

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

Report to the Community Planning and Preservation Commission from the Urban Planning and Historic Preservation Division, Planning and Development Services Department, for Public Hearing and Executive Action scheduled for **Tuesday, May 11, 2021, beginning at 2:00 p.m.**, in Council Chambers of City Hall, 175 Fifth St. N., St. Petersburg, Florida. Everyone is encouraged to view the meetings on TV or online at www.stpete.org/meetings.

UPDATE: COVID-19

Procedures will be implemented to comply with the CDC guidelines during the Public Hearing, including mandatory face coverings and social distancing, with limitations on the number of attendees within Council Chambers. The City's Planning and Development Services Department requests that you visit the City website at www.stpete.org/meetings and contact the case planner for up-to-date information pertaining to this case.

According to Planning and Development Services Department records, no member of the Community Planning and Preservation Commission or City Council 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.

CASE NUMBER: **21-90300001**

LANDMARK NAME: Jordan Park Administration Building

STREET ADDRESS: 2240 9th Ave. S.

PARCEL ID NUMBER: 26-31-16-44454-001-0002

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: JORDAN PARK REPLAT THAT PART OF BLK 1 DESC AS BEG NE COR SD BLD 1

TH S00D35'E 282.09FT TH N89D40'W 172FT TH N00D35'W 281.5FT TH

N89D28'25"E 172FT TO POB

OWNER: City of St. Petersburg

APPLICANT: City Council Initiation (August 6, 2020)

REQUEST: Designation of the Jordan Park Administration Building as a local historic

landmark to be listed in the St. Petersburg Register of Historic Places



OVERVIEW

The property at 2240 9th Ave. S. ("the subject property") was constructed circa 1939 for use as an office and community center for the adjacent Jordan Park Housing Development. The building holds a high degree of historical significance, both within the context of the local African American community in the early 20th Century and the role that segregationist housing policies played in its development and function, as well as in the context of the mid-century Civil Rights Movement.

Although its historically minimal ornamentation has been subject to alteration throughout its years of use by the community, the subject property serves as a tangible reminder of the strength of St. Petersburg's African American community. The City Council approved a resolution to initiate the process of designating the building as a local historic landmark in the St. Petersburg Register of Historic Properties on August 6, 2020.

Summary: Jordan Park Administration Building

Property Name (Current/Common): Jordan Park Administration Building

Historic/Alternative Names: Jordan Park Community Center; Jordan Park Housing

Complex (Administration)

Date of Construction: Circa 1939

Significant Alterations: 2000

Period of Significance: 1938-1971

Builder: St. Petersburg Housing Authority with funding

assistance from Federal Housing Authority

Criteria for Landmark Eligibility: A and B

Areas of Significance: Ethnic Heritage (African American);

Politics/Government; Social History

Retention of Historic Integrity: Location, Setting, Materials, and Feeling

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Early Development of St. Petersburg¹

The southern portion of the Florida peninsula had remained largely unsettled in the midnineteenth 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 1858.² A small handful of American and European 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 postwar 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 of the settlers who lived in the greater St. Petersburg area prior to the arrival of the railroad was African American John Donaldson and his wife Anna Germain. The couple arrived on the lower Pinellas peninsula in 1868 as employees of Louis Bell, Jr. They purchased 40 acres in 1871 on present-day 18th Avenue South and established a truck farm with cattle, hogs, and an orange grove.³ According to historian Karl Grismer, "Donaldson was considered one of the 'best well off' settlers on the lower peninsula and he and his family were respected by all their white

¹ The following historical context includes sections prepared sections prepared by Historic Preservationist Kimberly Hinder as supporting documentation for the designation of the Merriwether Building (City File 12-90300004).

² Nevin D. Sitler, Warm Wishes from Sunny St. Pete, (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2014), 21-22.

³ Arsenault, 41.

neighbors."⁴ Several of their children attended the local Disston City School along with white students.⁵

The arrival of the railroad in 1888 brought more than 100 African American railroad employees. With the completion of the railroad tracks, the railroad company transitioned many of the workers to construct the depot and the Detroit Hotel. Although some left to pursue other railroad jobs, approximately a dozen stayed in the city and brought their families to settle in St. Petersburg. These families established the city's first African American community, known as Pepper Town, along present-day 4th Ave. S. between 7th St. and 9th St. Most found work as day laborers, domestic workers, artisans and fishermen. Although the Donaldson family had been accepted by local white settlers of the frontier community, this settlement was met with racial discrimination by the local white population. As more Black settlers arrived, a second community, initially named Cooper's Quarters, developed south of the railroad tracks on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. St.⁶

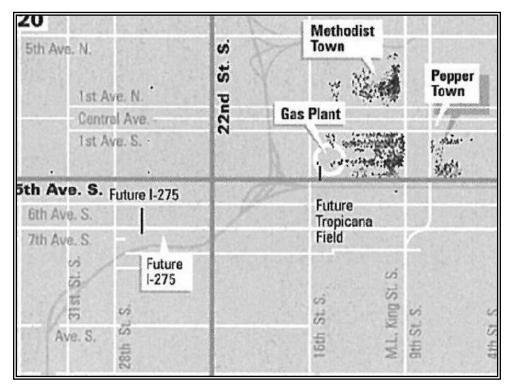


Figure 1: African American neighborhoods according to the 1920 Polk's St. Petersburg City Directory. As published in *St. Petersburg's Historic 22nd Street South* by Peck and Wilson, 2006, 42

⁴ Grismer, 188.

⁵ Arsenault, 124.

⁶ Peck and Wilson, 41.

As in many coastal resort towns in Florida, development in St. Petersburg boomed during the 1920s and Black neighborhoods including Pepper Town, Methodist Town, and the Gas Plant were clustered at the western edge of downtown.⁷

Construction of new buildings and public improvements also drew more African Americans to the city in search of work. Many of the men worked as day laborers while the women were often employed as laundresses and maids. Although Black employees could work in the white businesses and households, they were relegated to live in certain areas. The races were rigidly separated by custom and laws known as the "Jim Crow" system. Many of the new Black residents settled in the area west of present-day Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St. between Central and 5th Ave. N. This African American neighborhood came to be known as Methodist Town after the Bethel African Methodist Episcopalian (AME) Church which served as an anchor in the community. Directly south of Methodist Town, Cooper's Quarters became known as the Gas Plant district, named for the two large cylinders that stored the city's natural gas supply.⁸

Elder Jordan, Sr.

Elder Jordan, Sr. was an African American pioneer who spearheaded the development along 22nd Street South, which essentially became the "main street" of St. Petersburg's African American community. Born as a slave, Jordan became a successful farmer in north Florida after the Civil War but abandoned his farm after a disagreement with white vigilantes. He and his Cherokee wife, Mary Frances Strobles, brought their family to St. Petersburg in 1904 and opened a produce stand in their home. Jordan made deliveries using a horse-drawn wagon and opened a livery stable. With the proceeds and the money he brought from his farm, Jordan invested in real estate. When city leaders encouraged expansion of the African American community to the southwest to provide more room for white settlement, Jordan bought land on the edge of the city limits. He started building rooming houses and homes, grouping them in enclaves called courts. He and his sons operated a bus line between Tampa, Clearwater, and St. Petersburg and opened a beach north of the city for African Americans.

⁷ Rosalie Peck and Jon Wilson, St. Petersburg's Historic 22nd Street South, (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2006), 41.

⁸ Arsenault, 121-125.

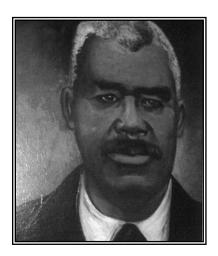


Figure 2: Elder Jordan, Sr. From St. Petersburg's Historic 22nd Street South (Peck and Wilson, 40).

By the 1920s, he and his sons opened new businesses including a filling station on 16th St. S. and a business block which later became known as the Manhattan Casino, on 22nd St. S. In response to the population growth and overcrowding at Davis Academy, a new elementary school was constructed and named in honor of Elder Jordan, Sr., who appears to have donated the land for the school. Jordan Academy, named in his honor, served as the neighborhood elementary school for the growing 22nd St. corridor.⁹

Institutionalized Segregation and the FHA Development of Jordan Park Housing Complex

Adding to the segregation of business and residential zones that had existed in practice since almost the earliest days of St. Petersburg's establishment, the City adopted a formal policy of racial zoning, which remained part of the City Charter from 1931 to 1971. Guidelines established by the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) for awarding development funds, including those being sought by the City of St. Petersburg may have had an influence on the adoption of these policies. The FHA's guidance on the "Rating of Location" included the requirement that neighborhoods be evaluated in part based on the "protection against... a change in social or racial occupancy," meaning that areas governed by rigid policies of racially segregated zoning were favored. Coupled with the desire to create a "beautified" downtown area that could be promoted to tourists, St. Petersburg's now-strengthened policy of racial segregation resulted in the establishment and enforcement of the limitation of African American residential and business properties' location to an area generally between 6th Ave. S. and 15th Ave. S., and 18th St. S. and 31st St. S. beginning in 1936. Known as the Deuces, a commercial "Main Street" emerged along 22nd St. S. as racially segregated zoning was put into effect and grew substantially during the 1950s. 11

Because Black residents were required to live and stay in their own communities after dark, African American owned and operated businesses, churches, and institutions developed to serve

⁹ Peck and Wilson, 39-45.

¹⁰ Marvin L. Simner, *Racial Segregation in the Riser and Fall of 22nd Street South,* Marvin L. Simner, on file, City of St. Petersburg, 2017, 7-10.

¹¹ Simner, 13.

the needs of their residents. This contributed to the creation of a small Black middle class. By 1920, the African American labor force included 18 teachers, ten grocery store owners, seven barbers, seven tailors, six ministers, four insurance agents, four restaurant owners, two doctors, one dentist, and one hospital superintendent which accounted for 6.7 percent of the local Black working population. The growth of the Black middle class during the 1910s and 1920s led to the establishment of a local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to defend against the worst of the racial discrimination. In counterpoint, the Ku Klux Klan, which championed white supremacy, grew increasingly active during the subsequent decades. 12

During this era, the Jordan Park Housing Complex was built in the African American community centered around 22nd St. S. With overcrowding and substandard housing conditions rampant in the city's Black neighborhoods, reformers turned to the federal government for assistance in slum removal. The two phases of construction spanning 1939 through 1941 incorporated 446 apartments. Like the nearby school, the housing complex was also named for Elder Jordan, Sr., who had died in 1936. The public housing was a success with full occupancy. It provided improved housing to hundreds, but the all-Black complex also reinforced segregation and the "separate but equal" construction of facilities.¹³



Figure 3: Residential building in Jordan Park Housing Complex shortly after completion in 1940. Photograph on file, City of St. Petersburg

¹² Arsenault, 121-126.

¹³ Grismer, 189-191.

In 1943, the City Planning Commission prepared a new master plan for the city which included an (sic) candid analysis of the economic and social conditions of the Black community. Although the Jordan Park Housing Complex was lauded as an improvement, most of the African American housing in the city was considered substandard. A stark contrast existed between white and Black schools as well with the Black schools being overcrowded, under-funded, and lacking basic educational materials. For example, Jordan Elementary had 690 students in a structure designed for 595. The African American community also lacked adequate park and recreation space.¹⁴

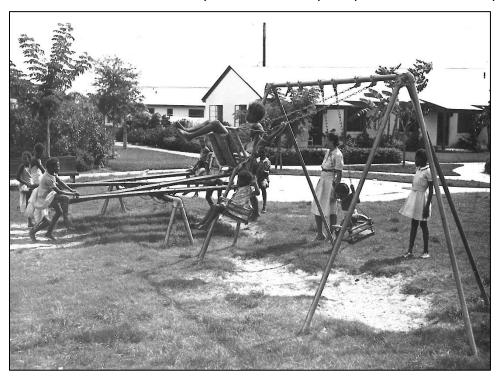


Figure 4: Supervised play time for children at Jordan Park playground, circa 1941. Photograph on file, City of St. Petersburg

A 1945 report by the National Urban League expanded and reinforced the planning study findings. According to the report, "The Black school system had no kindergarten classes, no facilities for technical education, and no access to St. Petersburg Junior College...Black teachers earned far less than their white counterparts...and everything from blackboards to school buses was in short supply." Although a Black middle class had emerged in the city, the African American community lacked lawyers, a swimming pool, and a library. With only two doctors, Mercy Hospital, which served the Black community, was overcrowded and understaffed. Backing up these findings, a 1948 study sponsored by the Juvenile Board, Business and Professional Woman's Club and the Woman's Club identified the social needs of the cities in

¹⁴ Arsenault, 306.

¹⁵ Arsenault, 306.

¹⁶ Arsenault, 307.

Pinellas County. The study found that African Americans in St. Petersburg needed, among other things, a "decent hotel for Negro tourists, branch employment office, ball park for out-of-state teams for Spring training, [and a] bathing beach on open water."¹⁷

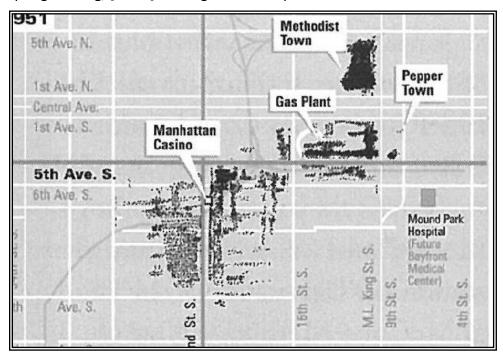


Figure 5: African American neighborhoods according to the 1951 Polk's St. Petersburg City Directory. As published in *St. Petersburg's Historic 22nd Street South* by Peck and Wilson, 2006, 42.

Although progress was slow, institutions, offices, and schools integrated during the post-war years. The traditionally conservative police department hired four African American officers in 1949. The construction of a Municipal Negro Swimming Pool, also known as the Jennie Hall Pool at Wildwood Park in 1954 (designated to the St. Petersburg Register of Historic Places as file 11-90300001) was followed by the forced desegregation of the Municipal Spa Pool in 1958.¹⁸

In 1954, Dr. Swain broke the "red line," which restricted African Americans to living and operating businesses to the area north of 15th Ave. S. Dr. Swain filed for permits to open a dentist office at 1501 22nd Street South. Although the City initially refused to issue a permit, it was finally issued after Swain threatened to sue. In 1956, Swain opened apartments next to his dentist office at 1511 22nd St. S. The apartments were built to accommodate African American baseball players who were banned from staying at "whites only" hotels during spring training. Swain, along with Dr. Ralph Wimbish, president of the St. Petersburg branch of the NAACP, refused to continue to house the African American baseball players in 1961 as they believed that it was furthering the

¹⁷ St. Petersburg Times, December 10, 1948.

¹⁸ Arsenault, 328-330

cause of segregation. Dr. Swain's Office Building and Apartments are designated to the St. Petersburg Register of Historic Places as City File No. 97-02 and 97-03, respectively.

This stand led to the integration of hotels and made national news when major league teams requested that their African American players be housed at the same hotel. Both the Yankees and the Cardinals found lodging outside of downtown St. Petersburg which would accommodate all of their players. Integration cost Swain not only the weekly rent at the apartments, but also the Robert James Hotel in Methodist Town. With the end of segregation in lodging, the hotels declined as African Americans now had choices in entertainment and lodging.¹⁹

By the early 1960s, more than 100 businesses operated along 22nd St. S. of which approximately 75 percent were African American owned. According to Askia Aqil, the former president of the 22nd Street Redevelopment Corporation as quoted in *St. Petersburg's Historic 22nd Street South*, "African American neighborhoods 'grew out of necessity, the mother of invention, the need to provide goods and services for ourselves," in a segregation based society where Black residents were denied doing business in white neighborhoods.²⁰

A strike by the largely African American city sanitation workers in 1968, which occurred in the midst of the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Senator Robert Kennedy, was the first en masse challenge to City Hall and led to improved political conditions and representation for African Americans. The vote to begin the strike and a number of marches began or were organized at the Jordan Park Administration Building, the subject property. The strike drew national attention. Reverend A.D. King, brother of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., visited St. Petersburg on at least one occasion to march with workers and assist with mediation with the City's administration. The strike was ultimately resolved with some concessions from the City, though St. Petersburg remained far from achieving racial equality when the sanitation workers resumed their work.

Pinellas County schools finally complied with desegregation in 1971 following a 1968 ruling that all "Negro schools in Florida and six other southern states must be integrated or abandoned." In response, the county closed all but three of the traditional African American schools.

During the 1960s, downtown and the neighborhoods surrounding the city core entered a period of decline and abandonment. Many of the buildings associated with the early history of the African American community slowly deteriorated as well. The construction of Interstate 275, started in the late 1960s and extended south with a feeder into downtown between 1978 and 1981, bisected the 22nd Street community and led to the disintegration of the north half of the neighborhood. As a result, numerous families and businesses were displaced and significant structures in the African American community were demolished along 22nd St. and in the other African American neighborhoods.²¹

¹⁹ Peck and Wilson, 74, 100.

²⁰ Peck and Wilson, 43.

²¹ Arsenault, 243.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Summary

The subject property was historically an administration building and community center that was constructed during the initial phase of the Jordan Park Housing Complex's late-1930s development. Originally fairly minimal in ornamentation, it was altered in the year 2000 through the application of a number of contemporary Craftsman-style details. It has been repurposed as the Dr. Carter G. Woodson African American Museum. The building is a one-story side-gabled building with a stucco exterior and asphalt shingle roof.

Setting

The subject property is located near the historic heart of the Deuces commercial district. Historic commercial buildings facing 22nd St. S., the district's commercial spine, remain just east of the subject property. The subject property is located at the northeastern corner of the Jordan Park Housing Complex.

North of the subject property and across 9th Ave. S. is a small parking lot, beyond which is Interstate 275. The construction of the interstate through the neighborhood had a dramatic effect on its setting and contributed to substantial deterioration of the community's visible sense of place. However, the collection of commercial and residential resources that remains serves as a significant reminder of a once-flourishing community and the myriad challenges it faced throughout the twentieth century.

Narrative Description

The subject property was constructed as an office building and community center to serve the Jordan Park Public Housing Development during the first phase of construction beginning in 1939. It is also sometimes referred to as the Jordan Park Community Center in historical records.

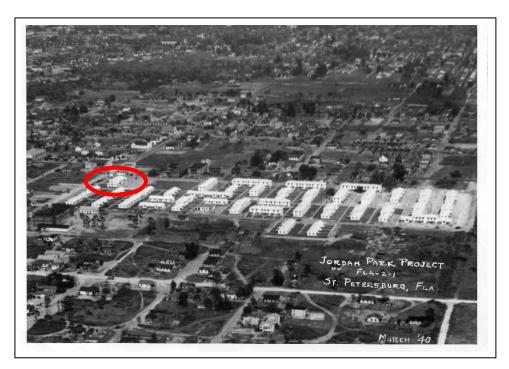


Figure 6: Jordan Park Housing Complex in 1940, administration building circled. Photograph on file, City of St. Petersburg.

Like the garden-style apartment buildings that surrounded it to the west and south, the Administration Building was constructed with a simple design and minimal ornamentation, reflecting both the Minimal Traditional style that dominated the era, and the utilitarian nature of the development's purpose as a community of clean, affordable housing. Like the majority of public housing constructed during the New Deal, the Jordan Park Public Housing Development was racially segregated. It was intended to house African American residents exclusively, and was intentionally constructed adjacent to African American neighborhoods.

The Administration Building is a north-facing single-story side-gabled building, with a central core and asymmetrical wings projecting from both the east and west elevations. Its exterior is treated with stucco and its roof is clad in asphalt shingles.



Figure 7: Facing southwest



Figure 9: Facing south



Figure 8: Facing southeast



Figure 10: Close-up of porches added circa 2000

The central massing is substantially taller than both the side wings and the surrounding apartment buildings, giving the Administration Building a prominent appearance as an entrance or anchor to the Jordan park Public Housing Development. A large front-gabled portico with siding at its gable end projects from the façade and is supported by four Craftsman-style battered wood columns atop stucco pedestals. Flat-roofed porches project from each wing, each of which is supported by two columns matching those found on the portico, though scaled down. Another such flat-roofed porch exists to shelter an entrance to the east elevation.

Windows are fixed or single-hung sash, with integral stucco sills. Sash windows appear to be two-over-one; fixed featuring two-by-two divisions. All windows appear to be fairly recently installed dual-paned windows with flat, internal muntins.

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:

- Building footprint, including side-gabled roof with predominant central massing;
- Low-pitched roof with small overhang and asphalt shingle cladding;
- Stucco exterior;
- Simplicity of building massing and form with an emphasis on horizontality.

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, a property must have been constructed over 50 years prior to designation.

Historic documentation demonstrates that the subject property was initially constructed approximately 83 years ago, surpassing the required 50 year threshold.

Further, staff suggests that the subject property satisfies two Criteria for Significance and four 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 next 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.

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.²² The recommended period of significance for the subject property spans from its construction in 1938, until the end of the historic era in 1971.

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 Jordan Park Administration Building, staff has determined that the proposed listing satisfies two St. Petersburg Register criteria as follows.

²² U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 16A Part III: Completing the National Register Registration Form,* accessed online at https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb16a/nrb16a_iii.htm.

Is at least one of the following criteria for eligibility met?			
Yes	Its value is a significant reminder of the cultural or archaeological heritage of the city, state, or nation.		
Yes	В	Its location is the site of a significant local, state, or national event.	
No	С	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.	
No	Е	Its value as a building is recognized for the quality of its architecture, and it retains sufficient elements showing its architectural significance.	
No	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	Н	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," the subject property is significant in the area of Ethnic Heritage (African American). As a recreational space near the heart of the Deuces, the Jordan Park Administration Building was host to several generations of gatherings in a community that was underserved by infrastructure such as parks and beaches that were accessible for white citizens only.

Under Criterion B, "Its location is the site of a significant local, state, or national event," the subject property is significant in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Social History because of its construction during the New Deal as part of the first phase of St. Petersburg's earliest public housing development.

Further, as an administration building and community center, it met a number of needs of the Black community during a time when many public resources were not accessible to them. Among these needs was as a union hall during the Civil Rights era. Municipal sanitation workers, the majority of whom were Black, met at the subject property to vote to initiate the 1968 strike that would become a pivotal point in the fight for equal working conditions and political will for African Americans in St. Petersburg.

The Jordan Park Housing Complex was the first of its kind in St. Petersburg and funded by newly established St. Petersburg Housing Authority with funding from the Federal Housing Authority shortly after the 1937 USHA was passed to allow for such projects. The surviving buildings include nine garden-style apartment buildings that are proposed to be redeveloped, which will make the administration building the lone surviving structure of St. Petersburg's first public housing development. As such, even though a degree of historic integrity has been lost due to alterations taking place circa 2000 during its conversion for use as a meeting hall and community assembly space, including interpretive exhibits, the Jordan Park Administration Building is considered eligible for listing in the St. Petersburg Register of Historic Places.

Historic Integrity

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

Is at least one of the following factors of integrity met?						
Location	Design	Setting	Materials	Workmanship	Feeling*	Association*
Yes	No	Slightly Diminished	Slightly Diminished	No	Yes	No
*Must be present in addition to at least one other factor.						

The subject property's integrity has undeniably been somewhat diminished. Although the setting retains some integrity because of the subject property's proximity to the Deuces commercial corridor and the Jordan Park Public Housing Complex (despite its partial redevelopment), there has been a notable impact by the placement of the Interstate just to the north of the property.

Further, the originally Minimal Traditional design of the subject property has been altered, most notably by the installation of a Craftsman-style front-gabled front porch, and some materials including windows have been replaced. These changes occurred during the circa 2000 redesign of the remaining Depression-era Jordan Park buildings.

Despite these changes, staff suggests that the high significance of the subject property compensates for a lack of pure historic integrity in this instance. Some of the changes over time – particularly the placement of the Interstate – reflect bureaucratic decisions that only further marginalized the community. Others, such as the stylistic changes, reflect attempts to improve the quality of life for the community, whether they have proven to be fully successful or not.

Staff suggests that the significance of the subject property outweighs these aesthetic changes, and indeed, the building's present-day use as the Dr. Woodson African American Museum provides an opportunity to maintain a strong integrity of feeling and interpretive measures to discuss and provide context to the way that the subject property has continued to serve as an important gathering space in a changing and challenged environment.

PROPERTY OWNER CONSENT AND IMPACT OF DESIGNATION

The application for the proposed local landmark designation of this City-owned property was initiated by the City Council and will provide an opportunity for certain rehabilitation grants.

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

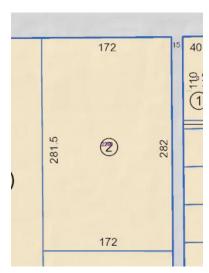


Figure 11: Florida Department of Transportation Photograph of Jordan Park and vicinity, 1970. Proposed boundary is highlighted.

The proposed designation boundary includes the Jordan Park Administration Building and land that was historically related to it as greenspace, whose legal description is JORDAN PARK REPLAT THAT PART OF BLK 1 DESC AS BEG NE COR SD BLD 1 TH S00D35'E 282.09FT TH N89D40'W 172FT TH N00D35'W 281.5FT TH N89D28'25"E 172FT TO POB. The City Council, in its authority, may amend the proposed boundary to exclude the greenspace, but this is not recommended.







LAND USE TYPE

The subject building is currently referred to as the Dr. Carter G. Woodson African American Museum. Despite its official name, the existing land use type is recognized in City Code Section 16.10.020.1 as a *meeting hall and other community assembly facility*. In addition to hosting public and private events, the facility also features historic interpretations and temporary exhibits.

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

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends *approval* of the request to designate the Jordan Park Administration Building as a local historic landmark, thereby referring the application to City Council for first and second reading and public hearing.

REFERENCES

- Arsenault, Raymond. *St. Petersburg and the Florida Dream 1888-1950.* Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1996.
- City of St. Petersburg. Property Card for 2240 9th Ave. S. on file, City of St. Petersburg.
- City of St. Petersburg. Merriweather Building. Local Landmark Designation Staff Report. On file, City of St. Petersburg. 2012.
- Grismer, Karl H. The Story of St. Petersburg: the History of Lower Pinellas Peninsula and the Sunshine City. St. Petersburg, FL: P.K. Smith & Company, 1924.
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Appendix A City Council Resolution to Initiate Local Historic Designation

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA NEW BUSINESS ITEM

TO: Members of City Council

DATE: July 23, 2020

COUNCIL DATE: August 6, 2020

RE: Historical Designation Process for the Jordan Park Administration

Building, commonly known as the Dr. Carter G. Woodson African

American Museum.

ACTION DESIRED:

Respectfully requesting City Council approve the initiation of the historical designation process for the Jordan Park Administration Building, commonly known as the Dr. Carter G. Woodson African American Museum, located at $2240 - 9^{th}$ Avenue South.

Deborah Figgs-Sanders Councilmember, District 5

Attachment(s):

Proposed Resolution

Reso	lution	

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA, INITIATING A LOCAL LANDMARK DESIGNATION APPLICATION FOR THE JORDAN PARK ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE DR. CARTER G. WOODSON AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, on February 5, 2015, the City Council of the City of St. Petersburg ("City") referred a New Business Item concerning the initiation of the historical designation process for the Dr. Carter G. Woodson African American Museum building located at 2240 - 9th Avenue South to the Public Services & Infrastructure ("PS&I") Committee; and

WHEREAS, at their March 26, 2015 meeting, the PS&I Committee reviewed the history and landmark eligibility of the building; and

WHEREAS, the PS&I Committee recommended that City Council initiate a local landmark application to consider designating the *Jordan Park Administration Building* a local historic landmark; and

WHEREAS, the City subsequently purchased the subject property soon after the PS&I Committee referral; and

WHEREAS, ownership by the City provided enhanced protection against future demolition, and City Council delayed scheduling the 2015 recommendation; and

WHEREAS, Section 16.30.070.2.5 authorizes the initiation and filing of a local landmark designation application by the City.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City that, pursuant to Section 16.30.070.2.5, the City Council hereby initiates the local landmark designation process for the *Jordan Park Administration Building* and requests that City staff prepare and process a local landmark application for listing in the St. Petersburg Register of Historic Places.

This resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

Approved as to form and content

Michael Dema, Assistant City Attorney	Elizabeth Abernethy, Director
City Attorney's Office	Planning and Development Services Dept.

Appendix B 2013 Historic Preservation Staff Determination of Eligibility

Jordan Park Administration Building

Construction

During the 1930s, the African American population in the city grew from 7,416 in 1930 to 11,982 in 1940, a 61 percent increase. In an effort to provide improved housing and to remove African Americans from the neighborhoods closer to the downtown core, the Jordan Park Housing Complex was built. With overcrowding and substandard housing conditions rampant in the city's black neighborhoods, reformers turned to the federal government for assistance in slum removal. Funded by the U.S. Housing Authority as a way to eliminate slums, the two phases of construction spanning 1939 through 1941 incorporated 446 apartments. Like the nearby school, the housing complex was also named for Elder Jordan, Sr., who had died in 1936. Several notable St. Petersburg architects collaborated on the design and construction of the complex including Henry Taylor, Emil Nordstrom, Elliott Hadley, Carl Atkinson, and Archie Parish. The public housing was a success with full occupancy. It provided improved housing to hundreds, but the all black complex also reinforced segregation and the "separate but equal" construction of facilities.

A Population Divided

Both phases of the project were the target of opposition from people who owned the substandard housing where African Americans lived. However, the second phase was particularly troublesome. Opponents came out of the woodwork stating that more public housing would destroy African-American initiative, among other fabrications often designed to protect their own property interests. Although the opposition during this phase was so intense that City Council dodged taking a vote, a citywide protest against Jordan Park opponents resulted in a referendum which put the issue up for referendum. The election revealed that voters favored proceeding with the project 2,731 to 2,080.

The Golden Era

Construction of the Jordan Park Housing Complex reinvigorated development along 22nd Street South. With the new construction of the housing complex providing jobs and the mass relocation of a number of African American residents, new businesses opened along the corridor making 22nd Street a thriving African American "main street" from the 1940s through the 1960s. The commercial corridor of 22nd Street South contributed to the emergence of an African American and Jewish middle class.

After construction, Jordan Park became a prestige address. Although, the facility could accommodate a population of about 1800, there was a long waiting list of people wanting to move in.

Instead of destroying initiative, as opponents claimed would happen, the opposite occurred. When families topped the income level requirements to be Jordan Park residents, they often purchased or built their own homes. A 1955 report stated that 18 of 32 houses built in the Carver Park Subdivision (just south of Jordan Park between 13th and 15th Avenues S.) had been built by Jordan Park "graduates." The same report said 181 former Jordan Park residents owned their own homes. One former resident said people did not lock their doors at night. "You just

Jordan Park Administration Building

went inside and slept." In 1955, St. Petersburg's police chief said he did not even schedule cars to patrol the area.

The Administration Building served as the office for the complex as well a meeting and assembly room. Not only did it serve local clubs and provide a space for birthday parties, it also played a pivotal role in the local struggle for civil rights. A strike by the largely African American city sanitation workers in 1968, which occurred in the midst of the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Senator Robert Kennedy, was the first en masse challenge to City Hall and led to improved political conditions and representation for African Americans. Organizers met in the Administration Building, voted to go on strike in the building, and marched to City Hall from the building.

The only part of the original complex which remains is the Jordan Park Administration building, which now houses the Carter G. Woodson Museum. In 2002, it was remodeled, and the housing complex was demolished and rebuilt. As the only remaining building from the complex, it remains significant for its African American history in the development of the 22nd Street neighborhood and for its part in the local civil rights movement.

Prepared by:

Kimberly Hinder, Historic Preservationist
Urban Planning and Historic Preservation Division
Planning and Economic Development Department
Municipal Services Center
One Fourth Street North, 8th Floor
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701
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(727) 892-5451

Appendix C Florida Master Site File, Jordan Park Administration Building

Page 1

☐ Original ☑ Update



HISTORICAL STRUCTURE FORM FLORIDA MASTER SITE FILE

Version 4.0 1/07

S ite #8	PI06899		
Field Date	2/5/2020		
Form Date	2-25-2020		
Recorder #	11		

Shaded Fields represent the minimum acceptable level of documentation. Consult the *Guide to Historical Structure Forms* for detailed instructions.

Survey Project Name Jordan Park His	Public Housing Complex (Admin)	Multiple Listing (DHR only) Survey # (DHR only)
National Register Category (please check one)	Filbriding Flatructure Fldistrict	Theita Challect
	□private-individual □private-nonspecific ☒city	□county □state □federal □Native American □foreign □unknown
	LOCATION & MAP	
Street Number Direction Str		Street Type Suffix Direction
	th	Avenue S
Cross Streets (nearest / between) SW corner USGS 7.5 Map Name ST. PETERSBURG		
City / Town (within 3 miles) St. Petersburg	In City Limits? I≅ yes □ no	Plat or Other Map □ □unknown CountyPinellas
Township 319 Range 169 Secti	ion 26 1/4 section' FNW FSW	□SF □NF Irregular-name:
Tax Parcel # 23-31-16-44460-001-00	110 Lan	dorant
Subdivision Name Jordan Park Replat	Blo	dgrant Lot
UTM Coordinates: Zone 16 ×17 Ea	isting [3] 3 [5 [9 [0] 4] Northing [3 [0] 7]	1 5 4 9
Other Coordinates: X:	Y: C oordinate S	System & Datum
Name of Public Tract (e.g., park)		
	HISTORY	
Construction Year: 1939 ⊠ approx	rimatelv	vear listed or later
Original Use Community center		
Current Use Art gallery/Museum/Pl	anetarium From (year):_	2003 To (year) : 2020
Other Use Administration Buildi	ng (Public Housin From (year):_	1939 To (year):2000
Moves:yes ☑nounknown Dat	te: Original address	
Alterations: yes no unknown Dat	te: 01/01/2000 Nature See cont	
Additions: yes Ino Junknown Dat	le: Nature Ruilder (la	st name first):
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HISTORICAL STRUCTURE FORM

Site #8 _PI06899

	DESCRIPTI	ON (continued)	
Chimney: No. 1 Chimney Material(s): 1.	Ctuana	2	
Structural System(s): 1. <u>Concrete bl</u>	nck 2	2	
Foundation Type(s): 1. slab	2.	v.	
Foundation Material(s): 1. Concrete, G	eneric 2.		
Main Entrance (stylistic details) Two half-gla			ortico. Add'll entrances to
Porch Descriptions (types, locations, roof types, etc	:) Large		
			
Condition (overall resource condition): Description of Passaurce Condition			
Narrative Description of Resource See con	tinuation sheet.		-
Archaeological Remains			Check if Archaeological Form Completed
R	ESEARCH METHO	ODS (check all that apply)	
	□library research	☐ building permits	⊠ Sanborn maps
□ FL State Archives/photo collection	□city directory	□ occupant/owner interview	□ plat maps
☑ property appraiser / tax records	⊠newspaper files	neighbor interview	☐ Public Lands Survey (DEP)
□cultural resource survey (CRAS)	⊠historic photos	interior inspection	☐ HABS/HAER record search
□other methods (describe)			
Bibliographic References (give FMSF manuscript	# if relevant, use continuation she	etifneeded) See continuation s	sheet.
On	INION OF DECOL	IDGE SIGNIFICANCE	
UP OF	INION OF RESUL	TRCE SIGNIFICANCE	
Appears to meet the criteria for National Reg	ister listing individually?	⊠ yes □no □insuffic	cient information
Appears to meet the criteria for National Reg			cient information
Explanation of Evaluation (required, whether sig			
			
Area(s) of Historical Significance (see National			
1. Ethnic heritage	_ 3	5	
2. Social/humanitarian	_ 4	6	
	DOCUME	ENTATION	
	DOCUME		
Accessible Documentation Not Filed with the	Site File - including field notes	, analysis notes, photos, plans and other impo	ortant documents
1) Document type All materials at one lo		Maintaining organization St Pete Planning	
Document description Notes and research		File or accession #'s	
2) Document type			
Document description		File or accession #'s	
	DECARDER I	NEODNATION	
	RECORDER I	NFORMATION	
Recorder Name Laura Duvekot		Affiliation St Pete Planning D	ept
Recorder Contact Information laura.duv	ekot@stpete.org / 72		
(address / phone / fax / e-mail)			

Required Attachments

- **1** USGS 7.5' MAP WITH STRUCTURE LOCATION PINPOINTED IN RED
- **❷ LARGE SCALE STREET, PLAT OR PARCEL MAP** (available from most property appraiser web sites)
- **19** PHOTO OF MAIN FACADE, ARCHIVAL B&W PRINT <u>OR</u> DIGITAL IMAGE FILE

If submitting an image file, it must be included on disk or CD <u>AND</u> in hard copy format (plain paper is acceptable). Digital image must be at least 1600 x 1200 pixels, 24-bit color, jpeg or tiff.

Continuation Sheet page 3

FMSF no.: 8PI06899

Narrative Description:

The Jordan Park Public Housing Complex Administration Building, located at 2240 Ninth Avenue South, was constructed as an office building and community center to serve the Jordan Park Public Housing Development (8PI12084) during the first phase of construction beginning in 1939. It is also sometimes referred to as the Jordan Park Community Center in historical records.

Like the garden-style apartment buildings that surrounded it to the west and south, the Administration Building was constructed with a simple design and minimal ornamentation, reflecting both the Minimal Traditional style that dominated the era, and the utilitarian nature of the development's purpose as a community of clean, affordable housing. Like the majority of public housing constructed during the New Deal, the Jordan Park Public Housing Development was racially segregated. It was intended to house African American residents exclusively, and was intentionally constructed adjacent to African American neighborhoods, both by zoning and in practice.

The Administration Building is a north-facing single-story side-gabled building, with a central core and asymmetrical wings projecting from both the east and west elevations. Its exterior is treated with stucco and its roof is clad in asphalt shingles.

The central massing is substantially taller than both the side wings and the surrounding apartment buildings, giving the Administration Building a prominent appearance as an entrance or anchor to the Jordan park Public Housing Development. A large front-gabled portico with siding at its gable end projects from the façade and is supported by four Craftsman-style battered wood columns atop stucco pedestals. Flat-roofed porches project from each wing, each of which is supported by two columns matching those found on the portico, though scaled down. Another such flat-roofed porch exists to shelter an entrance to the east elevation.

Windows are fixed or single-hung sash, with integral stucco sills. Sash windows appear to be two-over-one; fixed feature two-by-two divisions. All windows appear to be fairly recently-installed dual-paned windows with flat, internal muntins.

Evaluation of Significance:

The Jordan Park Public Housing Complex Administration Building holds a high degree of significance within the Jordan Park development as a whole. As part of the Jordan Park Public Housing Development (8PI12084), it is significant in the areas of ethnic heritage (African American) and community planning and development because of its construction during the New Deal as part of the first phase of St. Petersburg's earliest public housing development. Further, as an administration building and community center, it met a number of needs of the black community during a time when many public resources were not accessible to them. Among these needs was that for a union hall during the Civil Rights era. Municipal sanitation workers, the majority of whom were black, met in the administration building to vote to initiate the 1968 strike that would become a pivotal point in the fight for equal working conditions and political will for African Americans in St. Petersburg.

Following a partial demolition and extensive remodeling in 2001, only ten buildings remain from the Depression-era development of the Jordan Park Public Housing Complex development. The project was the first of its kind in St. Petersburg and funded by newly-established St. Petersburg Housing Authority

Continuation Sheet page 4

FMSF no.: 8PI06899

with funding from the Federal Housing Authority shortly after the 1937 USHA was passed to allow for such projects. The surviving buildings include nine garden-style apartment buildings are scheduled to be demolished in 2020, which would make the administration building the lone surviving structure of St. Petersburg's first public housing development. As such, despite the fact that a degree of historic integrity has been lost due to alterations taking place circa 2000 during its conversion for use as a museum, the Jordan Park Public Housing Complex Administration Building is considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

as well as the community's original administration building (8PI06899), which operates today as the Dr. Carter G. Woodson African American Museum.

The remaining buildings and the landscape they inhabit have historically significant associations in the areas of ethnic heritage (African American) and community planning and development. The Jordan Park Housing Project represents a period of segregated public housing – an unpleasant history, but one that should be carefully documented nonetheless. The construction of Jordan Park would further be instrumental in the development of the nearby 22nd Street South commercial corridor, which evolved into a segregated Main Street for St. Petersburg's black community during the mid-twentieth century.

The stated intentions of Jordan Park's development were to provide clean, affordable housing, improve the living conditions of families that had previously been living in unsanitary and inadequate private rentals, and to stimulate the local building industry through its construction. The very suggestion of its creation exacerbated local racial tensions, as the appropriateness of its location, and later, its expansion, became contentious and politically fraught. By many accounts, however, the cluster of garden-style apartments largely accomplished its goals. Its affordable housing served as a stepping-stone to homeownership in growing adjacent neighborhoods during the early post-World War II period, the businesses on 22nd Street South prospered, and the community provided safe, clean housing to hundreds of families.

The Administration Building, in particular, served as the setting for countless gatherings, meetings, and parties of residents. It was notably the site at which the 1968 strike by City sanitation workers was voted upon by organizers, most of whom were African American. The sanitation strike, occurring in the midst of the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Senator Robert Kennedy, was a critical moment in the local fight for improved representation and political conditions for African Americans in St. Petersburg.

Of the original 65 buildings that comprised the Jordan Park Housing Project, 55 have been demolished. The remaining 10, including the Administration Building, were significantly altered in 2001. These alterations included the obstruction of the buildings' historic and minimal style with added Craftsman references. Additionally, in the case of the remaining nine apartment buildings, the 2001 alterations reoriented the buildings away from shared garden spaces and pedestrian walkways and toward roadways and parking areas. This shift dramatically changes the site design of the community, further detracting from its original intent and diminishing historic integrity of the site as a whole.

As such, the Jordan Park Public Housing Development (FMSF 8PI12084) no longer retains sufficient historic integrity to be considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Continuation Sheet page 5 FMSF no.: 8PI06899



Figure 1: Jordan Park Public Housing Complex Administration Building (8PI06899), north-facing façade, facing south.

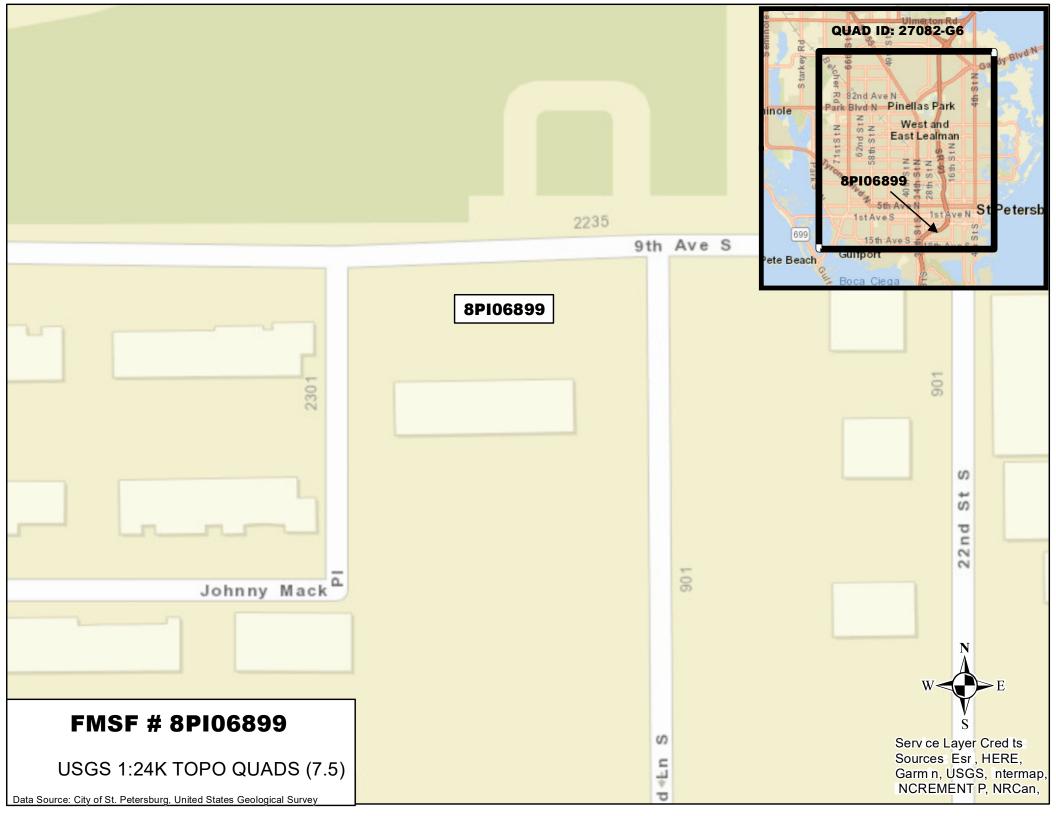


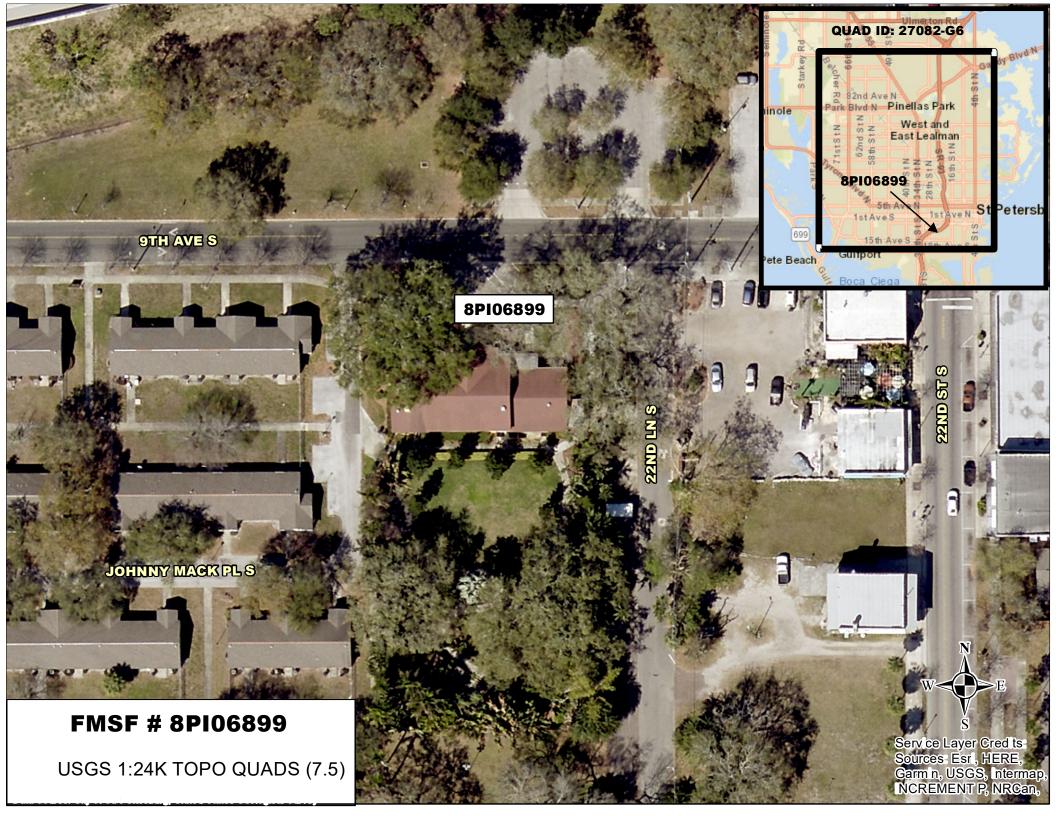
Figure 2: Jordan Park Public Housing Complex Administration Building (8PI06899) north façade and west elevation, facing southeast.

Continuation Sheet page 6 FMSF no.: 8PI06899

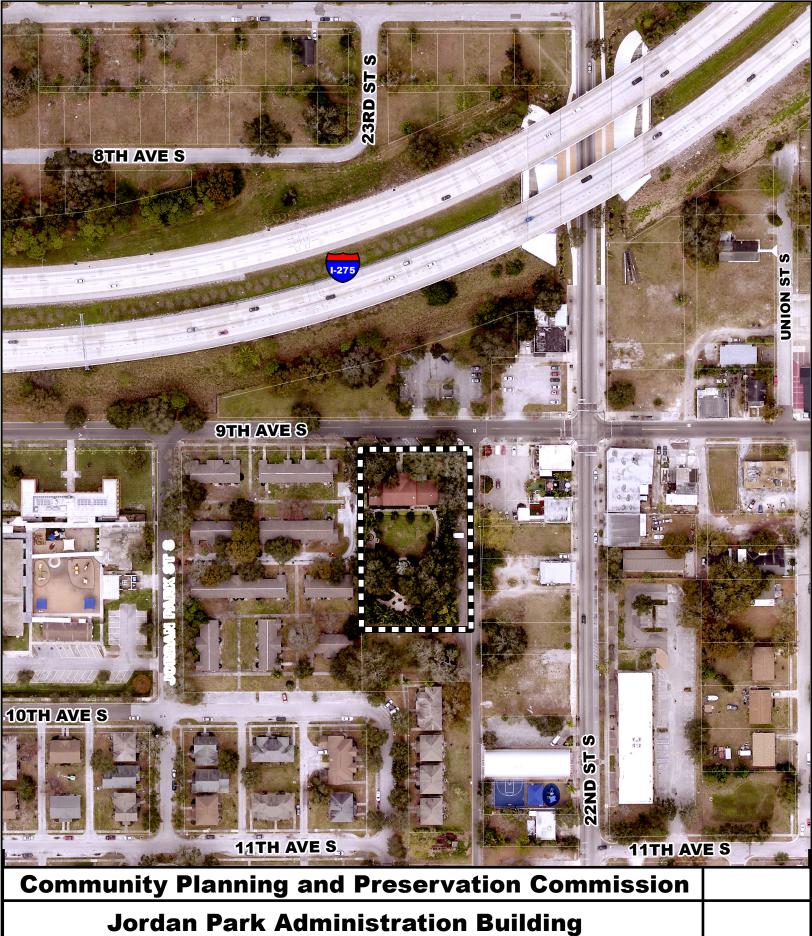


Figure 3: Jordan Park Public Housing Complex Administration Building (8PI06899) east elevation and north façade, facing southwest.





Appendix D Maps of Subject Property



AREA TO BE APPROVED,

SHOWN IN

CASE NUMBER 21-90300001

