



CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

URBAN PLANNING AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION

STAFF REPORT

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND PRESERVATION COMMISSION REQUEST FOR LISTING IN THE ST. PETERSBURG REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

For **public hearing** and **recommendation to City Council** on September 8, 2020 beginning at 2:00 P.M., by means of communications media technology pursuant to Executive Order 20-69 issued by the Governor on March 20, 2020, and Executive Order 2020-12 issued by the Mayor on April 9, 2020. Everyone is encouraged to view the meetings on TV or online at www.stpete.org/meetings.

According to Planning and Development Services Department records, Community Planning and Commission members Charles Copley Gerdes and Lisa Wannemacher reside or have places of business within 2,000 feet of the subject property. All other possible conflicts should be declared upon the announcement of the item.



CASE NUMBER:	20-90300003
LANDMARK NAME:	Smith-Empire Building / Coronet 300
STREET ADDRESS:	300 Central Avenue
PARCEL ID NUMBERS:	193117182430000601; 193117182430000401; 193117182430000901; 193117182430000101; 193117182430000301; 193117182430000801; 193117182430000501; 193117182430000001; 193117182430000701; 193117182430001101; 193117182430001001
LEGAL DESCRIPTION:	CORONET 300 CONDO
OWNER:	300 Central, LLC
APPLICANT:	Nicholas Gavulic, Community Coordinator for Station House
REQUEST:	Designation of the Smith-Empire Building / Coronet 300 as a local historic landmark to be listed in the St. Petersburg Register of Historic Places

OVERVIEW

The property at 300 Central Avenue (“the subject property”), historically known as the Smith-Empire building and the Coronet 300 since 1966, was constructed in 1924 as a commercial building and adapted for use as a mixed-use residential building in the 1960s. The owner proposes its designation in the St. Petersburg Register of Historic Places as a local historic landmark.

Summary: Smith-Empire Building / Coronet 300

Property Name (Current/Common):	Coronet 300 Apartments
Historic Names:	J. Bruce Smith Building, Empire Building
Date of Construction:	1924
Significant Alterations:	1933; 1966
Period of Significance:	1924-1966
Builder:	Franklin Mason, contractor, for J. Bruce Smith, merchant
Architects:	Malachi Leo Elliott (1924 design of J. Bruce Smith Building) Archie Parish (1933 remodel as Empire Building) Carl Atkinson (1966 reuse as Coronet 300)
Criteria for Landmark Eligibility:	B and F
Areas of Significance:	Architecture, Commerce, and Community Planning and Development
Retention of Historic Integrity:	Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, and Feeling

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Early Development of St. Petersburg, Florida

The southern portion of the Florida peninsula was largely unsettled in the mid-nineteenth century. The vast majority of the Seminole tribes who had resided in Tampa Bay had been eliminated, migrated, or killed by disease by the conclusion of the Indian Wars in 1858.¹ A small handful of settlers had established fish ranchos and small farms in the lower Pinellas area by the dawn of the Civil War, but most relocated during the conflict.

Following the war, politicians in Florida and states throughout the South struggled to recoup financially while still bickering over the ramifications of emancipation. During these early post-

¹ Nevin D. Sitler, *Warm Wishes from Sunny St. Pete*, (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2014), 21-22.

war years, some of the settlers that had called the Pinellas Peninsula home prior to the Civil War returned, and their numbers slowly grew. The expansion of railroad construction further into the state allowed a growing number of large-scale landowners to begin developing what had previously been agricultural land in the final decades of the 1800s. One such landowner was Peter Demens (born Pyotr Alexeyevitch Dementyev), a Russian immigrant and speculative real estate developer. Partially financed by Philadelphian and fellow area landowner Hamilton Disston, Demens expanded the Orange Belt Railway into, and platted the land that would become, St. Petersburg. When the first trains arrived in the newly-named town in 1888, it was home to only 30 residents.

Although the Orange Belt Railway was providing service into St. Petersburg, it was not initially successful. The American Medical Association's Dr. W.C. Van Bibber had endorsed the Pinellas peninsula as the perfect location for a "Health City" in 1885. To boost ridership and capitalize on the idea that St. Petersburg's climate offered healing powers, the Orange Belt Railway started to offer seaside excursions to St. Petersburg in 1889.² These excursions were among the first concentrated efforts by the community and its boosters to attract tourists.³ When the railroad could not pay its debts in 1889, the syndicate of Philadelphia financiers holding the debts took over the railroad and the investment company, which was responsible for the land held in the name of the railroad.⁴

Largely as a result of the efforts of city boosters to attract businesses and residents, developers such as H. Walter Fuller, Noel Mitchell, Charles Hall, Charles Roser, and C. Perry Snell triggered the city's first real estate land boom from 1909 to the start of World War I.⁵ Promotional efforts by the Atlantic Coast Line railroad (created in 1902 from the former Orange Belt Railroad and Henry Plant's South Florida Railroad) brought organized tourist trains from New York in 1909 and from the Midwest in 1913. Many early tourists continued to winter in the city; some purchasing second homes in St. Petersburg.⁶

The City's administration itself began to formally encourage tourism with promotional campaigns following the election of Al Lang as mayor in 1916. Lang had been elected after he arranged to bring the Philadelphia Phillies baseball team to the city for spring training. Under his leadership, the City publicly encouraged tourism and made efforts to improve the physical appearance of the city. With approximately 83 real estate companies operating in the city in 1914, the focus turned increasingly to attracting winter residents. The local population soon doubled during "the season." Winter residents even formed tourist societies organized by their state or region of origin which acted as booster clubs in their native states. Although the real estate market

² Arsenault, 62.

³ Grismer, 70, 97, 111; "Heavy Real Estate Deal: Old Company Goes Out of Business," *St. Petersburg Times*, December 15, 1906.

⁴ Grismer.

⁵ Arsenault, 136.

⁶ Arsenault, 135-137; 144-145.

collapsed during World War I, the boom of development had created a pattern for the future growth of the city. During the 1910s, the city's population grew from 4,127 to 14,237.⁷

J. Bruce Smith and the Construction of the Smith Building

With its location in the heart of downtown St. Petersburg at the southwest corner of Central Avenue and Third Street, it is unsurprising that the subject property was developed early in the city's history for commercial use, although the first generation of development at the site was replaced. An 1889 map of St. Petersburg produced by the Sanborn Map Company shows a two story, brick-veneered building with a broad awning facing Central Avenue at the site,⁸ though later newspaper accounts recall the construction date as 1896.⁹ The building was noted to be a "dry goods" store, generally indicating that it sold textiles, clothing, home goods, or even certain grocery items.

By 1917, the mercantile was operated by J. Bruce Smith, who had come to St. Petersburg around 1910 from Inverness, Florida, though he was a native of North Carolina.¹⁰ Smith established himself as "one of the true stand-by merchants of St. Petersburg boosters"¹¹ and invested in repairing the existing 1880s building that his store had come to occupy in 1918.¹²

In 1924, however, as St. Petersburg's economy boomed, Smith removed the original two-story building from the site and contracted Franklin J. Mason, builder of the nearby Princess Martha Hotel, to construct a new "skyscraper" from plans drawn by architect Malachi Leo Elliott. Elliott, whose firm had offices in Tampa, Sarasota, and St. Petersburg, is known for his design of Ybor City's Centro Asturiano and the early development of Temple Terrace.¹³ Interestingly, it was noted that the original two-story building was dismantled, and its materials repurposed to construct a warehouse in the Bayboro area.

The 1924 J. Bruce Smith Building, as the subject property would be known during its early years, was built with a steel frame that would stand seven stories tall, including a two-story space at its base to house Smith's department store and 80 office spaces above.¹⁴ Updates published in the *St. Petersburg Times* as the construction progressed suggest that these office spaces were in high demand, with many leases being signed before construction was completed.¹⁵

Although the subject property's original Elliott-designed façade, with its brick and terracotta skin supported by the steel frame, would later be altered by the 1966 apartment conversion, the increasing market for such a mixed retail and office "skyscraper" during the mid-1920s is a

⁷ Arsenault, 121-125, 143-146, 190; Peck and Wilson, 41; Karl H. Grismer, *The Story of St. Petersburg: The History of Lower Pinellas Peninsula and the Sunshine City*, (St. Petersburg, FL: P.K. Smith & Company, 1924), 189.

⁸ Sanborn Map Company, St. Petersburg Florida, Sheet 2, 1889.

⁹ "Contract is Let for New Smith Block," *St. Petersburg Times*, July 15, 1924.

¹⁰ "J. Bruce Smith Dies in Hospital," *St. Petersburg Times*, April 14, 1946.

¹¹ "J. Bruce Smith," *St. Petersburg Daily Times*, June 28, 1914.

¹² "Building Gets First Repairs in 30 Years," *St. Petersburg Times*, November 22, 1918.

¹³ Rimbey, Grant, "The Lost Drawings of M. Leo Elliott," *Creative Loafing Tampa*, May 23, 2011.

¹⁴ "Contract is Let for New Smith Block."

¹⁵ "Steel Work Pushed on Smith Building," *St. Petersburg Times*, September 26, 1924.

significant aspect of the building's history. Accounts from the time draw a strong distinction between the original two-story store building, which was seen to be at home in a downtown dominated by "cigar factories, phosphate railroad terminals...and industrial enterprises,"¹⁶ and the downtown St. Petersburg of 1924, which aimed to present itself as a sophisticated tourist town.¹⁷ The J. Bruce Smith Store sold dry goods and clothing from the ground floor and mezzanine space.

The Empire Building

Smith's department store appears to have relocated or closed by 1931, as a liquidation of goods associated with the "Old J. Bruce Smith Store" at 300 Central Avenue was announced that year.¹⁸ The shop at the ground floor of the subject property operated briefly as Watson's, but this store, too, closed in 1932.¹⁹ By the early 1930s, St. Petersburg had endured the interrelated hardships of the local crash of the 1920s "Land Boom" that had gripped Florida and the nationwide effects of the Great Depression. The building was later recalled to have been a "white elephant" and heavily burdened by mortgages during this time.²⁰ The number of real estate offices occupying its upper floors during the boom years of the mid-1920s suggests that a loss of rental income as the real estate industry waned may have heightened Smith's financial problems.

By early 1933, the building was owned by the New York Life Insurance Company, who contracted local architect Archie G. Parish to update the building.²¹ The subject property was known as the Empire Building for the next three decades despite several changes in ownership.

The Empire Building was used as office space for the practices of professionals such as architects and attorneys, but during and after World War II, the subject property also adapted to meet the demand for a regional office space of the Army, and later the Veterans Administration. Beginning in 1942, the building housed a US Army Air Force Basic Training Center, and in 1945 a portion of the building was leased for use as additional office space for the Bay Pines regional VA offices. As the war concluded, the Bay Pines medical facilities at the northwest outskirts of St. Petersburg badly needed space for hospital beds, and the relocation of legal and vocational education offices to the downtown core both made way for space at Bay Pines and provided convenience to local veterans living in the city.²²

All in all, the subject property's interim years as the Empire Building indicate a prolonged struggle to keep the building functioning as its original design intended – with a large single retailer at the ground floor and a series of small offices on its upper six stories. This was J. Bruce Smith's ambition for the building when it was initially constructed during the 1920s, but its initial success

¹⁶ "Building Gets First Repairs in 30 Years."

¹⁷ "Steel Work Pushed on Smith Building."

¹⁸ "Second Slaughter," *St. Petersburg Times*, February 25, 1931.

¹⁹ "Watson & Watson" *St. Petersburg Times* March 19, 1932.

²⁰ "Carol Corporation Buys Structure," *St. Petersburg Times*, July 9, 1946.

²¹ "Building Will Be Remodeled, Name Changed," *St. Petersburg Times*, February 12, 1933.

²² "Veterans Administration Leases Empire Building for Its Regional Office," *St. Petersburg Times*, June 21, 1945. "Many Bay Pines Offices Move to Empire Building." *St. Petersburg Times*, July 6, 1945.

as a posh retail and professional building was cut short by financial collapse followed by a period during which downtown St. Petersburg was home to a large military presence. Nonetheless, the changing needs met by the subject property's open ground floor, which hosted both department stores and fruit shops, and numerous offices above, are testament to the versatility of the boom-era "sky-scraper."

The Coronet 300

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s in St. Petersburg, new houses filled the subdivisions platted during the 1920s, but left vacant by the real estate decline and the Great Depression. Much of the area to the north, west, and south of the downtown core filled in during this time with single-family residential construction. Like the new houses being constructed, the commercial properties built to serve the neighborhoods that boomed in the post-War era were designed to facilitate easy access by vehicle. Strip malls and professional buildings were increasingly surrounded by large swaths of parking as if to demonstrate their convenience to potential clients. The subject property, of course, which occupies the entirety of its 40-foot by 100-foot parcel, offered no such amenity.

By the early 1960s, downtown St. Petersburg's commercial core was showing the impacts of the trend toward suburbanization. The group St. Petersburg Progress, Inc. formed in 1962 with a mission of "upgrading the central business district" from a group of local business- and property owners.²³ Now known as the St. Petersburg Downtown Partnership, this organization was not dissimilar to those formed in cities throughout the United States in the decades following World War II with goals of aesthetically and functionally improving conditions in downtown centers.

In 1966 a group of the organization's leaders, including Jack Y. Williams, Alfred L. Schelm, and Glenn Velboom purchased the subject property and announced plans for its conversion to the Coronet 300 Apartments. The men's clothing store that had been operating at the ground floor would remain in place, but the upper levels of the building were reconfigured for use as one-bedroom apartments. Three stories were added to the building, and horizontal bands added between the window levels of each floor. The remodel was designed by structural engineer J. C. Russello and architect Carl Atkinson for Williams and his partners.²⁴

²³ "Progress Unit Executive Director Hired," *St. Petersburg Times*, June 21, 1963.

²⁴ "Apartment Developers Purchase Major St. Pete Building," *St. Petersburg Times*, April 20, 1966.



Figure 1: Undated photograph of subject property.
Courtesy of Burgert Brothers Collection Hillsborough
County Library



**Figure 2: Artist's rendering of alterations, as shown
in *St. Petersburg Times*, September 7, 1966**

DESIGNATION BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

The proposed designation boundary includes the entirety of the property located at 300 Central Avenue. Because the building has recently been subdivided for condominium ownership, there are 11 Parcel ID Numbers:

- 193117182430000601,
- 193117182430000401,
- 193117182430000901,
- 193117182430000101,
- 193117182430000301,
- 193117182430000801,
- 193117182430000501,
- 193117182430000001,
- 193117182430000701,
- 193117182430001101, and

- 193117182430001001.

All parcels are under common ownership, which is the historic condition of the building. As such, the landmark application is being treated as a singular, owner-initiated application for an individual local historic landmark.

The property boundaries are appropriately applied to the designation boundary, as no landscape features or ancillary buildings have historically been associated with the subject property. Boundary maps depicting the proposed boundaries are included in backup material to this report.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Summary

The subject property is a ten-story, stucco-clad brick building with a steel frame. It occupies the entirety of its 40 foot by 100 foot parcel. Sited on a highly-visible intersection within downtown St. Petersburg, it features storefronts at the ground floor of its street-facing north and east elevations. Fenestration at upper floors is irregularly-spaced but aligned both horizontally and vertically. Large horizontal stucco bands between the windows at each floor on the north and east elevations present an appearance of recessed windows. An airshaft at the west elevation indicates the minimal setback between buildings that was customary at the time of the property's construction in 1924.

Setting

The subject property is located at one of the most visible intersections within downtown St. Petersburg's commercial core. It is approximately one block outside of the southern boundary of the Downtown St. Petersburg National Register Historic District. Its surroundings are urban and commercial in nature, including both properties that retain architectural significance dating to the town's early twentieth's century development, and those that have been more recently redeveloped. Buildings along the street front tend to be united by minimal setbacks and commercial use at their ground floors.

Narrative Description

Aside from its footprint, the visible exterior elements of the subject property are almost entirely the result of the 1966 conversion from the Empire Building to the Coronet 300 Apartments. The brick exterior is clad in stucco with raised horizontal banding wrapping the two street-facing elevations (north and east) between each window, as shown in **Error! Reference source not found.** The ground floor remains set up as a commercial space. Existing storefront windows do not appear to have been retained from the 1966 conversion, although the original openings are visible. Large storefront openings wrap the northeast corner of the building, which faces the street corner (**Error! Reference source not found.**). At the right (west) edge of the north-façade, a flat canopy is cantilevered over the sidewalk to shelter a single-action glazed door, which provides access to the elevator lobby and apartments above.



Figure 3: Subject property from the intersection of Central Avenue and 3rd Street, facing southwest



Figure 4: Altered storefront openings at east elevation of ground floor

Window bays are irregularly distributed throughout each elevation but align vertically among the upper floors. The majority of the subject property's windows are aluminum sash windows with horizontal muntins. At the rear (south) elevation, a small number of wooden sash windows that predate the apartment conversion remain (Figure 5). The south elevation faces an alleyway and is more utilitarian than the street-facing elevations. The west elevation, designed to have minimal setback from a neighboring building, features an airshaft to provide light and ventilation (Figure 6).



Figure 5: Historic openings and windows at south (alley-facing) elevation

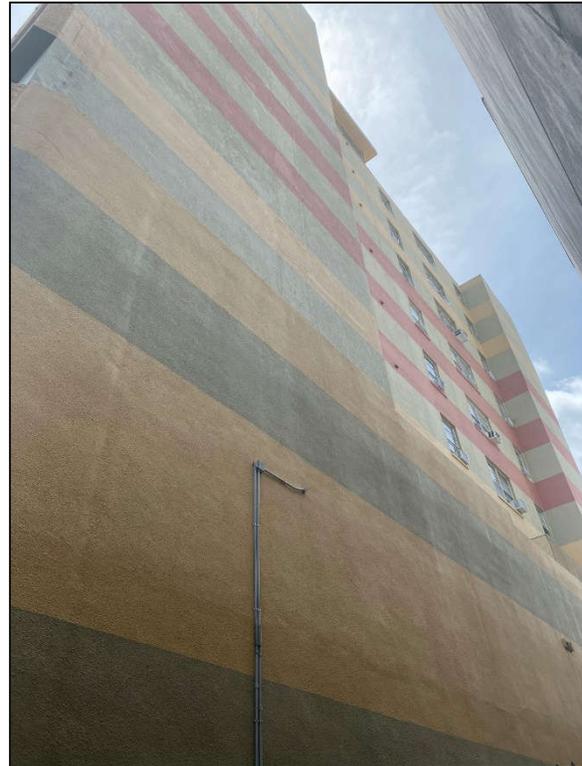


Figure 6: Airshaft at west elevation

Primary Character-Defining Historic Features

Future exterior alterations to the property will be subject to Certificate of Appropriateness review. The following list does not define all significant features of the subject property but is intended to identify the most distinct elements of this designation:

- Building footprint, including airshaft and nine-story height with penthouse;
- 1966 stucco exterior with horizontal banding;
- Ground floor storefront openings with high transparency facing Central Avenue and Third Street elevations;
- 1966 window openings and aluminum windows in aligned but irregular bays.

STAFF FINDINGS

In St. Petersburg, eligibility for designation as a local historic landmark is determined based on evaluations of age, context, and integrity as found in Section 16.30.070.2.5(D) of the City Code. Under the age test, a property must have been constructed over 50 years prior to designation.

Historic documentation demonstrates that the subject property was initially constructed approximately 96 years ago elements of its historic significance date to this initial construction. The majority of its architectural significance, however, is derived from its 1966 adaptive reuse from a retail/office building to multifamily residential. These alterations occurred roughly 54

years prior to the designation proposal. The subject property, therefore, meets the age threshold for designation.

Further, staff suggests that the subject property satisfies two Criteria for Significance and six Criteria of Integrity. Staff, therefore, recommends approval of the application to designate the subject property to the St. Petersburg Register of Historic Places.

Historic Significance and Satisfaction of Eligibility Criteria

The next test to determine eligibility for the St. Petersburg Register of Historic Places examines a resource’s historic significance with relation to nine criteria, and the period during which this significance was achieved. One or more Criteria for Significance must be met in order for a property to qualify for designation as an individual landmark or district to be placed in the St. Petersburg Register. The nine criteria are based on the National Park Service’s criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and are designed to assess resources’ importance in a given historic context with objectivity and comprehensiveness.

Period of Significance

A historic resource’s period of significance is the time frame during which a historic resource was associated with the important events, activities, themes, or people which qualify it for consideration as significant.²⁵ The recommended period of significance for the subject property spans from its construction in 1924, until its renovation in 1966 for use as a multifamily residential building.

Criteria for Significance

Nine criteria for historic significance are defined by St. Petersburg City Code, Historic and Archaeological Preservation Overlay, Section 16.30.070.2.5(D). In the case of the Norwood School, staff has determined that the proposed listing satisfies three St. Petersburg Register criteria as follows.

<i>Is at least one of the following criteria for eligibility met?</i>		
No	A	Its value is a significant reminder of the cultural or archaeological heritage of the city, state, or nation.
Yes	B	Its location is the site of a significant local, state, or national event.
No	C	It is identified with a person who significantly contributed to the development of the city, state or nation.
No	D	It is identified as the work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose work has influenced the development of the city, state, or nation.

²⁵ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 16A Part III: Completing the National Register Registration Form*, accessed online at https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb16a/nrb16a_iii.htm.

No	E	Its value as a building is recognized for the quality of its architecture, and it retains sufficient elements showing its architectural significance.
Yes	F	It has distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials.
No	G	Its character is a geographically definable area possessing a significant concentration, or continuity of sites, buildings, objects or structures united in past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development.
No	H	Its character is an established and geographically definable neighborhood, united in culture, architectural style or physical plan and development.
No	I	It has contributed, or is likely to contribute, information important to the prehistory or history of the city, state, or nation.

Under Criterion B, **“Its location is the site of a significant local, state, or national event,”** the subject property is significant in the areas of **Commerce** and **Community Planning and Development**.

In historic preservation parlance, discussion of historic events often includes that of the broader trends that shape our built environment. The evolution of the property at 300 Central Avenue from the optimism for St. Petersburg’s future surrounding the construction of the J. Bruce Smith Building, to the Empire Building set in the heart of a waning downtown core, and finally to its reuse as an apartment building as part of the reimagination of the community center, embodies the changing visions that property owners have brought to the city’s landscape over the last century.

Despite its midcentury alteration, the subject property retains its history as one of the only remaining early “skyscrapers” of St. Petersburg’s 1920s real estate boom, making it significant in the area of **Commerce**. The building serves as a physical link to the vision that St. Petersburg’s “boosters” had for the growing town’s commercial future – not as an industrial outpost or as a fishing village, but as a refuge for winter residents seeking to temporarily escape the northern climate. J. Bruce Smith envisioned the building as a space that would not only house his department store but included space for professionals including those in the real estate and building fields. Smith’s vision was shared by many, ranging from the developers who subdivided large swaths of St. Petersburg’s land for residential suburbs, to the local government itself, which took proactive steps to market itself as an “American Riviera” to prospective snowbirds.

Similarly, in the area of **Community Planning and Development**, the subject property demonstrates both the footprint of the pre-War commercial building that dominated downtown cores throughout the United States and the desire of property owners and local organizations to adapt these pre-War cores to a changing reality in the late twentieth century. As one of the earliest projects of St. Petersburg Progress, the building’s apartment adaptation shows an attempt to recreate downtown itself as a worthy competitor of the growing suburbs.

Finally, in a related but distinct way, the subject property holds historic significance under Criterion F, **“It has distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials.”** In the area of **Architecture**, the subject property demonstrates the relatively tall and narrow footprint of the “skyscrapers” that first became possible to construct in the late-nineteenth century thanks to innovations in the mass production of steel, and convenient to occupy with the introduction of the elevator in the early twentieth century. Additionally, in the area of architecture, the subject property demonstrates later efforts to modernize the aesthetic and use of both early twentieth century buildings and the downtown core as a whole.

Historic Integrity

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

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

The subject property’s integrity has been somewhat diminished in the area of **Association**, as the building is presently vacant and no longer houses commercial and residential uses. It is important to note that, since the proposed Period of Significance spans from 1924 to 1966, the building’s integrity is being evaluated with regard to its appearance after the alterations that occurred in the latter year, and not its original appearance immediately following construction.

PROPERTY OWNER CONSENT AND IMPACT OF DESIGNATION

The application for the proposed local landmark designation was initiated by the building’s owner. Designation of the subject property as a local historic landmark will allow the applicant to pursue adaptive reuse, certain tax credits and exemptions, and variances.

CONSISTENCY WITH ST. PETERSBURG’S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, EXISTING LAND USE PLAN, AND FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The proposed local historic landmark designation is consistent with the City’s Comprehensive Plan, relating to the protection, use and adaptive reuse of historic buildings. The local landmark designation will not affect the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) or zoning designations, nor will it significantly constrain any existing or future plans for the development of the City. The proposed landmark designation is consistent with the following objectives:

Objective LU10: The historic resources locally designated by the St. Petersburg City Council and Community Planning and Preservation Commission (CPPC) shall be incorporated onto the Land Use Map or map series at the time of original adoption, or through the amendment process, and protected from

development and redevelopment activities consistent with the provisions of the Historic Preservation Element and the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Policy LU10.1: Decisions regarding the designation of historic resources shall be based on the criteria and policies outlined in the Historic Preservation Ordinance and the Historic Preservation Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy HP2.3: The City shall provide technical assistance to applications for designation of historic structures and districts.

Policy HP2.6: Decisions regarding the designation of historic resources shall be based on National Register eligibility criteria and policies outlined in the Historic Preservation Ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan. The City will use the following selection criteria [for city initiated landmark designations] as a guideline for staff recommendations to the CPC and City Council:

- National Register or DOE status
- Prominence/importance related to the City
- Prominence/importance related to the neighborhood
- Degree of threat to the landmark
- Condition of the landmark
- Degree of owner support

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **approval** of the request to designate the Smith-Empire/Coronet 300 Building as a local historic landmark, thereby referring the application to City Council for first and second reading and public hearing.

REFERENCES

“Building Gets First Repairs in 30 Years.” *St. Petersburg Times*. November 22, 1918.

“Building Set for ‘Growth’ this Week.” *St. Petersburg Times*. September 7, 1966.

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Doubleday, Douglas. “Apartment Developers Buy Empire Building.” *St. Petersburg Times*. April 20, 1966.

Doubleday, Douglas. “St. Petersburg Sees Boom in Building.” *St. Petersburg Times*. September 10, 1966.

“Into Empire Building: Egerton and Moore Will Make Move in October.” *St. Petersburg Times*. May 6, 1962.

“J.B. Smith Reaches Dizzy Height from Humble Start.” *Evening Independent*. February 25, 1922.

“J. Bruce Smith Dies in Hospital.” *St. Petersburg Times*. April 14, 1946.

“J. Bruce Smith’s Only Store – 835 Central Ave.” *St. Petersburg Times*. June 25, 1931.

“Many Bay Pines Offices Move to Empire Building.” *St. Petersburg Times*. July 6, 1945.

“Only a Select Few.” [Coronet 300 Ad] *St. Petersburg Times*. February 27, 1968.

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“Veterans Administration Leases Empire Building for its Regional Offices.” *St. Petersburg Times*. June 21, 1945.

“Who’s Who in St. Petersburg: J. Bruce Smith.” *St. Petersburg Daily Times*. June 28, 1914.

Witwer, Stan. “War Clouds Recall Grim Mobilization of St. Petersburg During World War II.” *St. Petersburg Times*. August 27, 1950.

Appendix A
Application and Owner Consent



Local Landmark Designation Application

Type of property nominated (for staff use only)

- building structure site object
 historic district multiple resource

1. NAME AND LOCATION OF PROPERTY

historic name The Empire Smith Building
 other names/site number CORONET 300 CONDO UNITS / 193117182430000801
 address 300 CENTRAL AVE ST PETERSBURG FL 33701
 historic address 300 CENTRAL AVE ST PETERSBURG FL 33701

2. PROPERTY OWNER(S) NAME AND ADDRESS

name Steve Gianfilippo
 street and number 4830 W Kennedy Blvd Suite 880
 city or town Tampa state Florida zip code 33609
 phone number (h) _____ (w) 727-895-8260 e-mail steveflip@griesinfund.com

3. NOMINATION PREPARED BY

name/title Nicholas Gavulic / Community Coordinator
 organization Station House
 street and number 260 1st ave s
 city or town Saint Petersburg state Florida zip code 33701
 phone number (h) (305)613-9730 (w) (727)-895-8260 e-mail membership@stationhousestpete.com
 date prepared 5/20/2020 signature 

4. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

Describe boundary line encompassing all man-made and natural resources to be included in designation (general legal description or survey). Attach map delimiting proposed boundary. (Use continuation sheet if necessary)

The boundaries of Parcel ID 193117182430000801.

5. GEOGRAPHIC DATA

acreage of property 0.9
 property identification number 193117182430000801

CORONET 300 CONDO UNITS

Name of Property

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic Functions

Current Functions

Office and Retail Space

Apartment Complex

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification

(See Appendix A for list)

Materials

Narrative Description

On one or more continuation sheets describe the historic and existing condition of the property use conveying the following information: original location and setting; natural features; pre-historic man-made features; subdivision design; description of surrounding buildings; major alterations and present appearance; interior appearance;

8. NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	<u>Resource Type</u>	Contributing resources previously listed on the National Register or Local Register
_____	_____	Buildings	_____
_____	_____	Sites	_____
_____	_____	Structures	_____
_____	_____	Objects	Number of multiple property listings
_____	_____	Total	_____

Name of Property

9. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Criteria for Significance

(mark one or more boxes for the appropriate criteria)

- Its value is a significant reminder of the cultural or archaeological heritage of the City, state, or nation.
- Its location is the site of a significant local, state, or national event.
- It is identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the City, state, or nation.
- It is identified as the work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose work has influenced the development of the City, state, or nation.
- Its value as a building is recognized for the quality of its architecture, and it retains sufficient elements showing its architectural significance.
- It has distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials.
- Its character is a geographically definable area possessing a significant concentration, or continuity or sites, buildings, objects or structures united in past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development.
- Its character is an established and geographically definable neighborhood, united in culture, architectural style or physical plan and development.
- It has contributed, or is likely to contribute, information important to the prehistory or history of the City, state, or nation.

Areas of Significance

(see Attachment B for detailed list of categories)

Period of Significance

Post WWII / Real Estate Boom

Significant Dates (date constructed & altered)

Constructed in the mid-late 1920s and altered in 1967

Significant Person(s)

J. Bruce Smith Sr. and The Williams Construction Company

Cultural Affiliation/Historic Period

1920s post WWII Real Estate Boom

Builder

J. Bruce Smith Sr.

Architect

J. Bruce Smith Sr.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property as it relates to the above criteria and information on one or more continuation sheets. Include biographical data on significant person(s), builder and architect, if known.)

10. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

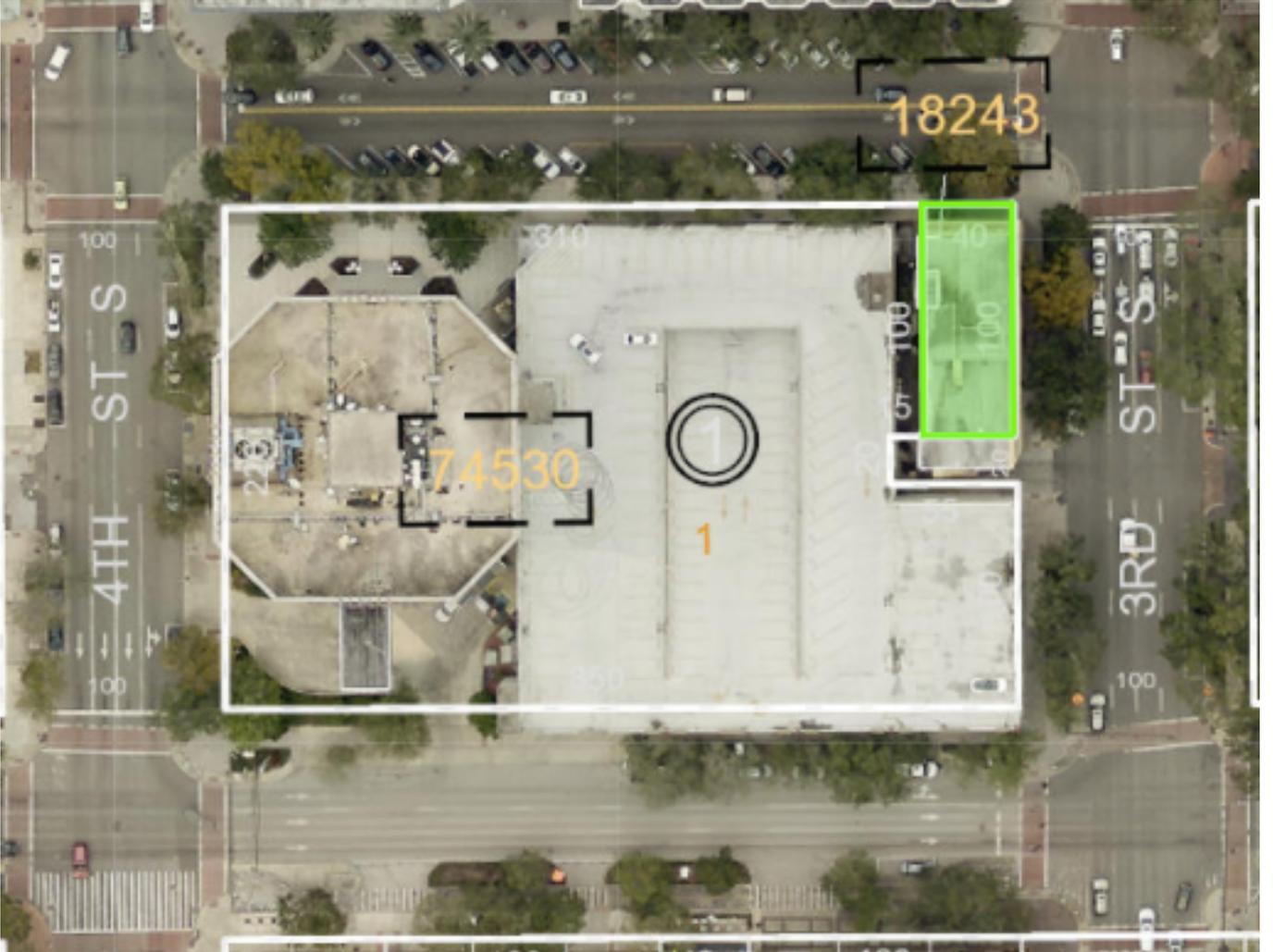
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

St. Petersburg Local Landmark Designation Application

Name of property The Empire Smith Building

Continuation Section

Page _____





st.petersburg
www.stpete.org

AFFIDAVIT TO AUTHORIZE AGENT

I am (we are) the owner(s) and record title holder(s) of the property noted herein

Property Owner's Name: Steve Gianfilippo

This property constitutes the property for which the following request is made

Property Address: 300 Central Ave Saint Petersburg, FL 33701

Parcel ID No.: 193117182430000701

Request: Begin designation process

The undersigned has(have) appointed and does(do) appoint the following agent(s) to execute any application(s) or other documentation necessary to effectuate such application(s)

Agent's Name(s): Nicholas Gavulic

This affidavit has been executed to induce the City of St. Petersburg, Florida, to consider and act on the above described property

I(we), the undersigned authority, hereby certify that the foregoing is true and correct.

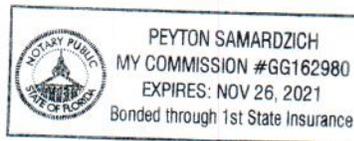
Signature (owner): [Signature] Steve Gianfilippo
Printed Name

Sworn to and subscribed on this date

Identification or personally known: Personally Known

Notary Signature: [Signature] Date: 6/12/20

Commission Expiration (Stamp or date):



Coronet 300 Ownership by Parcel
per Pinellas County Property Appraiser's Office as of 8/17/2020

NAME1	ATTN	ADDRESS1	CITY	STATE	ZIP	ZIP2	PIN	SITEADDRESS
300 CENTRAL LLC		4830 W KENNEDY BLVD STE 445	TAMPA	FL	33609	2583	193117182430000601	300 CENTRAL AVE
300 CENTRAL LLC		4830 W KENNEDY BLVD STE 445	TAMPA	FL	33609	2583	193117182430000401	300 CENTRAL AVE
300 CENTRAL LLC		4830 W KENNEDY BLVD STE 445	TAMPA	FL	33609	2583	193117182430000901	300 CENTRAL AVE
300 CENTRAL LLC		4830 W KENNEDY BLVD STE 445	TAMPA	FL	33609	2583	193117182430000101	300 CENTRAL AVE
300 CENTRAL LLC		4830 W KENNEDY BLVD STE 445	TAMPA	FL	33609	2583	193117182430000301	300 CENTRAL AVE
300 CENTRAL LLC		4830 W KENNEDY BLVD STE 445	TAMPA	FL	33609	2583	193117182430000801	300 CENTRAL AVE
300 CENTRAL LLC		4830 W KENNEDY BLVD STE 445	TAMPA	FL	33609	2583	193117182430001101	300 CENTRAL AVE
300 CENTRAL LLC		4830 W KENNEDY BLVD STE 445	TAMPA	FL	33609	2583	193117182430000501	300 CENTRAL AVE
300 CENTRAL LLC		4830 W KENNEDY BLVD STE 445	TAMPA	FL	33609	2583	193117182430001001	300 CENTRAL AVE
CORONET 300 CONDO ASSN	C/O MIELE, CARL F TRE	2200 COFFEE POT BLVD NE	ST PETERSBURG	FL	33704	4652	193117182430000001	0 3RD ST S
300 CENTRAL LLC		4830 W KENNEDY BLVD STE 445	TAMPA	FL	33609	2583	193117182430000701	300 CENTRAL AVE

Detail by Entity Name

Florida Not For Profit Corporation

CORONET 300 CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION, INC.

Filing Information

Document Number 746067 FEI/EIN Number 59-1979420 Date Filed 02/26/1979 State FL Status ACTIVE Last Event AMENDMENT Event Date Filed 01/11/2017 Event Effective Date 01/05/2017

Principal Address

4830 W. Kennedy Blvd.
Suite 880
Tampa, FL 33609

Changed: 04/12/2018

Mailing Address

4830 W. Kennedy Blvd.
Suite 880
Tampa, FL 33609

Changed: 04/12/2018

Registered Agent Name & Address Gianfilippo, Steve

4830 W. KENNEDY BLVD.
SUITE 880
TAMPA, FL 33609

Name Changed: 04/11/2018

Address Changed: 04/11/2018

Officer/Director Detail **Name & Address**

Title PRESIDENT

Gianfilippo, Steve

4830 W. KENNEDY BLVD.
SUITE 880
TAMPA, FL 33609

Title VICE PRESIDENT/SECRETARY

PALMER, CHARLES

4830 W. KENNEDY BLVD.
SUITE 880
TAMPA, FL 33609

Title TREASURER

HUFFMAN, AARON

4830 W. KENNEDY BLVD.
SUITE 880

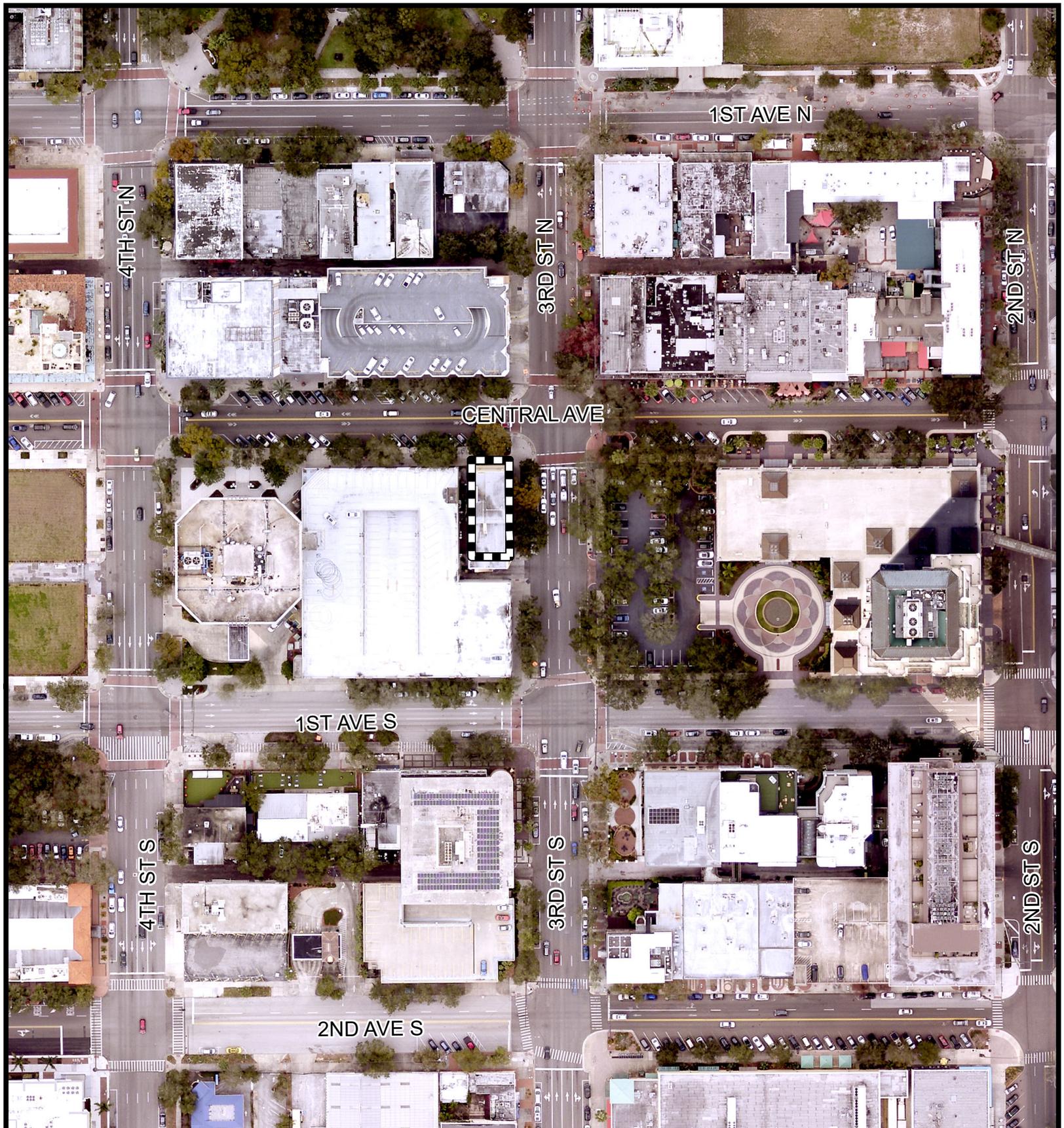
TAMPA, FL 33609

Annual Reports

Report Year	Filed Date
2018	04/11/2018
2019	06/13/2019
2020	07/21/2020

Appendix B

Maps of Subject Property and Proposed Boundary

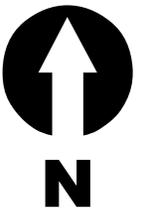


Community Planning and Preservation Commission

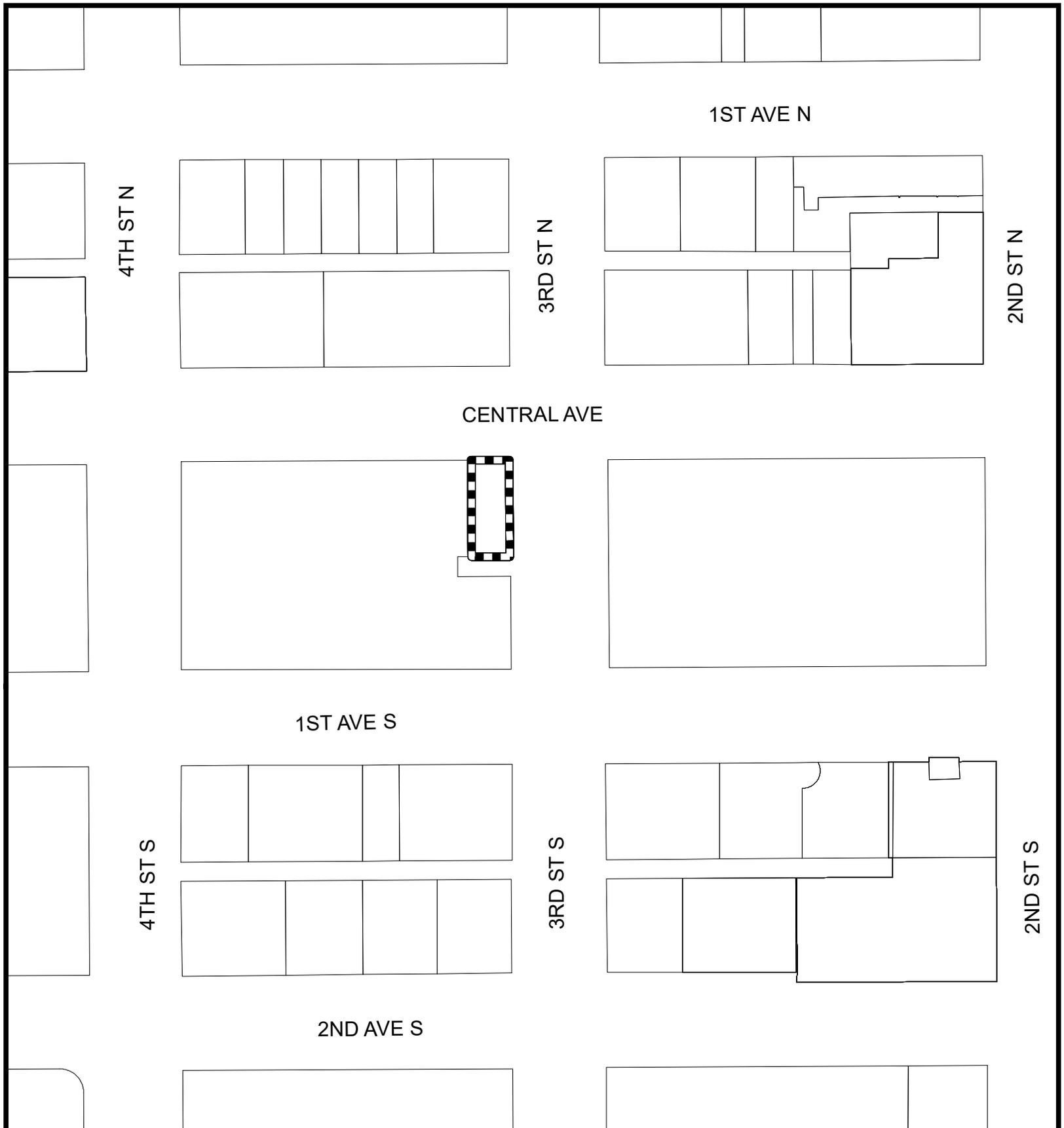
300 Central Avenue

**AREA TO BE APPROVED,
SHOWN IN** 

**CASE NUMBER
20-90300003**



**SCALE:
1" = 150'**



Community Planning and Preservation Commission

300 Central Avenue

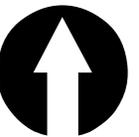
AREA TO BE APPROVED,

SHOWN IN



CASE NUMBER

20-90300003



N

SCALE:
1" = 150'