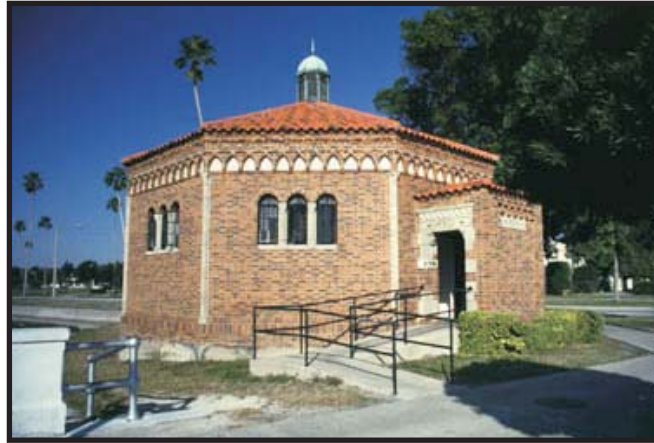


Comfort Station
NE Corner of Bayshore Drive and Second Avenue NE
HPC #91-04 - Designated January 1992



The 1927 Comfort Station is significant as a rare and unaltered example of the Romanesque Revival style of architecture which was designed by Henry Taylor. Less than one percent of the buildings surveyed in the 1978 and 1986 surveys were Romanesque Revival. Two other Romanesque Revival style buildings located in St. Petersburg that were also designed by Henry Taylor are the St. Mary Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church, and St. Paul's Catholic which were constructed in 1925 and 1929 respectively.

The similarity between the Comfort Station and St. Mary's Church has spurred years of local rumor and has given the Comfort Station the nickname "Little St. Mary's." Some say it was a gentle joke -- that Taylor had not been satisfactorily paid for his church design told gave a similar design to the city for the restroom. However, Mrs. Taylor, who returned to St. Petersburg to live after her husband died, said, "The church kept its commitments to pay. Everyone was having money troubles then, and it took some time, banks were closed, some of them, but I don't think there was ever any question or argument about Henry's getting paid for his work." It is more likely that since there were so few Romanesque Revival style buildings in St. Petersburg and the style was becoming popular elsewhere, such as Addison Mizner's 1925 octagonal design for Riverside Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Taylor liked the design and thought that it would be suitable for St. Petersburg's grand waterfront.

The Comfort Station has an octagonal shape and is capped with a red tile roof and a copper cupola and finial. The octagonal shape stems from the Greek cross shape used in early Roman churches. The building is constructed of several colors of brick, which is typical of Romanesque Revival style buildings. The lines of deeply recessed, rounded arched windows that are often found in Romanesque Revival style buildings are also seen on the Comfort Station. The exterior of the Comfort Station is adorned with stone carved title panels and stone carved columns and columnettes.