CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

URBAN PLANNING AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION

STAFF REPORT

Community Planning and Preservation Commission
Nomination for Designation in the National Register of Historic Places

For **Public Hearing** and **Executive Action** on Tuesday, **May 14, 2019** beginning at 2:00 P.M., Council Chambers, City Hall, 175 Fifth Street North, St. Petersburg, Florida

According to Planning and Development Services Department records, no Commissioner 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.

Huggins-Stengel Field and Crescent Lake circa 1940. Photograph P02752 courtesy of the St. Petersburg Museum of History.

CASE NO.:	19-90700001
STREET ADDRESS:	1320 5th St. N.
LANDMARK:	Huggins-Stengel Field
PARCEL ID NO.:	18-31-17-18864-001-0000
OWNER:	City of St. Petersburg
APPLICANT:	Lisset G. Hanewicz, President, on behalf of the Crescent Lake Neighborhood Association
REQUEST:	Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places

BACKGROUND

The Huggins-Stengel Field (8PI02942), also known historically as Crescent Lake Field and Miller Huggins Field, was designated as local historic landmark 18-90300005 in the St. Petersburg Register of Historic Places on October 18, 2018, following the submission of an application by Lisset G. Hanewicz, President, on behalf of the Crescent Lake Neighborhood Association. A nomination for the resource's listing in the National Register of Historic Places was subsequently submitted to the Bureau of Historic Preservation, Florida Department of State, by the same applicant (Attachment A).

According to procedures established by the National Historic Preservation Act, before a property within the jurisdiction of the Certified Local Government, such as St. Petersburg, may be considered by the State for nomination to the National Register, the local preservation commission and chief local elected official shall have the opportunity to comment. Within sixty days of the notice from the SHPO, the City shall submit a report as to whether the property meets the eligibility criteria and the recommendation of the commission and local elected official.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

Section 16.30.070.2.4 of the Historic and Archaeological Preservation Overlay of the Land Development Regulations (LDRs) outlines the application and approval procedure for nominations of a property to the National Register of Historic Places. The Certified Local Government Guidelines for Florida require the Community Planning and Preservation Commission's (CPPC) involvement in the process for nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places. These responsibilities include rendering an opinion on the technical completeness of the proposed nomination as well as assessing the proposal's eligibility for inclusion in the Register. Criteria for determining technical completeness include an adequate physical description of the property, historical overview of the city in which the property is located and its placement within the context of that history, demonstration that the property is significant under one of the four criteria used by the National Park Service (NPS) and evidence the property retains its integrity as specified by the standards used by the NPS.

As part of this process, the property owner, the Mayor of St. Petersburg, and the Chair of the Pinellas County Commission have the opportunity to voice support or opposition to the proposed nomination request. The CPPC shall forward to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) its action on the nomination and the recommendations of the local officials within 60 days of the mailing of the application from the SHPO.

If either the CPPC, the Mayor, or the Chair of the Pinellas County Commission, support the nomination, the SHPO will schedule the proposal for consideration by the Florida National Register Review Board at its next regular meeting. If both the CPPC and the chief local elected official recommend the property not be nominated to the National Register, then the SHPO will take no further action unless an appeal is filed with the State.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEWING NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATIONS

To be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, a property must be significant under the National Register criteria and retain its integrity. Significance may be found in one of four aspects of American history recognized by the National Register Criteria:

- Criteria A – Association with historic events or activities,
- Criteria B – Association with important persons,
- Criteria C – Distinctive design or physical characteristics,

- Criteria D – Potential to provide important information about prehistory or history.

Huggins-Stengel Field is proposed for nomination due to its significance under the local level under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation with a Period of Significance spanning from its circa 1925 construction to 1969, the end of the historic era. Unlike the designation to the St. Petersburg Register of Historic Places, the boundary of which follows the field's contemporary fence line, the proposed National Register designation boundary additionally includes the clubhouse and office buildings, build in 1960 and 1967 respectively, and two 1963 granite monuments adjacent to the clubhouse building. These buildings are proposed for listing as contributing elements to the National Register designation. The field and associated resources are found to retain integrity of setting, location, design, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Community Planning and Preservation Commission **approve** the attached letter of support for listing Huggins-Stengel Field in the National Register of Historic Places (Attachment B).

Attachment A: National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT of STATE

RON DESANTIS
Governor

LAUREL M. LEE
Secretary of State

March 20, 2019

Mr. Derek Kilborn
Manager
Urban Planning and Historic Preservation
Post Office Box 2842
St. Petersburg, Florida 33731-2842

Re: Huggins-Stengel Field (PI02942), 1320 5th Street North, St. Petersburg, Pinellas County, Florida 33701

Dear Mr. Kilborn:

A Florida National Register Nomination Proposal for the above referenced property has been prepared by the State Historic Preservation Office. We solicit your review and recommendation concerning eligibility in accordance with the procedures established by the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (54 U.S.C. 302504), which created the basis for the participation of Certified Local Governments in the Florida National Register of Historic Places nomination process.

According to the Act, before properties within the jurisdiction of the certified local government may be considered by the State to be nominated for inclusion on the National Register, the State Historic Preservation Officer shall notify the owners, the applicable chief local elected official, and the local historic preservation commission. The commission, after reasonable opportunity for public comment, shall prepare a report as to whether or not such properties meets the eligibility criteria. Within sixty days of the notice from the State Historic Preservation Officer, the chief local elected official shall transmit the report of the commission and his recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Officer. If no such report and recommendation are received within sixty days, the State shall proceed with the nomination process.

If either the preservation agency or the chief local elected official supports the nomination of the properties, the proposals will be scheduled for consideration by the Florida National Register Review Board. The nomination for the above property is tentatively scheduled for consideration

by the Florida National Register Review Board, meeting on May 23, 2019, at 1:30 p.m. at the R.A. Gray Building, Tallahassee, Florida.

If both the commission and the chief local elected official recommend that a property not be nominated to the National Register, the State Historic Preservation Officer shall take no further action, unless within thirty days of the receipt of such recommendation by the State Historic Preservation Officer an appeal is filed with the State. Any party may file an appeal with the State Historic Preservation Officer. If the State Historic Preservation Officer, after hearing the appeal, determines that the property is eligible, he shall proceed with the nomination process. The State Historic Preservation Officer shall include any reports and recommendations from any party along with the nomination submitted to the Keeper of the Register.

We look forward to your recommendation and comments regarding this property. If we can be of any further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me at Ruben.Acosta@dos.myflorida.com or 850-245-6364.

Sincerely,

Ruben A. Acosta
Survey and Registration Supervisor
Bureau of Historic Preservation

RAA/raa

cc: Lisset Hanewicz

Enclosures

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Huggins-Stengel Field

other names/site number Crescent Lake Field; Miller Huggins Field; PI2942

2. Location

street & number 1320 5th Street North N/A ☐ not for publication

city or town St. Petersburg N/A ☐ vicinity

state Florida code FL county Pinellas code 103 zip code 33701

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Bureau of Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
  - ☐ See continuation sheet
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register
  - ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
  - ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ removed from the National Register.
- ☐ other, (explain)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
- ☒ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☐ buildings
- ☐ district
- ☒ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	1	buildings
1	0	sites
2	0	structures
2	0	objects
7	1	total

Name of related multiple property listings
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: sports facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: sports facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A
walls
roof
other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☐ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

1925-1969

Significant Dates

1925

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

City of St. Petersburg, builder

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
#

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State Agency
☐ Federal agency
☒ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other

Name of Repository

#

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property roughly 8 acres

UTM References
(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	338328	3074552
2			
3			
4			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lisset Hanewicz, President; Andrew Waber, Historic Preservationist

organization Crescent Lake Neighborhood Association date February 2019

street & number PO Box 7243 telephone (727) 914-4070

city or town St. Petersburg state FL zip code 33734

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items
(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name City of St. Petersburg

street & number P.O. Box 2842 telephone

city or town St. Petersburg state FL zip code 33731

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Summary

Huggins-Stengel Field is a historic circa 1925 baseball training field that consists of a contributing site (the historic baseball field), two contributing buildings (the circa 1960 clubhouse and a 1967 office addition), two contributing structures (the circa 1960s dugouts), and two contributing objects (the monuments to Miller Huggins and Casey Stengel). There is a non-contributing metal grandstand. The baseball field retains its integrity, with the main diamond configured precisely where it was during its historic period of significance. The historic home plate view with the Crescent Park Water Tower in the background is still very much retained. The original extent of the field is retained as well, with its distinctive deep right outfield custom built for Babe Ruth. Sometime in the 1940s, a secondary baseball diamond was added to the north end of the field, giving the field a distinctive double diamond appearance that was retained well into the 1990s. The original fencing was never substantial and the grandstands were always temporary in nature. The clubhouse, which was built for the Yankees in 1960, is best associated with the New York Mets, who took over the field in 1962. The clubhouse, which included the locker rooms, trainer's rooms, and manager's office, maintains a high degree of exterior integrity. The interior spaces of the clubhouse have been altered, however, to make room primarily for offices. Despite this, the clubhouse retains its integrity as a contributor to the field.

Setting

The city of St. Petersburg, Florida, is located on the Pinellas Peninsula, which is on the Gulf Coast of Florida. Located across Tampa Bay from the city of Tampa, it is part of the larger Tampa-St. Petersburg metropolitan area. The city of St. Petersburg is also the county seat of Pinellas County. Huggins-Stengel Field is adjacent to Crescent Lake, which is a crescent-shaped lake which gives its name to both the Crescent Lake Park and the Crescent Lake community which surrounds it. Crescent Lake and the park bounds the field roughly to the north and west. A major element of the field's setting is the Crescent Lake Water Tower, which was built shortly after the field and is located adjacent to the southeast corner of the field immediately behind home plate. There is also a tennis court immediately to the west of the field that was there sometime prior to 1969. The Crescent Lake community borders the field on the east and south. It located at the intersection of 5th Street North and an alleyway that runs behind houses fronting 12th Avenue North. The field is adjacent to the Round Lake Historic District (NR 2003) and to the North Shore Historic District (NR 2003).

Physical Description

Huggins-Stengel Field

The key resource is the field itself. It consists of a single baseball diamond facing northwest with home plate on the southeast corner of the field (Photos 1-. The general dimensions of the field are still the same as they were when the field was first laid out in 1925, with its distinctive deep right field that was custom made for Babe

Ruth to prevent home run balls from being hit into the lake. The field is surrounded by a simple chain link fence with a corrugated metal barrier in deep center to prevent home runs from ending either into the lake or into the public walkway which runs right behind the field. A warning track runs to the inside of the homerun fence in deep outfield. This warning track was either added or expanded after the period of significance. There is also a protective cage and netting behind home plate.

Dugouts

There are two contributing structures, which are two concrete block dugouts along the first base and third base lines of the field (Photos 4-5). These are simple shed-roofed structures with wood roof framing and metal seats. The exact dates of the dugouts' construction are unknown but they predate 1969.

Clubhouse

Next to the field itself, the most important resource is the clubhouse (Photos 6-11). Built in 1960, the building features a simple rectangular floorplan and a shed roof. Originally, the roof had exposed eaves, which are now enclosed. According to permitting on file with the city of St. Petersburg, a new roof was put on in 1979, and it is possible at this time the eaves were enclosed. When the new clubhouse was built, portions of the original 1925 clubhouse was repurposed on the interior, including the lockers. The interior has since been modified to allow for the repurpose of the building into office space. Despite these changes, the clubhouse retains integrity to contribute to the field.

Office Addition

In 1967, a simple hipped roof concrete block building was constructed for additional office space (Photo 12). This building essentially remains the same as it was during the period of significance and is considered contributing to the field.

Miller Huggins and Casey Stengel Markers

There are two contributing objects, two simple granite monuments, one erected in Miller Huggins' honor in 1931, and the other erected in honor of Casey Stengel in 1963 (Photo 13). The granite markers have metal plaques affixed to them. They were originally located by the first base dugout but were moved to their current location near the clubhouse. The markers were simply moved from within one area of the field boundary to another and while the relocation affects the integrity of location, both markers retain overall integrity to contribute to the field.

Alterations

The field has undergone a few alterations over the course of its long history. Sometime in the 1940s, a secondary baseball diamond was added to the northeast corner of the field. This gave the field a distinctive two-diamond appearance that remained well after the Baltimore Orioles last used in the field in the 1990s. The removal was connected to the repurposing of the field to a community baseball park. The bleachers and surrounding chain link fence, which have always been temporary in nature, are all replacements. The Stengel and Huggins markers were relocated from nearby the dugouts to their current location near the clubhouse. In 1960, the current clubhouse was constructed for the Yankees, replacing the original one. The construction of this building is considered a historic alteration, however. Following the end of spring training at the field, the clubhouse was converted into a general purpose community building and the interior changes of the building reflect this. The large single open locker room space has been divided into offices, a computer lab, a television studio, a reception area, and a multi-purpose room. What was once a single restroom on the south end of the building has been converted into men's and women's restrooms, reflecting its opening to both men and women. What were once training rooms on the north end of the building have been converted into kitchen and storage space.

Integrity

The field and associated buildings are still in their original locations and the setting remains very much the same. The markers to Stengel and Huggins have been moved from their original locations near the dugouts to their current location near the clubhouse. Although the location is different, they have merely been moved from one spot within the historic boundary to another. Hence, the field and associated resources retain integrity of setting, location, and association. The most notable change that has taken place to the field has been the removal of a second baseball diamond on the northeast corner of the field that gave it a distinctive appearance from the 1940s through the 1990s. Although this affects its design and replacement of the second diamond with grass affects its integrity of materials, the extent of the field itself, including its distinctive deep right field, are retained. The main diamond, which is still in its original configuration with a character-defining view of the water tower behind home plate, is still there. For visitors, this would have been the field they watched and where batting practice took place. The removal of the second diamond correlates to the departure of the Baltimore Orioles in the 1990s and the field's subsequent repurposing into a community ballfield. This mandated the removal of the unnecessary second diamond and also mandated the widening of the warning track along the home run fence for safety reasons. Although the bleachers and fence have been replaced, these structures were always temporary in nature. It was not uncommon for spectators to just simply be standing and watching the players practicing from the other side of the fence. In addition to the configuration and extent of the field being retained, the ancillary buildings and associated parking lots remain largely as they were in 1969. Although the associated clubhouse has been altered on the interior, the exterior of the building remains

relatively the same. Although the spaces of the interior have been impacted, most of the original interior walls and openings have either been retained or are visibly present in some way. While a major part of spring trainings took place inside this building, the entire complex of the clubhouse, office annex, and field were clearly intended for outside activity. The most important element of the clubhouse as a contributor to the field is its exterior, of which the integrity is retained. Hence, the field and buildings retain their integrity of design, workmanship, feeling, and materials.

Summary

Huggins-Stengel Field is being proposed for listing in the National Register under Criterion A at the local level for Entertainment and Recreation. The period of significance extends from 1925 until 1969. The field served as the spring training grounds for the New York Yankees, the New York Giants, and the New York Mets. Starting with the arrival of the St. Louis Browns in 1914, the usage of St. Petersburg as a spring training site by Major League Baseball teams had long been a significant tourist draw for the city. It was the New York Yankees, however, who made the city famous for spring training. The field, which was originally named Crescent Lake Field, was laid out to Major League specifications under the guidance of the New York Yankees grounds crew. It was renamed twice, first to Miller Huggins Field in 1930 and then Huggins-Stengel Field in 1963. The city hosted the Yankees from 1925-1942, 1946-1950, and 1952-1961, during the height of their great dynasty years. In 1951, the New York Giants under manager Leo Durocher trained here prior to what became a National League pennant season. After the departure of the Yankees in 1961, the New York Mets moved in, and the field would host the team until 1987. Huggins-Stengel Field hosted some of the greatest teams in baseball history, including the 1927, 1939, 1953, and 1961 Yankees and the 1969 Mets among others.

When the Yankees, Giants, and Mets held spring training in St. Petersburg, they trained at Huggins-Stengel Field and played their exhibition games elsewhere, first at Waterfront Park then later at Al Lang Stadium. Waterfront Park was demolished and replaced by Al Lang Stadium. Although Al Lang Stadium is still standing, it has faced significant alterations, particularly to the field as it transitioned from a baseball stadium to a soccer stadium after spring training came an end there in 2008. Hence, Huggins-Stengel Field is the resource that is best associated with the history of Major League spring training left in St. Petersburg that retains its integrity, especially prior to World War II.

Historic Context

Importance of Spring Training to Major League Baseball

The origins of spring training in Major League Baseball (MLB) began in the 1870s, when teams would prepare for the upcoming season by establishing a training base in the south. They would hold exhibitions against other Major League teams and local teams as well, using the opportunity to scout promising young talent in an era before minor league farm systems. As nearly all Major League teams were concentrated in cold weather cities in the north, teams utilized the warmer climates of the south to help better prepare for the upcoming season. By the beginning of the 20th century, spring trainings became an established institution within the Major Leagues. The preparation for teams during spring training was crucial to the regular season and in many cases, the tone of successful teams was often set in the spring. It was here that teams built the camaraderie that they needed to get through a season. It was often here where catchers and pitchers first started working together. Usually, teams invited along top prospects to work out with the club and often some of the most important moments in the

career of Major League players occurred in their development during spring training. In many cases, spring training marked the first time some of the greatest players wore a team uniform. A great example of this was Joe DiMaggio, whose spring training in 1936 with the New York Yankees attracted national sports headlines. Hence, the short term and long term success of teams were often intricately connected to spring training. In the 19th and early 20th century, spring training was also an avenue for teams to bring Major League baseball to a wider audience in an era before television and radio. At the end of spring training, teams such as the Yankees would often stop in cities along the way north and hold exhibition games that were often well publicized and well attended. This became an important promotional tool for Major League clubs and an economic boon for local communities.[1]

Spring Training at St. Petersburg Prior to 1925

The history of MLB spring training in St. Petersburg dates back to 1914, due in large part to the efforts of the St. Petersburg Baseball and Amusement Company. The St. Louis Browns of the American League (now known as the Baltimore Orioles) trained for just the 1914 season before leaving the following season. In October 1914, the local baseball association, represented by Al Lang, underwent efforts to find another big-league club to train in St. Petersburg. By November 1914, Lang successfully arranged for the Philadelphia Phillies to hold their 1915 spring training in St. Petersburg. The Phillies, who featured Hall of Fame pitcher Grover Cleveland Alexander, were actually very good that year, going on to win their first National League pennant. They became the first of many pennant-winning teams to train in the city. Phillies manager Pat Moran was quick to credit Lang for his proactive role in convincing the Phillies to stay in St. Petersburg.[2]

Al Lang's involvement in baseball, specifically in heading the local baseball association and bringing National League baseball to the city proved crucial in advancing his political career. In 1916, he successfully ran for mayor of St. Petersburg, and would be reelected two years later. Hosting MLB spring training games not only brought visitors to St. Petersburg, but also ensured national exposure for the city for years to come.[3]

The Phillies trained at Sunshine Park (also known as Coffee Pot Park), a ballpark adjacent to Coffee Pot Bayou that was the first ballpark in St. Petersburg used for MLB spring training. Its location remains unclear – some believe it was located somewhere in Granada Terrace while others believe it was on North Shore Drive. The Phillies trained in St. Petersburg through 1918 and notified Lang late in 1918 they would not return for the 1919 season.[4]

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[1] Kevin M. McCarthy, *Spring Training in Florida* (Sarasota, FL: Pineapple Press, 1996), p. 138-141.
[2] City of St. Petersburg Division of Urban Design and Historic Preservation. Huggins-Stengel Field Local Landmark Designation Application, prepared by Lisset G. Hanewicz (2018), p. 4.
[3] Hanewicz, p. 4
[4] Hanewicz, p. 4.

Mayor Lang immediately began efforts to secure a Major League team to train in St. Petersburg, an effort that continued even after he finished his term as mayor in 1920. After a four-year absence, Major League Baseball returned in 1922 when Lang was successful in bringing the Boston Braves to St. Petersburg. Improvements on Waterfront Park, which was located a block south of the St. Petersburg Yacht Club, began within 24 hours of the news of the Braves' acceptance in 1921. Waterfront Park was originally an aviation field that was converted into a baseball field after Sunshine Park had been cut into building lots a few years earlier. The Boston Braves would become a fixture in St. Petersburg for years to come, holding their spring trainings in the city from 1922 until 1937.[5]

The biggest public relations coup for Lang, however, would occur in 1924, when he successfully convinced the New York Yankees to hold their spring trainings in the city. After years of struggling to convince Major League teams to hold training here, St. Petersburg was now the only city in the United States that hosted two MLB teams. Lang, who was responsible for negotiating the deal, became known as St. Petersburg's "Ambassador of Baseball." Pursuant to the terms of the contract, the Yankees would train in St. Petersburg for six years. By now, 10 of the 16 teams in the MLB held their spring trainings in Florida.[6]

New York Highlanders/Yankees 1901-1924

The New York Yankees were one of the original franchises of the American League, starting in Baltimore in 1901 before moving to New York in 1903. Originally playing in the elevated Hilltop Park, they were known as the Highlanders until 1913, when they moved into the Polo Grounds and changed their name to the Yankees. Plagued by financial difficulties, the Yankees struggled for most of the first two decades. They were easily the least successful and least popular Major League team in the city of New York after the older, more established New York Giants and Brooklyn Robins/Dodgers. The Yankees did not have their own stadium either, relying on the Giants' Polo Grounds to play their home games. Their fortunes started to change in 1915, when Colonel Jacob Rupert, a wealthy brewery heir, bought the team. Rupert began spending heavily on new talent and brought manager Miller Huggins aboard as the team improved. The Yankees were one of the better teams in the American League in the period right after World War I, but were not good enough to win the pennant. This all began to change in 1920, when Rupert acquired George Herman "Babe" Ruth from the Boston Red Sox for a then unheard of sum of $125,000. The Red Sox, who became major rivals of the Yankees, famously would not win another World Series until 2004. The Yankees on the other hand became contenders almost immediately while Ruth revolutionized the sport of baseball by becoming its first true dominant slugger. In 1920, Ruth hit an astounding 54 home runs, destroying his own record of 29 set the previous year. He followed this up in 1921 by hitting 59 home runs and leading the Yankees to their first American League pennant. This first World Series

[5] Hanewicz, p. 4.
[6] Hanewicz, p. 4

appearance began a 44-year run lasting until the 1964 season in which the Yankees would appear in 29 World Series, winning 20 of them. They would only have one losing season during this period. The explosion of popularity following the arrival of Ruth led to the Yankees constructing their own stadium, Yankee Stadium, in 1923, the year they won their first championship. Given Ruth's role in drawing record crowds to Yankee games, the stadium became known as the "House that Ruth Built."[7]

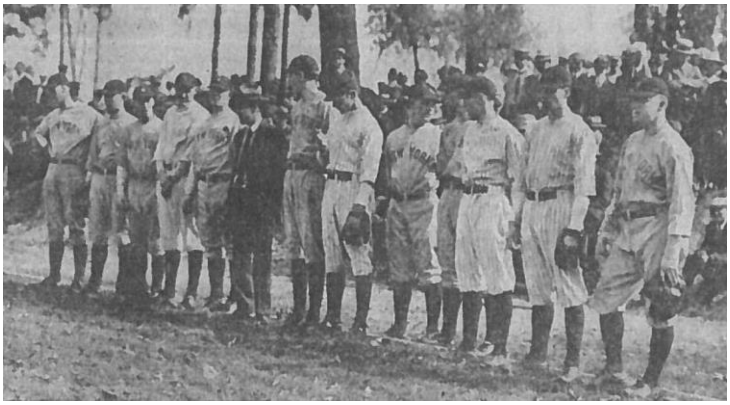
Crescent Lake Park

Crescent Lake Park, one of the largest park reservations in the area, was chosen for the New York Yankees' training field. In 1919, C. Perry Snell, who owned Crescent Lake Park and 56 acres around the lake, sold it to the City of St. Petersburg for $30,000 to turn it into a park. The $30,000 price was much less than the property's value at the time of the sale. Snell, a huge benefactor of public parks, sold it to the city on easy terms so that the city could use money from its budget for the purchase price. In 1920, the city identified Crescent Lake Park as a location for a new athletic field for Major League training, although it would not come to fruition until Lang made the deal with the Yankees in 1924.[8]

Historic Significance

Yankees Spring Training in St. Petersburg, 1925-1941

By June 1924, work began to prepare the Crescent Lake park grounds for the Yankees. Al Lang was the authorized representative of the Chamber of Commerce to transact all business in connection with preparing the field. All training was to take place at the Crescent Lake field while exhibition games were played at Waterfront Park. Just a couple months after the announcement of the Yankees' arrival, nearly all of the work on the field was finished with the exception of grass planting and the clearing of scrub oaks.[9]



Members of New York Yankees lining up during formal dedication of Crescent Park Field, 1925 (source: *St. Petersburg Times*, "Miller Huggins Presented with Training Field," February 24, 1925)

[7] Dan Levitt and Mark Armour, "New York Yankees Team Ownership History," Society for American Baseball Research, https://sabr.org/research/new-york-yankees-team-ownership-history.
[8] Hanewicz, p. 5.
[9] Hanewicz, p. 7.

The training field would occupy about six acres in the extreme southeast corner of Crescent Lake Park. The ground was built up more than seven feet above lake level. This was done by cutting away the high ground on the eastern half of the field and grading it toward the lake. A dredge was used to infill sand from the bottom of the lake into the low level lands around the lake.[10]

The training field was accessible from Fourth Street. The clearing of the scrub oaks and underbrush from the south section of the property provided ample parking space for over 500 automobiles. Although there were plans to build a concrete stadium here that never came to fruition, this field was never intended to hold large crowds. Hence the bleachers were temporary in nature and the fencing around the field was never substantial.[11]

Patrick Schenck, the groundkeeper of Yankee Stadium, supervised the field's construction and wanted a deep right field. A deep right field would ensure that less baseballs would end up in the lake. The field was "made to measure" for Babe Ruth. As a result, they filled in and sodded the field for a distance of 390 feet from home plate to the outer rim of right field.[12]

A permit was issued on January 26, 1925 to build the clubhouse building for the Yankees. It was to be situated on the high ground at the right of the first base line in front of 13th Avenue North. The building was 70 feet long and provided space for 52 lockers. In the front part of the structure there would be three separate rooms: one for manager Miller Huggins, a supply room, and another room used as a massage room.[13]

On February 23, 1925, 5,000 fans witnessed Al Lang officially turn over the Crescent Lake baseball field to the New York Yankees. Within a decade, St. Petersburg had become the epicenter for Major League spring training and developed into a major tourist destination. Reporter Stoney McLinn wrote that it "will do well to go back a matter of 10 years and recall that it was baseball, the nation's pastime, that started to put the Sunshine City on the map." During the months of February and March, fans would fill the stands of Crescent Lake Park to watch the Yankees for many years to come.[14]

The Yankees' run in St. Petersburg began ignominiously. Alligators from the nearby lake suddenly wandered onto the field, causing Ruth to head into the dugout for personal safety. The big story, however, was on the train ride back north, when Ruth suddenly fell ill with what became known as "The Bellyache Heard 'Round the World." One of the great mysteries of baseball has been what his precise illness was. The story that made

[10] Hanewicz, p. 7.
[11] Hanewicz, p. 7.
[12] Hanewicz, p. 7-8.
[13] Hanewicz, p. 8.
[14] Hanewicz, p. 9.

headlines around the world was that Ruth, who was famous for his excesses, ate too many hot dogs and drank too many sodas while in St. Petersburg. The specific illness was never officially disclosed, but it sent him to the hospital for a surgical procedure that kept him out of the lineup until June. Severely weakened by his illness, Ruth had easily his worst year as a Yankee and the team struggled. The team finished with a 69-85 record. This would be their last losing season until 1965. The 1925 season is perhaps best remembered for being the year in which Lou Gehrig became the starting first baseman for the Yankees. Known as the "Iron Horse" for his durability, Gehrig began the first of 2,130 consecutive games played when he replaced Wally Pipp at first base.[15]

With the start of the 1926 season, the Yankees surprised most observers by promptly returning back to dominance. Ruth committed himself to a stringent workout routine in the offseason and showed up in great shape. In his first full season as a regular starter, Gehrig became a major force within the Yankee lineup. Making their debuts for the Yankees were future Hall of Famer Tony Lazzeri and Mark Koenig. During the 1928 season, the team added catcher Bill Dickey. They formed the core of a great Yankees team that would appear in three straight World Series, winning in 1927 and 1928. They would win a third championship in 1932. It was the 1927 New York Yankees team, however, that stood out.[16]

Photo of 1927 New York Yankees at Crescent Park Field (now Huggins-Stengel Field)
(source: Hillsborough County Public Library System)

[15] Allan Wood, "Babe Ruth," Society of American Baseball Research, https://sabr.org/bioproj/person/9dcdd01c.
[16] Ray Robinson, *Iron Horse: Lou Gehrig in His Time* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1990), p.87-90, 101-103.

Although far exceeding expectations by winning an AL pennant, the 1926 season ended on a sour note, as the Yankees lost a hard-fought seven-game series to the St. Louis Cardinals. The Yankees blew a 3-2 series lead by losing the last two games. The seventh game (and the series) infamously ended with Babe Ruth attempting (and failing) to steal second base. Before the 1927 season started, Ruth signed what was then the largest professional contract ever given a player at that time, an astounding $70,000 a year after a very public negotiation and holdout with the Yankees. This, coupled with his gaffe in the 1926 World Series and a poor showing in 1925 placed a lot of pressure on Ruth to succeed. Ruth and the team responded by having their best season ever. The 1927 New York Yankees, known as "Murderer's Row," was widely considered one of the greatest teams ever assembled. They won an AL record 110 games this season. They were led by Ruth, who hit a Major League record 60 home runs, and Lou Gehrig, who hit 47 home runs. Four of the eight position players in this lineup would go on to be elected into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. They finished 19 games ahead of the second place Philadelphia Athletics before sweeping an overmatched Pittsburgh Pirates team in the World Series. During the 1969 centennial celebrations of professional baseball, the Baseball Writers of America declared the 1927 Yankees as the greatest baseball team of all time.[17]

Babe Ruth at Miller Huggins Field, ca. 1933 (Source: St. Petersburg Museum of History)

George Herman "Babe" Ruth has often been described as the first modern professional sports superstar. His ascendency to the top of the game coincided with the arrival of radio and "talking" motion pictures. The era saw the emergence of a new musical form known as jazz. He reached a level of popularity rarely seen in sports and he was a major popular culture icon of the 1920s and 1930s. His distinctive appearance made him instantly recognizable and now for the first time, fans could actually hear what he sounded like as well.[18] For many years, Babe Ruth's annual arrival in the St. Petersburg area was a significant event that drew people from miles around. An article from a New York newspaper gives a good description on the impression Ruth made upon the people of St. Petersburg:

> The king is here, and the populace flocked to the ball park to look at him. Men, women, and children came on foot, in wheel chairs, in motor cars, and on bicycles.[19]

Ruth's gregarious personality also made him a well-loved athlete. Inspired by his own rough childhood, in which he grew up in an orphanage, Ruth was particularly fond of children. He

[17] G.H. Fleming, *Murderer's Row: The 1927 New York Yankees* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1985), 50-52; Wood, "Babe Ruth"; Leonard Koppett, "1927 'Murderers' Row' New York Yankees: No Team Has Ever Been Better," National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum Yearbook (Cooperstown, NY: National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, 2002), p. 36-39.
[18] Allan Wood, "Babe Ruth," Society of American Baseball Research, https://sabr.org/bioproj/person/9dcdd01c.
[19] G.H. Fleming, *Murderer's Row: The 1927 New York Yankees* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1985), p. 65.

would often visit them in hospitals. One of the great moments of Ruth's career was the story of Johnny Sylvester, a child with a very serious life-threatening illness who was confined to a hospital during the 1926 World Series. There were two autographed balls sent back to Sylvester, one signed by each team and in his signature, Ruth wrote a promise to hit a home run before Game 4 of the series. He actually hit three and the child, who was very close to death, made a miraculous recovery shortly afterwards.[20] During the following spring training in St. Petersburg, in an exhibition against the Boston Braves, Ruth did something similar but far less dramatic:

> "Come on, Babe, give us a homer," cried a small youth seated behind the Yankees' bench as Ruth cantered to the plate… "Sure, kid, I'll sock a couple," the Babe answered. Just to keep faith with that small younster [sic], Ruth went out and not only socked a homer in the sixth inning, but he made another in the eighth.[21]

In 1930, Crescent Lake Field was dedicated to Yankees manager Miller Huggins who had passed away in 1929. A ceremony was held at Crescent Lake Park with more than 2,000 persons in attendance and a granite block with a bronze tablet was unveiled at the ceremony. The granite block weighed approximately 1,500 pounds. The monument was to be an exact counterpart of the Eddie Grant memorial at the Polo grounds in New York. The monument currently stands outside the former clubhouse.[22]

The bronze tablet honoring Miller reads:

> As a memorial and tribute to an outstanding sportsman and splendid character, who as a Manager of the New York Yankees and resident of this city contributed to its fame and the betterment of baseball, the citizens of St. Petersburg dedicate this ground, which forever shall be known as Miller Huggins Field.

The Yankees initially struggled finding a capable replacement for Huggins. In 1931, they brought in Joe McCarthy, the former manager of the Chicago Cubs who led the Cubs to a World Series appearance in 1929. By the following season, 1932, the Yankees were back on top, winning yet another championship. The 1932 season would be the last Yankees championship team with Ruth. In the third game of the World Series, which was played against the Chicago Cubs, Ruth famously quieted a hostile Wrigley Field crowd and the Cubs bench by allegedly pointing to the centerfield flagpole, then crushing a crucial home run right by the pole. Known as "The Called Shot," it would be Ruth's last World Series home run and greatly added to his legend. It would take on almost mythical proportions in the years following as sports writers and Ruth himself embellished upon the story. After a sharp decline in production, Ruth was released by the Yankees following the 1934 season. During

[20] Wood, "Babe Ruth"; Robert McG. Thoms, Jr., "Johnny Sylvester, the Inspiration for Babe Ruth Heroics, is Dead," *New York Times*, January 11, 1990.
[21] Fleming, p. 77-78.
[22] Hanewicz, p. 9.

his time with the team, Ruth helped lead the Yankees to seven World Series appearances and four championships.[23]

First photograph of Joe DiMaggio in a Yankees uniform, taken at Miller Huggins Field, February 1936 (source: Lily Rothman and Liz Ronk, "See Photos of Joe DiMaggio's First Year Playing for the Yankees," *Time*, May 3, 2016)

The Yankees spring training of 1936 was all about Joe DiMaggio, who was one of the most highly touted minor league prospects in Major League history. DiMaggio generated much excitement after a tenure with the minor league San Francisco Seals that included a 61-game hitting streak, the second longest in the history of professional baseball. The Yankees sent their two best Italian American players, Tony Lazzeri and Frankie Crosetti, to personally drive DiMaggio from California to St. Petersburg, Florida. After arriving, DiMaggio was a sensation, hitting a triple in his first formal spring training at-bat. Attendance soared. All of the leading sportswriters were in town to cover him. He ended up winning the starting centerfield job over the more experienced Ben Chapman. Unfortunately, disaster struck during spring training, when DiMaggio sought treatment for a bruised foot. The team's trainer used a diathermy machine, which ended up covering his foot with first degree burns and causing him to miss a month of baseball. He recovered, however, and had a sensational rookie year. He was the leading vote getter for the American League All Star team. DiMaggio's emergence and the quiet leadership of Gehrig, who was named American League Most Valuable Player this year, brought the Yankees back into the World Series, which they won over the crosstown New York Giants. After a lull in the mid-1930s, the Yankees were once again on top. This team, led by DiMaggio, Gehrig, Joe Gordon, and Bill Dickey, and managed by Hall of Fame manager Joe McCarthy, began an impressive streak. They would win four championships in a row from 1936 to 1939 and six championships in eight seasons between 1936 and 1943.[24]

During spring training of 1939, the physical degeneration of Lou Gehrig, who started his decline the previous season, became more pronounced. He collapsed during spring training and was visibly weaker and less coordinated in his base running. As the struggles continued at the beginning of the regular season, Gehrig voluntarily removed himself from the lineup after a Major League record 2,130 consecutive games played. He was later diagnosed with a lethal degenerative condition known as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), which came to be known as Lou Gehrig's Disease. As news spread of his condition, the Yankees held a touching

[23] Wood, "Babe Ruth."
[24] Richard Ben Cramer, *Joe DiMaggio: The Hero's Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), p. 83-97.

ceremony at Yankee Stadium in Gehrig's honor. He became the first professional athlete to have his number retired. In front of a capacity crowd that turned out to witness the event, Gehrig gave a famous speech in which he declared himself "the luckiest man on the face of the earth." Gehrig would die from ALS two years later. His life story would be turned into a major motion picture in 1942 starring Gary Cooper titled *Pride of the Yankees*. Costarring a number of current and former New York Yankees, including Ruth, this movie was critically acclaimed and was a box office success, adding greatly to the allure of the Yankee mystique in popular American culture.[25]

By the time Gehrig stepped down with the Yankees, DiMaggio had already established himself as the next great Yankee superstar. Known for his calm, soft-spoken demeanor, graceful playing style, and impeccable appearance, DiMaggio was perhaps the first Italian American superstar athlete. The best player on the best team in the most popular sport in the country, he was certainly the most renowned Italian American athlete of his time. Nicknamed the "Yankee Clipper" for his gracefulness and speed, DiMaggio was the personification of class. He was one of the first widely accepted Italian American popular culture icons in the United States. Off the field, he was always dressed in the finest suits, ate at the finest restaurants, and carried himself in a stoic manner that made him an enigma to an all-adoring public. For Italian Americans struggling to gain acceptance into an American culture that often stereotyped them as gangsters, DiMaggio became a folk hero and a symbol of the "American dream." He was also the subject of a hit 1941 song titled *Joltin' Joe DiMaggio*. After his Yankee career, DiMaggio famously married the model and actress Marilyn Monroe and became a tabloid mainstay in the 1950s. He spent most of his retirement staying out of the spotlight, however, prompting a well-known stanza in Paul Simon's hit song *Mrs. Robinson*: "Where have you gone, Joe DiMaggio our nation turns it's lonely eyes to you… What's that you say, Mrs. Robinson, Joltin' Joe has left and gone away…"[26]

The 1941 season, which was another championship year for the Yankees, was perhaps the greatest season in the rivalry that emerged between DiMaggio and Ted Williams of the Red Sox. DiMaggio, who by now had established himself as the unquestioned leader of the team and one of the best players in baseball, set a Major League Baseball (MLB) record by getting a hit in 56 consecutive games, a record that still stands. Williams would go on to lead the MLB with a .406 batting average, to date the last time a player would bat over .400 in a full season in the Major Leagues. This season was made all the more poignant in the wake of the worsening war situation in Europe and Japan, as it provided a welcome escape from world affairs at the time. The season would conclude mere months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. During the war, the Yankees held their spring trainings in the north.[27]

[25] Robinson, *Iron Horse*, 244-266, 275-278.
[26] Cramer, *Joe DiMaggio: The Hero's Life*, p. 100-102, 176, 350, 476.
[27] Cramer, *Joe DiMaggio: The Hero's Life*, p. 158-189

The Yankees returned to St. Petersburg for spring training after World War II, and very quickly resumed their winning ways. By now, they had new ownership as Del Webb, Dan Topping, and Larry MacPhail acquired the team from the estate of longtime owner Jacob Ruppert in 1945. They also had a new manager, with Bucky Harris replacing Joseph McCarthy. Under Harris, the Yankees won the 1947 World Series title but following an underwhelming 1948 season, he was let go and replaced by Casey Stengel. Unlike previous Yankees managers, Stengel was a larger than life personality well-known for his wit. He was also very successful with the Yankees, winning seven championships, including five championships in a row from 1949 to 1953, and making ten World Series appearances between 1949 and 1960. The Yankees would make four more World Series appearances between 1961 and 1964, winning two championships, giving them an astounding ten championships and 15 pennants total between 1947 and 1964.

In 1946, the City of St. Petersburg constructed a replacement for the aging Waterfront Park. The new ballpark was named in honor of Al Lang. Al Lang Field opened in March 1947. The Yankees would hold their home spring training games to Al Lang Field, but continue their practice sessions at Huggins-Stengel Field. The Yankees shared Al Lang Field with the St. Louis Cardinals, the other team in St. Petersburg at the time.[28]

Casey Stengel addressing Yankees in original clubhouse circa 1950s (source: Yogi Berra Museum and Learning Center)

The arrival of Casey Stengel in 1949 was met with much apprehension. Up to this point, despite his long association with baseball, Stengel had the reputation of a clown. His prior managerial stints in Brooklyn and with the Boston Braves were unsuccessful and he was fired from these jobs. Upon taking over the Yankees, Stengel implemented two-a-day workouts during spring training. He also made the crucial decision to use Yogi Berra as the full time catcher for the team. Former Yankees catcher Bill Dickey was brought in during spring training to intensively train Berra at the position. Like Stengel, Berra was viewed as a bit of a joke, someone who could hit well but was a poor fielder. Berra's lack of education and propensity for malapropisms brought with it a lack of respect for his intelligence and abilities as a player. The training he received in spring 1949 changed the trajectory of his career. The decision to use Berra at the catcher position proved pivotal, as he would serve as a key player of the 1950s and 1960s Yankees dynasty. Berra, who was one of the best hitting catchers in baseball history, later replaced DiMaggio in the cleanup spot in the batting lineup

[28] Local designation report

and was crucial to holding the dynasty together during the transitional phase between DiMaggio and Mickey Mantle. A three-time American League Most Valuable Player, Berra was the only player to play on all ten Yankee championship teams between 1947 and 1962, which is a Major League Baseball record. [29]

Stengel's managerial style relied very heavily off platooning, which is the practice of alternating players at different positions based upon a number of factors, primarily whether or not the other team's pitcher was right or left handed. The system essentially created a number of co-starters amongst position players on the team built around core everyday players such as DiMaggio, Phil Rizzuto, Berra, and Mantle. Although it was not new, Stengel is widely credited with popularizing it in the Major Leagues. By utilizing his entire bench, Stengel was able to get the most out of his team despite a number of years with players absent due to injuries or military service. During the five-year championship run from 1949 to 1953 for instance, the Yankees were only favored to win the AL pennant at the beginning of the year in 1953.[30]

At the beginning of this remarkable run, the Yankees teams between 1947 and 1951 were in many ways a continuation of the DiMaggio-led teams of the late 1930s and early 1940s. DiMaggio posted his final American League MVP season in 1947, but as he got older, injuries started catching up with him and the team came to rely more on its young talent. Berra particularly emerged as one of the best catchers and best hitters in the MLB, winning his first American League MVP in 1951. After the 1951 season, DiMaggio retired, collecting his ninth World Series ring in 13 seasons, a record that stood until Berra won his tenth with the Yankees in 1962.

New York Giants 1951

In 1951, the Yankees traded spring training locations with the New York Giants. This particular spring training had some drama, as Giants manager Leo Durocher, who managed Jackie Robinson in Brooklyn, pressured the Giants ownership into including more black players on their team in an effort to turn the team into a pennant contender. This spring training would be the first Major League spring training at Huggins-Stengel Field to feature black players. When Durocher first came to the Giants in 1948, they were a losing team that noticeably lost ground to their National League crosstown rivals the Dodgers after the Dodgers signed renowned black players such as Robinson, Roy Campanella, and Don Newcombe. Durocher saw the near endless talent pool of established negro league talent as a way to immediately lift the team up. The Giants first integrated their team in 1949, signing six players into their farm system, two of whom made it onto the team that year: Monte Irvin and Hank Thompson. At the start of the 1951 season, as a result of Durocher's constant badgering, the Giants had four black players on their team, the most in the Major Leagues. But Durocher had his eyes set on a 19-year-old prospect named Willie Mays, whom he was looking to add as a fifth black player. The owner, however, fearing

[29] Marty Appel, *Casey Stengel: Baseball's Greatest Character* (New York: Doubleday, 2017), p. 149-158; Robert W. Creamer, *Stengel: His Life and Times* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), p. 221-226.
[30] Appel, *Casey Stengel: Baseball's Greatest Character* p. 158; Creamer, *Stengel: His Life and Times,* p. 228, 251.

too many black ballplayers on the team was bad for business, refused to move off his quota of four. As a result, it would not be until May of that year that Mays joined the team, and to make room for him, Artie Wilson, who was black, was moved into the minor leagues, never to return to the majors. Due to the segregated nature of St. Petersburg, the players were forced to seek accommodations in the African American section of town. The dichotomy between Mays' entry into the Major Leagues and that of his crosstown rival Mickey Mantle could not be more glaring.[31]

Durocher's gambit worked. Mays responded with a good season, going on to win the National League Rookie of the Year honors. Aided by their rookie centerfielder, the Giants team won the National League pennant in a spectacular head-to-head matchup on the final game of the season against the Brooklyn Dodgers. This game, the first baseball game to be nationally televised, witnessed a dramatic three-run home run in the bottom of the ninth inning by the Giants' Bobby Thompson. It was known as "The Shot Heard 'Round the World," and propelled the Giants into the World Series against the Yankees. The connection between the Dodgers and Giants having the most black players on their teams and finishing tied for first place in the National League was not lost on people. The Yankees would go on to the championship, however. Mays, generally regarded as one of the greatest baseball players in history, would go on to a legendary career with the Giants. In 1954, the Giants won the World Series against the Cleveland Indians, who were the first American League team to integrate and had set an American League record for the most wins in the regular season. This win, followed by the Dodgers' first title in 1955, was a major catalyst for further integration in baseball.[32]

Return of the Yankees (1952-1961)

Spring training for the 1952 season brought a lot of attention to the Yankees. It would be the first spring training following the retirement of longtime leader Joe DiMaggio. Mickey Mantle was such a highly regarded prospect that the Yankees made the unusual step of keeping the 19-year-old on the team and having him start in the outfield alongside DiMaggio in 1951. Mantle, however, initially struggled and was actually demoted to the Yankees farm team in Kansas City for part of the year before arriving back and reclaiming the starting job during the World Series against Willie Mays and the Giants. During the Series, Mantle suffered a serious knee injury, tearing ligaments in his knee. As the 1952 season started, Mantle was given the unenviable task of replacing DiMaggio in centerfield. There were concerns as to whether Mantle was up to the task. Complicating matters, starting second baseman Billy Martin broke his ankle during spring training. These apprehensions were soon put to rest, however. Mantle filled in spectacularly, being selected to the first of 20 All Star game appearances and emerging as the new face of the Yankees. Martin returned to form during the season, and had his greatest moment in the 1952 World Series against the Dodgers, making a series saving catch in Game 7 off a

[31] Rick Swaine, "The Integration of the New York Giants," Society of American Baseball Research, https://sabr.org/bioproj/topic/integration-new-york-giants.
[32] Swaine, "The Integration of the New York Giants."

Jackie Robinson pop-up. Led by Mantle and Berra, the Yankees repeated as champions in 1952 and 1953, setting a Major League record by winning five championships in a row.[33]

Major League Baseball was dominated in the 1950s and early 1960s by New York teams. From 1949 to 1964, the city had at least one team in the World Series every year except 1959. That year, the Dodgers, who by now moved to Los Angeles, won the World Series. Seven of these World Series were between the Yankees and Dodgers (six while they were still in Brooklyn and one while they were in Los Angeles).

Known as the Subway Series, the Yankees-Dodgers rivalry was heavily cloaked in the racial politics of the time. There was a personal hatred between Casey Stengel and Jackie Robinson. Although the Yankees first signed black players to their minor league teams back in 1949, they were notoriously reluctant to promote them to the Major League team. Their reluctance actually cost them a chance to sign Willie Mays and Ernie Banks, both of whom went on to become two of the most dominant baseball players of the 1950s.[34] In a local broadcast aired in 1952, Robinson, when asked whether or not he thought the Yankees were biased against black players, was blunt:

> You've asked me a question and I'll answer it as honestly as I can. Yes, I think they are. I don't mean the players are – but I think the Yankee management is prejudiced. They haven't a single negro on the team and very few in the organization. You asked the question and I've answered it honestly. That's my opinion.[35]

The Yankees were seen as a representation of white America while the Dodgers and Giants were led by some of the highest profile African American athletes of the era. The Brooklyn Dodgers' decision to integrate early was a key component to their success as Robinson, Campanella, and Newcombe were crucial contributors to a team known as "The Boys of Summer." Although the team only won one World Series title while in Brooklyn in 1955, they were National League champions six times between 1947 and 1956. All of the Dodgers' World Series losses during this period, five in total, were to the Yankees. The Giants' black stars Willie Mays and Monte Irvin played a big role in leading the team to two National League pennants and a World Series title. Despite the clear success of the crosstown National League rivals spurred in large part by their decision to integrate, the Yankees remained segregated until Elston Howard became the first black player on the team in 1955.

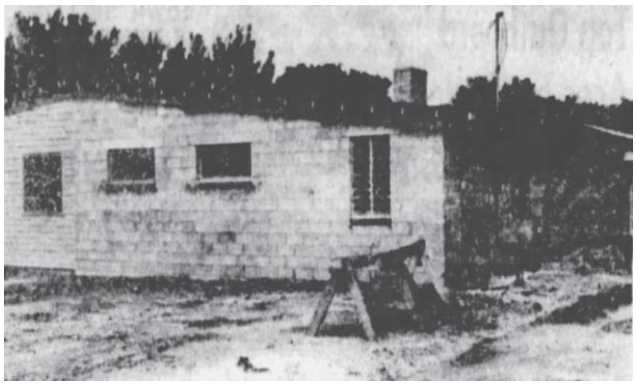
In 1954, the Yankees spring training featured two black players: Elston Howard and Eddie Andrews. Howard was one of the top prospects in the organization and was a clear favorite to break the team's color barrier. Andrews was a minor league prospect who was really brought in to keep Howard company during spring training. The Soreno Hotel, which is where the white Yankees players stayed, did not allow for Howard to join

[33] Creamer, *Stengel: His Life and Times*, p. 243-251.
[34] Appel, *Casey Stengel: Baseball's Greatest Character,* p. 200-202.
[35] Appel, *Casey Stengel: Baseball's Greatest Character*, p. 200.

them. He was also prohibited from engaging in a number of activities with his teammates, including dining, sharing a cab, or swimming. Like the Giants players in 1951, Howard and Andrews were forced to seek separate accommodations within the African American section of town. Although he returned to the minors in 1954, Howard would not have to wait long. He was with the Yankees full-time the following season, and would be a key contributor of the Yankees dynasty. He later took over for Berra at the catcher spot. Howard was in every All Star game between 1957 and 1965 and would win the American League Most Valuable Player award in 1963.[36]

By the late 1950s, Mantle was the most popular player on the Yankees and one of the most popular athletes in the United States. His rise coincided with that of Willie Mays of the Giants. The two men dominated the centerfield position in the 1950s. The rise of both players coincided with the age of television. A native of Oklahoma, the son of a miner, Mantle's looks, power, and skill made him one of the great popular culture icons of the era, a status greatly elevated by his role as a winner with the Yankees. Willie Mays was considered by many contemporary observers to be the best baseball player of his era. Following the retirement of Jackie Robinson after 1956, Mays became perhaps the most visible black player of the time. Both Mantle and Mays would be compared to each other throughout their careers, a comparison in which race inevitably played a role.

After missing the World Series in 1954, the Yankees would appear in four straight between 1955 and 1958, winning championships in 1956 and 1958. In 1959, however, the Yankees had a down year, finishing well out of contention for the pennant. Following this season, the Yankees acquired outfielder Roger Maris from the Kansas City Athletics. Led by the duo of Mantle and Maris, the Yankees entered into their last great era of baseball during their dynasty years, beginning a string of five consecutive World Series appearances from 1960 to 1964. Following a World Series loss to the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1960, the Yankees decided to let go of their longtime manager Casey Stengel. Despite his success, Stengel was let go due in part to his advancing age. Well-known for his outspoken nature and never one to shy away from the media, Stengel's departure from the Yankees was far from peaceful, stating "I'll never make the mistake of being seventy again."[37]



Construction of new clubhouse, 1960 (source: *Tampa Bay Times*)

In 1959, a new $29,300 clubhouse (100'x49') was slated to be built and completed by the beginning of spring training in 1960. The clubhouse would replace the original clubhouse, which at the time of construction was still standing at the entrance to the field situated at 5th Street North and

[36] Appel, *Casey Stengel: Baseball's Greatest Character,* p. 212-213, 218-220.
[37] Appel, *Casey Stengel: Baseball's Greatest Character*, p. 262-279.

13th Avenue North. The new clubhouse was located opposite of right field.[38]

The last Yankees team to hold their spring training at Huggins-Stengel Field was the 1961 Yankees team. The fallout from the removal of Stengel the previous season brought a certain amount of intrigue to the team as they met in St. Petersburg for spring training. This team, under the direction of new manager Ralph Houk, is widely considered one of the greatest teams in the history of Major League Baseball. The team went on to win 109 games this season. Pitcher Whitey Ford, the longtime ace of the Yankees staff, put in perhaps his best season, winning the Cy Young Award. The season, however, is best remembered for Mantle and Maris. The attention of the country turned to baseball as both players threatened the single season home run record of Babe Ruth. As injuries slowed down Mantle over the season, it was Maris who ended up breaking the record, hitting 61 home runs while Mantle hit 54. The Yankees went on to win the World Series that year.[39]

In February 1961, news broke of the Yankees moving from St. Petersburg to Ft. Lauderdale. At the time, there had been segregation related housing issues for players training in St. Petersburg. However, another issue in keeping the Yankees in St. Petersburg were the dated facilities. Plus, Al Lang Field was shared with another team. The facilities in St. Petersburg could not compare to what Ft. Lauderdale promised: a new modern 8,000 seat stadium including air-conditioned clubhouse and offices with desegregated housing for players. The spring training season of 1961 would mark the end of an era of the Yankees in St. Petersburg. After 36 years, the Yankees left St. Petersburg for new facilities in Ft. Lauderdale. The Yankees won a total of 17 World Championship titles in the years they trained at Huggins-Stengel Field.[40]

New York Mets 1962-1969

Casey Stengel's absence from Huggins-Stengel Field did not last long. Following the 1957 season, both the Dodgers and the Giants shocked the baseball world by relocating to the west coast. This left the city of New York with only the Yankees for a brief period. William Shea led the efforts to bring National League baseball back to New York. Until 1960, however, the MLB remained with 16 franchises, with teams merely relocating from different cities. Shea decided to force the MLB's hand by creating a rival sports league, the Continental League, in 1959. The league was created as a ploy to convince MLB to expand. This gimmick worked, as the MLB agreed to allow for four teams to be added

Casey Stengel with four members of the 1962 New York Mets during spring training (source: Robert Lipsyte, "Spring of '62: Revisiting the Dawn of the Mets," *Time*, February 19, 2012)

[38] Hanewicz, p. 11.
[39] Ralph Houk and Robert W. Creamer, *Season of Glory: The Amazing Saga of the 1961 New York Yankees* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1988), p. 67-91, 221-279.
[40] Hanewicz, p. 11.

between 1961 and 1962 in exchange for the Continental League folding. This brought the total number of MLB teams to 20. Among the four new teams was the New York Mets, who started in 1962. The team chose orange and blue as an homage to National League baseball in New York (blue being the Dodgers color and orange being the Giants color). The team also made an immediate public relations splash by hiring Stengel as the manager and bringing aboard former Dodgers players Don Zimmer and Gil Hodges. Richie Ashburn, a Hall of Fame player best known for playing for the Philadelphia Phillies, was also signed onto the team. Another hall of fame player, Rogers Hornsby, was hired as the third base coach. For its first two seasons, the Mets played at the Polo Grounds, the longtime home stadium of the Giants.[41]

The first Mets spring training generated a considerable amount of attention. It quickly became apparent, however, that this team was not very good. Most of the players on the team were either past their prime or just bad. One year after hosting the renowned 1961 Yankees team, Huggins-Stengel Field hosted a New York Mets team that posted a modern baseball record for most losses in a season, finishing 40-120. The 1962 Mets were considered one of the worst teams in the history of Major League Baseball. The personality and humor of Stengel through this ordeal, however, gave the team a reputation as lovable losers. Stengel, known as "The Old Perfessor," [sic] made headlines with quotes such as "If a banner got in your way, you didn't mind missing a play because it was something bad happening anyway" and "You look up and down the bench and you have to say to yourself, 'Can't anyone here play this game?' There comes a time in every man's life and I've had plenty of them."[42]

In 1962, a group of city officials and civic leaders wanted to pay tribute to Casey Stengel by changing the name of Huggins Field to Casey Stengel Field. A resolution was passed by the City of St. Petersburg City Council. On August 25, 1962, a formal presentation was made in a ceremony prior to a Mets-Dodgers game at Polo Grounds. There was opposition to the name change and in January 1963 the Chamber of Commerce's baseball committee endorsed a combined name, Huggins-Stengel Field. On February 21, 1963, the field was renamed Huggins-Stengel Field in honor of both great former Yankee managers.[43]

In August 1963, a tablet on a granite block, similar to the one dedicated in 1930 to Miller Huggins, was erected at Huggins-Stengel Field honoring Casey Stengel. The plaque reads:

> One of baseball's most popular and widely known figures who, as manager of the New York Yankees, won ten American League pennants in 12 years, helping to make the Sunshine City the spring training capital of the world and who now has returned as manager of the New York Mets, this plaque is gratefully and affectionately dedicated.

[41] Appel, *Casey Stengel: Baseball's Greatest Character* p. 279-286, 290-291.
[42] Appel, *Casey Stengel: Baseball's Greatest Character* p. 289-294.
[43] Hanewicz, p. 11.

Although they improved from their first season, the Mets remained in the cellar for most of the 1960s. The Mets were an anomaly, however. Despite their terrible record, they were actually outdrawing the Yankees at home and started to gain a national following. While the Yankees prohibited placards at their games, the Mets not only embraced fan-made placards, but encouraged them. In 1964, the Mets introduced Mr. Met, the first modern live-action mascot in the Major Leagues. The Mets' beginnings coincided with a new type of journalism amongst sportswriters who focused more on reporting players and coaches as people. Known as the "chipmunks," these reporters became critical to the promotion of the Mets as suddenly the team became more relatable to people than the Yankees, who had an aura of perfection. No one was better suited to the task of media relations than Stengel. While with the Yankees, Stengel discarded with the press room and brought the media straight into the more familiar confines of the clubhouse locker room. He took this same approach with the Mets. He was known for his long-winded, stream of consciousness answers that were often sprinkled in with humorous anecdotes, which became known affectionately as "Stengelese." It was on full display with the Mets, and helped deflect much of the attention and criticism for the play on the field. The Mets were so appreciative of the favorable coverage they received from a number of reporters that they actually rewarded them with championship rings in 1969. Another former Yankees legend, Yogi Berra, joined Stengel and the Mets as a coach prior to the 1965 season. Stengel was let go following the 1965 season after a broken hip sidelined him but remained a steadfast promoter and supporter of the Mets team.[44]

Stengel continued to be an active presence at the Mets' spring trainings for several years after he stepped down. He was awarded a very rare honor when the National Baseball Hall of Fame waived the usual five-year waiting requirement following retirement and inducted him the following year in 1966 on account of his advanced age. In a ceremony held at Huggins-Stengel Field before the Mets team and a group of fans, former MLB commissioner Ford Frick surprised Stengel by personally informing him of his induction. It was an exceedingly rare honor, only done once before for Lou Gehrig in 1939. The Mets also honored Stengel by making his number the first number ever retired by the team.

Stengel thanking fans at Huggins-Stengel Field following special ceremony announcing his induction into Baseball Hall of Fame (source: *St. Petersburg Times*)

1969 Amazin' Mets

The fortunes of the Mets began to turn around with the selection of Hall of Fame pitcher Tom Seaver in 1966 and the hiring of manager Gil Hodges two years later. Seaver made an immediate impact on the team, winning

[44] Appel, *Casey Stengel: Baseball's Greatest Character* p. 290, 301-306, 323-324.

the 1967 National League Rookie of the Year award and being selected to his first all-star game in 1967. Despite this, the team still finished with a losing record, never finishing higher than 9th place out of 10 teams in the National League. In 1968, the team posted a relatively respectable 73-89 record, the best record in team history but they still finished in 9th place in the National League. This set up the team for a remarkable 1969 season.[45]

The tone for what would be one of the great seasons in baseball was set as the Mets approached spring training in 1969, as Seaver himself alluded: "Often during spring training, Jerry Grote and I stood on the lawn of my rented homed in St. Petersburg and analyzed our chances, and we finally decided that we actually could win…"[46] Traditionally, pitchers were the first players on the team to report to spring training. Due to a potential players' strike following the 1968 season, however, this was delayed. Seaver and the Mets pitching staff decided to organize their own informal conditioning camp before the season. This conditioning program paid dividends for the team during the 1969 season.[47]

By now, the Mets had built a respectable pitching staff around Seaver. Pitcher Jerry Koosman also put together a solid season on the mound, perhaps the best of his career. Besides Seaver and Koosman, this team featured a young relief staff that included Tug McGraw and future Hall of Fame pitcher Nolan Ryan, two pitchers at the beginning of long, notable careers. Led by their young pitching staff and solid contributions from role players such as Cleon Jones and Tommie Agee, the Mets stunned the baseball world by winning 100 games and the World Series championship a mere two seasons after losing over 95 games for six seasons in a row. Seaver led the way, winning 25 games and the Cy Young Award. This team was one of the great turnaround stories in baseball history.[48] The team's nickname, the "Amazin' Mets," was actually coined by Stengel during their inaugural season and was often used in an ironic or joking manner with the Mets in the years prior.[49]

The Mets win in many ways ushered in a new era of Major League Baseball history. The 1969 season was the first season to feature the National and American League championship series. The leagues were divided into divisions and the division champions played each other in what was originally a best-of-five playoff for the league pennant. For the first time, merely being the team with the best record in the NL or AL was no longer an automatic guarantee to advance to the World Series. The Mets were the first World Series champion to play through a league championship series. The Mets also became the first expansion team to win a World Series championship.

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[45] Gene Schoor, *Seaver* (Chicago, IL: Contemporary Books, Inc., 1986), p. 69-97.
[46] Schoor, *Seaver*, p. 114.
[47] Schoor, *Seaver,* p. 113-116.
[48] Schoor, *Seaver,* p. 133-164.
[49] Thomas J. Brown, Jr., "April 11, 1962: New York Mets Open Inaugural Season with Loss to Cardinals," Society for American Baseball Research, https://sabr.org/gamesproj/game/april-11-1962-new-york-mets-open-inaugural-season-loss-cardinals.

Historical Context – Mets (1970-1987) and Orioles (1992-1995)

Although the Mets would not win over 100 games again until 1986, the team posted winning seasons in six of the next seven seasons. During spring training of 1972, tragedy struck when manager Gil Hodges, who managed the team to a championship in 1969, died. He was replaced by Yogi Berra. During the 1972 season, the Mets acquired Willie Mays from the Giants, giving him a chance to close out his career in the city where it began. In 1973, Mays' last season, they surprised everyone by winning the National League pennant and returning to the World Series, where they lost in seven games to the Oakland Athletics. There would be one more World Series-winning Mets team that trained here, the 1986 Mets. The following year, 1987, would be their last at Huggins-Stengel Field. From 1992 to 1995, the Baltimore Orioles, the same franchise that played in St. Petersburg as the St. Louis Browns back in 1914, used Huggins-Stengel Field as their spring training grounds.[50]

In 1997, city council approved a 10-year lease agreement turning over management of Huggins-Stengel Field, Al Lang Stadium, and the former Busch complex to the Tampa Bay Devil Rays. The Devil Rays did not end up using Huggins-Stengel Field much for practice because they had other practice fields. As a result, in late 1999 the Devil Rays returned Huggins-Stengel Field to the city. While Huggins-Stengel Field was in the Rays' control, improvements were made to the clubhouse, the backstop was replaced, and the irrigation system was repaired.[51]

In 2003, the 1960 Huggins-Stengel clubhouse underwent $230,000 in renovations to make offices and a meeting room. The building is now home to the City of St. Petersburg's Teen Arts, Sports, and Cultural Opportunities program, which began in the 1980s. During the renovations, the monuments to Miller Huggins and Casey Stengel were moved from the vicinity of the right field dugout to the front of the clubhouse.[52]

In 2008, the era of spring training in the City of St. Petersburg came to an end after 94 years. On March 28, 2008, the final spring game in the City of St. Petersburg was held at Al Lang Field with the Rays vs. Reds.[53]

[50] Hanewicz, p. 12.
[51] Hanewicz, p. 12.
[52] Hanewicz, p. 12.
[53] Hanewicz, p. 13.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The historic boundary encompasses a portion of parcel number 18-31-17-18864-001-000 of the Pinellas County Property Appraiser records that extends around the historic baseball field and associated outbuildings. Please see boundary map.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the resources historically associated with the operation of Huggins-Stengel Field.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number Photos Page 1

Name of Property: Huggins-Stengel Field

City of Vicinity: St. Petersburg County: Pinellas State: Florida

Photographer: Lisset Hanewicz Date Photographed: February 2019

Description of Photographs(s) and number, including description of view indicating direction of camera

1. View of Huggins Stengel Field home plate, facing southeast
2. View from Huggins Stengel Field home plate, facing northwest
3. View of bullpen, facing northwest
4. View of dugout, facing southeast
5. View of dugout, facing west
6. Exterior view of clubhouse main entrance, facing west
7. Exterior view of clubhouse and office annex, facing southwest
8. Exterior view of clubhouse rear elevation, facing southeast
9. Interior view of clubhouse office, facing west
10. Interior view of clubhouse's remaining locker, facing northwest
11. Interior view of clubhouse main entrance, facing southeast
12. Exterior view of office annex, facing northwest
13. View of Miller Huggins and Casey Stengel memorials, facing west

Figure 1

Huggins-Stengel Field circa 1940 (source: St. Petersburg Museum of History)

Huggins-Stengel Field

1320 5th Street North
St. Petersburg, Pinellas Co., FL

PHOTO KEY

1:1,300

Date: 3/15/2019

N

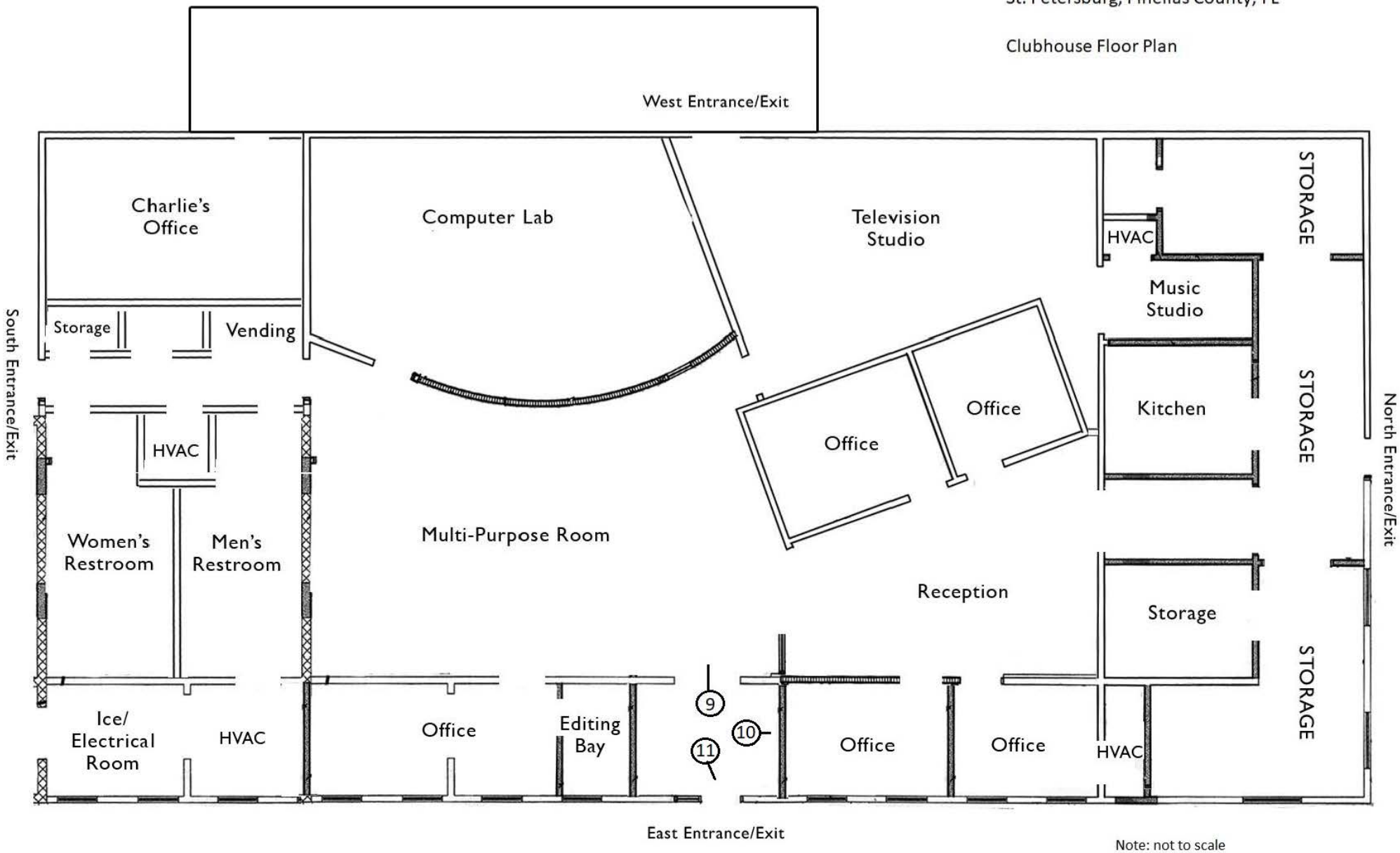
0 55 110 220 Feet

0 12.5 25 50 Meters

Basemap Source: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

Huggins-Stengel Field
St. Petersburg, Pinellas County, FL

Clubhouse Floor Plan



Note: not to scale

Huggins-Stengel Field

1320 5th Street North
St. Petersburg, Pinellas Co., FL

UTM:
17R 338328 3074552

Datum: WGS84

Proposed National Register Boundary

1:2,000

Date: 3/1/2019

N

0 80 160 320 Feet

0 20 40 80 Meters

Basemap Source: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

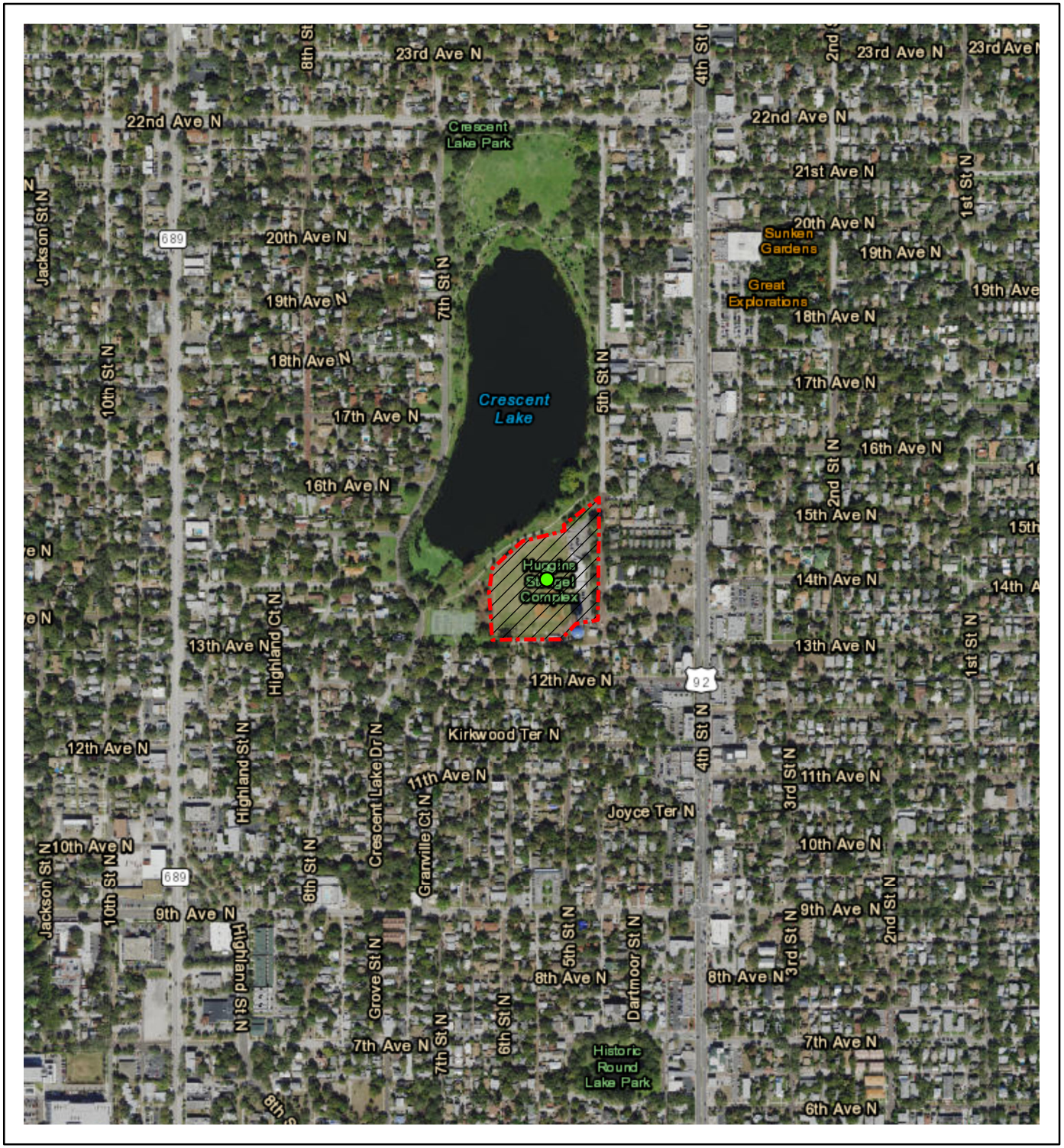
Huggins-Stengel Field

1320 5th Street North
St. Petersburg, Pinellas Co., FL

UTM:
17R 338328 3074552

Datum: WGS84

Proposed National Register Boundary



1:10,000

Date: 3/4/2019

N

0 425 850 1,700 Feet

0 105 210 420 Meters

Basemap Source: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

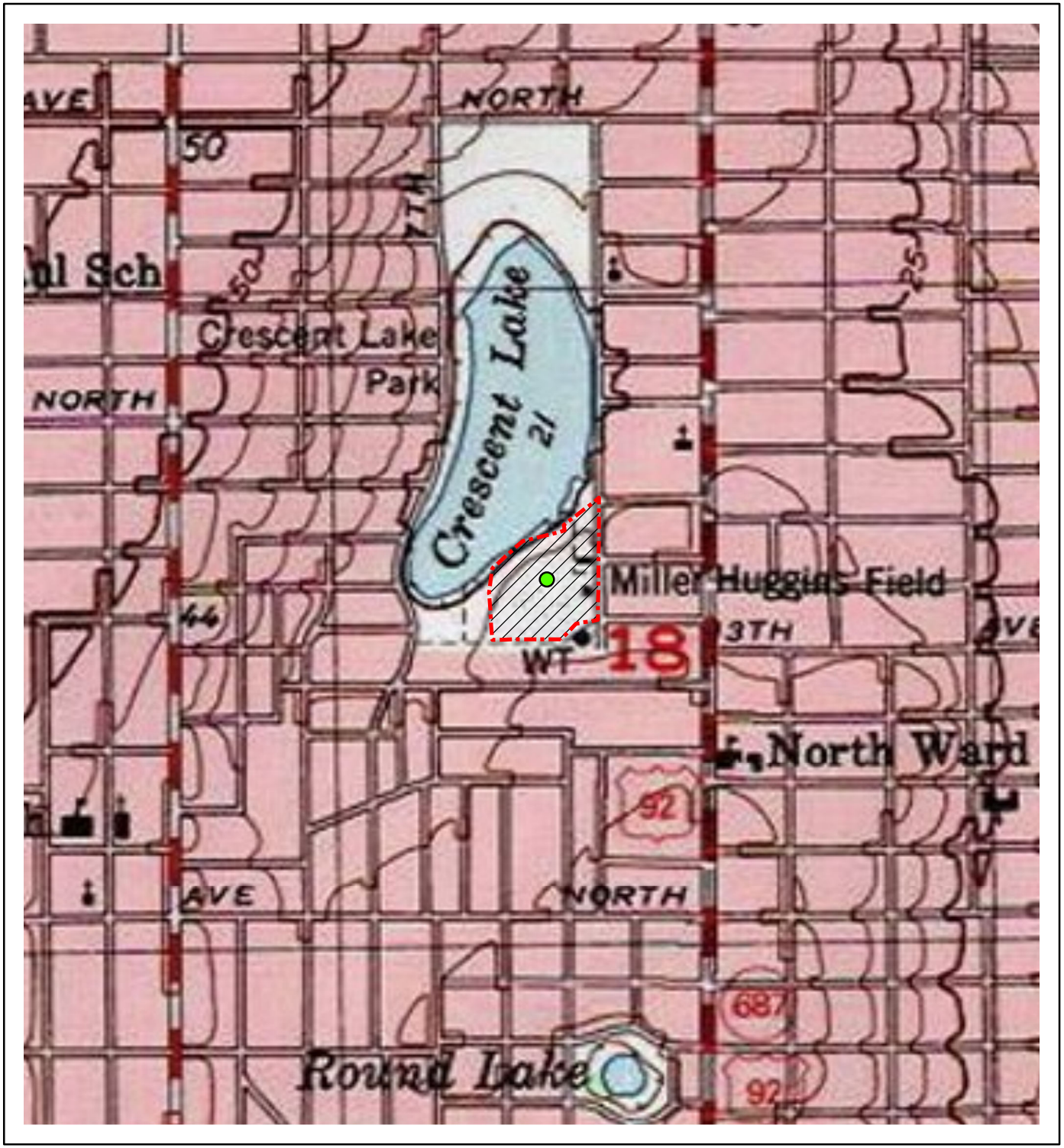
Huggins-Stengel Field

1320 5th Street North
St. Petersburg, Pinellas Co., FL

UTM:
17R 338328 3074552

Datum: WGS84

Proposed National Register Boundary



1:10,000

Date: 3/4/2019

N

0 425 850 1,700 Feet

0 105 210 420 Meters

Basemap Source: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

RAIN BIRD

1320 - 2
TASCO
NOT MY SON

1320 2

CRUZ
23
16

CRUSHING

EXIT

AutoNation Toyota
RAV4
BK

TO
CHARLES DILLON "CASEY" STENGEL
ONE OF BASEBALL'S MOST POPULAR AND WIDELY
KNOWN FIGURES WHO, AS MANAGER OF THE
NEW YORK YANKEES, WON TEN AMERICAN LEAGUE
PENNANTS IN 12 YEARS, HELPING TO MAKE THE
SUNSHINE CITY THE SPRING TRAINING CAPIT L
OF THE WORLD AND WHO NOW HAS RETURNED AS
MANAGER OF THE NEW YORK METS. THIS PLAQUE
S GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.
MILLER J. HUGGINS
1878 1929
AS A MEMORIAL AND TRIBUTE TO AN OUTSTANDING
SPORTSMAN AND A SPLENDID CHARACTER, WHO
AS MANAGER OF THE NEW YORK YANKEES AND
RESIDENT OF THIS CITY CONTRIBUTED TO ITS FAME
AND THE BETTERMENT OF BASEBALL, THE CITIZENS OF
ST. PETERSBURG DEDICATE THIS GROUND, WHICH
FOREVER SHALL BE KNOWN AS
MILLER HUGGINS FIEL

Attachment B: Letter of Support for Nomination of Huggins-Stengel Field to the National Register of Historic Places

City of St. Petersburg
Planning and Development Services Department
Urban Planning and Historic Preservation Division

Ruben A. Acosta, Survey and Registration Supervisor
Bureau of Historic Preservation
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Re: Nomination of Huggins-Stengel Field (8PI02942), 1320 5th Street North, St. Petersburg, Pinellas County, Florida to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Mr. Acosta,

As the chair of the Community Planning and Preservation Commission of the City of St. Petersburg, I am pleased to inform you that the Commission is in support of listing Huggins-Stengel Field in the National Register of Historic Places. Huggins-Stengel Field is significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation for its association with the development of Spring Training in St. Petersburg.

As the Commission charged with determining eligibility of properties for both the local and National Register, we are excited to support this designation of an early hotel in the City. Our aim is to educate the public regarding the importance of every aspect of our history and architectural legacy. This is an important step. Therefore, our Commission commends the owner in this valuable initiative to designate and preserve this gem of pioneer construction. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeff Rogo, Chair
Community Planning and Preservation Commission

Attachment C: Maps of Proposed Boundary

Community Planning and Preservation Commission

1320 5th St N

AREA TO BE APPROVED,

SHOWN IN

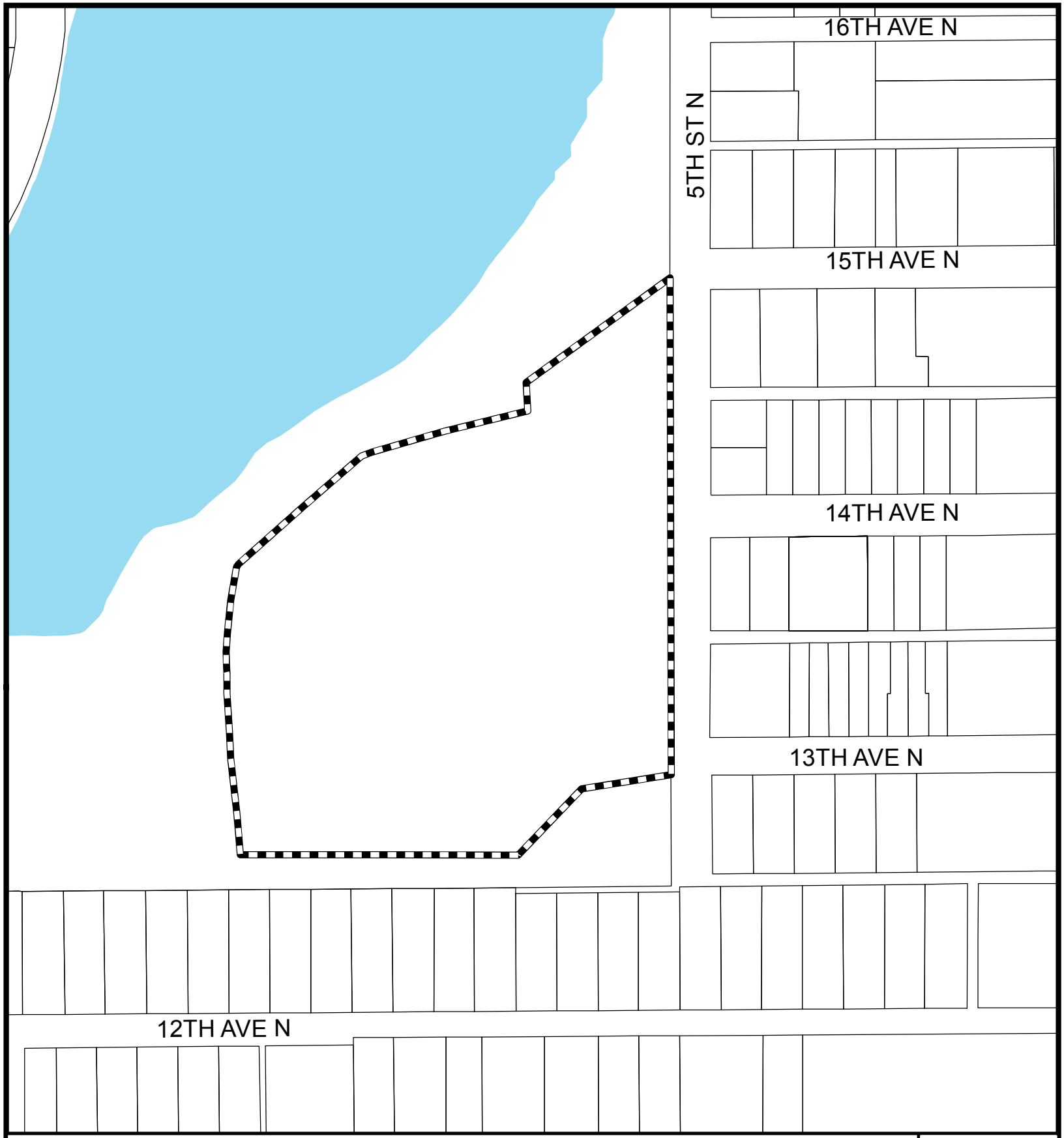
CASE NUMBER

19-90700001

N

SCALE:

1 " = 173 '



Community Planning and Preservation Commission

1320 5th St N

AREA TO BE APPROVED,

SHOWN IN

CASE NUMBER

19-90700001

N

SCALE:

1 " = 173 '