CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT
URBAN PLANNING AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION

STAFF REPORT

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND PRESERVATION COMMISSION
REQUEST FOR LISTING IN THE ST. PETERSBURG REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

For public hearing and recommendation to City Council on September 10, 2019 beginning at 2:00 P.M., Auditorium, Sunshine Center, 330 Fifth Street North, St. Petersburg, Florida

According to Planning and Development Services Department records, Community Planning and Commission member Jeff Wolf resides or has a place of business within 2,000 feet of the subject property. All other possible conflicts should be declared upon the announcement of the item.

AGENDA ITEM: CITY FILE NO. 19-90300003

REQUEST: Designation of Norwood Elementary School to the St. Petersburg Register of Historic Places as an individual historic landmark

OWNER: Pinellas County School Board

AGENT: Charlene Diefel for Joseph Perlman, Trustee; Second Veterans’ Property Trust

ADDRESS: 2154 27th Avenue North

PARCEL ID NO.: 12-31-16-69120-000-0010

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: PINE CITY SCHOOL SITE LOT 1

ZONING: NT-1
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OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

Norwood School, a historic elementary school building originally constructed in 1925 and continuously in use as an educational facility by Pinellas County School Board (PCSB) until 2008, is under contract for sale to the applicant. The applicant seeks to repurpose the building for use as multi-family housing. The subject property has long been considered a candidate for potential listing as a local historic landmark. The applicant submitted the attached designation application for review by the Community Planning and Preservation Commission and City Council on July 23, 2019. The applicant has a contract to purchase the subject property from PCSB and has submitted an affidavit demonstrating authorization to submit the designation application to the City.

Summary: Norwood Elementary School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Name (Current/Common):</th>
<th>Norwood Elementary School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historic Names:</td>
<td>Pine City Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Construction:</td>
<td>1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant Alterations:</td>
<td>1927: addition of eastern wing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1954: further additions to southeast and west</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Circa 1960: addition to southwest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period of Significance:</td>
<td>1925-1968</td>
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<td>Builder:</td>
<td>Eric T. Clauson</td>
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<td>Criteria for Landmark Eligibility:</td>
<td>A, E, and F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Areas of Significance:</td>
<td>Architecture, Community Planning and Development Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention of Historic Integrity:</td>
<td>Location, Design, Materials, Workmanship, and Feeling</td>
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</tbody>
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HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The southern portion of the Florida peninsula was largely unsettled in the mid-nineteenth century. The vast majority of the Seminole tribes who had resided in Tampa Bay had been eliminated, migrated, or killed by disease by the conclusion of the Indian Wars in 1858.¹ A small handful of settlers had established fish ranchos and small farms in the lower Pinellas area by the dawn of the Civil War, but most relocated during the conflict.

Following the war, politicians in Florida and states throughout the South struggled to recoup financially while still bickering over the ramifications of emancipation. During these early post-war years, some of the settlers that had called the Pinellas Peninsula home prior to the Civil War returned, and their numbers slowly grew. The expansion of railroad construction further into the state allowed a growing number of large-scale landowners to begin developing what had previously been agricultural land in the final decades of the 1800s. One such landowner was Peter Demens (born Pyotr Alexeyevich Dementyev), a Russian immigrant and speculative real estate

developer. Partially financed by Philadelphian and fellow area landowner Hamilton Disston, Demens expanded the Orange Belt Railway into, and platted the land that would become, St. Petersburg. When the first trains arrived in the newly-named town in 1888, it was home to only 30 residents.

Although the Orange Belt Railway was providing service into St. Petersburg, it was not initially successful. The American Medical Association’s Dr. W.C. Van Bibber had endorsed the Pinellas peninsula as the perfect location for a “Health City” in 1885. To boost ridership and capitalize on the idea that St. Petersburg’s climate offered healing powers, the Orange Belt Railway started to offer seaside excursions to St. Petersburg in 1889.2 These excursions were among the first concentrated efforts by the community and its boosters to attract tourists.3 When the railroad could not pay its debts in 1889, the syndicate of Philadelphia financiers holding the debts took over the railroad and the investment company, which was responsible for the land held in the name of the railroad.4

Largely as a result of the efforts of city boosters to attract businesses and residents, developers such as H. Walter Fuller, Noel Mitchell, Charles Hall, Charles Roser, and C. Perry Snell triggered the city’s first real estate land boom from 1909 to the start of World War I.5 Promotional efforts by the Atlantic Coast Line railroad (created in 1902 from the former Orange Belt Railroad and Henry Plant’s South Florida Railroad) brought organized tourist trains from New York in 1909 and from the Midwest in 1913. Many early tourists continued to winter in the city; some purchasing second homes in St. Petersburg.6

The City’s administration itself began to formally encourage tourism with promotional campaigns following the election of Al Lang as mayor in 1916. Lang had been elected after he arranged to bring the Philadelphia Phillies baseball team to the city for spring training. Under his leadership, the City publicly encouraged tourism and made efforts to improve the physical appearance of the city. With approximately 83 real estate companies operating in the city in 1914, the focus turned increasingly to attracting winter residents. The local population soon doubled during “the season.” Winter residents even formed tourist societies organized by their state or region of origin which acted as booster clubs in their native states. Although the real estate market collapsed during World War I, the boom of development had created a pattern for the future growth of the city. During the 1910s, the city’s population grew from 4,127 to 14,237.7

Although World War I had limited tourism, St. Petersburg rebounded quickly, with the winter season of 1918-1919 being even more profitable than the season before the war. Thanks in part

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2 Arsenault, 62.
4 Grismer.
5 Arsenault, 136.
6 Arsenault, 135-137; 144-145.
7 Arsenault, 121-125, 143-146, 190; Peck and Wilson, 41; Karl H. Grismer, The Story of St. Petersburg: The History of Lower Pinellas Peninsula and the Sunshine City, (St. Petersburg, FL: P.K. Smith & Company, 1924), 189.
to the efforts of John Lodwick, publicity agent for the Chamber of Commerce and the City of St. Petersburg, hotels and boarding houses were filled to capacity during the season.\textsuperscript{8}

The construction of a national, state, and local road system opened St. Petersburg to an increasing number of middle-class vacationers as well as a new type of vacationer known as tin-can tourists. This type of vacationer typically came by car and favored campgrounds to hotels. This new type of tourist threatened the city’s established hotel industry and was not the class of visitor that leaders of the City were interested in attracting. Nonetheless, several seasonal campsites were established in or near St. Petersburg during St. Petersburg’s boomtimes, beginning with the aptly-named Tent City in 1920.\textsuperscript{9} Another site that had its roots in catering to tin-can tourists was the Pine City Tourist Camp, which began as a collective of tourists camping beneath the stars but soon evolved into a community that was home to hundreds of residents living in both tents and cottages, as well as an athletic center, a grocery store, a church, a barber shop, and beginning in 1922, a one-room schoolhouse.\textsuperscript{10} The original Pine City School, located at the corner of 29\textsuperscript{th} Avenue North and Union Street North, was repurposed as the Church of God when the subject property was constructed, and later demolished.\textsuperscript{11}

The earliest portion of the subject property was constructed in 1925, as St. Petersburg’s population was booming and Pinellas County’s school system began to establish countywide warehouses and administrative services, and sought to hire a construction superintendent to oversee anticipated growth.\textsuperscript{12} Known at that time as Pine City School and intended to serve as a replacement to its predecessor mentioned above, City records suggest that the cost of construction was approximately $45,000, about $650,000 in 2018.\textsuperscript{13} As shown in Figure 1, the school was, at that time, bordered by undeveloped land to the west and intermittent residential development to the east. The informal settlement pattern established by tin can tourists can still be seen in the lower right.

When constructed in 1925, the subject property housed four classrooms. The school’s first year in session brought a student body of only 24 pupils who were led by teacher Seta Reiss. With the rapid pace of development in St. Petersburg, however, the four rooms soon faced overcrowding as the student body swelled to 405, warranting the construction of an addition.\textsuperscript{14} With the coming economic downturn unforeseen, the expansion of Norwood School near the northwestern edge of the developed area of the city was expected to both nurture continued residential construction and serve existing residents.

\textsuperscript{8} Arsenault, 186-189.
\textsuperscript{9} Arsenault, 186-189.
\textsuperscript{11} Board of Public Instruction, 15.
\textsuperscript{12} Board of Public Instruction, 19, 37.
\textsuperscript{14} Bureau of Public Instruction, 4.
Near the end of the school year in 1926, the Pinellas County School Board announced plans to construct, remodel, or add to 21 schools throughout the county at an expected cost of $4 million, or nearly $57 million in contemporary dollars. It was estimated that the number of public school students in Pinellas county had ballooned from 200 to nearly 16,000 since the institutional board’s early days, with the majority of the growth having occurred during the 1920s.\textsuperscript{15}

The school’s expansion consisted of a brick wing along the eastern parcel boundary and housed six classrooms, a clinic, and administrative offices. At the time of this expansion, the school was re-named for Arthur Norwood, who was at that time the chairman of the School Board.\textsuperscript{16} The 1925 and 1927 wings are visible in the image in Figure 2.

A relatively healthy tourist trade initially kept the local economy afloat following the downturn of the real estate market in 1926 and the devastating hurricanes which damaged south Florida in 1926 and 1928. However, the crash of the stock market in 1929 largely kept the traveling public at home during the ensuing national depression. A dismal tourist season during the winter of 1929-1930 led to business failures, mortgage foreclosures, and unemployment in the city. Every bank in the city failed and closed by April 1931.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{15} New Buildings to Be Erected During Summer, St. Petersburg Times, May 23, 1926; Bureau of Labor Statistics.
\textsuperscript{16} Ruth Walker, Rapid Growth Necessitates New Building, St. Petersburg Times, February 24, 1929.
\textsuperscript{17} Arsenault, Florida Dream, 253-255.
Throughout the 1950s and 1960s in St. Petersburg, new houses filled the subdivisions platted during the 1920s, but left vacant by the real estate decline and the Great Depression. Much of the area surrounding the subject property filled in during this time, though the area immediately west of 22nd St., across from the Norwood School, became and remains industrial in use.

Additions were erected in 1954 at the northeast and northwest corners of the property to accommodate the fresh growth of the community, which housed an auditorium, kitchen, and classrooms. A final addition was constructed at the school’s southwest corner circa 1960.

The school is adjacent to Interstate 275, which was rerouted to avoid the site when it was constructed in the early 1970s. A pedestrian overpass, still extant, was constructed to provide access to the school. After considering demolition that same decade, the school was rehabilitated in the 1980s. By the late 1990s, however, the school’s small size and lack of adjacent land upon which to expand necessitated its closure as a traditional neighborhood school. The property was

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18 City of St. Petersburg, Property Card for 2154 27th Ave. N., on file, City of St. Petersburg.
used as an alternative school from 1998 through circa 2008 but has now remained vacant for a decade.  

**DESIGNATION BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION**

The proposed designation boundary includes a majority portion of the parcel located at 2154 27th Ave. N., whose legal description is Pine City School Site Lot 1, which includes the original school building and its historically significant additions, as well as the space which historically served as the schoolyard. Although historically significant landscape elements are not present in the schoolyard, its historic function as part of the site warrants its inclusion in the boundary and future consideration as part of the resource. Parcel maps depicting this boundary line are included in Appendix A.

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

**Summary**

The subject property is a historic elementary school building constructed in several stages between 1925 and the 1960s. It is a brick structure built in the Mediterranean Revival style with an irregular L-shaped form and gabled, shed, and flat roof structures. Mid-century additions are more vernacular in style but continue the original wings’ brick patterning and general rhythm of fenestration. The subject property’s 1925 and 1927 wings feature open gallery-like corridors that face the interior of the parcel, creating in the schoolyard a partially-enclosed courtyard.

**Setting**

The subject property is located just outside of boundaries of St. Petersburg’s Ponce de Leon Neighborhood, a primarily residential neighborhood that was largely developed during the years following World War II. Historically, however, the Norwood School was connected to the neighborhood then known as Pine City to the east. This connection has been interrupted by the construction of I-275. The presence of the impact has a major effect on the neighborhood setting. The subject property’s surroundings are now mixed, with the highway remaining present to its east, single-family residential buildings facing it from the north and south, and industrial buildings facing it from the west across 22nd Street North. Despite this change to its broader setting, the subject property does retain its original building, several additions and ancillary buildings, and its grounds, which help to convey its historic function.

**Buildings**

The Norwood School is the sum of several wings built at different times to suit the needs of the growing community, as shown in Figure 3. The original building was constructed in 1925, with a wing being added only two years later in 1927. Further additions were building circa 1955 and

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circa 1965, resulting in the footprint that is extant today. Interestingly but not surprisingly, the construction dates of these portions align with growth periods in the city as a whole, creating in the subject property’s evolving footprint a representation of St. Petersburg’s twentieth century progress. The school’s five building components create an irregular L shape near the north and east edges of the parcel. Though constructed at different periods of time, they are relatively well-united by material, scale, and massing.

![Figure 3: 1973 aerial photograph of Norwood School with construction dates](image)

*Original Building – 1925*

Comprising the majority of the façade and running parallel to 27th Ave. N., the 1925 portion of the building is brick with a concrete slab foundation which creates a visual water table. It features two stories and ten original rooms. It is rectangular with a side-gabled roof and its façade facing north along 27th Ave. N. The bricks are laid in a Flemish garden wall bond, a pattern which alternates three stretchers (bricks laid with their longest faces visible) with by one header (a brick laid sideways to reveal its shorter face). The building originally appears to have featured a tiled roof, though composition shingles have been applied as a replacement. A brick chimney stack rises above each gable end, each of which was originally topped with a gabled, tiled chimney cap, a common feature to the Mediterranean Revival style. This cap has been removed from the western chimney, though the chimney stack itself remains visible. The 1925 portion of the building is symmetrical, with nine bays of single or paired windows aligned between top and bottom floor, which are generally appear to be six-light aluminum casement windows. The configuration of these replacement windows matches that depicted in historic photographs, although the original windows were likely wooden. Some sashes have been replaced or obscured by air conditioning units, presumably during the mid-1980s renovation.
The building’s focal point is the entrance at the ground floor’s central bay. The entrance itself features dual-action wooden doors with a transom light encased by a door surround highlighted by staggered quoins. The door is flanked by two windows set in irregular stucco, further highlighting the entrance as a focal point within the brick façade. The entrance is recessed behind a tripartite arcade of ionic columns with a Mediterranean motif and reached via five cast concrete steps with knee walls and utilitarian metal handrails; the handrails appear to be a non-historic alteration though their small outline creates a minimal impact on the entrance (Figure 4).

A distinctive feature of the school building’s design is begun on the 1925 building and carried onto the 1927 addition but only visible from the side and rear elevations. As shown in Figure 5, the second level of the building features a recessed gallery, serving as a sheltered but exterior hallway connecting rooms. The stairways at the east and west ends of the building project from the main form and feature arched cutout openings for light and circulation. Several small, one-story additions are present at the rear (south) elevation of the 1925 building. These flat-roofed spaces appear to have been constructed between 1962 and 1973.
Figure 5: Rear of 1925 building, showing arcade at second floor. Facing northeast.

1927 Addition
Built only two years after the school’s initial construction, the 1927 addition is very similar in design to the original building. The 1927 addition runs along the eastern side of the parcel, forming an L shape in its connection to the 1925 building and further defining “courtyard” of the interior of the parcel, as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Subject property, facing northwest
The west elevation of the 1927 addition features the same open-air corridors along the exterior gallery, defined by paired columns at the upper story and arched openings at the ground floor. It
is possible that the 1925 portion featured a similar composition at its ground floor before the construction of the one-story south addition.

The rear elevation of the 1927 addition (Figure 8) is somewhat utilitarian; the east side continues the rhythm of fenestration established by the façade elevation of the 1925 building. The primary distinction in form between the 1925 and 1927 wings is the roofline. Where the 1925 wing features a consistent side gable with overhangs, the 1927 portion features a gabled roof with parapet at its main form, with a shed roof protecting the gallery, as shown below.

1954 and 1960 Additions
Two additions were constructed in 1954 to accommodate the growing post-War population: a two-story classroom addition projecting from the façade and adjacent to the 1927 addition (Figure 10), and a one-story auditorium to the west of the 1925 structure (Figure 11). Both are
constructed of brick laid in a matching garden wall bond to the earlier portions of the building, though the bricks themselves exhibit a slightly redder tone. Both have flat roofs with stepped parapets vaguely referencing the Mission style. A small, flat-roofed addition was appended to the rear (south) elevation of the auditorium circa 1960.

Figure 10: East addition dating to 1954. Facing southeast.

Figure 11: West additions dating to 1954 and circa 1960. Facing east.

Landscape
The historic “school yard” has changed over time, having evolved from what appears to be a dirt or gravel surface into an asphalt pad featuring spaces for basketball and other games. The extant materials of this space, therefore, do not contribute to the subject property's significance.

Primary Character-Defining Historic Features
Future exterior alterations to the property will be subject to Certificate of Appropriateness review. The following list does not define all significant features of the subject property but is intended to identify the most distinct elements of this designation:

• Entrance from 27th Ave. N., including arcade of cast-concrete Ionic columns and doorway with transom and surrounding quoins;
• Unpainted brick exterior with garden wall bond throughout;
• Water table;
• Window openings, sills and brick lintels where extant, and historic six-light configuration;
• Gabled chimney cap;
• Gallery facing southwestern portion of parcel with arched cutouts at ground level and paired columns above; and
• Historic roof forms, including gabled and flat shapes and parapet walls where they exist.

Site Evolution and Non-Historic Alterations
As noted, the construction of the Norwood School took place during a number of years that can be roughly categorized into the 1920s Florida Land Boom period of construction, and the 1950s-
1960s post-World War II Baby Boom. More than 50 years have passed since the construction of the post-War additions, and staff therefore recommends their inclusion in the proposed Period of Significance of 1925 through 1968. For this reason, the extant additions to the subject property should be considered to be significant in their own right, and not non-historic alterations.

There are, however, some visible exterior changes which post-date the Period of Significance and are out of character to the historic building. Large air conditioning units protrude from many of the school’s windows. It does not appear that these units have resulted in the alteration of the window openings themselves, so a rehabilitation of the building could reverse this alteration and restore a degree of integrity in this area.

The chimney cap of the west chimney at the school’s 1925 wing has also been removed, though the chimney stack remains. Evidence of the historic design exists through the survival of the chimney cap at the east elevation of the building, potentially making a restoration possible.

No historic windows were observed at the 1925 and 1927 wings; all appear to have been replaced by aluminum windows at an unknown date (likely during the 1980s renovation). Some original aluminum windows appear to remain at the mid-century additions. Window sills throughout the property appear to have been covered with aluminum sill covers; it is likely that historic cast concrete sills exist beneath these.

The Spanish clay tile which appears at the 1925 and 1927 wings in historic photographs has been replaced with composition shingles.

STAFF FINDINGS

In St. Petersburg, eligibility for designation as a local historic landmark is determined based on evaluations of age, context, and integrity as found in Section 16.30.070.2.5(D) of the City Code. Under the age test, historic documentation demonstrates that the Norwood School was initially constructed approximately 93 years ago and surpasses the minimum requirement of 50. Further, staff suggests that the subject property satisfies three Criteria for Significance and five Criteria of Integrity. Staff, therefore, recommends approval of the application to designate the subject property to the St. Petersburg Register of Historic Places.

Historic Significance and Satisfaction of Eligibility Criteria

The first test to determine eligibility for the St. Petersburg Register of Historic Places examines a resource’s historic significance with relation to nine criteria, and the period during which this significance was achieved. One or more Criteria for Significance must be met in order for a property to qualify for designation as an individual landmark or district to be placed in the St. Petersburg Register. The nine criteria are based on the National Park Service’s criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and are designed to assess resources’ importance in a given historic context with objectivity and comprehensiveness.
Previous Considerations of Eligibility

In addition to the applicant’s proposal and staff findings discussed herein, the Norwood School has been previously evaluated by several architectural history professionals and considered to be potentially eligible for historic designation at either the local or National Register level in the past. A 1978 survey of historic architectural resources in the city resulted in the building’s first recording as Florida Master Site File (FMSF) 8PI00714. Although documenting a property through the creation of an FMSF form to be filed with Florida’s State Historic Preservation Office does not in itself result in any formal designation status or even imply eligibility, the 1978 form for Norwood School suggests that the building is “worthy of note” as a historic resource. More recently, the 2012 Pinellas Alternatives Analysis conducted by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and others noted the previous recording and listed the Norwood School among the significant historic structures within the area of potential effect of the project being considered therein.

A more in-depth evaluation occurred as part of a Cultural Resource Assessment Survey of I-275/SR 93 in St. Petersburg in 2015. That study suggested that the Norwood School be considered individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the areas of Education and Community Planning and Development and Criterion C in the area of Architecture.22 At the local level, these previous evaluations led to the Norwood School’s inclusion in a proposed extension of the City’s list of Potentially-Eligible properties in 2016, though the 2016 list has not been formally adopted as of the writing of this report.

Period of Significance

A historic resource’s Period of Significance is the time frame during which a historic resource was associated with the important events, activities, themes, or people which qualify it for consideration as significant.23 Because these events and activities generally must have taken place 50 or more years prior to designation, the Period of Significance often ends at that point. The recommended Period of Significance for the Norwood School, 2154 27th Ave. N., is 1925 through 1968, during which time it was continuously used as a public school building by the Pinellas County School Board.

Criteria for Significance

Nine criteria for historic significance are defined by St. Petersburg City Code, Historic and Archaeological Preservation Overlay, Section 16.30.070.2.5(D). In the case of the Norwood School, staff has determined that the proposed listing satisfies three St. Petersburg Register criteria as follows.

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| Yes | A | Its value is a significant reminder of the cultural or archaeological heritage of the city, state, or nation. |
| No | B | Its location is the site of a significant local, state, or national event. |
| No | C | It is identified with a person who significantly contributed to the development of the city, state, or nation. |
| No | D | It is identified as the work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose work has influenced the development of the city, state, or nation. |
| Yes | E | Its value as a building is recognized for the quality of its architecture, and it retains sufficient elements showing its architectural significance. |
| Yes | F | It has distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials. |
| No | G | Its character is a geographically definable area possessing a significant concentration, or continuity of sites, buildings, objects or structures united in past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development. |
| No | H | Its character is an established and geographically definable neighborhood, united in culture, architectural style or physical plan and development. |
| No | I | It has contributed, or is likely to contribute, information important to the prehistory or history of the city, state, or nation. |

Under Criterion A, “**Its value is a significant reminder of the cultural or archaeological heritage of the city, state, or nation.**” Norwood School possesses historic significance in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Education. As a neighborhood primary school established and almost immediately expanded during the frantic development years of the 1920s land boom, then later expanded during the post-War years, Norwood School serves as a physical representation of two of the city’s periods of great expansion.

Under Criterion E, “**Its value as a building is recognized for the quality of its architecture, and it retains sufficient elements showing its architectural significance.**” the subject property is significant in the area of Architecture for its demonstration of the Mediterranean Revival style. Norwood school exemplifies the visual language from which the builders of St. Petersburg drew in efforts to portray the city as an “American Riviera.” The fact that Norwood School was built in such a style only three years after the 1922 frame vernacular building that was originally Pine City School is indicative of the growing city’s changing self-perception, as well as the image it sought to present to potential residents of an area expected to continue increasing rapidly in population.
Finally, in a related but distinct way, the subject property holds historic significance under Criterion F, “It has distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials.” In the areas of both Architecture and Education, the Norwood School is significant in its depiction of an evolving system of local schools led by an increasingly organized School Board. The rear galleries of the 1920s wings create a connection between the classrooms that face them and the outdoor schoolyard, speaking both to a common theme of courtyards and sheltered porches in Mediterranean Revival buildings, and to a goal of incorporating socialization, recreation, and access to nature into early education.

**Historic Integrity**

A staff analysis of the subject property’s historic integrity finds that Norwood School retains integrity in five of seven given criteria, surpassing the requirement of one or more criteria be retained.

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<td>Location</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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*Must be present in addition to at least one other factor.

The areas in which integrity has been somewhat diminished are Setting and Association. The setting’s integrity has been diminished by the disrupted connection between the school building and the residential neighborhood that primarily lay to its east historically. Following the construction of I-275 during the mid-1970s, the school is functionally and visually separated from this neighborhood.

The loss of association is due to the fact that the site is no longer used as a school building.

**PROPERTY OWNER CONSENT AND IMPACT OF DESIGNATION**

The application for the proposed local landmark designation was submitted by a potential buyer of the property with authorization from the Pinellas County School Board, which remains the legal owner. Designation of the subject property as a local historic landmark will allow the applicant to pursue adaptive reuse, certain tax credits and exemptions, and variances once the purchase is finalized. The designation of the property, therefore, is an instrumental element of its rehabilitation.

**CONSISTENCY WITH ST. PETERSBURG’S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, EXISTING LAND USE PLAN, AND FUTURE LAND USE PLAN**

The proposed local historic landmark designation is consistent with the City’s Comprehensive Plan, relating to the protection, use and adaptive reuse of historic buildings. The local landmark designation will not affect the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) or zoning designations, nor will it significantly constrain any existing or future plans for the development of the City. The proposed landmark designation is consistent with the following objectives:
Objective LU10: The historic resources locally designated by the St. Petersburg City Council and Community Planning and Preservation Commission (CPPC) shall be incorporated onto the Land Use Map or map series at the time of original adoption, or through the amendment process, and protected from development and redevelopment activities consistent with the provisions of the Historic Preservation Element and the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Policy LU10.1: Decisions regarding the designation of historic resources shall be based on the criteria and policies outlined in the Historic Preservation Ordinance and the Historic Preservation Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy HP2.3: The City shall provide technical assistance to applications for designation of historic structures and districts.

Policy HP2.6: Decisions regarding the designation of historic resources shall be based on National Register eligibility criteria and policies outlined in the Historic Preservation Ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan. The City will use the following selection criteria [for city initiated landmark designations] as a guideline for staff recommendations to the CPC and City Council:

- National Register or DOE status
- Prominence/importance related to the City
- Prominence/importance related to the neighborhood
- Degree of threat to the landmark
- Condition of the landmark
- Degree of owner support

ADAPTIVE REUSE EVALUATION

Through the Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings Overlay, Section 16.30.020 of the City Code, local landmark buildings may be re-purposed or adaptively reused for land use types that are otherwise prohibited within the applicable zoning category.

The purpose of this benefit is to encourage the retention and productive reuse of structures that add historic, architectural, or cultural value to the city rather than demolition because their original use has become functionally obsolete. Historically significant buildings, especially when located within a single-family neighborhood, are sometimes abandoned or demolished when it becomes too difficult to meet current zoning standards and Florida Building Code requirements. Adaptive reuse recognizes the importance of these historically significant buildings and establishes a process by which these buildings can be retained and reused while minimizing any secondary impacts to the surrounding properties.

In this instance, the applicant proposes to preserve the historic building and reuse the interior spaces for approximately 38 multi-family dwelling units. The dwelling units will be configured using the historic classroom layout, with modifications to add individual kitchen and bathroom facilities. The modified configurations will require a variance to the minimum unit size, described below.
City Code, Section 16.30.020, requires the applicant to be approved by the CPPC when proposed uses are not allowed in the existing NT-1 (Neighborhood Traditional) zoning category but may be allowed as outlined in the adaptive reuse chart. The chart states that a building may be occupied by, “All uses allowed in the district plus multi-family uses and bed and breakfasts.”

The conversion of a retired school building to a multi-family use is common within historic preservation efforts nationwide. In the City of St. Petersburg, two historic school buildings have been adaptively reused for multi-family dwelling units (and several more have been adaptively reused for commercial purposes). The Euclid School, 1090 10th Street North, was designated a local landmark (Case No. 14-90300004) in 2014 and adaptively reused for 16 multi-family dwelling units. The original St. Petersburg (Mirror Lake) High School, 701 Mirror Lake Drive North, was designated a local landmark (Case No. HPC-98-01) in 1998 and adaptively reused for approximately 70 multi-family dwelling units. Both are successful examples of the potential for this building to return to productive use.

![Euclid School](image1.png)  
**Figure 12:** Euclid School (HPC 14-90300004)  
1090 10th Street North

![St. Petersburg (Mirror Lake) High School](image2.png)  
**Figure 13:** St. Petersburg (Mirror Lake) High School (HPC 98-01)  
701 Mirror Lake Drive North

The request for adaptive reuse is aided by surrounding conditions, including the Interstate 275 to the east and industrial facilities to the west. Single-family houses exist to the north and south of the property; however, the orientation of the parking and vehicle use area will more directly impact the property owners to the south.

Properties to the south will be impacted in several ways. First, operating conditions at the previous school likely included heavy vehicle traffic at concentrated times through the weekday schedule, with little to no vehicle traffic during weekends and holidays. Comparatively, the proposal for multi-family dwelling units will result in less concentrated vehicle activity distributed more evenly throughout the day and early evening. Second, the vehicle use area was also used for outdoor recess and physical education, which likely created noise impacts upon the surrounding properties. Finally, site improvement regulations will require new vegetation in the
interior and around the perimeter of the vehicle use area thereby improving the physical appearance of the site.

The potential for this historic building, given the repairs and rehabilitation proposed by the applicant, is important to preserving and sustaining a building of such architectural significance to the City and cultural history of Pinellas County’s school system. The conceptual plan for multi-family residential units is compatible with the purpose and intent of the adaptive reuse provisions.

**VARIANCE**

Special Note: On September 5, 2019, City Council is considering the elimination of minimum unit sizes for multi-family dwelling units. If approved on September 5, 2019, the following variance request will become unnecessary.

The applicant is proposing to create 38 multi-family dwelling units. The dwelling units will be configured using the historic classroom layout, with modifications to add individual kitchen and bathroom facilities. The modified configurations will require a variance to the minimum unit size.

Pursuant to City Code, Section 16.10.020.1, the minimum gross floor area for a studio unit is 375-square feet and one-bedroom unit is 500-square feet. Most of the proposed units do not meet the minimum unit size required; 1) 30 of the 36 studio units are deficient averaging 327.7 square feet; and 2) two of the proposed units are one-bedroom with each measuring 443 square feet. See floor plans included in Appendix A.

<table>
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<th>Proposed</th>
<th>Variance Sq. Ft.</th>
<th>Variance %</th>
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<tr>
<td>Studio</td>
<td>375 sq. ft.</td>
<td>291 sq. ft.</td>
<td>75 sq. ft.</td>
<td>22.4 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>One-Bedroom</td>
<td>500 sq. ft.</td>
<td>443 sq. ft.</td>
<td>57 sq. ft.</td>
<td>11.4 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pursuant to City Code, Section 16.70.040.1.6, the basis for granting a variance shall be guided by several factors:

1. **Special conditions exist which are peculiar to the land, building, or other structures for which the variance is sought, and which do not apply generally to lands, buildings, or other structures in the same district. Special conditions to be considered shall include, but not be limited to, the following circumstances ... Historic Resources. If the site contains historical significance.**

In this instance, the applicant is attempting to configure dwelling units using the historic classroom layout, with modifications to add individual kitchen and bathroom facilities. The goals, objectives, and policies of the City’s historic preservation program and the Comprehensive Plan’s Historic Preservation Element is to preserve/conserve historic buildings, sometimes through adaptive reuse. A variance to the minimum unit size will protect the historic integrity of the building and provide for an alternative to the possible demolition and redevelopment of the site into single-family houses.
2. The special conditions existing are not the result of the actions of the applicant;

This request for a variance to the minimum unit size results from an attempt to configure dwelling units using the historic classroom layout without compromising the historic integrity of the building.

3. Owing to the special conditions, a literal enforcement of this chapter would result in unnecessary hardship; and 4. Strict application of the provisions of this chapter would provide the applicant with no means for reasonable use of the land, buildings, or other structures;

A literal enforcement of the minimum unit size provision is not a hardship as the property owner retains the right to use the building as a school or raze the building and develop individual single-family houses. This would be unnecessary however given the City’s stated goals, objectives, and policies for supporting historic preservation. The adaptive reuse provisions of the City Code were written specifically for accommodation in situations like this one.

4. The variance requested is the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of the land, building, or other structure;

The variance requested is the minimum variance necessary to achieve the objectives of the City’s historic preservation program while reasonably accommodating the challenges associated with adaptive reuse of historic buildings. In 2016, a text amendment to the City Code was approved allowing variance requests to “reinstate” smaller dwelling units below the minimum unit size. Furthermore, on September 5, 2019, City Council is considering the elimination of minimum unit sizes for multi-family dwelling units, as part of a comprehensive initiative to improve access to attainable, workforce, and affordable housing.

5. The granting of the variance will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of this chapter; and 7. The granting of the variance will not be injurious to neighboring properties or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare;

The granting of the variance will not be injurious or otherwise detrimental to the occupants, neighboring properties, or public welfare.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the request to designate the Norwood School, located at 2145 27th Ave. N., as a local historic landmark, thereby referring the application to City Council for first and second reading and public hearing. Further, staff recommends approval of request for adaptive reuse of the property as a multifamily residential building.
The CPPC is required to take two, possibly three, separate votes. Staff recommends:

1. APPROVAL of designation of the Norwood School, as described by the proposed land boundary, to be added as a local historic landmark building to the St. Petersburg Register of Historic Places.

2. APPROVAL of the Adaptive Reuse request. Approval of the adaptive reuse shall not constitute approval of any variance for elements of the proposed site plan, except as noted within this report.

3. APPROVAL of the variance to minimum unit size. This variance shall only be required if City Council does not act on, or votes to deny, elimination of the minimum unit size requirement for multi-family dwelling units.

REFERENCES

Board of Public Instruction, Pinellas County Public Schools. The Golden Anniversary of Pinellas Schools: Celebrating 50 Years of Educational Progress. Superintendent’s Semi-Centennial Report, 1912-1962. 1962.


City of St. Petersburg. Foster Grove House. Local Landmark Designation Staff Report. On file, City of St. Petersburg. 2018


Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), Metropolitan Planning Organization of Pinellas County Florida, Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA), and Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA). Pinellas Alternatives Analysis: Cultural Resources Reconnaissance Study – Technical Memorandum. On file, City of St. Petersburg. 2012.

Hansen, Howard; Robin Reed; and Emily Elwyn. Euclid Elementary School. Local Landmark Designation Application. On file, City of St. Petersburg. 2014.


Appendix A

Application for Designation to the St. Petersburg Register of Historic Places as a Local Historic Landmark
AFFIDAVIT TO AUTHORIZE PERMIT APPLICATION

The following property is owned by and title is held by the School Board of Pinellas County, Florida ("Owner"):

2154 27th Ave N, St. Petersburg, Florida 33713 and empty lot 26th Ave N, legally described as:

Fruit Haven Blk D Lots 10, 11, 12 Less E20ft for street (34-30-16-29628-04-0100) and vacant lot 12-31-15-5902-020-0150 Pine City Sub replat Blk 20 Lot 15

The Owner has approved a contract for sale of the property to Second Veterans Property Land Trust, Joseph Perlman Esq Trustee ("Buyer") and by executing this document the Owner is providing authorization for the Buyer to apply to the City of St. Petersburg for permits on the property. The Buyer is not acting as the Owner’s agent or on behalf of Owner and the Owner is executing this document solely to assist in the sale of the property.

This affidavit has been executed to induce the City of St Petersburg, Florida to consider and act on the above described property.

We the undersigned authorize hereby certify that the foregoing is true and correct.

Signature ___________________________ 
Printed Name ___________________________

Approved as to form:

______________________________
Office of School Board Attorney

Sworn to and subscribed on this date:

Identification or personally known: ___________________________

Notary signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________

Commission Expiration (Stamp or date):

______________________________
CATHY J. HUNT
Notary Public - State of Florida
Commission # GG 025264
My Comm. Expires Sep 19, 2020
Bonds through National Notary Assn.
Local Landmark Designation Application

1. NAME AND LOCATION OF PROPERTY

   historic name Norwood Elementary School
   address 2154 27th Ave N, St Petersburg, FL 33714

2. PROPERTY OWNER(S) NAME AND ADDRESS

   name Pinellas County School Board
   street and number 1111 South Belcher Rd
   city or town Largo
   phone number (h) 727-541-3291
   e-mail beyer@pcsb.org

3. NOMINATION PREPARED BY

   name Joseph Perlman, Trustee (by Charlene Diegel)
   organization Second Veterans Property Trust
   street and number 2846 US Hwy 19 N
   city or town Clearwater
   phone number (h) 727-536-2371
   e-mail Charlene.Diegel@bo1.com
   date prepared 7/23/19

4. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

   Describe boundary line encompassing all man-made and natural resources to be included in designation (general legal description or survey). Attach map delimiting proposed boundary. (Use continuation sheet if necessary)

   Pine City School Site Lot 1

5. GEOGRAPHIC DATA

   acreage of property 1.6
   property identification number 19-31-16 - 39120 - 000 - 0010
6. FUNCTION OR USE

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Historic Functions</th>
<th>Current Functions</th>
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<td>vacant</td>
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7. DESCRIPTION

**Architectural Classification**
(See Appendix A for list)

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**Materials**

<table>
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<td>masonry</td>
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Narrative Description

On one or more continuation sheets describe the historic and existing condition of the property use conveying the following information: original location and setting; natural features; pre-historic man-made features; subdivision design; description of surrounding buildings; major alterations and present appearance; interior appearance;

8. NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY

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<th>Contributing resources previously listed on the National Register or Local Register</th>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</table>
9. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Criteria for Significance
(mark one or more boxes for the appropriate criteria)

☑ Its value is a significant reminder of the cultural or archaeological heritage of the City, state, or nation.

☐ Its location is the site of a significant local, state, or national event.

☐ It is identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the City, state, or nation.

☐ It is identified as the work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose work has influenced the development of the City, state, or nation.

☑ Its value as a building is recognized for the quality of its architecture, and it retains sufficient elements showing its architectural significance.

☑ It has distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials.

☐ Its character is a geographically definable area possessing a significant concentration, or continuity or sites, buildings, objects or structures united in past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development.

☐ Its character is an established and geographically definable neighborhood, united in culture, architectural style or physical plan and development.

☐ It has contributed, or is likely to contribute, information important to the prehistory or history of the City, state, or nation.

Areas of Significance
(see Attachment B for detailed list of categories)

Architecture, Community Planning & Development Education

Period of Significance
1925 - 1968

Significant Dates (date constructed & altered)
1925, 1927, 1954, c. 1960

Significant Person(s)

Cultural Affiliation/Historic Period

Builder
Eric T. Clauzon

Architect

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property as it relates to the above criteria and information on one or more continuation sheets. Include biographical data on significant person(s), builder and architect, if known.)

10. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)
St. Petersburg Local Landmark Designation Application

Name of property Norwood School Property

Continuation Section

Page _____
Site Name: Norwood School
Survey Date: 7/80

Instruction for locating (or address): 2154 27th Avenue N.
St. Petersburg, FL 33710

Location: Pine City
County: Pinellas

Owner of Site: Name: Pinellas Board of Public Instruction
Address: PO Box 4688
Clearwater, FL

Occupant, Tenant, or Manager:
Name: 

Type of Ownership: County
Recording Date: 8/32

Recorder:
Name & Title: Davies, Doug and Nuccio, Margaret, Historic Researchers
Address: 205 Ninth Street N.
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Condition of Site:
Check one
- Excellent 863=
- Good 863=
- Fair 863=
- Deteriorated 863=

Integrity of Site:
Check one or more
- Altered 858=
- Unaltered 858=
- Original Site 858=

Original Use: Educational 838=
Present Use: Educational 850=
Dates: Beginning +1925 844=
Culture/Phase: American 840=
Developmental Stage: 20th century 842=

NR Classification Category:
Building 916=

Threats to Site:
Check one or more
- Zoning () 878=
- Development () 878=
- Deterioration () 878=
- Borrowing () 878=
- Other (See Remarks below): 878=

Areas of Significance:
Historical 910=

Significance: Norwood School was built during the boom year of 1925. It was named after Arthur Norwood, a leading merchant in St. Petersburg. Cost to build the school was $30,000 and a year later an addition was put on at the cost of $31,950.

Fuller, Walter P. St. Petersburg and Its People, p 330.

Photographic Record Numbers: CS - 12 - 11 860=...
ARCHITECT ___________________________ 872==

BUILD ______________ Louis Fleischer Company 874==

STYLE AND/OR MODE _____________________ Mediterranean Revival 964==

PLAN TYPE _____________________________ rectangular with wings 966==

EXTERIOR FABRIC(S) ______________________ brick 854==

STRUCTURAL SYSTEM(S) __________________ masonry 856==

FOUNDATION: __________________________ spread footing 942==

ROOF TYPE: _____________________________ gable 942==

SECONDARY ROOF STRUCTURE(S): __________ 942==

CHIMNEY LOCATION: ______________________ left lateral 942==

WINDOW TYPE: ___________________________ wood casement 942==

CHIMNEY: ________________________________ brick 882==

ROOF SURFACING: _________________________ hollow tile 882==

INTERIOR WALLS: _________________________ plaster 882==

ORNAMENT INTERIOR: _____________________ 882==

ORNAMENT EXTERIOR: _____________________ 882==

NO. OF CHIMNEYS ___________ 1 ____________ 952== NO. OF STORIES ________ 2 ________ 950==

OTHER (SPECIFY) ________________________ 954==

Map Reference (incl. scale & date) _________________ 809==

Latitude and Longitude: _________________________ 800==

LOCATION SKETCH OR MAP

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Contact Print
Appendix B
Maps of Subject Property and Proposed Boundary
Community Planning and Preservation Commission

2154 27TH AVE N

AREA TO BE APPROVED, SHOWN IN

CASE NUMBER
19-90300003

SCALE: 1 " = 167'
Community Planning and Preservation Commission

2154 27TH AVE N

AREA TO BE APPROVED, SHOWN IN

CASE NUMBER
19-90300003

SCALE: 1" = 167'
Appendix C
Floor Plans
PROFESSIONAL STATEMENT: TO THE BEST OF THIS ARCHITECT’S KNOWLEDGE, ENCLOSED PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS COMPLY WITH THE APPLICABLE MINIMUM BUILDING CODES AND THE APPLICABLE MINIMUM FIRE SAFETY STANDARDS AS DETERMINED IN ACCORDANCE WITH CHAPTERS 553 AND 633, LAWS OF FLORIDA.

SCALE

SHEET DRAWN DATE

SEAL DATE

NO. REVISIONS DESCRIPTION

JB / MT 4-30-2019

CONTRACTOR SHALL CHECK AND VERIFY ALL DIMENSIONS AND COORDINATE ALL FIELD CONDITIONS. ALL DISCREPANCIES AND CONFLICTS SHALL BE REPORTED TO THE ARCHITECT IN WRITING PRIOR TO PROCEEDING OR CONTINUING WITH CONSTRUCTION. UNREPORTED DISCREPANCIES AND CONFLICTS SHALL REMAIN THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CONTRACTOR.

ARCHITECT, DESIGN, AND CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT
FLORIDA REGISTRATION NO. AR0005065
EMAIL: JACK@JABODZIAK.COM

JOHN A. BODZIAK
ARCHITECT AIA, PA
TEL: (727) 327-1966 FAX: (727) 826-0968
2325 ULMERTON RD. SUITE 21 CLEARWATER, FLORIDA 33762

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"

ST.PETERSBURG, FLORIDA.

NORWOOD VETERANS HOUSING
ST.PETERSBURG, FLORIDA.

FLOOR PLAN

A-2.1