

**The Harlan Hotel  
15 8th Street North  
HPC #96-04, Designated March 1997**



Built in 1925, the Harlan Hotel is significant for its association with the development of tourism in St. Petersburg, serving as one of the few remaining small hotels constructed during the 1920s Florida Boom era for less affluent visitors. Although a majority of the real estate development occurred only on paper, a significant number of buildings were constructed during this period in St. Petersburg, including the Harlan Hotel. The hotel originated from a need for more accommodations for the winter tourists that began to converge on St. Petersburg. The winter of 1920-21 saw such record numbers of visitors that Mayor Noel Mitchell established Tent City on a city-owned block at 18th Street and Second Avenue South. The following boom years saw the construction of many small hotels like the Harlan to meet the needs of tourists.

The Harlan Hotel is a Masonry Vernacular style building typical of commercial architecture found along many Main Streets of the country during this time period. Central Avenue was the main street of St. Petersburg and was once lined with a mixture of boarding houses, shops and hotels with residential buildings occurring in close proximity. During the 1920s Boom era, the section of Central Avenue just to the south of the Harlan Hotel had developed into a commercial shopping district which featured one and two-story masonry buildings. The building served as a hotel until the Lester Brothers Furniture store purchased the Harlan during the 1950s and utilized the building as a showroom for furniture suites until it was closed in the 1980s.

Built by contractor Frank Chase, the Harlan Hotel was originally built as a three-story steel-framed building with walls constructed of hollow tile covered with stucco. The building is rectangular in plan, has a flat built-up roof, and originally contained a large retail space on the first floor with the upper two levels maintained as a hotel. The symmetrical front facade is visually divided into three bays. This division can be seen in the roof parapet with its shaped central portion, the major detail of the building. The parapet along the west-facing facade is capped by concrete banding. The south and north facing sides of the building feature a stepped parapet.

The second floor/mezzanine level of the building featured large windows which have been removed. The third and fourth levels on the west-facing facade feature single double hung windows along the central stairwell and paired double hung windows on either side of the stair. The south facade, which faces onto an alley, features pilasters that run from the ground to the built-up roof line. Windows are placed in an ordered fashion between the pilasters.

On the first and second levels, the windows are of industrial type metal and have operable hoppers at the bottom portion. The third and fourth levels feature paired double hung windows. The north facade has no windows on the first two floors and the east facade contains several double hung windows and a metal pull-down type fire escape staircase.