because it is the only recorded example in the state of Mississippi of a private residence designed and built to include a complete, fully-developed chapel. (The house has been determined to be of local significance at the present time because there is insufficient information on this phenomenon to determine its importance in a statewide context.) The house is a locally-prominent example of the eclectic "country house" architecture of the 1920s, with Tudor and Mediterranean characteristics, but it is the inclusion of a chapel in its design that makes it particularly noteworthy. The chapel itself is significant for its design and craftsmanship, featuring a hand-carved German altar and Tiffany windows.

The house was built from 1925 to 1929 as a retirement home for Sister Anne Christine Abercrombie, an Episcopal nun. A native of Memphis, Tennessee, Sister Anne took her novitiate at Peekskill, New York, as a member of the Community of St. Mary, a religious order of the Episcopal Church. After residing for several years in New York, she returned to Memphis and took charge of the Memphis Episcopal Church Home and School. She became Mother Superior in 1886 and served in that capacity until her retirement in 1929, whereupon she moved to Moss Point and resided at "St. Mary's by the River" with her half-sister Celeste M'hoon. After Sister Anne's death in 1945 at the age of 86, the house became the property of Miss M'hoon. Later inherited by her nephew, Col. Cecil M'hoon, the house remained in the M'hoon family until purchased by the present owners.

☐ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Donnely, Tom. "Mhoon Mansion," The Mississippi Press Plus, May 13, 1987.

Jackson County, Mississippi. Deed Book 905, Page 552.

"John Stephens' House," Powerlines (magazine of Mississippi Power Company), vol. 61, no. 9 (September 1987).

LeBartard, James Henry. On Our Way Rejoicing (a centennial history of St. John's Episcopal Church, Pascagoula, and St. Pierre's Chapel, Gautier). Pascagoula, Mississippi: Lewis Printing Service, 1985.

This nomination is based on a draft submitted by Mr. and Mrs. John P. Stephens, owners of the house.

☐ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ 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:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately 3 acres

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	16	350825	3363560
B			
C			
D			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

☒ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

This acreage includes the house and the grounds historically associated with it.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard J. Cawthon, Chief Architecutural Historian

organization MS Dept. of Archives and History date _____

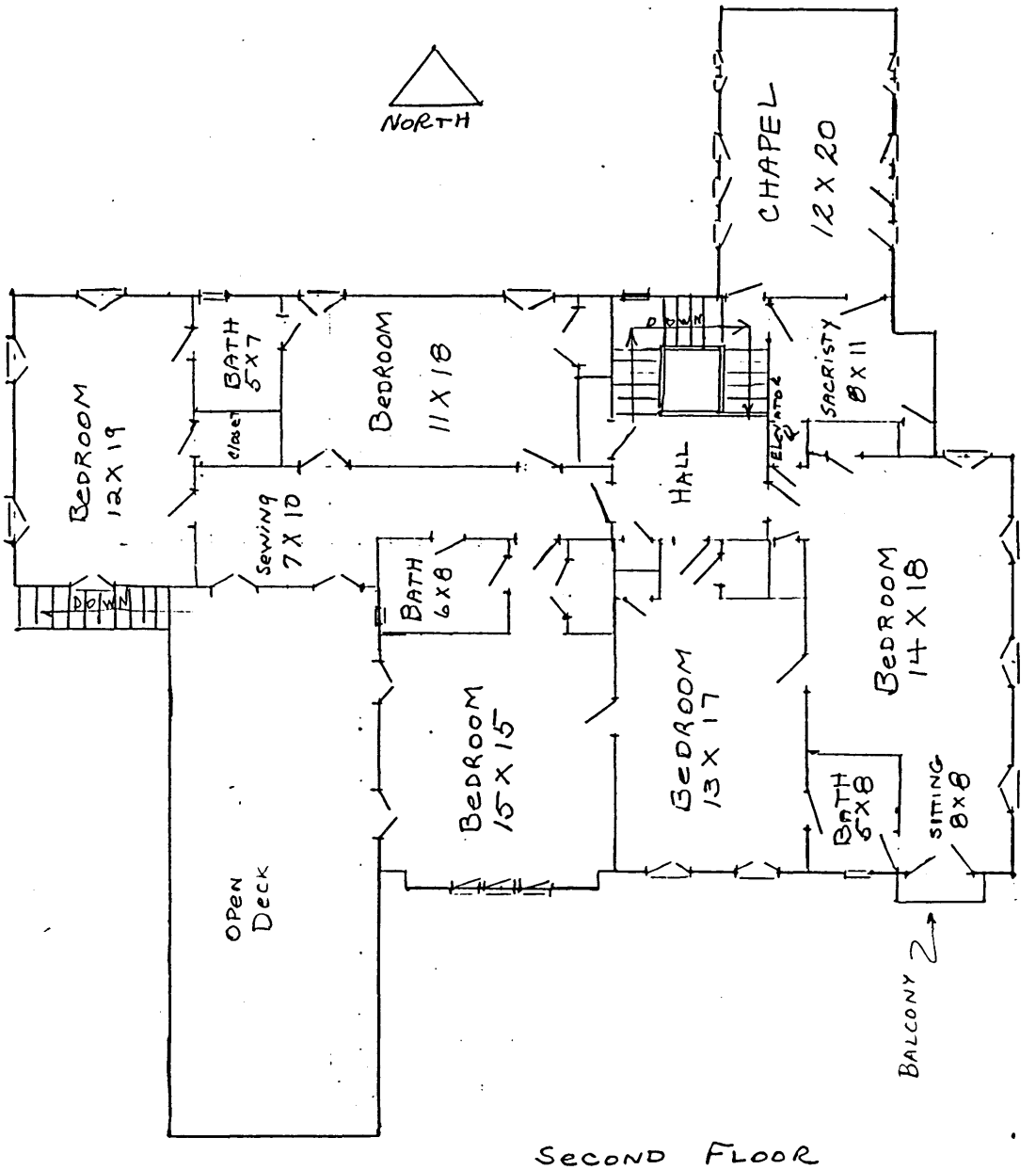
street & number Post Office Box 571 telephone (601) 359-6940

city or town Jackson state Mississippi zip code 39205

★U.S.GPO:1988-0-223-918

Part of Lot 14 of Fairley Tract as per Plat thereof recorded in Book 24, page 80 of the Land Deed Records of Jackson County, Mississippi, and being bounded by a line running as follows:

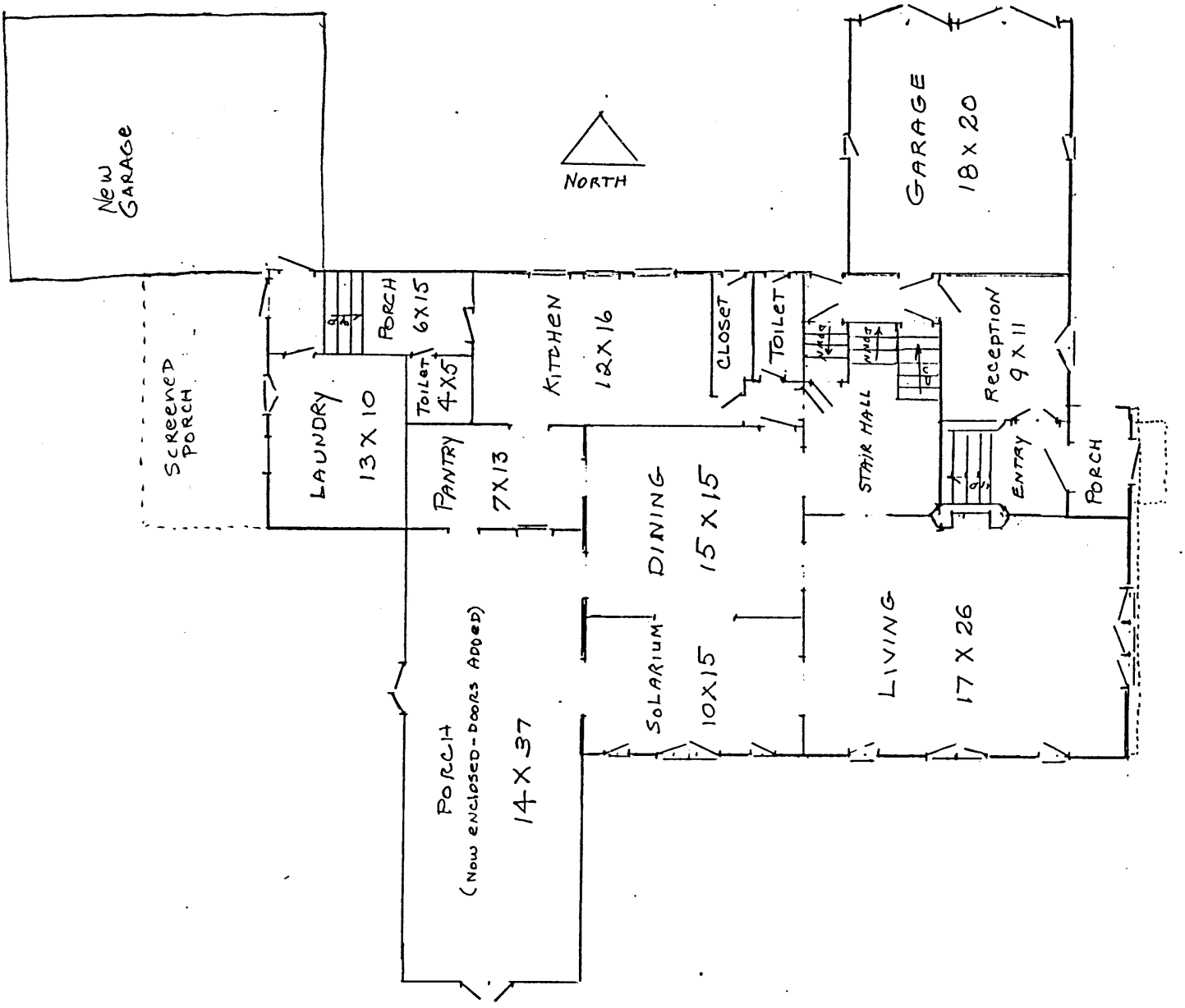
Beginning at the intersection of the South margin of Celeste Way with River Road which intersection is South 17° 45' East 702.4 ft. of the Section line dividing Sections 26 and 35 of Township 7 South, Range 6 West; thence run West along the South margin of Celeste Way 459.5 ft.; thence run South 232 Ft. and to the edge of the marsh; thence run Southeasterly along the edge of the marsh 160 ft., more or less, to the property conveyed to Joe W. Martin and Wife by instrument recorded in Book 341, page 28; thence North 34° 35' East 133 ft. more or less, and to the South margin of a private road; thence North 88° East 36 ft.; thence North 71° East 148.5 ft.; thence South 51° 30' East 92 ft.; thence South 86° 45' East 52 ft. and to the West margin of River Road; thence North 17°45' West along the West margin of River Road a distance of 245.6 ft. to the point of beginning.



SECOND FLOOR

ST. MARY'S BY THE RIVER

MOSS POINT, MISS



FIRST FLOOR

ST. MARYS BY THE RIVER
MOSS POINT, MISS.

St. Mary's by the River
Moss Point, Jackson County, Mississippi

Photo by John P. Stephens
January 1990

Negatives: Miss. Dept. of Archives & History

East (Front) elevation
Photo 1 of 4

St. Mary's by the River
Moss Point, Jackson County, Mississippi

Photo by John P. Stephens
January 1990

Negatives: Miss. Dept. of Archives & History

Main staircase, looking into chapel
Photo 2 of 4

St. Mary's by the River
Moss Point, Jackson County, Mississippi

Photo by John P. Stephens
January 1990

Negatives: Miss Dept. of Archives & History

Interior of chapel

Photo 3 of 4

St. Mary's by the River
Moss Point, Jackson County, Mississippi

Photo by John P. Stephens
January 1990
Negatives: Miss. Dept. of Archives & History
Windows in the chapel

Photo 4 of 4