

**The Boyce Guest House
635 Bay Street NE
HPC #96-03, Designated 1996**



The circa 1914 Boyce Guest House is a residence containing an eclectic mixture of design elements characteristic of both the Prairie and Craftsman architectural styles. It is representative of a Vernacular form of architecture and as such is associated with the development of the North Shore area, one of St. Petersburg's oldest residential neighborhoods.

The Boyce Guest House was one of an estimated 109 buildings that were recorded as dating from between 1914 and 1918 in the North Shore area. At the time of the building's construction, this area of the North Shore Neighborhood was just developing as a residential neighborhood amidst a flurry of subdivision activity that took place between 1910 and 1917. The North Shore Neighborhood was started in 1911 by C. Perry Snell and J.C. Hamlett, and was one of the earliest residential neighborhoods in the City. The North Shore Neighborhood was developed just to the north of Downtown St. Petersburg and adjacent to the City's waterfront. By 1918 most of the North Shore area had been subdivided, but only 244 buildings had been constructed. The neighborhood experienced its most significant period of development in terms of building construction during the land boom years of the 1920's, with most of the remaining available lots in the area developing during the 1930's and 1940's.

During the land boom of the 1920's, the Boyce Guest House changed occupants frequently. This was during the same time the North Shore area experienced its most significant period of development in terms of building construction. Robert M. and Barbara Boyce purchased the house in 1947 and named it "The Boyce Guest House" as they began renting rooms. The Boyce family lived in Connecticut during the spring and summer and would return to St. Petersburg during the fall season to manage the house. They owned and managed the house until 1967; a guest book was maintained for the house which lists many baseball stars as guests during the late 1950's.

This 2-1/2 story, balloon framed house is an eclectic mixture of house styles popular during the period. During the early years of the eclectic era of American house construction, experimental combinations of styles were common. From about 1890 to 1915, styles as different as the Colonial Revival, Neoclassical, Prairie, Tudor, Mission and Craftsman were being built simultaneously around the country. Many architects and builders experimented with combinations of these styles which produced both high-style and vernacular examples. Identifying Prairie and Craftsman features include a hipped roof, multiple-hipped dormers, upper sashes of wooden-muntin, double-hung windows and wide boxed-eave overhangs, wood clapboard siding, balconies, balustrades, sleeping porches and large masonry exterior chimneys. Also typical of Craftsman style detailing are the decorative carved brackets painted in contrasting colors. These brackets are actually single elements painted with a black interior, giving the illusion of a hollow paired bracket.